

**Feasting & Bonding Like a Man:
Tom Brown's Consumption of the English Masculine Ideal**

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"The sun shines almost warmly, and breakfast has oiled all springs and loosened all tongues"
(80)

"So Tom, in the midst of three or four more urchins similarly employed, toasted his face and the sausages at the same time before the huge fire, till the latter cracked; when East from his watch-tower shouted that they were done, and then the feast proceeded, and the festive cups of tea were filled and emptied, and Tom imparted of the sausages in small bits to many neighbours, and thought he had never tasted such good potatoes or seen such jolly boys." (Hughes 118)

<1> Tom's arrival at Rugby, in Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days*, hallmarks the transition from a Victorian child into a *male* child; that is, the movement away from the comforts of the domestic feminine space into the heteronormative environment of the public school where the boy learns, and, in Tom's case, consumes English manhood.⁽¹⁾ Food becomes much more than a warm comfort to the child. Tom's meals, which are imbued with Englishness and manliness, replenish and erect the body of the growing young man. Hughes's depiction of Tom's development at Rugby plays with Victorian fragmented perceptions of gender. The story depicts Victorian masculine stereotypes through rich descriptions of boyish rebellion, physical activity, and male-male bonding. In addition, Hughes's keen attention to the milk curds, cake, beefsteak and sausage consolidates the didacticism of the story. Tom must respond to his biological drive to fight, conquer, protect, explore—he must have a diet that encompasses nationhood and manliness.

<2> "The school story was born with Thomas Hughes," writes Isabel Quigly of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, a genre that remained "fertile ground" for authors to fashion a didactic moral tale (42). *Tom Brown's* legacy is evident in subsequent works that borrow Hughes's use of the school-story to address similar preoccupations with class, gender, and national identity. Among the most popular novels are F.W. Farrar's *Eric, or Little by Little: A Tale of Roslyn School* (1858), Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* (1905), and, most recently, J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007). These works appropriate more than just the school story setting from Hughes; just as prominent in these works is attention to aliment. Although the study of food in Children's literature is gaining recognition from several critics, mentions of food in Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays* have been overlooked.⁽²⁾ *Tom Brown's* impact has been traced by scholarly criticism interested in exploring Hughes' use of the school story to promote Evangelical masculine and social values, athletic enthusiasm, contemporary concerns with bullying, homoerotic desire, and, most importantly, in tracing *Tom Brown's* literary influence.⁽³⁾ This essay adds to the *Tom Brown* critical conversation and examines the role that eating and feasting sequences play in instructing young boys about English manliness, socialization techniques, and public responsibility.

<3> Hughes ensures that Tom's meals are both masculine and English. It is through collective activities like sports, lectures, and most importantly as this study will demonstrate, eating that Hughes advocates for the hardworking and vigorous Victorian man. This essay begins with a survey of Hughes's masculine archetype and explores how Tom's rebellion is linked to an appetite that is represented as inherently masculine. Tom's craving for the fatty milk curds illustrate his impulse to satisfy his physical and emotional needs. The second part of this essay studies how Hughes uses food and the act of sharing meals to both blur and reinforce the lines between classes. Hughes evokes the traditions of the "quiet country village" (21) to highlight Tom's place in the community as both master and consumer. This temporary disruption of hierarchy is explored through a close reading of the feast of the Veast, "the feast of the Vale" (28). Hughes alludes to local cuisine to instruct moral consciousness and citizenship. The final section takes a closer look at selected scenes from *Tom Brown* that turn food into an epitome of normative masculinity. These include Tom's beef-centered ceremonial dinner with his father before leaving to Rugby, the first communal feast with his schoolmates, and the celebration of his graduation over cake with the Master. The cake in Tom's last supper at Rugby brings the reader back to the "Veast" to reveal his moral and physical growth. This study will bring into conversation social and historical scholarship of meat ingestion, Victorian dietary practices, and critical studies of food in the Victorian novel.

