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‘Nourished by that Abstinence’: *Consumption and Control in The Corsair*

Critics and anthologists have often turned to Conrad in *The Corsair* for an example of the quintessential Byronic hero.¹ But they have not drawn attention to the one characteristic that sets him apart from other Byronic heroes: his decidedly abstemious diet. This is all the more surprising given how insistent Byron is about Conrad’s limited and unappetising food:

Ne’er for his lip the purpling cup they fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still –
And for his fare – the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have passed untasted
too;
Earth’s coarsest bread, the garden’s
homeliest roots,
And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit’s board would scarce deny.
(I, 67–74)²

While no one has asked about Conrad’s eating habits, a variety of biographical commentators have asked about Byron’s.³ There is now consensus about the chronology of his efforts to eat less, but little agreement about how, if at all, those efforts relate to the culture of celebrity, the critique of luxury, and the relationship of embodiment to subjectivity.⁴ Why, then, does Conrad restrict his intake of food?

This essay will answer that question by

setting *The Corsair* alongside Byron’s diary from 1813–1814, drawing on recent theories about eating and its disorders, and setting both texts in the context of anxieties generated by Romantic celebrity culture. My aim is to provide an answer without lapsing into a psycho-biographical reading, in which the poem is scanned for symptoms of neuroses or psychoanalytic complexes. My object is not to use *The Corsair* to investigate Byron’s psyche – which would repeat yet again the hermeneutic paradigm of celebrity culture – nor to produce a fully-elaborated ‘reading’ of the poem or its hero. Instead, I employ both public and private texts to investigate how food becomes the troubled interface between the cultural apparatus of celebrity and the individual at its core.

Byron’s early ambitions were tied to public performance as well as to writing. He aspired to shine among his peers in the House of Lords and to cut a fashionable figure with ‘a tinge of Dandyism’.⁵ Dandyism provided a discourse and a praxis which validated the slender, tastefully adorned male body and implied its plasticity. Stendhal opined that, ‘during at least a third part of the day, Byron was a dandy, [and] expressed a constant dread of augmenting the bulk of his outward man’.⁶ His cultivated slenderness would become central to his self-presentation. We have detailed information about Byron’s weight between January 1806

and July 1811 from a ledger in the archives of the vintner Berry Brothers and Rudd. Their customers enjoyed weighing themselves on the set of scales in the shop, and ledgers record the weight of Charles James Fox, Beau Brummell and Thomas Moore, among others.⁷ Byron was first weighed on 4 January 1806 (he weighed thirteen stone, twelve pounds). By the autumn of 1806 he weighed fourteen stone, six pounds: very overweight for a man of five feet, eight and a half inches. In 1807 Byron began a regime of weight loss, writing to an acquaintance:

I have lost 18 LB in my weight, that is one stone and four pounds since January [...] as I found myself too plump [...] my clothes have been taken in nearly *half a yard*. (*BLJ*, I, p. 114)

By 10 June 1809, he weighed eleven stone, five and three-quarters pounds. He must have eaten frugally on his travels in 1809–11, because when he returned to Berry's scales, he was only nine stone, eleven and a half pounds: twenty-two pounds lighter than when he left, and four and a half stone below his heaviest recorded weight.⁸ Having produced a body that was fit for his entry into public life, Byron maintained his low weight by tapping into a Romantic discourse on diet. We know he bought a treatise on corpulence in 1811 and in September 1812 he instructed his publisher to 'send [him] Adair on Diet and regimen' (*BLJ*, II, p. 191).⁹ By 1816 his library contained at least two more works on the subject.¹⁰ In his quest for public prominence (as a peer, a dandy, or a poet) Byron responded to the somatic expectations of Romantic celebrity culture, making eating (and not eating) the means through which that culture inscribed itself on his body.

