

### The ties that bind

I was shocked to read Bartleby's unfounded claim that the tie was "an impractical garment that constricted male necks for a century" (May 4th). True, the tie is no longer regularly used to protect the neck during close combat, but it retains a vital function for the modern male: wiping and cleaning one's eyeglasses.

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Glenn O'Brien observed in "How to Be a Man", that the necktie's "almost transcendental pointlessness" is, in fact, its essential quality. A necktie's sole purpose is beauty. Or, as Mr O'Brien put it: "The functionless tie is to the wardrobe what the functionless soul is to the body. It is pure poetry."

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The demise of the male tie is somewhat premature. It has a function that is necessary and desirable: the partial cover-up of an extended gut, of which we have many.

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