The subject of obesity has certainly, during the last few years, engaged the attention of the physician much more than formerly. He recognises that such a condition is not an evidence of a good state of health, but is, especially when redundant, a symptom of real disease requiring to be treated on sound principles depending on the causes leading to excessive corpulence, just as much as people of too spare a habit require treatment to bring their condition up to a normal standard of weight and vigour.

—Thomas Dutton, *Obesity: Its Cause and Treatment*

The contemporary reader might well assume this passage by the Victorian physician Thomas Dutton was written today because we generally believe that fear of obesity is a recent cultural phenomenon. Indeed, we often assume a stereotype that asserts that Western society in the past, however understood, prized the fat body because it signified wealth and status. The Victorians are believed to have favored both the curvaceous, often voluptuous body of women and the solid, sometimes even hefty body of the man. To a certain extent, this stereotype is accurate: standards of embodiment in years past did allow for more fat on the body than our current fatphobic society permits. Even while the body ideal of the nineteenth century was not nearly as slender as it is today, Victorians were hardly free from stereotyping and stigmatizing fat. In fact, the anxiety over obesity became particularly acute during the Victorian period with its propensity for defining, classifying, and categoriz-
ing, which led to standards of embodiment and a normalizing discourse that subjected bodies that did not meet such standards to regulation and reform. My examination of the short story “The Truth about Pyecraft” by H. G. Wells will underscore the anxieties associated with obesity felt by my many men at the turn of the twentieth century.

First published in April 1903 in the *Strand Magazine* and later in several different collections of short stories, “The Truth about Pyecraft” is a humorous tale about one man’s search for a cure for his obesity. It provides a fictional account of how obesity, and male obesity in particular, was constructed at the turn of the twentieth century and how the practice of “reducing” related to codes of middle-class English masculinity. In this story, through the corpulent body of the London clubman, Pyecraft, and the narrative voice of Formalyn, his fellow clubman, Wells illustrates both the anxiety that was generated by the obese male body at the end of the Victorian period and the cultural imperative to modify and reform such bodies. As this tale indicates, Pyecraft’s overabundant body marks him as deficient. His weakness is an affront to his peers, but more significantly, it is also a threat to British efficacy at home and abroad. Implied in Wells’s short story is the fear of racial degeneration and a concurrent emphasis on maintaining a physically fit, muscular appearance, and thereby, a physically fit nation and empire. Significantly, however, the emphasis placed on corporeal management is undercut by the narrator’s own physical deficiencies, and further complicated by the homo-erotic tension between the two men, which in turn points to a contradiction within the discourse of national fitness.

Contemporary readers, with our assumption that fat is a woman’s issue, might be surprised to find that men’s corpulent bodies, more so than women’s, were subjected to intense scrutiny at the turn of the twentieth century when “The Truth about Pyecraft” was published. Degenerative diseases such as obesity, as opposed to infectious diseases like tuberculosis, seemed to be occurring more frequently. Obesity, explains historian Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, was on the rise during the second half of the nineteenth century because of modern society’s more plentiful diet and less active lifestyle. Moreover, it was most prevalent in bourgeois men, she argues, who then became the primary targets of the reducing culture in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century and into the early part of the twentieth. Managing the individual body was a civic duty as the strength and vigor of the male body became a symbol for the health of the national body and the efficacy of Great Britain both at home and abroad. Conversely, the diseased male body implicated the national body in its debility. Nineteenth-century physician James Cantlie, for example, argues that the young man who has been educated out-
side the city where exercise is more readily available is much more likely to “attain eminence” than the “son of a townsman” who is trained in his father’s business, educated in a city school, and goes to work in an office as early as fourteen or fifteen. The lifestyle of the latter, Cantlie contends, leads to “the inevitable dyspepsia” that comes from hurried meals, days spent bent over a desk, and the general absence of fresh air and exercise. Such conditions prevent the “greatest citizens” from being made. Much of Cantlie’s concern about degeneration stems from a concurrent anxiety about what will happen to the empire when those in charge lack the “ambition, energy, enthusiasm and love of enterprise” necessary to maintain a successful empire. Thus obesity, and male obesity in particular, took on greater meaning toward the end of the century as it came to be seen as a form of degeneration with far-reaching effects.

Although obesity has held various, often conflicting, meanings throughout history, toward the close of the nineteenth century a more consolidated view of obesity came into existence, one which was less permissive and more stigmatizing than before. Obesity during the Victorian period was most frequently associated with greed, self-indulgence, and laziness, and at times was even associated with crime or moral transgression. Further, obesity was seen as fundamentally emasculating. The soft body of the obese man was the antithesis of the muscular, robust male body so valued toward the end of the century, and the obese man was viewed as the countertype to the Victorian ideal of manly self-restraint, discipline and physical vigor. Thus the strength of Great Britain and the success of the imperial project depended upon and necessitated vigorous, self-disciplined male bodies. Such emphasis on the well-managed male body provoked many men to participate in body shaping practices like dieting and exercise, or “reducing,” that today we most often associate with women. The imperative to meet and maintain standards of embodiment was so strong that even social critics like H. G. Wells participated in the physical culture movement. Both his autobiography and his fiction reveal an anxiety to shape and mold the male body to meet the physical standards of masculinity. “The Truth about Pyecraft” demonstrates his participation in the culture of fitness even as it also intervenes to disrupt this culture by emphasizing the homoerotic relationship between two characters.

Wells is just the sort of person who might feel anxiety over his body because he had only recently become a member of the middle classes, having spent his childhood years in a rather impoverished, working-class background. When he discusses his background in his autobiography, Wells reveals considerable anxiety over the failure of his body to meet a standard of masculinity. Early in his autobiography, readers discover that the young Wells
was concerned that his body was overly thin and weakly, a result, most likely, of his family’s limited income and lack of resources. His mother, Sarah Neal, served as a lady’s maid for several prominent families. His father, Joseph Wells, was a gardener early in life, but later took over a china and crockery shop from a cousin, which did not seem to generate much income, perhaps in part because Joseph was obsessed with the game of cricket. Fortunately, his father’s interest in cricket helped subsidize the family’s income when he took on various jobs as a professional bowler and cricket instructor. Overall, the Wells family did not have enough money to support their children’s nutritional needs. Often they did not have enough to eat, and even when they did find food, the fare was not all that nutritious. Wells recalls that their midday meal was at times not “successful.”

