

*tifolia*, is as different from the bloated green Persian limes depicted in soft-drink advertisements as Catherine Earnshaw from Dora Spenslow. Genuine Key limes are round, small, thin-skinned and juicy, yellow with a light charreusse cast, and difficult to obtain commercially. (For an extended discussion of this matter, see Raymond Sokolov's *Fading Feast*.) The Key lime tree bears best where its life is toughest, and its juice carries the complex flavor of fierce tropic storms. (Remember *Key Largo*?) If you are lucky enough to have a friend with a backyard tree or a fruit vendor with good connections, about six Key limes will provide the half cup of juice you need.

Next, make a thickish graham-cracker crust. The recipe is on the box.

Third, mix one fifteen-ounce can of sweetened condensed milk with three or four egg yolks and some sugar (anywhere from a couple of tablespoons to a third of a cup will do). Add the lime juice slowly, mixing rapidly and well. Pour the mixture into the waiting crust immediately, and put the pie in the refrigerator. To serve, top with homemade whipped cream (*not* the kind that comes out of a can through a pointy plastic spout) or—if you are a poverty-stricken graduate student—a meringue made from the leftover egg whites.

The resulting pie will be pale yellow (never green!) as tropical sunshine, heavy as deconstructionist discourse, rich with allusion, sweet and wild as an overextended metaphor. Enjoy.

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To the Editor:

Susan J. Leonardi makes good points about embedding discourse for recipes in dear old Irma Rombauer's rather foolish prose, in E. F. Benson's coy novels, and in Nora Ephron's personal *Heartburn*, but she also demonstrates the risk of canon stretching: some of it may stretch to the breaking point and get lost. Leonardi has lost the great biblical lament of David for Saul and Jonathan, and the *PMLA* editorial board has at the very least mislaid it. For Leonardi takes Benson's epitaph for Mapp and Lucia, "In death they were not divided," as a borrowing from the end of *The Mill on the Floss*; accordingly it suggests to her the gendered differing of pairs as of Maggie and Tom, and it suggests wrong. E. F. Benson, the son of an archbishop of Canterbury, knew perfectly well what he was borrowing, and so did George Eliot. Leonardi brings the pop-sociology word *sharing* into literary discourse, and this might bring to mind the concept of canon as a concept of something "shared." And the fact is: readers won't be able to "share" with Benson or George Eliot if they don't go on "sharing" the old canonical Bible.

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Reply:

I hoped to provide some summer fare, light but nourishing. I am, therefore, a bit surprised that a few of my readers have found it less than digestible. Alas, I suppose I must answer in kind the heavy objections they have dished up. I would like to suggest to Joel Roache, whose detailed critique I don't have space to refute point by point, that the distinction between sex and gender can perhaps maintain itself *only* in the abstract. I'm sorry he was "burdened" by the "antimale subtext." Having myself been burdened all my reading life (including, of course, the being-read-to period) with antifemale subtexts (not to mention texts), I can work up very little sympathy. Quick to attack (to borrow his diction) my logic, he fails to observe his own lapses. The correct analogy, for example (if one must make it), would be to a black who is familiar with white culture, not the other way around. That he reverses it indicates again that he sees himself as oppressed and excluded—by castrating women? cooks? female academics? I worry, too, about his seeming equation of violence and vigor. I've made refreshing gazpacho without "assaulting" the vegetables and delicious cheesecake without "a good macho beating" of the batter. (And I cringe to think that my winding and leisurely argument has anything so phallic as a "thrust.") Finally, his reference to the "unembedded recipe written out for me by my wife before our marriage" suggests that he does not understand what I mean by embedding. Recipes exchanged by lovers cannot be unembedded.

Deborah A. Thomas's suggestion that I offered readers too much pasta and dessert rests perhaps on ethnic differences. Even for a third-generation Italian like me, there can never (I quote here my third-generation Italian flatmate) be too much pasta—and almost never too much dessert.

What puzzles me about Betsy Hilbert's virulent objection to Rachel Samstat's Key lime pie is that the *Heartburn* recipe is almost the same as Hilbert's, except that *Heartburn*'s adds grated lime rind (for me, without a food processor, the most time-consuming part) and makes allowances for those of us unlucky enough not to have a Florida or Caribbean friend with a backyard tree. The only other difference is that Hilbert's recipe adds sugar—but the addition hardly makes a pie more "substantial" or less junky. To my mind, much of the pie's charm is its tartness. I long for half a dozen Key limes, but in their absence I have made the pie with ordinary limes (good) and with bottled Key lime juice (better). Neither makes a green pie, and "even bottled lime juice will do" does not sound to me like a "recommendation." Thus the "yupified, fast-food" recipe of Hilbert's scorn seems a straw pie rather than the text's or mine. My omission of the recipe, by the way, was not coyness at all but reluctance to repeat what the reader can so easily find in *Heartburn*.

While I happily acknowledge that George Eliot knew she was borrowing from David's lament and that E. F. Benson knew that she knew, it seems clear from the flood