Whilst Byron shaped his own body by dieting, he crafted for Childe Harold a body that would fascinate his readers by suggesting hidden crimes or sorrows:

Yet oft-times in his maddest mirthful mood
Strange pangs would flash along Childe
Harold's brow,
As if the memory of some deadly feud
Or disappointed passion lurk'd below[.]
(I, 8)

Readers learnt to view the bodies of Byron's heroes, and by extension Byron's own body, as full of meaning. Byron's appearance in society, his representation in portraits and the distribution of his image in prints underwrote this strategy, enabling a discourse that constructed Byron's body as a locus of signification for interior subjective realities. Byron's body came to be understood as the authentic register, legible to the perceptive observer, of hidden inward depths – the canvas of his soul. Apparently a natural pre-textual entity, inscribed with traces of an authentic interior subjectivity, Byron's body was in fact a rigorously artful formation. His physical appearance, whether in portraits, dandified clothes or in the flesh, was an aesthetic production: his art was also body art.

Once he became a celebrity, however, Byron lost control over his self-presentation. Initially eager to collaborate with his celebrity promotion, he wrote to his publisher to enquire when 'the graven image' of his portrait would be ready 'to grace or disgrace some of our tardy editions' (*BLJ*, II, p. 191). But when he saw the frontispiece engraving, which was intended for the fifth edition of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, he strongly objected to it and made Murray destroy it.¹¹ Being a celebrity meant involving others in the construction and promotion of a public image. The results could be unsettling, as an engraved portrait from the *European Magazine* shows. In the week that he began *The Corsair*, Byron corresponded with the magazine's editor, James Asperne, who was keen to publish a portrait. But Byron declined to sit for the artist Asperne suggested and so Thomas Blood engraved a version of the

existing portrait by Richard Westall. The engraving was published on the same day as *The Corsair*, 1 February 1814. It seems to have been produced without Westall's permission, and takes drastic liberties with its source.

Blood's engraving takes Byron's head from his 1813 portrait and bolts it onto a completely different body. He moves Byron's body from its three-quarter turn into a frontal view, replaces the single-breasted jacket with a double-breasted coat, covers Byron's throat with a white cravat and substitutes large flamboyant collars for the small ones in the painting. Byron's neck ends up unrealistically elongated, and his body much fuller than in the original.¹² Blood's casual emendations exemplify the troubling loss of control over his public image that Byron experienced when he became a celebrity. John Locke had made the assertion that 'every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*' foundational to the theory of civil society; but in celebrity culture's representations, a man's body seemed to be all too easy to traffic.¹³ The body that Byron had so carefully produced through his diets, adorned in dandified clothes and had painted by distinguished artists turned out to be available for appropriation, alteration, reconstruction and re-circulation.

Food became the figurative arena for expressing the concerns about subjectivity, agency and representation that this loss of control produced. Concerns about control have been central to recent thinking about disorderly eating, which has reconceptualized it using the anthropological idea of an ethnic disorder and rediscovered its long and varied history. An ethnic disorder, such as 'amok' in South East Asia, involves a parody or perversion of standard cultural desiderata in response to unbearable pressures.¹⁴ The pattern of homicidal violence that characterizes 'running amok', for example, is a deformation of the virtues central to tribal warrior culture. Ethnic disorders provide a culturally recognizable

template for expressing psychological distress, through which the subject simultaneously protests against cultural pressures and crumbles beneath them. In the West, patterns of food refusal have offered a comparable expression of distress. The social meanings of food refusal shift over time, from Medieval 'holy fasts' to medicalized anorexia nervosa (first named in 1874), and the long eighteenth century witnessed a shift from mystical to rational explanations.¹⁵ By Byron's lifetime, as Edward Shorter has argued, food refusal was 'part of the "symptom pool" that the culture offers individuals for the expression of psychic distress'.¹⁶

Such distress often arises from a profound sense of being out of control, which Richard Gordon describes as 'a kind of lacuna at the core of the self, a sense of being "nothing," of not being an active agent in control of one's destiny'.¹⁷ In a life felt to lack autonomy, food may become the focus of concerns about intrusions into the self from outside. In Maud Ellman's words, 'eating comes to represent the prototype of all transactions with the other, and food the prototype of every object of exchange'.¹⁸ Restricted eating, then, can be experienced as empowering. Controlling hunger becomes a way to reassert control, at a minimal material level, in a life that seems to be out of control.¹⁹ Food thus becomes central to both a culture's inscription of its norms on the body and a subject's resistance to, or troubling of, those norms. These considerations illuminate Byron's comments on eating, socialising and celebrity in the journal he wrote while composing *The Corsair*.

