

The Librarian Lion: Constructing Children's Literature Through Connections, Capital, and Criticism (1906–1941)

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While much has been written about the pioneering children's librarian Anne Carroll Moore, little has been written about her role as a *de facto* literary agent. As such, Moore was an innovator not only in children's librarianship, but also in the field of children's publishing. This paper analyzes Moore's letters at the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library and uncovers evidence of her agenting role. Letters written to Moore from authors and illustrators like Greville Macdonald, Walter de la Mare, Leonard Leslie Brooke, Dorothy Lathrop, Florence Crannell Means, and Beatrix Potter demonstrate Moore's involvement—from previewing manuscripts, to placing them with editors, to reviewing finished books, and finally, to selecting works for the library's children. Moore's innovative mentoring work with authors defines her as a leader whose reach stretched from the library to the world of publishing, as she helped shape the burgeoning genre of children's literature.

Keywords: Historical research, children's librarianship, children's publishing, agenting, Anne Carroll Moore

Introduction and Context

Using the Anne Carroll Moore Papers at the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the New York Public Library, this paper focuses on the formative period in the history of children's librarianship and publishing during Anne Carroll Moore's reign at the New York Public Library (1906–1941), and on Anne Carroll Moore herself, a key player in the establishment of a burgeoning field, who served as children's librarian, critic, and mentor and advisor—and as virtual literary agent—to authors and illustrators. During that time, children's literature was beginning to acquire what Bourdieu (1984) refers to as “cultural capital.” Children's books were nearly on par with literature for adults as objects containing cultural value. Children's literature was reviewed and criticized, starting with Anne Carroll

Moore's “The Three Owls” column in *The New York Herald Tribune*, and was considered to be an entity powerful enough to shape children's minds. Publishers realized that the cultural capital inherent in children's literature could be exchanged for economic capital, and formed children's departments as part of their editorial programs starting with editor Louise Seaman Bechtel at Macmillan's children's department in 1919.

In that context, this paper focuses on the “Librarian Lion,” Anne Carroll Moore, who was a central figure during that foundational period, rising from librarian to primary gatekeeper in the field of children's literature, determining through her reviews and criticism which books were worthy of inclusion in the canon of quality children's literature, and serving as a gatekeeper, connecting would-be authors and illustrators with editors at publishing

houses (several of whom she had initially trained as children's librarians). Moore's partnerships with authors, illustrators, publishers, editors, trade organizations, booksellers, and other librarians, at home and abroad, and her role as one of the first critics and reviewers of children's literature, posited her at the center of a sphere of influence. In her role as mentor, intermediary, and eccentric shaper-of-culture (evidenced through letters from authors and illustrators written to her wooden doll "Nicholas"), she played a strategic role in connecting authors and illustrators with editors, and consulting with those authors and illustrators at every stage of the literary process, from manuscript to finished book, to critical reception and awards. Based on the large number of authors and illustrators who corresponded with her who went on to win major awards, Anne Carroll Moore might even have played a subtle role in influencing award recognition. For example, award committee members might have paid special attention to books that received favorable reviews by Moore. And Moore championed those whose work she liked.

This paper analyzes letters written to Moore from authors, illustrators, editors, and publishers and uncovers patterns that reveal her role as a *de facto* (albeit unpaid) literary agent. In her work on the rise of the field of agenting, Mary Ann Gillies (2007) writes that by the 1870s, the professionalization of the author in Britain had created the need for a middleman. According to Gillies, the future agent A.P. Watt launched his career by connecting (free-of-charge) his struggling writer friend George MacDonald with publishers. Gillies (2007) defines the primary role of an agent to "recognize a work that would sell" (p. 30) and acting as an "assessor and purveyor of literature, which meant that [Watt] assumed the position of house critic for his author clients" (p. 30). An association with a literary agent served both to professionalize the author and legitimize his or her standing as a writer, and

also to increase the author's cultural capital and ensuing economic capital. An association with Anne Carroll Moore did the same for children's authors and illustrators of this period. Letters written to Moore over her career, especially from Greville MacDonald, Walter de la Mare, and Leslie Brooke, speak of the intense level of involvement that she had with their work, from pre-viewing their manuscripts, to recommending editors and publishers, to writing reviews of their published works, and finally to purchasing finished copies for the New York Public Library system. Moore's reach transcended international borders, and several of her relationships with both British and American authors and illustrators will be examined here, focusing primarily on the three case studies of this paper, but also with supporting evidence from other authors and illustrators.