Masculinity and the English Body

<4> Victorian identity was fashioned from Protestant work ethics that rejected idleness and turned work into the tool through which Victorians learned and practiced self-regulation, productivity, individual effort, business, and industrial production (Danahay 39). Victorian authors, nonetheless, applied their own vision of what "work" or "industry" entailed to promote their own ethics. This association between work and manhood led to different movements that regarded exercise and good nutrition as essential to the formation and maintenance of Victorian manliness. Thomas Hughes's and Charles Kingsley's vision, for instance, was part of a movement known as Muscular Christianity and regarded physical and military prowess as fundamental to English manliness. Kingsley and Hughes stress the importance of exercise like football and wrestling in the child's mental and physical development (Watson, Weird, & Friend 1). The movement educated young boys to be "manful, godly, practical, enthusiastic, prudent, self-sacrificing, moving across class barriers, and dedicated to the furtherance of English interests through war" (Webb 107). Victorian hegemonic masculinity is therefore built, maintained, practiced, and centered on exercise, industry, and, most importantly, ingestion.

<5> Nineteenth-century books of instruction and literature for children exposed young boys to dominant hegemonic masculine models to create a "ruling administrative elite" that will possess the "correct" impact in society (Holt 4). After *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was published in 1857, the school story became a maker and conduit of meaning. Hughes appropriates the pedagogical objectives of the public school— public responsibility, socialization, compliance, and goodness (Quingly 1-2)— to impart his own principles and gendered philosophies. The morality that Hughes advocates in *Tom Brown*, for example, is influenced by the doctrines of Thomas Arnold, Rugby's headmaster from 1828 to 1841, whose teachings were instrumental in Victorian public school reforms.(4) Through the school story, Hughes educates the male-child on how to build and preserve a masculine body through sports and healthy meals.

<6> Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, attention to the quantity of food that a man consumed was the basis for the general understanding of the individual's primary food requirements (Drummond & Wilbraham 274, 408). Hughes's masculine ideal demanded a diet that could provide

enough fuel to sustain the physique of the growing male-child, the future “captain of industry” as Carlyle famously puts it.(5) A healthy diet, thus, produced vigorous men that could defend the country and that enabled them to meet the masculine standards Hughes so highly endorses.(6) Accordingly, writing about dietary regulations was popular among educationalists, physicians, and philosophers.(7)

<7> Victorian identity was constructed in regards to food preparation and diet. Andrea Broomfield, a historian of food in Victorian ideology, argues that food was celebrated and that “appetite, feasting, and hosting became markers of English culture” (6). The gentry and upper class Victorians regarded food practices as an extension of moral values. What you ate not only situated you in the appropriate rank, as male or female, as child or adult, but it also defined you as English. The attention to diet as part of a male child’s moral, physiological, and psychological development intended to mold their identity to meet the nation’s specific values, as Daniels explains: “[t]o be a proper (human) subject one must eat in a controlled manner, according to cultural rules. Eating, and specifically the cultural imperative to eat correctly, is a significant means by which society controls individual identity” (3). Hence feasting, although a social and celebratory practice, also offered parents and schoolmasters an opportunity to formulate a child’s character and identity. Still, the importance of food for the Victorian individual goes beyond symbolic associations with gender and nationhood. *Tom Brown* depicts a fundamental concern with nutriment—food nourishes the child’s body and mind, and that of his reader’s.

<8> Tom’s escapades at the age of four illustrate Victorian stereotypes of maleness. For the mid-Victorians, gender difference was linked to biology; thus, manliness was branded as a display of physical prowess and of spontaneity (Nodelman 2). Hughes introduces Tom under the conventional view that “almost all English boys love danger” (Hughes 86) and are “wild things” (Nodelman 4). He is a very headstrong, adventurous, and active child, a “heartily strong boy ... given to fighting and escaping from his nurse” and exhibiting “great strength” (Hughes 3). Hughes suggests that Tom’s resistance at this stage is driven by a “want of independence” from the female, a milestone of the Victorian male-child. Tom’s early display of boyhood portrays his resistance to female authority as a biological response by exerting an unregulated agency over his own ingestion:

This want of independence began every morning before breakfast ... Tom had no sort of objection to whey, but he had a decided liking for curds, which were forbidden as unwholesome, and there was seldom a morning that he did not manage to secure a handful of hard curds, in defiance of Charity and of the farmer’s wife. (23)