Byron began the journal on 14 November 1813, the day after he finished the fair copy of *The Bride of Abydos*, and continued it until 19 April 1814. He was dieting rigorously, determined 'not [to] be the slave of any appetite' and to avoid 'the horrors of digestion' (*BLJ*, III, p. 212). Around this time, I suggest, Byron's dieting ceased to be a matter of

wanting to be slimmer, or to maintain his low weight, and became an effort to control the incursions of the outside world into his body and thus into his identity. He began to go without food for days at a time, noting on separate occasions that he went out 'not having tasted food for the preceding forty-eight hours' and 'without eating at all since yesterday' (*BLJ*, III, pp. 237, 223). 'When I *do* dine,' he wrote, 'I gorge like an Arab or a Boa snake, on fish and vegetables, but no meat.' But he asserted that 'I am always better [...] on my tea and biscuit than any other regimen, and even *that* sparingly' (*BLJ*, III, p. 226). 'I wish I could leave off eating altogether,' he complained (*BLJ*, III, p. 237). And he recorded an abstemious week in November 1813:

I have dined regularly to-day, for the first time since Sunday last – this being Sabbath, too. All the rest, tea and dry biscuits – six *per diem*. I wish to God I had not dined now! – It kills me with heaviness, stupor, and horrible dreams; – and yet it was but a pint of bucellas, and fish. Meat I never touch, – nor much vegetable diet. (*BLJ*, III, p. 212)

Materialising the anxieties about control and autonomy raised by Blood's engraving, Byron's disordered eating turned the artistic issues that troubled him at this time into physiological ones. Withdrawing from public performances into the privacy of his journal, Byron relished his increasing isolation as a sign of his autonomy. Associating food with society, he rejected both, writing 'would I were an ostrich, and dieted on fire-irons, – or any thing my gizzard could get the better of' (*BLJ*, III, p. 233). Instead of burying his head, he starved himself of food and company, writing 'I have not dined out, nor, indeed, *at all*, lately: have heard no music – have seen nobody' (*BLJ*, III, p. 217). To venture into company too often would be to risk everything: 'three days' dining would destroy me' (*BLJ*, III, p. 223). 'My stomach is entirely destroyed by long abstinence,' he

concluded, 'and the rest will probably follow' (*BLJ*, III, p. 230).

Byron's journal records his growing dissatisfaction with the routine of Regency socialising in which his celebrity had involved him. The spectacular Lord was an ornament to any guest list, but the journal shows him refusing invites and visits, making himself 'invisible':

The Duke of * * called. I have told them forty times that, except to half-a-dozen old and specified acquaintances, I am invisible. His grace is a good, noble, ducal person; but I am content to think so at a distance, and so – I was not at home. (*BLJ*, III, p. 230)²⁰

Later the same day, 'Sharpe called, but was not let in, – which I regret.' Byron notes that he 'did not go to the Berrys' the other night', and writes 'Invited out to a party, but did not go; – right. Refused to go to Lady * *'s on Monday; – right again' (*BLJ*, III, p. 237). All the world could not tempt him out of his solitude:

I have sent an excuse to Madame de Staël. I do not feel sociable enough for dinner today; – and I will not go to Sheridan's on Wednesday. [...] All the world are to be at the Staël's to-night, and I am not sorry to escape any part of it. I only go out to get me a fresh appetite for being alone. (*BLJ*, III, p. 238)

In comments such as this one, Byron associated eating with socialising, and claimed to have little appetite for either. He was hungry only for solitude and abstinence. At the height of his celebrity, when he was most in the public eye, Byron felt besieged by visitors announced with 'knocks single and double' (*BLJ*, III, p. 235). In response, he attempted to make himself invisible to the audience who celebrated him.