He writes, “Sometimes there was not much to eat; but there was always potatoes and there was too much cabbage for my taste [. . .]. I in particular was often peevish with my food, and frequently I would have headaches and bad bilious attacks in the afternoon.” Wells later suggests that the bodies of the boys suffered from this upbringing; thus, he later reports that, because of his mother’s faith in the benefits of cod liver oil, he narrowly escaped the vitamin deficiency that she believed retarded the growth of his older brother and gave him a pigeon breast, a physical deformity characterized by a projecting sternum. Although he escaped his brother’s disfiguration, Wells still betrays in his autobiography a certain self-consciousness about his physical appearance. Early in his life, his slight frame causes him angst. By his own account, he was a “small rather undernourished boy.” Such inadequacy is seen in terms of masculinity when he later writes that “like most undernourished growing boys” he was “cowardly.”

Wells’s internalization of the cultural ideal that stigmatized both the excessively thin body as well as the corpulent, fat body is just as apparent in his recollection of his adult years. He continues to feel uneasy about his body size when as a student at the Normal School of Science in London, where he studied under T. H. Huxley, he writes that his body was “scandalously skinny.” Weighing as little as ninety pounds at one point according to historian Michael Anton Budd, Wells realized that much of the anxiety about his body surrounded his growing feelings of sexual longing:

To me, in my hidden thoughts, the realization that my own body was thin and ugly was almost insupportable—as I suppose it would be to most young men or women. In the secret places of my heart I wanted a beautiful body and I wanted it because I wanted to make love with it, and all the derision and humour with which I treated my personal appearance in my talking
and writing to my friends, my caricatures of my leanness and my unkempt shabbiness, did not affect the profundity of that unconfessed mortification. Each year I was becoming much more positively and urgently sexual and the desire to be physically strong and attractive was intense. I do not know how far my psychology in these matters is exceptional, but I have never been able to consider any sort of love as tolerable except a complete encounter of two mutually desirous bodies—and they have to be reasonably lovely bodies.14

In this passage, Wells reveals not just a desire to have a beautiful body himself, but a prejudicial outlook on other bodies. Bodies must be “reasonably lovely” in order for individuals to be attractive and sexually desirable. In Wells’s case, that means physically strong rather than lean and weak.15

Such a normative concept of the masculine body also led him to dislike his body when he gained weight later in life. He writes, “I was no longer lean and hungry-looking . . . , I was ‘putting on weight’ and in order to keep it down I pulled a roller about my nascent garden.”16 Feeling anxious about his middle-age spread, Wells exercises in order to lose a few extra pounds. Body size and weight, as Wells’s own confessions about his physical appearance make clear, was something to be monitored and regulated, and by the end of the nineteenth century such corporeal management was no longer being conducted for purely medical reasons. Pat Rogers argues that weight-watching is not a modern phenomenon and further speculates that concern about weight and the management of body size shifted from being primarily a medical affair to a more widespread preoccupation sometime in the late eighteenth century with the advent of public weighing machines. “As people begin to interest themselves more and more in their own weight,” observes Rogers, “it starts to seem malleable rather than eternally given.”17 With the advent of weighing machines, people, especially men, became more aware of their own weight and learned that it was something that could be, and sometimes should be, changed according to medical doctrine and popular opinion.18 Over the course of the nineteenth century, the interest in measuring body weight increased, as did the obsession with fat. Much of this preoccupation with weight and fat had to do with reasons that were more than simply medical. In his argument that fat was a special preoccupation of the turn of the century, Peter Stearns acknowledges a number of factors involved in “the advent of a lasting hostility to fat,” including health fads like those advocated by Sylvester Graham and John Harvey Kellogg, a growing interest in athleticism, and the women’s fashion industry, to name just a few.19 The most influential reason, Stearns contends, was the need “to compensate for . . . new areas of greater freedom.”20
century, in addition to a decreasing adherence to the more austere traits of traditional religion, people sought different ways to express and maintain virtue. One of the ways to reinscribe a new morality that encouraged commercial consumption was by attacking fat:

People could indulge their taste for fashion and other products with a realization that, if they disciplined their bodies through an attack on fat, they could preserve or even enhance their health and also establish their moral credentials. The widespread association of fat with laziness, so vivid in fashion and medical commentary alike, directly translated the desire to use disciplined eating as a moral tool in a society where growing consumer tastes and more abundant leisure time seemed to contradict the work ethic of the Victorian middle class.

Thus, at the time Wells was writing, a body that failed to meet physical norms because it was overweight was concerning for reasons that were no longer simply medical, but for reasons that had much to do with negative public perception and the stigma of corpulence. The uneasiness about excessive body size and weight gain is apparent in not just Wells’s autobiography, but also in his fiction. In the short story “The Truth about Pyecraft,” the anxiety produced by the unruly size of the obese middle-class male body, as well as the need to change and reform such bodies, is markedly evident.

Wells’s story about the “fattest clubman in London” begins with Formalyn’s pronounced discomfort in the presence of Pyecraft, his exceptionally overweight fellow club member and the comedic hero of the story. Much of Formalyn’s uneasiness displayed early in the narrative arises from Pyecraft’s gaze. Pyecraft has a secret to hide that Formalyn shares, and his stare is at once imploring and suspicious. It is the burden of this secret, and Pyecraft’s disconcerting stare, that causes Formalyn to reveal Pyecraft’s secret to readers. As the story unfolds, readers come to find out that Pyecraft has sought Formalyn’s help in reducing, but not in the usual manner of diet and exercise. Instead, Pyecraft has learned that Formalyn is descended from Hindu ancestors and has inherited a stash of recipes from his Hindu great-grandmother, one of which is for Loss of Weight. The Eastern recipe is effective, but not as Pyecraft had hoped. After drinking the potion, Pyecraft disappears for several days. When Formalyn is finally called to his flat, he finds Pyecraft floating on the ceiling just like a “gas-filled bladder,” having lost weight, but ironically, not an ounce of fat. Formalyn learns that Pyecraft has consumed too much of the foreign medicine, which has left him just as immense as before, yet completely weightless. After days of trying to figure out how to bring Pyecraft
back down to the ground, Formalyn devises a solution: Pyecraft will wear lead underclothing in order to defeat the laws of gravity. “‘Buy sheet lead,’ says Formalyn, ‘stamp it to discs. Sew ‘em all over your underclothes until you have enough. Have lead-soled boots, carry a bag of solid lead, and the thing is done!’” But once Pyecraft’s problem is solved, Formalyn realizes, much to his disappointment, that he must once again cope with Pyecraft’s fat presence at the club. It becomes clear that it is not simply sharing Pyecraft’s secret of living in leaden knickers that makes Formalyn uncomfortable. Pyecraft’s corpulence is excessive according to Formalyn, and it is this very excess that is so upsetting to the narrator. Pyecraft fails to meet the moral imperative to contain and control the body. Such failure becomes apparent in Formalyn’s negative depiction of his fellow clubman, which allows readers to see how male obesity was perceived at the turn of the twentieth century, a perception that is at once condemning and unforgiving.