Hughes’s choice of foods stresses the idea that Tom’s alimentary preferences are first and foremost linked to taste (a “decided liking”). Victorian physicians advocated the importance of a sensible nutrition after a child was weaned (Drummond 445). Hughes’s subsequent use of modifiers like “forbidden” and “unwholesome” to describe the milk curds refer to the understanding of curds and butter as unsuitable for children because of their fat content (Drummond 230). Tom, however, does not recognize whey as nutritious nor does he drink it willingly to honor his mother’s wishes. The creaminess of the curds and whey were appealing to a child’s taste buds (Beeton 606). Likewise, Tom’s incentive to eat a “handful” of the curds every morning depicts the male child’s natural craving for fuel to satisfy the needs of his active body. The nineteenth-century physician declared that physical activity promoted appetite and led to healthy digestion (Combe 28). He is a “robust” and “combative urchin” (22) who must sustain his frame to preserve his strength. Because women were assumed to have more delicate appetites than men, Tom’s ravenous hunger identifies him as one already exhibiting manly qualities.

<9> Hughes considers the “life and the environments of the child” as an essential aspect of Tom’s history through boyhood (21). Whereas children who grew up in the capital during industrialization, where the milk was disease-ridden,(8) Hughes underscores that Tom has immediate access to locally-produced whey: “Master Tom” acquires his whey from the “neighboring farm-house which supplied the Browns, and where, by his mother’s wish, Master Tom went to drink whey, before breakfast” (23). In addition, Hughes’s mention of the whey harkens back to the dietary practices of the pre-industrial nation. Whey, the liquid remaining after milk has been curdled and strained, was the recommended drink for infants throughout the eighteenth century, but was mostly eaten by Victorian children in pudding (Beeton 606, Drummond 231, Velten 130). Hughes relies on the reader’s familiarity with these foods and practices to complement his elevation of the country life and to reassert Tom’s entrance into the gendered specificity of boyhood from the gender generalizations of early childhood.

Social Responsibility & the Veast

<10> The effects of industrialization transformed Victorian social, economic, and dietary lifestyle. Hughes’s text belongs to the “Golden Age of Victorian prosperity” (1850-1875) that experienced economic growth and “best standards of health,” as Clayton and Rowbotham reveal in their new study of Victorian nutrition (1236). The movement away from old established social hierarchies with the rise of the middle classes and the prevalence of the working classes in the city rendered the role of and expectations from the aristocracy and gentry as uncertain. The ideal became to transform the idle gentleman into the industrious and disciplined Victorian man (Danahay 23). Food practices, Burnett states, also went through a radical transformation and the first decades of the nineteenth century experienced the “rise to importance of a virtually new social class [the middle class] whose eating habits, in food at least, approached those of the landed gentry” (39). Critics distinguish Hughes’s intended audience as middle class Victorian public schoolboys (Sanders *ixi*). Hughes’s lengthy narration of the Brown’s family history emphasizes their gentrified background. Hughes’s ambivalence towards rank in *Tom Brown* responds to the period’s transition; he depicts firsthand progressive public school “subjects coalesced from boys of both gentry and middle-class origins” (Burnett 483).(9) The sharing of a meal in *Tom Brown* illustrates the union of English subjects as moral and gendered entities without permanently disrupting the class differences between them. Thus, Tom Brown learns and performs a moral ideal that is both masculine and English while also learning to negotiate his place within a changing society that continues to value rank distinction and appropriate ingestion. The feast, furthermore, is used as a tool to instruct the upper classes in social duties towards members of less privileged classes.

<11> Hughes’s description of the Veast reflects on his dietary, educational and moral doctrines, his masculine ideal, and the ambivalence about class/rank experienced throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The Veast is a yearly event that takes place during Tom’s childhood where boys from neighboring villages gather to watch or participate in activities that would “try the muscles of men’s bodies ... the endurance of their hearts, and to make them rejoice in their strength” (41). These events included sword fighting, wrestling, and jumping sacks (40). Right from the start, the masculine body is built through strenuous physical activity. As the wild nature of boys needs to be subdued without inflicting emasculation, exercise and ‘manly’ age-appropriate games provide these boys with a suitable outlet for their spirited drives. Hughes uses the Veast to impart the idea that communal bonding is essential to become a proactive citizen. The Veast provides the perfect opportunity for boys of all ages, from middle class or gentry upbringing, who were away at school to come back and to reconnect with their country roots and values and to interact with all members of their community (Hughes 28). Throughout the narration of the Veast, the narrator expresses his melancholy for the loss

of old country traditions that encouraged assemblies between gentlemen and farmers (Hughes 41). As members of the gentry, Squire Brown and Madame Brown are responsible for providing the means for that union to take place. Tom's storyline before Rugby thus focuses on his development as a community member.