In the privacy of his journal, he began to question what it *meant* to be a celebrity:

Last night, *party* at Lansdowne House. To-night, *party* at Lady Charlotte Greville's – deplorable waste of time, and something of temper. Nothing imparted – nothing acquired – talking without ideas – if anything like *thought* in my mind, it was not on the subjects on which we were gabbling. Heigho! – and in this way half London pass what is called life. To-morrow there is Lady Heathcote's – shall I go? yes – to punish myself for not having a pursuit. (*BLJ*, III, p. 254)

Celebrity did not seem to be a pursuit to make sense of his life, and when Byron ventured into the gaze of society he seemed to be in danger of dissolving into nothingness. 'At five-and-twenty, when the better part of life is over, one should be *something*; – and what am I? nothing but five-and-twenty – and the odd months' (*BLJ*, III, p. 204). His celebrity made him a fixture of Regency society, but having declared himself 'sick of parliamentary mummeries', he had no clear sense of his social role (*BLJ*, III, p. 206). He risked becoming a zero, a man with no vocation but that of the socialite. 'I shall never be any thing, or rather always be nothing', he glumly concluded (*BLJ*, III, p. 218).

In response to this distrust of his celebrity status, Byron secured his own integrity with an ironic hermeticism, causing Hobhouse to say that he was 'growing a *loup garou*, – a solitary hobgoblin' (*BLJ*, III, p. 246). To support this cautious withdrawal, Byron turned from public poetry to the private prose of the journal, and burnt the poems he couldn't resist writing. Between finishing *The Bride of Abydos* and the end of the year, Byron on several occasions burnt pieces of creative writing that he had started – a 'song', a 'Roman' and a poem – and it was not until 18 December that he wrote and kept the two sonnets 'To Geneva' and began *The Corsair*.²¹ Burning verse rather than publishing, Byron turned instead to the private medium of his journal, writing 'I am so far

obliged to this Journal, that it keeps me from verse, – at least from keeping it' (*BLJ*, III, p. 235). Poetry that wasn't kept could never come into the public eye. Turned in upon himself, Byron began carefully to audit his transactions with the outside world in an attempt to prevent it from encroaching too greatly on his selfhood.

Hidden away in his rooms in The Albany, he noted that 'I have not stirred out of these rooms for these four days past' (*BLJ*, III, p. 257). Byron's dieting, which was initially a way of producing a body fit for the public eye, became an attempt to maintain his integrity under public scrutiny by limiting his transactions with the world and a tacit critique of the way his body was viewed as an object for consumption. Restricting his food intake was a way to maintain a minimal level of control. Asserting the right to choose what went into his body was a way to reassert the most basic autonomy. Refusing food, withdrawing into solitude and burning his writings were all connected ways of avoiding the interventions of others into his self-presentation and self-understanding.

Without understanding this context, we will not understand the full significance of food in *The Corsair*. In the poem he wrote during this period of drastically restricted eating and socialising, Byron made food refusal a key element in the Byronic hero's characterization. When food became the locus of his resistance to or protest against the disempowering effects of celebrity culture, this resistance left its trace in his poetry. Conrad's character is built around the intriguing contradiction of his 'one virtue, and a thousand crimes' (III, 696). In a paradox that Byron's first readers found alluring, the more nefarious are his exploits with his pirate crew, the more constant is his love for Medora. Yet Conrad's refusal to eat cuts across both these aspects of his character, disrupting both the feast that his pirates share and the domestic meal that Medora prepares for him.

When the pirates gather to eat, Conrad is absent. Byron notes, 'Ne'er seasons he with mirth their jovial mess' (I, 65). This culinary metaphor confirms eating as a fully socialized practice, in which friendship would add savour to food. Food does not simply sustain the pirates physically; its consumption is also arranged into rituals of feasting that bind them together as a social group. But Conrad is uninterested in communal eating, and with his men, 'he mingles not but to command' (I, 63). Byron clearly suggests that the pirates share a friendship cup from which they take turns to drink draughts of wine. Shared consumption, and shared intoxication, is a key rite of their group identity. Conrad, by contrast, distinguishes himself from his men by remaining outside the drinking circle. 'Ne'er for his lip the purpling cup they fill, / That goblet passes him untasted still' (I, 67–8). In a culture where communal eating and drinking is indicative of social equality, Conrad's refusal to eat and drink with his men becomes a mark of his social distinction.