Progressive Era Values and Children's Literature in America

At the turn of the 20th century, children's literature in the United States was not considered a genre separate from literature for adults. According to Clark (2003), between 1865 and 1914, there was no real distinction between literature for adults and literature for children, and bestsellers were as likely to be *Madame Bovary* as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. By the 1920s, thanks to Progressive Era ideals and John Dewey's work on childhood, children were considered to be a population in need of adult protection. A core component of Moore's work was using children's literature to shape and improve children's minds, which clearly reflected Dewey's ideals, and there is evidence that they were at least acquainted—a letter from Dewey thanks Moore for sending Marie Shedlock, a famed storyteller and children's librarian at the New York Public Library, to his house to tell Hans Christian Andersen stories to his children.

A burgeoning group of librarians and (soon thereafter editors, too) considered

themselves the official arbiters of taste for youth, who would be responsible for reforming gauche reading habits, and for shaping the minds of all children, including children of immigrants. As we know from Sherry B. Ortner's (1972) work, women traditionally were seen as those naturally best suited to take care of children, which served to confine women "to the domestic family group" (p. 17). Such essentialist views on women made them (in the eyes of men) experts in the care of children, and understanding of children's needs, and naturally suited for any and all work directly related to children. Subsequently, women were able to carve out the terrain for themselves, and establish a controlling matriarchy (Hearne, 1996) within a separate field of children's librarianship and publishing, in an arena where they could even assume leadership positions.

Mentored by librarian Caroline Hewins, Moore was considered along with Minerva Sanders and Lutie Sterns as one of the first children's librarians in America (Lundin, 2004). Moore's 45-year career from 1896–1941 included ten years at the Brooklyn Public Library and thirty-five at New York Public Library where she worked as the first Supervisor of Work with Children (Miller & Mucci, 2004). The earliest children's rooms had begun to be formed in libraries around the turn of the twentieth century by librarians such as Hewins from the Hartford Public Library in Connecticut, who established new precedents in an emerging field. Kate McDowell (2009) describes Hewins' systematic use of survey research, a technique that was only minimally used in libraries at the time. This enabled her to support claims about the benefits of library service for the young with solid, empirical research, thereby professionalizing the field and generating support for her work from a largely male audience. In doing so, she helped move the field of children's librarianship from the fringe and into the mainstream. With her demonstrated leadership in the field, according to McDow-

ell (2009), in 1879 Hewins was "the first woman to speak at an ALA conference" (p. 285), and, according to Wayne Wiegand (1986), in 1891 she became the first woman Vice President of the American Library Association.

Wiegand (1986) describes Hewins as an innovator in children's librarianship, who hosted children's story-related events at the library; compiled annotated reading lists of recommended children's literature such as the 1882 guide *Books for the Young: A Guide for Parents and Children*, which became "staple fare for building library collections" (p. 36); and, in 1904, established a children's room at the Hartford Library in Connecticut. Hewins, born in 1846, was twenty-five years older than Moore, but became her close friend and mentor, addressing the formidable "Miss Moore" in her letters as "Dear little Annie."

Moore had studied librarianship at Pratt, and her first job upon graduating was children's librarian at the Pratt Institute Free Library, where she worked from 1896–1906. In 1906, she was made Supervisor of Work with Children at the New York Public Library (Miller & Mucci, 2004), of which there were 36 branches (Miller, 2003) and directed the children's room at the Fifth Avenue Branch from 1906 until her retirement in 1941. Prior to Moore's reign in New York, children were not allowed in libraries, and Moore established children's rooms in every branch.