<12> Class distinction is temporarily disrupted with the public production and feasting of cake and wine. The town's feast enforces those communal values. Every household, regardless of class, would "manag[e] to raise a "feast-cake" and bottle of ginger or raisin wine, which stood on the cottage table ready for all comers...feast-cake is very solid and full of huge raisins" (28). Cake is not used as a nutritional source like milk is; its presence serves a symbolic purpose. The food that these children and the community ingest has a "regional affiliation and heritage" (Broomfield 152) and a motherly and natural attachment to it because they are homemade with local produce.(10) The feast, held in a "green field" (Hughes 29), idealizes the values of the pre-industrial world before "overcivilization and deceitfulness of riches" (Hughes 43) transformed the country's collective traditions. Hughes looks back nostalgically to a social organization of rank that is connected by bonds of mutual responsibility. The cake then becomes a symbol of this unity, a food that they can all ingest to celebrate, remember, and commemorate this solidarity.

<13> Moreover, Squire Brown teaches Tom to integrate and manage the community.(11) Squire Brown's strongest belief is that "a man is to be valued wholly and solely for that which he is in himself, for that which stands up in the four fleshly walls of him, apart from clothes, rank, fortune, and all externals whatsoever" (52). In this way, he encourages Tom to interact with honest and brave sons of lords and ploughmen alike (53). Manhood is therefore as much about caring for one's community as it is about possessing a strong, athletic body. Tom also learns public service and compassion from his mother, who uses food and "comforting drinks" to soothe the "old folks with the rheumatiz" (16), and who advises town folks on how to "pu[t] out their earnings to the best advantage" (28). To offer the labourer classes with both sustenance and support are trademarks and responsibilities of the English gentry. This celebration provides Tom with a glimpse of what national identity entails: duty to England and its people (Hughes 41). Hughes evokes Tom's awareness of social struggles and awakens his determination to work hard to find ways to improve the unfortunate situations of the people (lessons he continues to learn at Rugby). Although the feast of the Vale blurs the lines between rank and class with the communal sharing of cake and wine, it also reinforces class boundaries by not serving meat, a food that only the Browns could easily afford. It is a feast on cake and other goods, not an extravagant protein-filled meal like the one Tom has on his way to Rugby.

Consuming the Masculine Ideal

<14> Before Rugby, Tom's character development is influenced by his mother's instruction. Yet, as the male-child grows, he must cease to identify with the mother and, in exchange, learn what Daniels calls a "boy's masculine gender identification" (104). Tom's moral values begin at home, but he must learn manliness and moral duty in an environment where he is surrounded by his equals "in age and strength" (Hughes 57). Hughes removes Tom from the maternal space and places him in the fraternal/masculine environment of the public school because "[i]n no place in the world has individual character more weight than at a public school" (167). Rugby becomes a link to tradition and nationhood while building honesty, manliness, and self-governance through food and sport (Hughes 143). Tom's meals help him meet the objective of the Victorian male-child: they provide the tools to fight infection and help him procure a sturdy physique in preparation for the substantial demands of work and responsibility in adulthood.(12) Hughes's attention to Tom's meat-centered meals at Rugby as being both wholesome

and restorative maintains and negotiates the connection between work, health/nutrition, and national/individual/and gendered identity.

<15> Justus Liebig's and Jonathan Pereira's influential work on the chemical composition of food (1843-1848) changed the way Victorians thought of nutrition. Even if there was not a concrete understanding of minerals and vitamins, the public understood good health as primarily related to digestion (Broomfield 46). They also recognized the importance of protein and the use of calories as a measurement of food's energy (Broomfield 85). The term "protein" was used liberally to refer to eggs, milk, meat, and other animal foods like fish and poultry (Drummond 415).⁽¹³⁾ The word "meat" is more prominent in mid-Victorian literature and is often a generic term for beef, lamb, mutton, pork, veal, venison, ox, and, sometimes, any other flesh from mammals (*Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* 111). Mid-Victorian writers often use the word "meat" to evoke its dietary qualities, whereas remarks to a specific cut of meat refers to Victorian cultural practices and beliefs.