But Byron goes further than this. Conrad not only refuses to dine with his men, he refuses to eat anything but a 'short repast' consisting of 'Earth's coarsest bread, the garden's homeliest roots, / And scarce the summer luxury of fruits' (I, 71–3). The superlatives in this description suggest an odd contrast between Conrad's elevated social position and the lowliness of his food. His unequalled personal distinction is mirrored and inverted by the quality of his meal, which is described using adjectives with social overtones: 'coarsest', 'homeliest'. Inverting expectations, Byron allows the coarse and homely pirates to feast and quaff, while their aristocratic leader subsists on 'all a hermit's board would scarce deny' (I, 74). Conrad's leadership is confirmed not simply by his refusal to mingle with his followers, but also by his ability to deny himself the luxuries that even they enjoy. Food itself, and not simply the rituals that surround

its consumption, is central to the construction of Conrad's mastery. That mastery is bound up with the idea that food refusal is a telling example of exerting control over oneself, one's companions, and one's surroundings. Food thus becomes part of a symbolic economy in which the mind thrives as the flesh starves, and Conrad's compensation for 'shun[ning] the grosser joys of sense' is that 'His mind seems nourished by that abstinence' (I, 75–6).

Byron carries Conrad's food refusal into the quasi-domestic scene of his relationship with Medora. Caroline Franklin asserts that, in the description of this relationship, 'the bourgeois ideology of domesticity [is] recognizable even in its exotic setting'. Whilst Franklin's claim that 'Medora is an Oriental version of the "angel in the house" ideal' risks anachronism, Medora does seem to endorse the bourgeois familial assumption that shared meals are central to domestic life.²² Medora labours to produce a domestic space and time, centred on a shared meal, which will be a retreat from the strife of Conrad's piracy. Her invitation draws attention yet again to his restricted food intake:

[D]earest! come and share
The feast these hands delighted to prepare;
Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
(I, 420–2)

Rejecting feasts for frugal fare and wine for sherbet here emblemizes the substitution of privacy for piracy, orientalizing Byron's retreat from his celebrity. Medora reports how she has searched the hills for a cool stream to provide water for Conrad's sherbet, which now 'sparkles in its vase of snow' (I, 428). She makes clear that when Conrad refuses wine, he does so not in response to religious proscriptions or external pressures, but by exercising his own will:

The grapes' gay juice thy bosom never
cheers;

Thou more than Moslem when the cup
appears:

Think not I mean to chide – for I rejoice
What others deem a penance is thy choice.

(I, 429–32)

Conrad trumps social restrictions with personal principles, becoming 'more than Moslem', and wins Medora's joyous approval. But Conrad never consumes the meal that Medora has prepared. Within the hour he sets sail again for battle, and apparently goes unfed. Whether in the company of his pirates or the domesticity of Medora's tower, Conrad allows only the simplest food to be prepared for him, and refuses to eat even that. In his description of Conrad, Byron made his restricted eating crucial to the presentation of his masterly leadership and fascinating character. Eating is overlaid with social and domestic meanings, and Conrad's refusal of food and wine is linked to the charismatic power he wields over his followers and his lover, and to the control he exercises over himself.

Faced with the compromises that his celebrity required, Byron made food refusal crucial to his fantasy of a hero who commanded respect while remaining isolated and independent. Conrad is a fantasy of the autonomous agent who does not study to please, who enjoys a self-sufficiency so complete that he scarcely eats, and yet who magically fascinates and compels all who encounter him. He is 'Lone, wild, and strange' and stands apart from the community that revolves around him, 'alike exempt / From all affection and from all contempt' (I, 271–2). Whereas Byron invited readers to scrutinize Childe Harold's face for signs of his soul, he makes Conrad's face inscrutable:

He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would
seek

To probe his heart and watch his changing
cheek,

At once the observer's purpose to espy,

And on himself roll back his scrutiny[.]
(I, 217–20)

Byron made restricted eating characteristic of the Byronic hero when he sought to reassert his hero's agency, autonomy and privacy – three aspects of his own self-understanding that his celebrity had placed under threat.