Formalyn is unremitting in his criticism of Pyecraft’s size, calling into question Pyecraft’s manliness throughout his interrogation. In the first few paragraphs of the narrative he exclaims in reference to Pyecraft: “As if anything so gross and fat as he could feel at ease!” Betraying his own self-righteousness, Formalyn cannot imagine how someone so large could be comfortable. Even Pyecraft’s speech is “fat” and “abundant,” according to Formalyn. Yet the discomfort in this story is mostly experienced by Formalyn. His unease with Pyecraft’s body is apparent in his pronounced disgust expressed in the numerous dehumanizing epithets he applies to Pyecraft, as when he calls him “a great rolling front of chins and abdomina” that “grunts” and “wheezes” to find space for his large body. In this physical description of Pyecraft and the sounds that emanate from his body, Formalyn has effectively reduced Pyecraft to an animal. All chin and abdomen and grunting like a pig, Pyecraft is not even human. He certainly is not manly, as Formalyn also makes clear when he describes Pyecraft’s voice as “thin” and “fluty.” Ironically, even as Pyecraft’s corpulence makes him appear large and overwhelming, his voice is weak and unsubstantial, more appropriate, it would seem, to a small body. Pyecraft’s thin, high-pitched voice makes him sound like a woman. Moreover, Pyecraft’s size prevents him from demonstrating manly vigor. Rather than carrying himself with command and strength, Pyecraft wallows, wheezes, and pants. Pyecraft is less than a man, intimates the harshly critical narrator.

Additionally, the food that Pyecraft eats is hardly masculine. In his study of how biological activities such as eating, mating, habitating, and surviving danger are represented in Wells’s fiction, Peter Kemp argues that “meat-cravings and masculinity are closely associated in Wells’s mind.” Historically, eating meat has typically been portrayed as a masculine activity, while women
were enjoined to nibble on more delicate fare. In her history of anorexia nervosa, Joan Jacobs Brumberg argues that no food caused Victorian women as much moral anxiety as meat because meat was a heat-producing food and therefore believed to stimulate passion and sexual activity. Consequently, meat, along with heavily spiced foods, was off limits to Victorian women because of their supposed stimulating effects and their sexual connotations. Such food was less problematic for men because it was not considered to threaten their masculinity. Brumberg further explains, “Indulgence in foods that were considered stimulating or inflammatory served not only as an emblem of unchecked sensuality but sometimes as a sign of social aggression. Women who ate meat could be regarded as acting out of place; they were assuming a male prerogative.”

Eating meat was decidedly a manly affair. Pyecraft notably does not prefer meat. Like his thin, fluty voice, his tastes are more delicate. Time and time again Formalyn observes that Pyecraft eats hot buttered teacakes.

In all his corporeal excess, what Pyecraft demonstrates is lack. He lacks self-restraint, discipline, and physical vigor, all the characteristics that make a Victorian man “manly” in the nineteenth century. This lack of manliness and the emasculating effect of civilization demonstrated through Pyecraft’s excessively corpulent body points to racial degeneration; his enervated body raises concerns about the health of the national body and Great Britain’s prowess as an imperial power. If Pyecraft is representative of the growing waistline and the softening of the English male body, then what does that say about the nation and its future as a world power as it enters the twentieth century? Formalyn steps in as the voice of masculine self-control and restraint, condemning Pyecraft for his lack of self-discipline. Through Formalyn’s condemnation, Pyecraft is subjected to the oppressive, normalizing discourse of corporeal regulation and reform.

Formalyn repeatedly condemns Pyecraft for Pyecraft’s inherent lack of self-control, the characterization that modernity most often equates with the fat. He “keep[s] on eternally eating” Formalyn points out to readers, and later he notes that Pyecraft, “like all excessively obese people, . . . fancied he ate nothing.” Formalyn condemns Pyecraft by telling readers that Pyecraft eats too much and thus lacks self-discipline, but also by suggesting that Pyecraft is unwilling to take responsibility for his corpulence because he clings to the fantasy that he eats nothing. In criticizing Pyecraft for lacking personal accountability, Formalyn insists that Pyecraft’s excessive weight is entirely his own fault. Additionally, Pyecraft does not simply eat, but “stuff[s],” a term that implies that Pyecraft lacks the manners and good taste of a gentleman. The narrator later exclaims, “A man who eats like a pig ought to look like
a pig,” once again calling into question not just Pyecraft’s manliness, but his very humanity. The language used by Formalyn in his description of Pyecraft and his behavior is unabashedly morally censorious, where Pyecraft’s supposed overindulgence and lack of self-control makes him less than a man.

In his censure, Formalyn gives voice to the normative definition of masculinity that equates the muscular and lean body with masculinity and the fat one with an imperfect, degenerative condition, characterized by effeminacy and weakness. Formalyn’s construction of masculinity is apparent in the popular medical books of the day, which used similar formulations to mark and stigmatize the obese (man) as characterized by a similar dangerous weakness and lack of self-control. Early in the century, French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin writes in his handbook on food and diet that “if obesity is not actually a disease, it is at least a most unpleasant state of ill health, and one into which we almost always fall because of our own fault.” Perpetuating the perception that obesity is the individual’s fault were the conduct manuals written to help people reduce. They were, as Zweiniger-Bargielowska indicates, “based on the belief that the body was an instrument of will that could be reformed by means of self-control.” Thus a person’s flawed character—his lack of will power—is revealed in his excessive weight.