<16> To eat meat was "considered a mark of a good diet" and its complete absence was rare (Clayton & Rowbotham 1243).⁽¹⁴⁾ Meat, a food emblematic of virility and masculine prowess, "nourishing food par excellence, strong and strong-making, giving vigour, blood, and health" (Broglia 190), is the recommended food for the Victorian male. Tom's dinner remains in conversation with the wholesomeness of food. Nonetheless, the supper at the Peacock introduces Tom to patriarchal traditions:

Tom and his father had alighted at the Peacock, at about seven in the evening; and having heard with unfeigned joy the order at the bar, of *steaks* and oyster sauce for supper in half an hour, and seen his father seated cozily by the bright fire in the coffee-room with the paper in his hand...Then being summoned for supper, he had regaled himself in one of the bright blue boxes of the Peacock coffee-room, on the *beef-steak* and unlimited oyster-sauce, and brown stout (tasted for the first time)—a day to be marked for ever by Tom with a white stone. (71, my emphasis)

The use of word "regaled" to describe Tom's actions and reactions draws attention to the celebratory overtones of this dinner. This is indeed a special moment for Tom: he is not required to follow his mother's dietary recommendations. He can partake in a meal that is prepared for adults. Instead of milk, the drink of his infancy, he tastes the favored brown stout. Hughes uses the word "summoned" to stress that this supper is so alluring that it induces an "unfeigned joy" in Tom. In addition, Hughes's mention of beef-steak conjures its association with manliness and patriotic sentiment.⁽¹⁵⁾ Oyster fisheries were revered in England so "unlimited" access to oyster sauce intensifies the nationalistic allusion (Beeton 229). Tom's supper "marks" his growth and bolsters his English masculine traits

<17> The meat-centered dinner also provides Tom with the opportunity to bond with his father outside of the home. The scene is depicted as serene; the father seating comfortably reading the newspaper and the child exploring the scenery. Hughes's declaration that this was a day to be "marked for ever by Tom with a white stone" (71) is hallmarked by Squire Brown's powerful speech ("You tell the truth, keep a brave and kind heart, and never listen to or say anything you wouldn't have your mother and sister hear" [72]) and by Tom's decision that all "kissing should now cease between them" (72). The resolution to stop greeting his father with a kiss does not distance father and son, it rather strengthens that relationship through male-male bonding in a homo-social environment. Squire Brown fulfills his duty as "father to the boy" (21) and introduces Tom to the responsibilities of boyhood.

<18> Tom begins his journey, and his first act of independence is exercised during another popular Victorian English practice: breakfast. A full English breakfast, Broomfield argues, is one of the best known and appreciated by English citizens and continues to be a Victorian legacy (23). The preparation of toast, for example, was elaborate and demanded full attention.⁽¹⁶⁾ A typical Victorian breakfast consisted of eggs, bacon, sausage, an “assortment of breads and various cold dishes” (Broomfield 23). Hughes participates in this English tradition and names the chapter heading of Tom’s second milestone with the word “Breakfast” (78) in order to highlight the importance of this meal for Tom’s identity formulation. Tom’s long journey is bearable with “the prospect of breakfast” (78) waiting for him at the next lodge, his last stop before Rugby. A succulent and hearty breakfast is served to commemorate his journey into English manhood:

And here comes breakfast...The table covered with the whitest of cloths and of china, and bearing a pigeon-pie, ham, round of cold boiled beef cut from a mammoth ox, and the great loaf of household bread on a wooden trencher. And here comes in the stout head waiter, puffing under a tray of hot viands; kidneys and a steak, transparent rashers and poached eggs, buttered toast and muffins, coffee and tea, all smoking hot. The table can never hold it all; the cold meats are removed to the sideboard, they were only put on for show and to give us an appetite. And now fall on, gentlemen all. It is a well-known sporting-house, and the breakfasts are famous. (79)