While Byron associated abstaining from food with charisma, self-sufficiency and mastery in *The Corsair*, he associated consuming food with luxury, self-indulgence and callousness. While Conrad fasts, his enemy, Seyd, feasts. The feast is one of Byron's stock images of decadence, which he had already employed in describing Harold's youthful revelry, and would use for Belshazzar in *Hebrew Melodies* and the Amundevilles in *Don Juan*. In *The Corsair*, however, Seyd's feasting is linked not simply to his self-indulgence, but to martial incompetence and irresponsibility. Seyd and his men feast *before* battle, to celebrate an as-yet-unearned victory, 'A feast for promised triumph yet to come' (II, 4). When they gorge themselves, 'loud [is] the boast', and they have 'Already shared the captives and the prize' in their imaginations, before proving their worth in battle (II, 9–10). Seyd's sybaritic consumption is diametrically opposed to Conrad's frugality. While Conrad declined the wine that his men shared, Seyd drinks alone:

Forbidden draughts, 'tis said, he dared to
quaff,

Though to the rest the sober berry's juice
[i.e. coffee]

The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems'
use[.]

(I, 32–4)

Byron takes care to spell out his villain's characterization in a set of references to food that inverts Conrad's attitude. While Conrad's abstinence is closely allied to his martial prowess, Seyd's 'silken couch' allies feasting

with dereliction of military duty: 'Feast there who can – nor combat till they must' (II, 40–1).

When these two leaders meet, their encounter is initially represented as the clash of two attitudes towards food. Conrad, entering Seyd's halls disguised as a Dervise, asks for 'food for my hunger' (II, 96). But when Seyd orders him to join the banquet, 'the sumptuous fare / He shun[s] as if some poison mingled there' (II, 113–14). Seyd alludes to the Muslim law of hospitality, which ensures the safety of any guest who has shared his host's salt, but Conrad explains that 'Salt seasons dainties – and my food is still / The humblest root, my drink the simplest rill' (II, 123–4). At this moment of heightened tension, Byron recalls attention once again to Conrad's restricted eating habits. Claiming that 'I taste nor bread nor banquet – save alone', Conrad maintains his ascetic diet, and avoids violating the law of hospitality by attacking an enemy who had become his host (II, 130).

Why, then, does Conrad restrict his intake of food? Because, while he was writing the poem, Byron came to understand restricted eating no longer as a way to stay slim, but as a synecdoche for the reassertion of personal agency. In the winter of 1813–14, he recorded this understanding in his journal and employed it when shaping the plot and characterization of *The Corsair*. Conrad refused to eat, finally, because refusing to eat was a key part of Byron's response to the anxieties about control that becoming a celebrity generated. Food became important in *The Corsair* because food was the figurative arena in which Byron played out his concerns about subjectivity, agency and representation. Contextualising the poem reveals eating as an unusually rich field of interaction between the material and the conceptual, the somatic and the discursive, interpellation and resistance, a culture and a subject. ■

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NOTES

1. This essay was written during my tenure of a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship at the University of Bristol. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Leverhulme Trust.

2. *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980–93). All references are to this edition.

3. See Jeremy Hugh Baron, 'Byron's Appetites, James Joyce's Gut, and Melba's Meals and Mésalliances', *British Medical Journal*, 315, no. 7123 (1997), pp. 1697–703, Arthur Crisp, 'Commentary: Ambivalence toward Fatness and Its Origins', *British Medical Journal*, 315, no. 7123 (1997), p. 1703, Jeremy Hugh Baron and Arthur Crisp, 'Byron's Eating Disorders', *The Byron Journal*, no. 31 (2003), pp. 91–100 and Wilma Paterson, *Lord Byron's Relish: The Regency Cookbook* (Glasgow: Dog & Bone, 1990), pp. 131–42.