In the case of Pyecraft, as the narrator asserts, it is his inability to abstain from eating so many hot buttered teacakes that has led to his unruly corpulence. Acting the part of a physician in his endeavors to help his patient reduce, Formalyn claims that Pyecraft’s inability to control his appetite has also contributed to his problem of “weightlessness,” telling readers, “I pointed out to him that this was a trouble he had brought upon himself, and that it had almost an air of poetical justice.” Pyecraft, according to Formalyn, had consumed too much of the Hindu medicine. Once again, Formalyn condemns Pyecraft for his voracious appetite and lack of manly self-control that contribute to his current awkward position as a virtual balloon floating just beneath the ceiling. “Fat and masculinity,” Sander Gilman reminds readers “are often seen as incompatible.” This story offers us an example of the inverse relationship posited between obesity and manliness in Victorian culture. Subjected to a life in leaden knickers in order to defeat the laws of gravity, the already deviant body of Pyecraft is made even more so in his somewhat ridiculous inability to remain on the ground, which in the end, is his own fault.

As this story demonstrates, obesity is all-encompassing. It involves the entire person, indicating not just body size, but also something about the person’s character. It becomes a marker of identity, not just girth. Associating body size with essential character was also common in Victorian construc-
tions of masculinity. Both the too thin body and the too fat body were seen as imperfectly masculine. Provoked by Pyecraft’s “burst of passion,” whose frustrating predicament has gotten the better of him, Formalyn vents, “He behaved just as I should have expected a great, fat, self-indulgent man to behave under trying circumstances—that is to say, very badly.”\(^{40}\) In this passage, obesity is equated with a character that is self-indulgent, which in turn suggests a want of decorum and a concurrent propensity for inappropriate, emotional outbursts. Within the gender binaries of the time, such passionate reactions were more appropriate to women, who were assumed to be emotionally inferior, rather than to men, who were called upon to maintain the proverbial “stiff upper lip.” By the end of the century, the imperative for men to demonstrate courage and remain stoic when faced with challenges became even stronger than in decades past, according to historian John Tosh, in response to women’s increasing political and economic power. As the discourse on sexual difference intensified late in the century, more emphasis was placed on the “toughest and most exclusive male attributes,” namely emotional hardness.\(^{41}\) I would add that the imperative to demonstrate courage and stoicism increased at the turn of the century also because Great Britain’s status as an imperial power was threatened by the increasing unrest in its colonies and the encroachment by other world powers such as the United States and soon Germany. In his emotional outbursts and lack of self-restraint, Pyecraft defies such standards of manliness and symbolizes the potential for weakness at the core of Great Britain. “Underneath the controlled body,” as Budd astutely points out, “there was always the threat or promise of its opposite.”\(^{42}\) Although Budd applies his statement to the individual male body, it applies equally to the national body. This is the case because the individual body was frequently used as a metaphor for the nation as a whole. Just like the individual body, the national body is also always at risk of losing control. In all his heft, Pyecraft demonstrates a loss of control of the individual body, and in turn, his weak character points to, and raises concern about, the potentially inadequate character of the national body.

Pyecraft, however, is not unaware of the need to reform. Fat, as this discussion has revealed, is stigmatizing. One of the more well-known reducing manuals of the nineteenth century was William Banting’s 1863 pamphlet, *A Letter on Corpulence*, in which he recounts his own battle with obesity. This is the first diet book that we might call “modern” in part because of its emphasis on dietary regulation for reasons other than those related to health. Joyce L. Huff contends that previous advice manuals “tended to recommend reducing only when obesity explicitly interfered with health,” but Banting’s letter, in drawing attention to the prejudice he suffered as a result of his obe-
sity, suggests that avoiding public censure was also part of his motivation for desiring to become more slender.\textsuperscript{43} Perhaps the most notable feature of Banting’s very popular pamphlet (reprinted five times) is its emphasis on social conformity. He sets about his reducing diet in order to save himself from the public humiliation he describes in detail. As such, the pamphlet suggests that medical and societal reasons for reducing converged in this period. He writes,

Any one so afflicted is often subject to public remark, and though in conscience he may care little about it, I am confident no man labouring under obesity can be quite insensible to the sneers and remarks of the cruel and injudicious in public assemblies, public vehicles, or the ordinary street traffic . . . , and therefore he naturally keeps away as much as possible from places where he is likely to be made the object of the taunts and remarks of others.\textsuperscript{44}

If Banting himself experienced this humiliation, the popularity of the book also suggests that others experienced a similar humiliation. Many responded to this stigmatization by engaging in such reducing diets as Banting’s in order to conform to the standards of embodiment.

Such popular pamphlets like Banting’s demonstrate an obsession with monitoring and disciplining the body in order to make it fit physical ideals of masculinity. Such a preoccupation is evident in Wells’s story as when Formalyn presents Pyecraft as obsessed with his corpulence. All Pyecraft can talk about is his fatness, the narrator declares. In recounting one of their discussions at the club, Formalyn complains, “And then he began to talk about his fatness and his fatness; all he did for his fatness and all he was going to do for his fatness; what people had advised him to do for his fatness and what he had heard of people doing for fatness similar to his.”\textsuperscript{45} Pyecraft is acutely aware of his overabundant size, and it is something that he feels compelled to change. The body, as both this passage and the chapter epigraph make evident, is something to be monitored and regulated, and fat is something that must be struggled against. Wells’s story exposes to view the extent to which the individual internalizes such a constraining body ideal in the relationship between the censorious Formalyn and his clubmate, Pyecraft. Formalyn’s words suggest the degree to which the fat male body must be policed, punished, and corrected so that it fits the standards of manliness in Britain at the turn of the century. As the dynamic between the characters suggests, Pyecraft does not feel compelled to lose weight for the health reasons that some physicians were associating with “obesity”; instead, he feels compelled to lose weight because he wants to avoid the ugly stares and hurtful words of people.
like Formalyn. As the medical field, as well as the insurance industry, was finding more and more reasons why individuals should monitor their weight for health reasons, the stigma of obesity grew in intensity.\textsuperscript{46} Popular perception of the obese individual was increasingly becoming more negative, as indicated by the following remarks of Victorian physician Nathaniel Edward Davies: “the stupid, heavy, non-intellectual person, or the idiot, is generally flabby and fat.”\textsuperscript{47} The medical and popular understandings of obesity, of course, mutually reinforce each other in order to create a broad cultural fear of fat, as we experience today in the West. For this reason, Wells’s story helps readers see the genesis of today’s multibillion dollar diet and fitness industry that exists in order to help people shape their bodies to fit modern standards of beauty, which in our mainstream culture privileges the slender, yet toned, female body and the muscular male body. Neither ideal allows for the presence of much fat and stigmatizes those who betray such standards. The Hindu recipe for Loss of Weight is, in part, a precursor to Hydroxycut, Zantrex, Trimspa, and other diet pills of our society today.

