The shame of it is that occasionally in there was an idea, an insight worth considering.

—Paul van Reyk, Petersham, New South Wales, Australia

Krishnendu Ray replies:

I am happy that Mr. van Reyk got the joke, but it is surprising to see him turn sour so quickly as his sense of humor evaporates when he reads that “immigration is nothing but the international labor market at work.” It isn’t? That is news to me and most labor economists. Maybe a few references will help here: Edna Bonacich, ed., Labor Immigration Under Capitalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); and Lowell Turner, Democracy at Work: Changing World Markets and the Future of Labor Unions (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

From his derision for my statement that only in mass-consumption societies is the consumer believed to be owed something, I guess Mr. van Reyk is also unfamiliar with the literature on consumer cultures. Again two citations should help here: William Leach, Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture (New York: Random House, 1994); and Lizabeth Cohen, A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

Mr. van Reyk also seems to miss the point about the Borborygmus section in Gastronomica where my piece was published. “Borborygmus” is the rumbling noise caused by the propulsion of gas through the intestines, so if Mr. van Reyk was discomfited by hot air, he was just hanging around in the wrong section. As a long-time reader of that section I have come to understand that it is supposed to be the place for speculative (gaseous) thinking-aloud pieces, without all the burdens of references and citations. Since he keeps asking for references, this response seeks to placate him.

He wants citations for the statement that “all new immigrants have seen servitude up close. Even if they were the middle classes in their pre-immigration societies, as many Asians and Latinos were, they have seen servitude up front, at least the servitude of others.” Mr. van Reyk would have found numerous references to that fact if he had looked at the immigration data for any major nation. Since I am most familiar with and based my observations on what used to be called INS (USA) data, a quick lesson is in order:

a. In all about sixty-five million immigrants have settled in the United States;

b. The group I am referring to is called the “New Immigrants” in the social science literature; about twenty million new immigrants have entered the United States since 1965, when immigration laws were made race-neutral;

c. Out of this twenty million, about ten million are from Asia, particularly China, Taiwan, and South Asia, including India;
d. Another ten million are from Mexico and Central America, including El Salvador and Guatemala;

e. My contention is that people from India, China, Mexico, and El Salvador have seen exploitation and servitude up close, even if they themselves may not have been poor. If Mr. van Reyk wants confirmation of my contention he need merely familiarize himself with the socioeconomic structure of India, Mexico, or China. Any one will do.

Finally, it is a pity that I spoiled the whole issue of *Gastronomica* for Mr. van Reyk’s rather sensitive palate. He should have skipped the bean course.

**Of Gluttony and Temptation**

Upon reading Ray Boisvert’s “Gluttony” (*Gastronomica*, Spring 2003), I could not resist the temptation of thinking that the author is a glutton for punishment. Not only does Boisvert have it all wrong where Lionel Poilâne is concerned, he actually has it upside down! The thrust of Poilâne’s and his collaborators’ supplique (plea) to the Pope was not to *drop* gluttony from the list of capital sins, but to *insert* it! Any contention to the contrary implies a mistranslation, a poor knowledge of French language and culture, an excessive reliance on secondary sources, or possibly all three. Let me explain.