Moore extended her career as a children's librarian by working to establish *Children's Book Week* and by becoming a renowned critic of children's literature. She was instrumental in the creation of the first (and still to this day the two most prominent) American awards for children's literature: the first Newbery Medal was awarded in 1922, and the first Caldecott Medal was awarded in 1938. The Newbery Medal, named after 18th century British bookseller John Newbery, awards the "author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for

children” (ALSC, “Welcome to the Newbery”). The Caldecott Medal, named after nineteenth-century British illustrator Randolph Caldecott, awards “the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children” (ALSC, “Caldecott Medal”). The advent of awards in children’s literature, given by librarians, “confirmed the reputation of children’s librarians as critics,” (Lundin, 2004, p. 49), and served as a “critical prerogative that exerted their authority in the field and established children’s books as high literary fare” (p. 49).

Prestigious awards helped bestow cultural capital on the field of children’s literature. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) wrote about different forms of capital, defining “cultural capital” as that which is connected to one’s educational qualifications, and describing how those qualifications can be exchanged for power and status. As publishers realized that the cultural capital of children’s literature could be traded for economic capital (Squires, 2007), they created children’s departments within their houses. Macmillan hired Louise Seaman Bechtel, the first children’s editor, in 1919 (Miller, 2003 and Eddy, 2006). Bechtel, a Vassar graduate, had worked as a teacher for several years before leaving to work at Macmillan.

Many future children’s editors were initially trained as children’s librarians (including Margaret McElderry who was trained by Anne Carroll Moore at the New York Public Library), and this provided for an important discourse and partnership between the publishing house and the library, still prevalent today. Additionally, “this network of women—including editors, critics, and librarians—supported [each other’s] aesthetic commitment in vocal and powerful ways” (Hearne, 1996, p. 757). A study of this connection informs the formative period of the genre of children’s literature in the United States, at the center of which was Moore herself. Anne Carroll Moore was a seminal figure both in children’s librarianship and in children’s

literature, presiding at the center of a “web of influence” (Lundin, 2004, p. 28) just as both fields were developed in America. Because of her social networking skills, Moore rose from librarian to becoming a key gatekeeper in this emerging field of children’s literature. Looking at Darn-ton’s Communication Circuit (Darnton, 1989), Moore’s web of influence included relationships with people at virtually every level of the Circuit, perhaps with the exception of printers, shippers, and suppliers. She formed lasting friendships and strategic partnerships with authors and illustrators, booksellers, librarians, library users, children’s publishers and editors, and these connections enabled her role as a *de facto* literary agent.

The Arbiters of Taste

As the self-appointed arbiters of taste within children’s literature, the new children’s librarians included criticism of children’s literature as part of their job description. Moore was instrumental in establishing the field of criticism of children’s literature, writing and reviewing for *The Bookman*, a monthly magazine, from 1918–1926. The ensuing reviews were collected in three books: *Roads to Childhood: Views and Reviews of Children’s Books* (1920); *New Roads to Childhood* (1923); and *Cross Roads to Childhood* (1926). Moore also had a weekly column called *The Three Owls* in the *New York Herald Tribune* from 1924–1930. This column later moved to *The Horn Book Magazine*. So powerful was Moore’s opinion that *The Three Owls* column in the *New York Herald Tribune* was called the “yea or nay of all children’s literature” (Josiah Titzell in Miller, 2003, p. 167).

Moore expanded her influence beyond New York by working with national library associations such as the American Library Association, and her reach extended to England, Sweden, and France, where she joined the American Committee for Devastated France after World

War I. These relationships enabled her to discover authors and illustrators abroad, especially in England, as demonstrated by the case studies of this paper.