Revealingly, the pervasiveness of the moral imperative to control and regulate one’s body, as well as the near impossibility of meeting corporeal standards of masculinity, is demonstrated in the depiction of the narrator’s body as the disciplining gaze is turned on himself. Even though Formalyn would have readers believe that he is Pyecraft’s opposite—trim and athletic and therefore self-disciplined as suggested by Pyecraft’s observation that Formalyn “ought to be a good cricketer,” his “truth” about Pyecraft and about himself does not always seem altogether honest.\textsuperscript{48} With the increasing emphasis on athleticism as a marker of masculinity at the end of the century, Formalyn appears to embody all the proper characteristics of Victorian manliness.\textsuperscript{49} His sense of corporeal superiority, however, is challenged by his own physical shortcomings. Just as Pyecraft fails to meet standards of English masculinity, so too does Formalyn. Like Wells during his younger years, Formalyn fears he is a bit too thin to live up to ideals of masculinity, which at the end of the century celebrated the muscular, robust body: “I suppose I am slender,” he concedes, “slender to what some people would call lean.”\textsuperscript{50} Later, when hypothesizing what might happen if Pyecraft were to fall on him, he confesses, “I own I was weak.”\textsuperscript{51} Lean has connotations of weakness, as Formalyn’s second comment underscores. The excessively thin body was often also associated with the working class who, like Wells’s family, were too impoverished to maintain a healthy diet. In turn, the emaciated male body likewise raised concerns about the strength of the nation.\textsuperscript{52} Even as the obese male body was coming under frequent attack as the body that overconsumed, the overly thin male body was also not without concern. The nineteenth century
after all witnessed the birth of the physical culture movement in which gurus, like Eugen Sandow and Bernarr Macfadden, promoted and popularized the trim, but highly muscular, male body through their regimen of diet and exercise. By the end of the century, the athlete came to be revered so much so that even the formerly “effeminate shop-clerk,” according to Lord Brabazon in his essay on the health of city dwellers, “has developed into the stalwart volunteer, the oarsman, or the bicyclist.” Relatedly, the nineteenth century saw the rise of “Muscular Christianity,” a more aggressive style of masculinity, which likewise emphasized the characteristics of physical vigor, robustness, and self-discipline, and was a shift away from the more austere, and what some considered effete, Christianity of the Oxford Movement. Thus the athletic, muscular physique that was neither too skinny nor too fat was the male body type that became more fashionable over the course of the nineteenth century. That Formalyn is anxious about living up to such standards of English masculinity is suggested by his self-righteous behavior toward Pyecraft, which betrays the misgivings he has about his own body. Formalyn uses Pyecraft’s body in order to demonstrate his uncertain physical superiority. After reporting Pyecraft’s “burst of passion,” he writes that he “generously disregarded[ed] the insults [Pyecraft] was putting upon me” and “sat down in his armchair and began to talk to him in a sober, friendly fashion.” Pyecraft is all uncontrolled passion whereas the narrator, as he would like readers to believe, is the epitome of emotional restraint and self-possession. Formalyn is constantly nagged by his own insecurities. Just as he admits that his slender physique is possibly a little too lean, so too he admits that he was “a young, nervous new member” of a London club when he met Pyecraft. He, like Pyecraft, does not quite fit in; thus he uses his constant condemnation of Pyecraft in an attempt to compensate for his own physical deficiencies.

Wells’s story also shows how a racialized discourse stigmatizes certain bodies as less than appropriately masculine. Significantly, Formalyn has a dark complexion, which marks him as Other. Indeed, he is descended from a Hindu great-grandmother, the very one from which he received the weight-reducing potion. Formalyn admits that he is “rather dark,” but claims that he is “not ashamed of having a Hindu great-grandmother.” Of course he is ashamed as this defensive remark, and his reluctance to claim his racial heritage, make clear. In the next breath, Formalyn protests, “but, for that, I don’t want casual strangers to see through me at a glance to her.” Besides his overwhelming size, much of what annoys Formalyn about Pyecraft is the fact that he does not treat Formalyn’s foreign ancestry with the delicacy and discretion that Formalyn desires. Pyecraft’s presumptuous familiarity threatens to reveal Formalyn’s own secret. Like Pyecraft’s indiscretion of overeating,
Formalyn’s body is evidence of a previous indiscretion, the mixing of the English race with a supposedly inferior race, a sexual taboo in Victorian England. The fear was that the body of the Other was not only inferior, but tainted, and would cause the degeneration of the English race. Thus Formalyn carries the burden of miscegenation. In this way, Formalyn, just as much as Pyecraft, represents a challenge to the hegemony of English middle-class masculinity and physical superiority at the turn of the century. He too is thus subjected to the oppressive, normalizing discourse of corporeal regulation and reform.

Not only does the imperial project return to England in the dark complexioned body of Formalyn, but it is also brought home in the form of Formalyn’s great-grandmother’s cache of recipes. In his study of Wells’s early writing, Bernard Bergonzi points out that in many of Wells’s first novels and stories “one observes the recurring encounter between the exotic and the everyday.”58 This sort of encounter is certainly evident in “The Truth about Pyecraft” when the mundane lives of two very ordinary London clubmen are dramatically altered by Pyecraft’s ingestion of Eastern medicine. Unlike “Western Pharmacopoeia,” Formalyn’s great-grandmother’s recipes “are queer things to handle,” he warns Pyecraft.59 Something mysterious, in fact, has happened to “Pattison,” one of their fellow club members, after consuming one of these Hindu concoctions. Readers are not permitted to know exactly what happened, but the fact that it cannot be uttered leads the reader to believe that it must have been something truly awful. Formalyn very coyly reports,

The little affair of Pattison to which I have alluded was a different matter altogether. What it was doesn’t concern us now, but I knew, anyhow, that the particular recipe I used then was safe. The rest I didn’t know so much about, and, on the whole, I was inclined to doubt their safety pretty completely. Yet even if Pyecraft got poisoned—.60

Formalyn hints at the possibility that Pattison might have been poisoned, and that Pyecraft could be subjected to the same fate. Once Formalyn finds the recipe for Loss of Weight, he repeats his warnings to Pyecraft that he should heed his advice and leave the remedy alone because his “ancestors on that side were . . . a jolly queer lot.”61 Pyecraft nevertheless shuns his friend’s advice and takes the mysterious drug anyway, the ingredients of which are themselves very odd: addled egg, fresh rattlesnake venom, and pariah dog. Of course, no mysterious potion would do unless it tasted very, very poorly, and in this story, the concoction that Pyecraft ingests appears to taste just as nasty as the ingredients sound: “‘Oh, beastly!’,” exclaims Pyecraft when Formalyn
asks him how it tasted. Pyecraft admits, too, that he was compelled to hold his nose when taking the strange brew. Thus Pyecraft literally consumes the exotic, foreign Other when he drinks the formula. Furthermore, the Eastern medicine that causes Pyecraft to lose literal weight rather than size makes the already deviant body of Pyecraft even more transgressive. After taking the potion, he is magically transformed into an object that transgresses the laws of natures. Even if the potion had worked to reduce his bulk so that he achieved the thin, muscular ideal, the body would be blemished by the fact that it relied on Eastern medicine to do so in a way that undermines his identity as an Englishman.