I not only had the pleasure of knowing Poilâne, who was one of the most brilliant breadmakers of our time, but I was also privileged to be a part of the team charged with drafting the supplique in 2002. The team of collaborators—who assembled not after Poilâne’s death but nearly a year before and met frequently with him—consisted not of pranksters or anti-clerics but of linguists, theologians, culinary historians, and representatives from the business and publishing worlds. Poilâne, as astute in marketing and public relations as he was in breadmaking, would never have indulged in the foolishness that Boisvert describes, nor would his collaborators have. In the French wording of the seven deadly or capital sins, “gluttony” is invariably rendered as *gourmandise*. Yet the word *gloutonnerie* not only
exists in French, it is the exact equivalent of its English counterpart. *Gloutonnerie* signifies excessive eating, whereas *gourmandise* conveys the love of good food. Boisvert implicitly recognizes this, yet fails to understand the brunt of Poilâne’s argument, which is, quite simply, that in its French version, the key word of the sin of gluttony should be changed from *gourmandise* to *gloutonnerie*. This request is reinforced by illustrations in a series of other languages where the exact semantic equivalent of “gluttony” appears in the wording. In other words, there is no question whatsoever of a plea for eliminating one, several, or all of the deadly sins from the text or context of Church doctrine, merely a plea to change the French wording so as to put it in the same class as that of other languages. Could anyone blame Poilâne for a desire to remove an appreciation of good food from the list of deadly sins (i.e., one that ensures that you are targeted for eternal damnation) and put in its place a word denoting sloth and excess? On the other hand, when Boisvert (ironically) extends “all apologies to Poilâne,” I couldn’t agree with him more (without irony), for apologies indeed are due. If the lexical change were to be adopted, the seven deadly sins would be deadlier than ever. Apoplexy anyone? How about heart attack or diabetes?

—Beatrice Fink, Paris

**Raymond Boisvert replies:**

Many thanks to Beatrice Fink for her explanation of Lionel Poilâne’s actual position on the issue of gluttony. My lighthearted reflections defending the seven deadly sins and what is called “virtue ethics” were occasioned by an article in the daily newspaper *Le Figaro*, definitely a secondary source, as Fink recognizes. As a teacher, my real concern is with the MTV generation. When asked about the seven deadly sins on an MTV special, entertainers agreed on one thing: the list was “dumb.” If Poilâne disagreed, and remained a supporter of the seven deadly sins, I say welcome aboard.

**In Memoriam:**

Estel “Ed” Wood Kelley

LISA HELDKE

“There’s nothing stickier than Tang.” So said the mother of a friend of mine every time her daughter spilled that fluorescent orange beverage at the breakfast table. When I was growing up, Tang (not orange juice, which I found unpleasantly sour, and disgusting pulpy) was on the breakfast table every morning, an accompaniment to the white-bread toast we dunked into our mother’s instant coffee. Tang, the television ads reminded us, was “What the Astronauts Drink.” (I can still remember being allowed to stay up until two a.m. to watch them land on the moon on July 20, 1969, the day before my ninth birthday. Were they toasting their successful landing with space-food tubes of Tang, I wondered?) Estel “Ed” Wood Kelley, the man whose entrepreneurial efforts brought us Tang, died this year on July 4, at the age of eighty-six. That Wood should have died on this important American holiday seems oddly fitting for a man whose contributions to the food industry so significantly shaped the eating habits of generations of American schoolchildren. Kelley, an executive for industry giants including Standard Brands, General Foods, and Gulf and Western, is credited with helping develop such familiar consumer products as A-1 Steak Sauce, Cool Whip (a substance forbidden in our third-generation-dairy-industry home), and Klondike Ice Cream Bars (“What would you do-oo-oo for a Klondike Bar?”). Grownups can thank him for bringing us Grey Poupon mustard and Smirnoff vodka.

Ed Kelley received a bachelor’s degree in accounting from Indiana University in Bloomington in 1939; his 1997 donation of twenty-three million dollars to that institution represents the largest gift it has ever received. In gratitude, the university named the Kelley School of Business after him. In later years, Kelley founded the investing group Kelley and Partners, which bought and revived companies regarded as industry “underperformers.” After the group purchased Steak ‘n Shake, the Indianapolis-based company more than tripled its number of restaurants, to 412, and expanded its range of operation to nineteen states. At the time of his death, Ed Kelley was still serving as co-chairman of the company, despite his ongoing battle with the cancer to which he eventually succumbed.

