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In his fabulously comprehensive essay, "Children are Hiding in Plain Sight in the History of US Foreign Relations," Brian Rouleau has provided a great service to practitioners of diplomatic history and childhood studies, two groups of scholars that would benefit from spending a little quality time together. Although Rouleau's plea for a robust interdisciplinary conversation is equally valuable for scholars in the histories of youth and diplomacy, his article is clearly aimed at the latter. He makes use of "The Soapbox" feature of *Modern American History* to argue that it is time for foreign relations histories to include the youngest of citizens. Gender, race, ethnicity, and social class have all become powerful lenses through which scholars examine United States foreign relations. This article synthesizes recent scholarship in the history of youth, and gives diplomatic historians a roadmap for including age as a meaningful category of analysis in their work.

The history of childhood and youth in the United States is still a relatively young discipline, although it has been growing exponentially in the past few years. Like many emerging fields, it spent its initial decade defining key analytic concepts, amassing a canonical historiography, and building connections to established fields. Rouleau's article recognizes all of these foundational ventures while highlighting the field's nascent, and growing, interest in the involvement of youths in politics and international affairs. Like all good synthetic essays, this piece traces the broad outlines of the most current scholarship, provides readers with a thorough introduction to the field, and points to areas where new scholarship could advance the conversation.

The article's first section focuses on children's literature as a form of "diplomatic discourse." Children's literature as a field predates the history of youth, and thus the work of literary scholars offers a stable and finely crafted platform for many historical studies. As in each of the article's three sections, the story of children's politically tinged literature progresses chronologically, with key thematic concepts introduced along the way. Historians of the nation-state will be on familiar ground here, given the prominent role of print media in such field-defining works as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.[1] If adult citizens are inclined to feel kinship in an imagined national community thanks to press messages, why wouldn't such tactics work even better on youth, who are widely believed to be both naturally imaginative and uniquely malleable? Rouleau touches on the basics: the role of popular dime-novel Westerns in legitimizing territorial expansion, the vast collection of youth serial fiction and its penchant for plotlines celebrating imperial and colonial adventures - *The Rover Boys in the Jungle, or, Stirring Adventures in Africa* is a typical title, and the synergy between governmental anti-Communist messaging and wildly popular Cold War comic books published by the likes of Marvel and DC.[2]

[1] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).

[2] Arthur M. Winfield. *The Rover Boys in the Jungle* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1899).

Despite the power of youth literature to abet the creation of zealous patriots, the article is careful to discuss important caveats. Not all messages were geared toward fomenting jingoism and American exceptionalism. On this point, however, Rouleau's counterexamples come up a bit short. I am not certain that the tepid internationalism of *Parents Magazine* and *Seventeen* can stack up against President Harry Truman's cameo appearance in *Captain Marvel Adventures*, or the image of Captain America delivering a knockout punch to Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler on the cover of the inaugural issue in March, 1941. More compelling—and for scholars of children's literature, fundamentally important—is the article's caution that young readers do not necessarily ingest adult-created content as it was intended to be consumed. In an argument that Rouleau returns to at the end of the piece, he reminds us that youth, like adults, are selective readers of literature. Children have agency, and use it when they read and perhaps even more when they participate in activities designed for them by adults—whether it be in schools, church groups, or recreational clubs.

In the second half of the article, readers are introduced to the myriad organizations that, in the latter half of the twentieth century especially, accounted for the "institutionalization of children's diplomacy" (8). World War I coincidently happened at the same time that major Anglo-American youth organizations were launched. Scouting, for both boys and girls, was given an enormous boost by home-front mobilization; indeed, both groups were able to define themselves as critical purveyors of patriotism and civic duty during the first war in which American children were mobilized as *children*. From this platform of civic responsibility, youth were posed to be included in their nation's rise to global power. In the aftermath of the war, all the foreign policy debates of the "American Century" played out in youth organizations, and clubs from 4-H to the Junior Red Cross aligned their members with positions from transnational anti-Communism to internationalism.

While it is important to affirm that messages to youth ran the gamut of political opinions, it is perhaps even more necessary to recall that adults who ostensibly occupied similar ideological positions did not necessarily agree on how those messages should be communicated to youth. For example, leaders of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), as noted by Mischa Honeck in his aptly titled *Our Frontier Is the World: The Boy Scouts in the Age of American Ascendency*, rarely missed an opportunity to align themselves with U.S. imperial adventures.[3] Yet they expressed more than a little apprehension about youth serial fiction that on the surface reflected similar perspectives. BSA librarian Franklin Mathiews wrote an article, "Blowing out the Boy's Brains," that excoriated the fiction that echoed many values undergirding the Scouts' own organization.[4] Thus, while Rouleau is justified in presenting youth histories of the Cold War as converging on a common theme - "Even Disneyland, he argues, "can be reimagined as another brick in the national security state's edifice"—we are well advised to imagine this wall as porous, if not breachable (15).

In the end, this article reaffirms the insights of such iconic texts as *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities*.[5] Scholars of children and youth, and the texts they produce, may still be sidelined in many disciplines, relegated to the proverbial kids' table. But such omissions are increasingly difficult to justify for historians who want to understand the full story of U.S. foreign relations. If generals (and diplomats) are indeed always fighting the last war, perhaps they do so, in part, because of lessons learned in their youths. It is time scholars take these lessons seriously.

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[3] Mischa Honeck, *Our Frontier Is the World: The Boy Scouts in the Age of American Ascendency* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2016).

[4] Franklin K. Mathiews, "Blowing out the Boy's Brains," *The Outlook*, November 18, 1914, 652-654.

[5] Anna Mae Duane, ed. *The Children's Table: Childhood Studies and the Humanities* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013).

Growing Girls: The Natural Origins of Girls' Organizations in America (Rutgers University Press, 2009). Her current work is on youth nationalism and patriotism in the U.S.