Having said this, the story’s treatment of the reverse colonization of Pyecraft’s body by the Other is largely humorous, however. It is the source of the story’s ultimate irony and the reader’s pleasure. The mixing, or miscegenation in a sense, that takes place here is not felt by readers to be altogether that harmful. Thus the anxiety produced in this story is felt not by the reader, or even by Wells himself, as we might imagine. Nor does Pyecraft, despite a passing reference to his awkward predicament at the end of the narrative, even seem much disturbed by his weightlessness or his unusual leaden underclothing. Rather, much of the story’s anxiety is generated by Formalyn, the narrator of the story, because of his own physical shortcomings that become even more apparent when he attempts to assume an air of superiority.

Like Pyecraft, Formalyn has something to hide, and it is the constant presence of Pyecraft’s deviant body that is a nagging reminder of Formalyn’s own deficiencies and insecurities, and the possibility that his family secret will be revealed. In Pyecraft, Formalyn sees his own inability to measure up to standards of English masculinity. Pyecraft has the ability to conform to the physical standards of normative masculinity if he engages in a regimen of diet and exercise, but Formalyn does not have that same ability. He cannot change his dark skin, nor can he erase the miscegenation that occurred to produce it. No amount of discipline will allow him to reform himself, as Pyecraft can, and so he will always remain outside the norms of hegemonic English masculinity. He can only try to pass as an Englishman, something he can do in part by asserting his distinction from and superiority to obese Englishmen like Pyecraft. In his demonstration of both the physical and emotional self-discipline required of English masculine identity, Formalyn attempts to assume the appearance of English manhood despite his darker complexion. He hopes that if he can behave like a true Englishman, then the “biological foundation of race,” evident in his skin color, and thus his mixed racial heritage, will appear less obvious to others. Yet the more he attempts to assert his superiority over Pyecraft, the more his own physical shortcomings stand
out, and the greater his chances are of losing his corporeal edge, and therefore his identity as an Englishman. Much of Formalyn’s anxiety, then, has to do with the risk that his ethnic origin, and his real identity as part Hindu, will be exposed to others. Passing, as Elaine Ginsberg explains, is bound up in the privileges associated with “whiteness” and “maleness.” Were Formalyn’s true identity to be revealed, he would lose the social and economic opportunities granted white Englishmen. In his predicament, Wells demonstrates the near impossibility of living up to corporeal standards of masculinity.

Formalyn’s favored position as the voice of reason, wisdom, and self-control—the voice of hegemonic masculinity—is further challenged by the class connotations that are attached to each man’s body. As William Harvey, the physician who successfully treated Banting’s corpulence, points out, “the sufferers” of obesity “are found most frequently among those on whom fortune has smiled, whose incentives to physical exertion are in abeyance, while the inducements of the table are in excess.” While obesity was a disease seen as afflicting the more affluent classes according to nineteenth-century health experts, the working class body, in contrast, was seen as lean, pale, and shrunken. Exemplifying this perception, Lord Brabazon writes,

Let the reader walk through the wretched streets of one of our large manufacturing towns, or through those of the eastern and southern districts of London. If he returns satisfied with the results of his investigations, he must indeed be gifted with a very sanguine temperament. Should he be of average height, he will find himself a head taller than those around him; he will see on all sides pale faces, stunted figures, debilitated forms, narrow chests, and all the outward signs of a low vital power.

Like the overfed, corpulent body of the bourgeoisie, the emaciated body of the working class also raised concerns about the health of the nation during the nineteenth century because of its association with weakness and disease. In this equation, Formalyn’s lean, and by his own admission, weak physique takes on the characteristics of the working man’s body in a way that places him in a subordinate position to Pyecraft, whose corpulence marks him as more affluent, now not just in terms of race, but also in terms of class.

The importance placed on disciplined management of the body and the necessity of maintaining a physically fit physique as depicted through the debasement of Pyecraft’s obese body is also complicated by the homoerotic tension between the two men, further revealing a contradiction inherent in the discourse of physical fitness. There are no women in this tale, except for the brief appearance of Pyecraft’s housekeeper, who is subordinate both in
terms of gender and class as revealed by her disheveled appearance and poor grammar. This narrative privileges middle-class homosocial relations. It is in fact a London club, a homosocial retreat that excluded women and allowed men to gather away from the pressures of domesticity, at which Formalyn and Pyecraft first meet. Indeed, much of the narrative takes place at either this club or Pyecraft’s bachelor quarters. Even as the two men share the same club membership where camaraderie between men is expected, Formalyn seems painfully uncomfortable when Pyecraft is near. Formalyn appears stifled and smothered in Pyecraft’s presence, and even when Pyecraft sits at a distance, Formalyn perceives his proximity as a mere “dozen yards away,” too close for Formalyn to feel at ease. Formalyn is made even more uneasy under the weight of Pyecraft’s stare; in the opening lines of the story, he exclaims, “I glance judiciously and catch him biting a round of hot buttered teacake, with his eyes on me. Confound him!—with his eyes on me!” Formalyn feels the burden of Pyecraft’s secret in his seemingly unrelenting gaze, but the discomfort Formalyn feels could be due to something else as well. The degree of uneasiness that Formalyn feels in this opening scene seems exaggerated and even paranoid, suggesting that his reaction could be a moment of what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls homosexual panic, in which the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable male bonding becomes blurred. Formalyn’s paranoid reaction to Pyecraft’s unrelenting gaze suggests that Pyecraft, at least in Formalyn’s mind, threatens to jeopardize that boundary. His obsessive interest in policing Pyecraft’s appetites, which he perceives as over-indulgent and excessive, suggests that Formalyn is worried Pyecraft will consume him, quite literally. Later, when Formalyn is recounting how Pyecraft approached him to ask for his grandmother’s recipe, Formalyn complains that Pyecraft’s stare made him feel “like being at an aquarium.” He feels exposed and vulnerable when Pyecraft looks at him, and his nervous commentary makes his anxiety palpable to readers. Formalyn’s feelings of vulnerability are also apparent when he recounts his initial meeting with Pyecraft. New to the club and sitting alone, Formalyn is nervous and wishing he knew more members. Pyecraft “saw it,” according to Formalyn, and seizes upon his advantage, sitting down next to the nervous new member. Formalyn explains this scene as if Pyecraft had been stalking him, and later complains that Pyecraft “seemed at times almost to be clinging to me.” The narrator suspects that Pyecraft is predatory and that he is using Formalyn’s insecurities to his advantage. Despite feeling persecuted by his clubmate, Formalyn does very little to avoid Pyecraft.