For someone so focused on the consumer end of the production chain, Kelley’s background holds some surprises. He grew up on the eighty-acre farm his family had owned since 1837 and attended elementary school in a one-room schoolhouse in Indiana. I like to imagine how lunchtime in that schoolhouse differed from lunchtime at the average suburban elementary school today; you’d have to go through a lot of lunch boxes before finding one with the homegrown foods Kelley’s undoubtedly contained. On the other hand, in today’s lunchbox you’d probably find a host of products Kelley helped to develop. Yet for all his evangelism about processed foods, Kelley retained his ties to the land and continued to farm until he died.
A Cuppa Tea

CHITRITA BANERJEE

The Victorians loved to describe tea as “the cup that cheers but not inebriates,” and the Indians said it in imitation of their colonial masters. It’s hard to remember most of the time that an innocuous beverage should be so laced with history, nostalgia, mythmaking, and the weight of exploitation, but that is the reality. The Summer 2003 “Yankee Remix” exhibition at MASS MoCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art) in North Adams, Massachusetts, has an installation by Rina Banerjee, a Calcutta-born artist who uses kitsch and history to confront us with precisely that reality.

The nineteenth-century tea trade between India and the West generated enormous wealth for European and American merchants. Many fortunes were built on that trade, and many pirates achieved respectability and elite status from their takings. But as Banerjee elucidates in her three-part installation, for later generations of such families, the cup of tea became a symbol of Western gentility and the romance of the Orient, instead of rapacious greed and the cruel exploitation of labor. Banerjee has chosen to elucidate the theme of the West’s “playing at” India by showing it through a pink “cloud.” The pink symbolizes the artificially rosy view of a distant world, but also, more darkly, suggests a view that ignores the ills of a colonized world whose resources are depleted to sustain the affluence of the colonizers.

The installation has three segments. The most eye-catching is an enclosure under a pink plastic dome in the shape of India’s best-known tourist landmark—the Taj Mahal. Under the dome hangs an ornately carved wooden chair from India, similar to the ones that adorned the homes of wealthy Boston Brahmins of the time. From the top of the dome hang a Styrofoam chandelier, plastic butterflies, bits of brightly colored tinsel, and a collection of pink plastic balls. The title of the piece, “Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...To the Palace of Love,” is taken from a popular Hindi movie from the 1950s.

From this kitschy palace, the viewer is immediately drawn to another segment of the installation, a literal commentary on nineteenth-century America’s romance (however short-lived) with India. Here the artist has assembled eleven tea sets, ranging in size from regular to miniature, on a number of tables arranged like the petals of a lotus. Some of the sets are tiny enough to be part of a doll’s house—further accentuating the element of “play.” In the center is an Oriental carved wooden pedestal on which stand a miniature cannon, the Statue of Liberty, and a postage-stamp-sized American flag. The wall directly behind this display continues the American theme. The representation of a two-storied house with wooden shutters and genteel lacy curtains is accompanied by portraits that represent the power equation between East and West—an oriental amah, the famous Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington.

Although tea cultivation in India is linked with British colonialism, there was also a long and well-established relationship between India and America based on tea. It may even remind us of the splash of the tea chests being thrown into Boston Harbor and the subsequent salvo of the American Revolution.

In the third segment of her installation, Banerjee highlights the evolution of that relationship by presenting extracts from letters written by Ogden Codman—a typical Jamesian American with cosmopolitan aspirations and the money to satisfy them—who visited Calcutta in November 1838. By then, India was officially part of the British Empire and, on British-owned plantations, Indian laborers were toiling to meet their masters’ targets in tea production.

To the British, ruling India implied that wealth from India’s crops and resources could confer gentility and elegance only on the British. The same tea to which they addicted the large Indian public through a ruthless advertising campaign became a symbol of specifically Western refinement and elegance when it was sipped in Britain. The British hostess pouring tea for her family and guests is an iconic, inescapable figure in nineteenth-century English literature. No “native” could aspire to that gentility, no matter how many cups of tea he or she downed. For the Americans of the day, however, it was somewhat different. They enjoyed the prosperity brought by the trade without having to deal with the cruelty of engaging in master-slave domination with the Indian tea workers.

