

Editorial

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I am pleased to introduce *Boyhood Studies*, Volume 11, Issue 1. This issue's authors unanimously invite an appreciation of the many regional, temporal and contextual inflections of manliness-in-the-making. After all: "Among boys, as among men, there are 'all sorts and conditions;' environment moulds them" (Anon. 1890: 147). This merits a bit of intercontinental time-travel. *Ecce puer*: from Lord Baden-Powell's and American contemporaries' middle ages to late nineteenth-century Mexico's French Third Republic, back to Baden-Powell and into the Great War, and back again to present-day Mexico. In Mexico, on both visits, we are travelling back and forth as well, between the rural and urban experience.

Kent Baxter's contribution, "Becoming a Gentleman: Adolescence, Chivalry, and Turn-of-the-Century Youth Movements," details how the medieval motif of chivalry became, with the endorsement of G. Stanley Hall, appropriated by turn-of-the-twentieth-century youth movements and novel theories of adolescence. Recapitulation theory and a broader fin-de-siècle medieval, and specifically Arthurian, revivalism (e.g., Bryden 2005; Mancoff 2014; Richmond 1998) found in chivalry "a metaphor for human development" benefiting new narratives of coming-of-age in an equally changing and precarious modern context. Chivalry provided a sense of privileged ancestry and a system of codification of masculine values, allowing a boy, in characteristic recapitulationist vertigo, to "relearn what is already natural to him"—to withstand the kernel corruptions of modern society yet, at the same time, thrive in such a society. Baxter skillfully teases out the contradictions and strictures in Lord Baden-Powell's attempts "to contemporize chivalry" in the British Boy Scout movement, which assume cultural relief when compared to the case of William Byron Forbush's contemporaneous American youth organization for boys, the Knights of King Arthur.

Carlos Zúñiga Nieto's "The Concept of Sentimental Boyhood: The Emotional Education of Boys in Mexico during the Early Porfiriato,



1876–1884” documents evolving concepts of sentimental boyhood during the early Porfirio Díaz regime in Mexico (1876–1910), known to Mexicans as the Porfiriato. Said concepts were advanced especially in the period’s child-rearing periodicals, articulating what Nieto documents to be a “uniquely Mexican” standard in valuing emotionality pedagogically, a reckoning, Nieto shows, drawing on the towering work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Nieto documents influences of Third Republic French educators on their Mexican counterparts, highlighting clear contrasts between valuation of boys’ emotionality across urban and rural contexts, as exiled Cuban émigrés (especially) promoted European notions of boyhood and childhood in Yucatán, while in Mexico City, Christian fear of divine judgment reigned as key pedagogical experts’ recommended vehicle in promoting obedience.

In “‘Be Prepared!’ (But Not Too Prepared): Scouting, Soldiering, and Boys’ Roles in World War I,” Lucy Andrew sheds a historical light on Scouts different from Baxter’s by interpreting idealized images of the male body in Lord Baden-Powell’s 1908 *Scouting for Boys* (1908) and editions of his movement’s official magazine *The Scout*, leading up to and into early World War I. Andrew shows that representations of bodily resolve in the British Scout literature responded to extant homeland anxieties concerning physical deterioration, such as voiced in a 1904 interdepartmental report. Where future roles for Scouts in the Great War were pervasively alluded to in Scout literature, they were destined to remain problematic and embattled. A “fine line” had to be walked between preparation for defense of empire and respecting laws banning underage enlistment. While the movement, *ab ovo*, distinguished itself from military youth movements, its foregrounding of physical ability implicitly tied it to contemporary, and increasingly real, concerns for soldier qualification, fitness, and resilience. Some boys ended up illicitly enlisting and even serving in World War I, writes Andrew; however, most fulfilled “supporting and, sometimes, hypothetical roles.”

In their article “Social Representations of Masculinity in Mexican Youth’s Creative Narratives,” Robyn Singleton and colleagues examine generational representations of masculinity among rural Mexican youth. They were able to document young authors’ critical engagements with age-honored constructions of machismo. Many favor a companionate relationships model, mirroring historical trends in urbanization, although the breadwinner position was found to be an enduringly defining feature of masculinity. Among the significant dimensions of this study are adolescents’ narrative ties between substance abuse and gender “role” fulfillment: older generations

were portrayed as failing and younger ones as able to overcome abusive patterns, as measured in their eventual resolve in successfully heading families. Narratives notably did not significantly differ by authors' gender, although it would definitely be worthwhile, as the authors suggest, to assess implications for adolescents' actual health and health practices.

Concluding this issue is a number of book reviews honoring the interdisciplinary reach of the field. Six reviewers discuss recent additions to the fields of children's literary and biography studies, mental health, sociology of sports, social history, and postcolonial studies.

References

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