Tom is served with three different proteins including poultry, pork, and beef (steak, ox), foods that, as Juliette De Soto explores in her study of poverty and female starvation, were not recommended for women (n.p.). Tom’s breakfast is masculine, and its relevance is enhanced by the need to have a corpulent man serve this emblematic abundance of masculine prowess and virility on a table that is already overwhelmed by the weight of the meal. Cold meat, a leftover food, was often fried and recommended as a nursery food (Broomfield 46), but the fact that its presence serves as a “performance” rather than as symbolic or nutritional highlights the ingestion of the fresh beef and its importance in Tom’s transition to manhood. Tom takes part in this iconic English meal: “[t]he image of the well-fed Englishman, weaned on beef and ale, or bread and cheese ... an integral part of British national identity” (Cozzi 41). For a moment, Tom joins the adult masculine world; he feels self-sufficient for the first time in his life when he pays for his meal from his own pocket (Hughes 79). In addition, Susan Honeyman argues that it is through food that the child learns to negotiate his or her place in society. Food, then, becomes an important apparatus to “harness a power” and “enables the young to define themselves” (57). Tom defines himself by eating meat and by paying for his meal. Hughes is complicit in reinforcing the English masculine ideal because his readers learn that to be like Tom Brown, they must eat like Tom Brown.

<19> The “second milestone” (Hughes 87) in Tom’s journey to manhood occurs when he is introduced to football once he arrives at Rugby. East, who is a “genuine specimen—frank, hearty, and good-natured” (91), teaches Tom all of Rugby’s ways and bigotries before the celebratory banquet takes place. The chapter provides an exhaustive description of the football match in anticipation of the big wholesome culinary reward. The game continues to reinforce the idea that masculinity is defined by physical dexterity: “a struggling mass of boys, and a leather ball, which seems to excite them all to great fury, as a red rag does bull” (105). The fierceness of football adds to Hughes’s delineation of English boyhood as being driven to danger, limb breaking, and drowning (86). After such a physical endeavor, it is only fitting to replenish the body with a hearty meal. The food is purchased from Sally’s kitchen, a “small house, half a parlour, half a shop” (166) that caters to all the Rugby boys and other men living on or around campus. Hughes prepares his reader for the feast ahead by opening his chapter with a food

reference from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "—Some food we had" (qtd in Hughes 114). The epigraph connects food with tradition and Englishness while it also highlights the importance of what the boys are about to devour after the game: sausage, potatoes, bread, and butter. Indeed, some food these boys have. Hughes pays closer attention to the feast that occurs before the celebratory supper to distinguish how the dietary practices of the older and more experienced schoolboys differs from that of the young ones in training. Pater Brooke's anti-bullying campaign takes precedence over exhaustive descriptions of their dinner, but the narrator only records that all students had "bread and cheese, and beer" (119). By providing a feast for just Tom, his future classmates, and the younger pupils, Hughes brings our attention to the feast as ceremonial and essential in Tom's masculine development.

<20> The sausage has a double symbolic purpose; it is restorative and manly. Sausage was a popular nursery food and it was considered appropriate for children because it was cheaper, soft and easier to chew for a child's delicate teeth (which also speaks to Tom's excitement over the oyster sauce, it softens the meat). Other cuts of meat were very expensive and more elaborate meat-dishes like steak and roast beef were reserved for the breadwinner of the family, for the one who "control[s] the natural environment" (Fiddes 158). The children feast on sausage rather than on beef and steak to allocate their position on the masculine and social scale: they are not at an age where their labor earns them the right to treat themselves to expensive and manly culinary delicacies. Nonetheless, Tom and East experience independence and manliness by the act of purchasing their own meat, by cooking it themselves, and by hosting this grand feast after the match.

<21> An important way in which children demonstrate this development towards manhood is by practicing fiscal responsibility. Tom pays for his breakfast on his journey, but, at Rugby good economy, organization, and restraint must be practiced. Arnold advises against boys surrendering to peer pressure and spending their parents' money "liberally" (53). Tom's first meal at Rugby tests his application of economic restraint. Tom is "uncommonly hungry" and his "new purse and money burnt in his pocket" (115). After the game, when he finds out that all the other boys do not have enough money to spend on anything other than potatoes, Tom purchases a "pound of the most particular sausages" (166). Tom's expenditure challenges Arnold's teachings, yet his decision to share the sausages with all his peers reveals his moral inclinations. Tom's purchase is an exertion of selfless generosity, whereas East's proud and grandiose response foreshadows his weakness of character, "few, at this period of the half-year, could live up to a pound of Porter's sausages, and East was in great magnificence upon the strength of theirs" (118). Hughes justifies Tom's expense by placing him at the center of the table as a benefactor: "Tom imparted the sausages in small bits to many neighbors, and thought he had never tasted such good potatoes or seen such jolly boys" (118). Tom also gets the opportunity to apply social consciousness and leadership when he rations and "impart[s]" the prized sausages. Tom must formulate an identity that encompasses how to be a good peer to become a good citizen after graduation.