Because there are almost no women in this story, and certainly no women who would be conventionally considered viable in terms of a marriage plot,
there is also no heterosexual desire. Rather, the erotic connection described in this tale is between two men, which is evident in the fact that Formalyn cannot seem to be without his fellow clubman, even though his claims of disgust suggest otherwise. Formalyn’s self-assured sense of superiority is undercut by his uneasiness in the presence of Pyecraft, despite his reluctance to avoid Pyecraft altogether. After all, it is Formalyn who spends days and days with his supposed nemesis at his flat, helping him figure out a way to return to a normal life on the ground, and it is Formalyn who discovers the solution that in turn allows Pyecraft to return to the club. Formalyn seems to revel in the fact that Pyecraft is “never, never, never coming to the club any more,” but then admits that his “fatal ingenuity” got the better of him. As soon as he suggests lead underclothing, he realizes that he has solved the problem, but soon regrets that this will result in Pyecraft’s renewed, and unnerving, presence at the club. When Pyecraft exclaims, “‘By Jove!’ . . . ‘I shall be able to come back to the club again,’” Formalyn responds with dismay: “The thing pulled me up short. ‘By Jove!’ I said, faintly. ‘Yes, Of course—you will.’” In the end, after Pyecraft has returned to the club, Formalyn feels that he must elude Pyecraft, but cannot because Pyecraft occupies, “an admirable strategic position between [him] and the door.” Formalyn cannot escape Pyecraft, as much as he seems to try, but his inability to avoid Pyecraft is in the end his own fault. He cannot seem to tolerate Pyecraft’s presence, but he also cannot seem to function without him.

The homoerotic aspect of the story is evident most tellingly in the central focus on one man’s body—its shape and size, what it looks like, sounds like, and must feel like—from the point of view of another man. Formalyn is obsessed with Pyecraft’s body. Although he claims to be disgusted, he is in reality also very fascinated by Pyecraft’s body, which becomes apparent in his inability to stop looking at and commenting on Pyecraft’s superabundant size. Even though Pyecraft’s gaze causes Formalyn to feel uncomfortable, the narrative could not be possible if Formalyn did not return Pyecraft’s gaze. Judging from the extensive description Formalyn provides of Pyecraft’s body, Formalyn does just as much staring. Moreover, Formalyn’s scrutiny of Pyecraft’s body is akin to the medical examination of the obese male form. Medical intervention justifies and makes permissible the study of the male body by other men. In other words, men are allowed to gaze at and inspect the male body without suspicion or sanction in the name of science. The public, as D. A. Miller might argue, is allowed to do the same in order to help manage, or police, the bodies of other citizens, keeping them within acceptable parameters. Male-male surveillance is permissible so long as it is conducted in an effort to help maintain standards of English masculinity. In
this way, Formalyn’s treatment of Pyecraft appears acceptable, and even warranted, as he attempts to help Pyecraft reform his seemingly unmanageable body. Yet the amount of attention Formalyn gives to Pyecraft’s body, with his detailed scrutiny, also eroticizes the obese male form, and therefore, exceeds the boundaries of heteronormative masculinity. It is underwear after all, a rather intimate suggestion, that Formalyn provides as a solution to Pyecraft’s unusual predicament.

In this story, Formalyn appears to be the voice of hegemonic masculinity. Through his narrative, readers are led to believe that being obese as a man is inadmissible because it denotes a certain weakness of character, a weakness that has ramifications for the nation. Formalyn, in contrast, appears to uphold the moral imperative of manly restraint, self-discipline, and physical vigor, the qualities necessary to maintain a strong, healthy nation and a prosperous, thriving empire. Yet his noticeably adamant condemnation of Pyecraft is excessive, and in turn betrays his own physical shortcomings, which endanger his privileged position as bearer and enforcer of hegemonic masculinity. Further, Formalyn’s fascination with the corpulent male body undercuts his air of corporeal superiority and his apparent revulsion toward Pyecraft. His intense scrutiny and criticism of Pyecraft’s body allows him to articulate an attraction toward the obese male form that would otherwise be unacceptable. Thus the ambivalence inherent within Formalyn’s position points to a contradiction within the discourse of national fitness. Although the strength of the nation and the success of the imperial project depended upon healthy, vigorous male bodies, and demanded that corpulent bodies like Pyecraft’s be reformed, those enforcing such standards are potentially inadequate themselves. Moreover, as this story makes clear, the nation’s soundness was also predicated upon male-male surveillance, and a desire that was always at risk of exceeding heteronormative boundaries, a desire that in other ways was deemed unfit for the health of the nation.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank Susan Zieger and Chrissy Crockett for their helpful and insightful comments on earlier drafts. A shorter version was delivered at the Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies in San Marino, California, in March 2008 and at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Conference in Calgary, Canada, in October 2007.

2. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the first recorded use of the term “reducing” meaning to lose weight occurred in 1897 in Allbutt’s *System of Medicine* in which “reducing remedies” are “strongly recommended.”
Several historians argue that fat has not always been a “women’s issue,” as we tend to see it today. In his cultural history of fat, Hillel Schwartz writes, “Although we now associate dieting most immediately with women, the classical texts of dieting until the 20th century were written by men who had made a drastic change in their habits in midlife. The archetypal public dieters were more often male until late in the 19th century, despite that stoutness so praiseworthy in Victorian rhetoric about men.” Hillel Schwartz, *Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets, Fantasies and Fat* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1986), 16–17. Similarly, in her study of fasting and masculinity in America at the turn of the nineteenth century, R. Marie Griffith argues that almost all the practitioners of fasting between 1890 and 1930 were men: “The desire to limit one’s food intake, whether for reasons related to religion, health, or physical appearance, was never a purely female impulse, and at the turn of the century it may not have even been primarily so.” R. Marie Griffith, “Apostles of Abstinence: Fasting and Masculinity during the Progressive Era,” *American Quarterly* 52.4 (December 2000): 601. See also Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, “The Culture of the Abdomen: Obesity and Reducing in Britain, circa 1900–1939,” *Journal of British Studies* 44.2 (April 2005): 239–73.