And so Ogden Codman could wax eloquent about his Indian sojourn and write copious letters home about the experience. He could even bemoan the impossibility of meeting beautiful Indian women: “The women did not amount to much and there was only one pretty one there. Of course there were no native women there as those of the higher class are never supposed to be seen in public.” But as Banerjee slyly reminds us by juxtaposing the portrait of the Oriental amah with those of the American worthies, power and social status were always firmly the preserve of the Western nations. Whenever the veil was lifted from the
face of native womanhood, the only perception permitted was that of the servant and the worker. The Indian woman remained imprisoned on the slopes of the tea plantations, weighed down by her basket full of fresh-plucked tea leaves, her fingers stained forever, vulnerable to male rage and sexuality, while the white memsahib sat behind her silver teapot, a model of grace and hospitality.

Anyone for a nice hot cuppa?

The Pisco Wars

DANIEL JOELSON

Like the tremors so prevalent in Chile and Peru, the dispute over ownership rights to the grape liquor known as pisco periodically shakes the relations of these neighboring countries. Perhaps no other issue mobilizes nationalist spirit as much as the question of who owns the rights to this centuries-old aguardiente. Pisco's classic end product, the Pisco Sour, can be so sweet and delicious that it's a wonder it can leave such a bitter taste in the mouths of the Latin brothers who drink it. Is this just sour grapes...
between the two countries, or is something truly at stake here? Who deserves to wave the pisco banner?

Technically, both Chile and Peru are allowed to use the term “pisco” (which means “bird” in the Quechua language) on the bottles they sell domestically and abroad. Chile is the global giant, having produced 1.2 million gallons of the drink in 2002. According to Roberto Salinas, CEO of Pisco Capel, which makes about 60 percent of Chile’s pisco, this is ten times more than Peru’s output. Fernando Aguirre, president of Peru’s National Pisco Commission, makes about 60 percent of Chile’s pisco, this is ten times more than Peru’s output. Fernando Aguirre, president of Peru’s National Pisco Commission, doesn’t dispute that figure, acknowledging that Peru exports only fifteen to twenty-five thousand gallons of pisco annually—significantly less than Chile’s eighty thousand gallons.

Yet, from Peru’s perspective, pisco ownership shouldn’t be determined by numbers alone. Pisco production dates back to the 1500s, when the Spanish conquistadores arrived in Peru and planted grapes in the southern region of Ica. They turned the grapes into fiery aguardiente, which they stored in large, earthenware jugs called piscos. The jugs gave rise to the name of the port town of Pisco, south of Lima, through which the bottles were exported.

Not to be outdone, Chileans note that they, too, have a town named Pisco, though Peruvians charge that the town of Unión in Chile’s northern Elqui Valley changed its name to “Pisco Elqui” only in the 1930s. Chileans further contend that the Spanish also came to Chile in the 1500s with their pisco jugs. Peruvians erroneously believe that pisco is theirs, say Chileans, partly because Chile had to export its products via Lima, the seat of the Spanish Viceroy’s Latin colonies. Chile has signed trade agreements with Europe and the United States that allow it to use the name of pisco.

The Peruvian government has recently expanded its efforts to increase domestic consumption of pisco, which had flagged due to tainted products on the market. The government has concentrated on improving quality by announcing strict regulations for producers wishing to call their products “pisco.” According to Gonzalez Gutierrez, director of economic promotion for the Peruvian Foreign Ministry and author of a book on pisco, the government has secured agreements from several Latin countries to accept pisco solely as a Peruvian product.