<22> Arnold's treatises and sermons placed male-male bonding as central to his educational system (Weaver 456). Hughes transforms an ordinary school meal, "a quarter of a loaf of bread and pat of butter," into an extravagant spectacle filled with "festive cups of tea" and "jolly boys" to illustrate the boys' camaraderie (117, 188). The kids learn from Tom's generosity and express their gratitude by adding their own meals to the spread: "baked potatoes, a herring, sprats, or something of the sort" (117). Hughes refers to these side dishes as a "further luxury" to highlight the transformative effects of gathering and sharing. Cozzi talks about the importance of feasting as a bonding experience and states: "food is central to the notion of bonding and community—and, ultimately, fighting—that the word companion is derived from *panis*, the Latin word for bread, and community is rooted in shared munitions" (7, emphasis in original). The consolidation of these provisions mirrors and commemorates

Tom's integration into the school community. Feasting sequences in literature prevent the child reader from questioning the validity of these ideals by distracting them with, what Daniels calls, the "visceral pleasures" created in the reading experience (4).

<23> The last ceremonial culinary scene in Tom's life happens before he graduates from Rugby after a game of cricket. Of course, a festive dance and feast follows the game (even though the opposing team is victorious); only this time, Tom is not in the mood to join the festivity and chooses to spend the evening over cake and tea with his Master (360). Tom's last meal is as delectable as the previous ones: "The cake was newly baked, and all rich and flaky" (361). The reference to cake brings Tom and the reader back to Tom's childhood, where his first idea of nationhood was formed with "feast-cake" and when he leaves home for the first time, at the age of eight, to attend private school and his mother bakes the "biggest cake ever seen" in the village (62). The image of the cake on the table, the view, and the sound of the kettle convey a serene environment where deep conversation can take place. It reminds Tom of home and of his duty: he is ready and eager to contribute to the betterment of the nation by practicing his civic duty (363). Rather than having Tom feast on meat with his peers on his last night at Rugby, Hughes chooses a more intimate dinner to emphasize his masculine growth and character maturity. The meal is more informal and does not include food that symbolizes manhood because Tom is already part of the community and embodies the English masculine ideal: he is "grown into a young man nineteen years old, a praepostor and captain of the eleven and let us hope as much wiser as he is bigger" (351). Tom becomes the iconic Victorian masculine hero who transforms his "sociability" into "social responsibility" (Sanders xxiv). Thus, Tom is ready to begin his adult life at Oxford and his official send off happens the "next morning *after breakfast*" when he says his "hearty goodbyes," takes the train, and leaves Rugby with "all the confidence of a young traveler" (367, my emphasis). Tom's new journey, once again, is commemorated with food. The two most important moments of his young adult life take place over cake and after breakfast just as the ones from his childhood happen over tea and a meat-centered dinner.

<24> The feasting sequences in *Tom Brown* illustrate Tom's evolution from rebellious child to responsible adult. The sharing of a meal also provides Tom with the opportunity to learn about his local and school community and to adopt the moral and masculine values of his contemporaries. Food similarly allows for lines between ranks to be temporarily disrupted to promote and instruct duties to the community and to the nation. The school setting provides an ideal masculine environment where the child can engage in manly socialization just as their adult counterparts do at work or at public dining spaces like chophouses and inns. As addressed in the introduction, the prominent presence of food in subsequent school stories including the work of Farrar, Burnett, and Rowling, brings attention to how their texts are indebted to Hughes in more ways than just plotting technique. Hughes's successors explore anxieties over child starvation, female identity, and class discrimination; yet, their work also depicts exquisite feasts to represent Englishness just as Hughes does.