Conversely, as R. Marie Griffith persuasively demonstrates, men who practiced fasting at the turn of the nineteenth century, the “apostles of abstinence” as she calls them in the title of her article, did so in the name of strength, virility, purity, and productivity. Food refusal when carried out by men (many of whom also practiced weight lifting) was recoded as a masculine endeavor because it demonstrated manly self-discipline and will power. The fasting man was the picture of strength and health, an image that is in direct opposition to that of the fragile, weak, and sickly anorexic girl. R. Marie Griffith, “Apostles of Abstinence: Fasting and Masculinity during the Progressive Era,” *American Quarterly* 52.4 (December 2000): 599–638.


Budd also argues that Wells was obsessed with bodily health and fitness as the result of “a disease-ridden and impoverished upbringing”; this obsession, he further argues, could be seen in his writing, namely, the novels *The Time Machine* and *Tono-Bungay*, which deal with issues of physical decay and degeneracy. Budd, *The Sculpture Machine*, 52–53. Zweiniger-Bargielowska reports that Wells was a client of Fredrick Arthur Hornibrook, a well-known physical culture instructor and the author of the best-selling book *The Culture of the Abdomen: The Cure of Obesity and Constipation*, which I would add also indicates Wells’s concern with bodily health and appearance. Zweiniger-
3: “The Fattest Clubman in London”


18. The first practical scale for humans—the “steelyard”—was brought to London in 1760 by the inventor John Joseph Merlin. These first scales for personal weighing were public in nature. Rogers writes that “the best known place to get oneself weighed at one time was Merlin’s own museum in Hanover Square,” but that scales could also be found at establishments like those of tailors. Notable within the context of this essay, Rogers points out that almost all of the early self-weighers were men, perhaps because only men would submit to their public weighing (Rogers, “Fat Is a Fictional Issue,” 173–74). In the United States, according to Schwartz, the first scales for personal weighing were platform scales and could be found at fairs. Later, penny scales were first seen in railroad stations, subways, pharmacies, and groceries. It was not until just after the turn of the century that bathroom scales began to be used. Schwartz writes that a “more private bathroom scale,” which had first appeared in Germany, “was featured in Chicago in 1913 in Marshall Field’s new household utilities department.” Schwartz, Never Satisfied, 164–68.


20. Ibid., 54.

21. Ibid., 59.


23. Ibid., 452.

24. Ibid., 454.

25. Ibid., 447.

26. Ibid., 455.

27. Ibid., 447.

28. Ibid., 448.


31. Ibid., 176.

32. Some nineteenth-century health reformers, Americans Sylvester Graham (of Graham cracker fame) and John Harvey Kellogg being two of the better-known, advocated vegetarianism for men and women alike on the grounds that meat was stimulating and led to immoral behavior. One of the criticisms of vegetarianism, however, was that the practice in men led to cadaverousness and emasculation. For a discussion of nineteenth-century vegetarianism in America, see James C. Whorton, Crusaders for Fitness: The History of American Health Reformers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), particularly the chapter “Tempest in a Flesh-Pot.” See also R. Marie Griffith, Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), for comments on vegetarianism as well as a broader discussion of the relationship between food and sexuality during the nineteenth century.

34. Ibid., 447.
35. Ibid., 451.
46. For a discussion of insurance companies and weight, see Schwartz, *Never Satisfied*, particularly chapter 6, “The Measured Body.” Banting also mentions insurance companies in his pamphlet when he provides a “tabular statement in regard to weight as proportioned to stature” that he believes will be “interesting and useful to corpulent readers.” This table, he explains, was created for an insurance company (Banting, *Letter on Corpulence*, 36).
51. Ibid., 449.
52. For a discussion of the relationship between the working class and the physical culture movement, see Budd’s chapter titled “Bridging Reform and Consumerism,” in *The Sculpture Machine*. That leanness was a concern is also evident in the medical pamphlets of the time. For instance, in *Obesity: Its Cause and Treatment* (London, 1896), 38, Thomas Dutton concludes with a short section on leanness, which he describes as a “troublesome” condition and one that should be treated.
53. Lord Brabazon (Earl of Meath), ed., *Prosperity or Pauperism? Physical, Industrial and Technical Training* (London, 1888). In his essay “Health of Our City Populations,” Lord Brabazon is concerned about the health and strength of the working classes living in urban areas, which he believes is deteriorating, even while he admits that the
physical powers of the “well-to-do classes” are “worthy of the best days of our ancestors” and even seem to be surpassing that of their ancestors (Lord Brabazon, *Prosperity or Pauperism?* 4).

54. Ibid., 453.
55. Ibid., 447.
56. Ibid., 448.
57. Ibid., 448.
60. Ibid., 449.
61. Ibid., 449.
62. Ibid., 452.
64. Ibid., 2–5.
67. In her study of bachelor-narrated fiction, Katherine Snyder writes that the “last third of the nineteenth century was the heyday of the men’s club in the principal cities of both America and England” and argues that the prevalence of such clubs along with other all-male associations and secret societies at this time “is just one register of the continuing salience of homosociality during this period” (Katherine V. Snyder, *Bachelors, Manhood, and the Novel, 1850–1925* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999], 43, 26).
69. Ibid., 447.
70. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 185. She writes, “Thus, at least since the eighteenth century in England and America, the continuum of male homosocial bonds has been brutally structured by a secularized and psychological homophobia, which has excluded certain shiftingly and more or less arbitrarily defined segments of the continuum from participating in the overarching male entitlement—in the complex web of male power over the production, reproduction, and exchange of goods, persons, and meanings. . . . Because the paths of male entitlement, especially in the nineteenth century, required certain intense male bonds that were not readily distinguishable from the most reprobated bonds, an endemic and ineradicable state of what I am calling male homosexual panic became the normal condition of male heterosexual entitlement.”
72. Ibid., 447.
73. Ibid., 448.
74. Ibid., 454.
75. Ibid., 454.
76. Ibid., 455.