4. Criticism on Byron and food includes: Christine Kenyon Jones, "'Man Is a Carnivorous Production": Byron and the Anthropology of Food', *Prism(s): Essays in Romanticism*, 6 (1998), pp. 41–58, Christine Kenyon Jones, "'I wonder if his appetite was good?": Byron, Food and Culture: East, West, North and South', in *Byron: East and West*, ed. by Martin Procházka (Prague: Charles University Press, 2000), pp. 249–62, Carol Shiner Wilson, 'Stuffing the Verdant Goose: Culinary Esthetics in *Don Juan*', *Mosaic*, 24, no. 3–4 (1991), 33–62, Peter W. Graham, 'The Order and Disorder of Eating in Byron's *Don Juan*', in *Disorderly Eaters: Texts in Self-Empowerment*, ed. by Lilian R. Furst and Peter W. Graham (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 113–23, and Jane Stabler, 'Byron's World of Zest', in *Cultures of Taste/Theories of Appetite: Eating Romanticism*, ed. by Timothy Morton (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 141–60.

5. George Gordon Noel Byron, *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. by Leslie A. Marchand, 13 vols (London: John Murray, 1973–94), IX, p. 22, hereafter cited as *BLJ*.

6. Cited in *His Very Self and Voice: Collected Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. by Ernest J. Lovell (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p. 201.

7. See H. Warner Allen, *Number Three Saint James's Street: A History of Berry's the Wine Merchants* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p. 87, on the ledgers; pp. 101–4, on Fox; pp. 137–38 on Brummell; p. 149 on Moore and pp. 149–54 on Byron.

8. Leslie A. Marchand, *Byron: A Biography*, 3 vols

(London: John Murray, 1957), I, p. 125.

9. James Makittrick Adair, *An Essay on Diet and Regimen*, 2nd edn (London: James Ridgway, 1812). Baron suggests that the earlier treatise was [William Wadd,] *Cursory Remarks on Corpulence* (London: Printed for J. Callow, Medical bookseller; by J. and W. Smith, 1810).
10. William Stark, *The Works of the late William Stark [...] with experiments, dietetical and statical [sic]* (London, 1788), and Sir John Sinclair, *The Code of Health and Longevity*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1807). Both books are listed in the 1816 sale catalogue for Byron's library, in *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. by Andrew Nicholson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 231–45.
11. See *BLJ*, II, pp. 224–5, 228, 234.
12. For a fuller account of this portrait, and the correspondence that surrounds it, see Tom Mole, 'Byron, Westall, Asperne, Blood: An Early Engraved Portrait', *The Byron Journal*, 29 (2001), pp. 98–102.
13. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. by Peter Laslett, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 305. Paul Youngquist explores the role of eating in Locke's thought in 'Romantic Dietetics! Or, Eating Your Way to a New You', in Morton, pp. 237–55, esp. pp. 241–2.
14. See Richard A. Gordon, *Eating Disorders: Anatomy of a Social Epidemic*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 6–13.
15. See Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), pp. 43–61, and Keith Walden, 'The Road to Fat City: An Interpretation of the Development of Weight Consciousness in Western Society', *Historical Reflections*, 12, no. 3 (1985), pp. 331–73.

16. Edward Shorter, 'The First Great Increase in Anorexia Nervosa', *Journal of Social History*, 21 (1987), pp. 69–96 (p. 69).
17. Gordon, p. 19.
18. Maud Ellmann, *The Hunger Artists: Starving, Writing and Imprisonment* (London: Virago, 1993), p. 53.
19. See Hilde Bruch, *Eating Disorders: Obesity, Anorexia Nervosa and the Person Within* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), especially pp. 9–24, 102–4, 251. Also relevant are David Marcus and Morton Wiener, 'Anorexia Nervosa Reconceptualised from a Psychosocial Transactional Perspective', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 59, no. 3 (1989), pp. 346–54, Roger Slade, *The Anorexia Nervosa Reference Book* (London: Harper and Row, 1984), and Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1993), esp. pp. 139–64 and pp. 185–214.
20. This journal was first published by Thomas Moore with many omissions, indicated by asterisks. The MS has since disappeared, and Marchand reprints Moore's text in *BLJ*.
21. References to burnt fragments of writing: *BLJ*, III, pp. 210, 217, 235. Byron mentions the two sonnets in his last journal entry of 1813 (*BLJ*, III, p. 240). They were first published with the second edition of *The Corsair* and are printed in McGann, III, pp. 104–5.
22. Caroline Franklin, *Byron's Heroines* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 65.