Endnotes

(1) "Fathers feared for their own manhood. They were often even more concerned about the manhood of their sons ... Somehow boys had to be prepared for the insecurities of adult life within the security of the family, and equipped with a confident manliness after passing many years in the feminine ambience of home" (Tosh 98).[\(A\)](#)

(2) In *Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature*, only one author, Jenny Webb, briefly mentions *Tom Brown* as pivotal to the development of Muscular Christianity but does not include the novel in her analysis of food. (▲)

(3) For Evangelical masculinity refer to Hall (1993) & Puccio (1995). For athletic enthusiasm see Cordery (1985), Harvery (2002), and Kidd (2013). For studies in bullying and homoerotic desire see MM (2002); for *Tom Brown's* literary influence see Steege (2007) & Galway (2012). (▲)

(4) "Arnold's rethinking of the exclusively grammatical emphasis of the nineteenth-century public school classical curriculum; his reemphasis of the pastoral bonds between masters and boys, especially through the reinvigoration of the tradition of the headmaster performing the school's weekly chapel service; and his encouragement of mentoring bonds among older and younger boys through a revamped, and presumably meritocratic, prefect disciplinary system all served as influential educational templates for Victorian public school reform" (Weaver 455-456). (▲)

(5) Daniel Danahay also refers to Carlyle's expression in *Gender at Work in Victorian Culture*: "The 'Gospel of Work' implied that the upper classes were indolent and that their parasitical position in the economy should be supplanted by self-disciplined, [and] hard working 'Captains of Industry' to use Carlyle's famous term" (Danahay 23). (▲)

(6) In their historical study of the mid-Victorian diet to extrapolate cost-effective methods to improve the health of twenty first-century public, Paul Clayton and Judith Rowbotham write:

Britain and its world-dominating empire were supported by a workforce, an army and a navy comprised of individuals who were healthier, fitter and stronger than we are today ... Our recent research indicates that the mid-Victorians' good health was entirely due to their superior diet. This period was, nutritionally speaking, an island in time; one that was created and subsequently squandered by economic and political forces ... The health and vitality of the British population during this period was reflected in the work forces and armed forces that powered the transformation of the urban landscape at home, and drove the great expansion of the British Empire abroad." (1235-6) (▲)

(7) One of the most influential educationalists who followed Greek and philosophical doctrine was John Locke, who dedicates an entire chapter on the appropriate diet for young boys in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. (▲)

(8) Whey-houses in England throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century were very popular in both the country and the capital (Drummond 141). Nonetheless, throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the milk that was delivered to towns was of terrible quality and full of disease. By 1850, the development of the railway allowed for country milk to be brought to London. Towns became dependent on milk from the country districts after the cattle plague of 1863 (Drummond 354-5). (▲)

(9) Burnett categorizes the division of rank by 1850 as follows: aristocracy (landed), gentry (country families, squires, untitled/freehold farmers), middle class (professions- law, medicine, the Church, merchants), the working class (town workers- factories), and the poor (labourer) (*Plenty & Want*). The diet of the lower and working classes greatly differed from that of the middle and aristocratic classes. For impoverished families struggling with famine, food did not hold the same meaning; food was both a

luxury and a necessity (Broomfield 26). The food sequences in *Tom Brown* are indicative of Hughes' intended audience being gentry and middle-class young males.(^)

(10)Daniels discusses the importance of the organic meal and its association with the maternal in Burnett's *The Secret Garden* ("Wholesome Food, Wholesome Children" 25).(^)

(11)"The gentry provided the lesser leaders of local society and, through their appointment to the magistracy, largely controlled county administration" (Burnett 65).(^)

(12)For an account of the development and health of Victorian children see Thomas E. Jordan's *Victorian Childhoods: Themes and Developments*.(^)

(13)Gerardus Johannes Mulder, an influential chemist, coined the term "proteine" in 1837. He defined it as a fundamental and "complex, nitrogen-containing component of all living matter, both plant and animal" (Drummond 415).(^)

(14)In accordance to their income and cooking amenities, Victorians consumed meat in various forms like soups, broth, meat on the bone, and offal (Clayton & Rowbotham 1243). Victorian women were also acquainted with the best cooking methods recommended to optimize the meat's nutritional properties.(^)

(15)In his historical survey of meat, Nick Fiddes claims that "beef-steak—cow's muscle—remains the most popular choice of entrée in British restaurants, and its preparation is a matter of great concern" (90).(^)

(16)Broomfield underlines the importance of breakfasts and its preparation in the English household: "the mistress of the house was to showcase orderliness, punctuality, diligence, and efficiency along with presenting the food...the quality of the breakfast toast could be used as a yardstick by which others measured the mistress's faithful execution of her duties, and consequently, how worthy she was of her privileged social station" (26).(^)

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