



Roughhouse Magazine

Roughhouse Magazine is a return to a better time for boy's magazines. Inspired by the "Boy's Own" magazines of the 1800s and Scout Life's older issues, we aim to form today's boys into tomorrow's men by grounding them in the real. Every issue of *Roughhouse* is beautiful, sturdy, and crafted with care, filled with stories of heroism, projects, and games.



Photo courtesy of Roughhouse Magazine: <https://roughhousemag.com/>

ROUGHHOUSE MAGAZINE: FORMATION BY IMITATION

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ABSTRACT

Roughhouse Magazine is a monthly publication for boys aged 10–18, developed in response to a perceived shortage of trustworthy, engaging, and formative reading material for male readers. This brief report explains the literary influences behind the magazine, its educational purpose, and its use of imitation as a model for character formation. It describes how historical and fictional stories, science and mechanics articles, projects, and games are combined to encourage virtue, curiosity, creativity, and participation beyond digital screens. The article also reflects on the challenges of establishing the publication as a sustainable business and argues that independent print media can offer families a constructive alternative within youth culture while supporting reading habits and meaningful engagement between boys and their families.

Keywords: boys' literature, character formation, youth media, reading, Roughhouse Magazine



The Author's Formation

Most endeavours are pushed into reality by a number of motivations, all of which underlie the actual project, but which come into being at different points in its life. *Roughhouse Magazine*, the new monthly publication for boys ages 10-18, got an identity of its own on a day I do not remember, likely in one of those moments of passing thought that often assail one on a walk, or while listening to music, or even as a daydream. Its true origins, however, lie years earlier. My family is a family of readers, and a quite traditional family, and so I grew up reading a great deal of somewhat older literature for boys. I have early memories of reading the *Tintin* series of Comics by Belgian author Hergé, of paging through volumes of WWII-era British comics and stories, and of positively devouring Louis L'Amour Westerns and Alistair MacLean adventure novels.

I also grew up reading magazines. The *LEGO Club Magazine* was a constant source of excitement - I would check the mailbox each day waiting for it to come.

So, it was quite natural, really, when, some months ago, I realised it would be an excellent thing if there were some magazines that boys could look forward to, that families could trust, and that contained writing that was actually worth reading. The magazines I grew up reading, after all, were really not worth much. *Boy's Life* and *Lego Club* were things I looked forward to, but when I actually received them, I would page through to the few sections I truly enjoyed, skipping much of duller contents. They were filled mostly with bright images and banal information, and little that was of interest to an active, imaginative boy.

I approached my brother with the magazine idea, and when he, a strong skeptic of commercial ideas, said that not only would he actually pay for such a publication, but he thought many others would as well, I knew I had something.

Formation as Purpose

While my motivation in creating *Roughhouse* is not entirely unselfish, as the opportunity to make a living writing things I enjoy is a great opportunity, neither do I do this work just for myself. A magazine of this sort is something badly needed, both by boys and by their parents. In our current culture, where much of the media and literature is either filled with sexual themes and content or passive and effeminate, literature which parents can give their children without hesitation is a rare thing, and the guarantee of monthly reading material that is clean, enjoyable, and exciting is a gift I would greatly like to provide. Beyond the power to occupy children safely, however, is education. Reading is a deeply formative activity, and good formation is something badly lacking these days. Further, children, and teen and preteen boys especially, are rightly sceptical of explicitly educational content. That's why I think a turn to literature as a formative medium will be of great help to parents.



Formation by Imitation

If you are what you eat, your mind is what you read. Man, after all, is an imitative creature. We create by imitation, and we are created by it. As I've written elsewhere, art is fundamentally imitative, re-creating the natural world through reason and imagination, and producing something new that emphasises what is of importance. That emphasis on the essential elements of the world is the main way that we learn by imitation, at least in the context of literature (of course, the examples of language and moral formation from role models are also important). Hence, providing children with stories that inspire them, and with an avenue to act out that inspiration, are key to building up the next generations of men. *Roughhouse Magazine* is written to do exactly that, and this is the secondary motivation I referred to above, one which came about later on, but which now guides the entire publication process. The magazine contains stories, both historical and fictional, written to inspire a love of virtue, honour, and heroism. It follows that up with articles on science and mechanics, and with projects that allow boys to live what they've seen by building and experimenting. Finally, each issue contains a number of games to be played, from sports to card games, to provide something constructive and enjoyable they can do in the real world, providing them something other than iPad screens.

Forming the Business, and the Future

None of this is possible, as I'm sure you know, for free. Building a business has been a fascinating project for me, and there are a number of elements in this. Much of that is generic: building a website (you can visit it here, and subscribe: <https://roughhousemag.com>), finding printers, and so on. Other elements are more exciting: *Roughhouse Magazine*, if it succeeds, need not be the end of this project of formation, and I hope to eventually produce more than just periodicals. Either way, however, this work has filled me with real optimism for the future of men, and of our society and culture. There are many more good men building good things than I had initially thought. I believe the future lies in developing parallel institutions that rely less on the façade of the digital and ethereal and more on the true, the good, the beautiful and the real.

AUTHOR PROFILE



Dominic Andres is the editor and publisher of *Roughhouse Magazine*, a new publication inspired by the *Boy's Own* magazines of the 19th century. He also writes fiction and non-fiction and has been published by Altitude Press, Catholic Exchange, and others. His past work includes essays on philosophy and politics, coverage of scientific advancements, and historical narrative.

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