Meanwhile, Chilean producers have launched aggressive marketing campaigns to penetrate international markets. Unlike their Peruvian counterparts, they have no worries about domestic consumption: Pisco accounts for 70 percent of the liquor that Chileans drink, compared to pisco’s mere 3 to 5 percent market share in Peru, and adulterated products in Chile are rare. Furthermore, Chile has a technological advantage, whereas Peru’s production has suffered in past decades from illegal business practices, civil war, and terrorism.

Many Chileans bristle at Peru’s claims. Peruvian anger over Chilean pisco “is a result of anti-Chile sentiment, it is resentment,” says Sergio Villalobos, a historian at the University of Chile. “All themes between Peru and Chile reappear with the same violence as before,
just as they did thirty years ago, eighty years ago, and so on.”

The frequent clashes over pisco are typically ignited after an unrelated, perceived affront by one country toward the other. For example, the pisco debate resurfaced when Chile was reported to be purchasing F-16 fighter jets from the United States, and when Peru closed a local factory owned by the Chilean pasta maker Lucchetti. Yet this enmity doesn’t make sense to many. The two countries are more like the Hatfields and the McCoys than two alien nations, suggests Hugo Ramírez, a historian and president of the Chilean-Peruvian Institute of Cultural Research in Santiago. The countries share the same language and religion, as well as a similar history; Peruvian immigrants pour into Santiago to find work, while Chilean businesses thrive in Peru.

Even so, the pisco salvos are only intensifying. The first daily cross-border pisco battle, featuring copious free drinks and intoxicating patriotism, took place on February 8, 2003, when Peru celebrated Pisco Sour Day and Chile celebrated Piscola Day (Piscola is a concoction of Pisco and Coke).

A possible finale rests with the World Trade Organization, which may consider nations’ claims that pertain to goods whose names can be linked to their place of origin. International law could ultimately reward Latin countries the right to enjoy the exclusive appellation for a given liquor, converting pisco into the toast of Chile or Peru alone, and leaving the other on the rocks.

Pisco Sour

Though Peru and Chile are at odds over who owns pisco, both make Pisco Sour. The main difference is that Peruvians generally include egg whites, while Chileans do not. Sometimes a few drops of angostura bitters are added to the drink.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 1/2 cups Pisco
- 1/2 cup strained fresh lemon or key lime juice
- 1/3 cup confectioner’s sugar
- 1 1/2 cups crushed ice
- 1 egg white (optional)
- Angostura bitters (optional, to taste)

Whisk all the ingredients together thoroughly to make a cold, light drink, or use a cocktail shaker to blend them.

Makes 4 servings.

**Oxford Symposium**

The subject for the 2004 Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery is Wild Foods. If you would like further information or wish to participate, please consult the Symposium Web site at www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk.

**Berkshires Cuisine**

The Massachusetts Institute of Contemporary Culture is pleased to announce three one-week courses in July 2004 designed to explore the gastronomic richness of the Berkshires. From Monday through Thursday the Berkshires’ best chefs will speak to attendees about issues of note in American cuisine, followed by dinners at their restaurants. Other topics to be addressed in the courses include sustainable agriculture and food in the arts.

The Institute, housed at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, offers a variety of other courses that take advantage of the region’s renowned cultural attractions, including Jacob’s Pillow, MASS MoCA, Tanglewood, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, and the Norman Rockwell Museum. For additional information, visit the Web site at www.mcla.edu/micc, or contact the Institute’s directors: Dr. Robert Bishoff (413-662-5372) or Dr. Marc Goldstein (413-662-5378).

**The Iceman Cometh**

The William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor announces a new exhibition, “The Ice Man Cometh…and Goeth!”, which will run from June 7 to October 1, 2004. Organized by Jan Longone, the library’s Curator of American Culinary History, the exhibition explores the American ice industry, from early New England pond ice harvesting to mechanical refrigeration. For more information visit the library Web site at www.clements.umich.edu or call 734-764-2347. On Sunday, September 19, from 3 to 5 p.m., the Clements Library and the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor will co-sponsor a public lecture on the exhibition by Jan Longone.