Moore's personality was not without eccentricity. In addition to candlelight and comfortable furniture, characters from children's books were part of the cozy decor of the children's room at the New York Public Library. Moore's own wooden doll named Nicholas Knickerbocker "lived" in the children's room at the library, and became a personality who "wrote" letters on his own stationery (Eddy, 2006), and was even featured in two books by Moore. Because of her considerable power, the files are filled with letters from authors and illustrators respectfully addressing Nicholas (whether or not they are secretly mocking), either by writing to him directly, or by extending greetings to him in correspondence. Despite her seemingly child-like attributes, as a pioneer in the profession, Moore could not afford to be meek. Frances Clarke Sayers, who succeeded Moore at the New York Public Library, called her a "torment and delight" (Sayers, 1989). Margaret McElderry describes Moore's tenacity as follows: "ACM, like any woman of that generation, had had to fight hard to be recognized, to have this kind of work recognized, and she won her battle. It was deathly serious to her, and ACM's word was law and God forbid that anyone should cross her . . . she was a stern taskmaster who could strike terror into one's heart" (McElderry in Hearne, 1996, p. 762). The ability (and inherent struggle) to balance traditional feminine qualities with the type of power accompanying the type of career typically reserved for men contributed to Moore's success.

Methodology

This paper began in 2006 as an independent study project with Professor Betsy Hearne at GSLIS (Illinois), about the Grandes Dames of librarianship and publishing during the formative years of the

field of children's literature in America. At the time, like others who have written about Moore (Eddy, 2006; Jagusch, 1990; Lepore, 2008; Sayers, 1989), I became intrigued by her enormous contribution to the field—and by her quirky reputation. At Rutgers, in Dr. Marija Dalbello's *History of the Book* course, I used an assignment requiring original research as an opportunity to read the Anne Carroll Moore papers at the New York Public Library. Evidence of Moore's agenting activities emerged quickly, and were documented in an excel spreadsheet which included the letter writer's name, date of letter, and quotes copied verbatim. Strike-throughs, British spellings, and misspellings are rendered faithfully in this paper as in the original letters. I visited the archive twice—first in Fall 2008, and again in Fall 2012. Moore's letters occupy seven boxes (three linear feet) in the Manuscripts and Archives division of the library. Access is provided to researchers by appointment upon prior written request. Most of the content is from 1920–1960, and the portion I was most interested in included letters, telegrams, and drawings from authors and illustrators from Robert McCloskey to Beatrix Potter, and from noted contemporary figures such as the poet Carl Sandburg, first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and publisher Alfred A. Knopf. While many authors and illustrators, whose letters comprise the collection, described Moore's agent-like activities on their behalf, her *de facto* agenting activities were especially prominent in the correspondence of three authors and illustrators: (1) author Dr. Greville MacDonald; (2) author and poet Walter de la Mare; and (3) illustrator Leonard Leslie Brooke. While clearly they each had a close personal friendship with Moore (especially de la Mare and Brooks), it was also clear that these relationships were based on business as well. Such evidence will be provided in the next section. Gillies (2007) documents that agenting emerged as a profession in the 1870s, but was largely restricted to authors of books for adults. But what Moore

provided, from the center of her powerful sphere of influence, duplicated the work of professional literary agents and extended it to the realm of children's literature, except that her work was provided free-of-charge.

The Case Studies: ACM and Her Mentees

According to Gillies (2007), "authorship" became recognized as a profession in 1870s England. By the 1920s, as American publishers hired children's editors, and children's literature became professionalized, the business of authorship extended into this new realm. "Agents were better versed in the inner workings of different planes than publishers; thus their expertise provided an important advantage for writers. A good agent . . . could increase an author's income simply by placing material in the right market, in the right format, with the right publisher and at the right time" (Gillies, 2007, p. 26). In addition, having an agent increased a writer's social status.

According to Moore's successor, Frances Clarke Sayers, the Central Children's Room of the New York Public Library served as a "Mecca for artists, editors, writers, designers, and educators of that day and time" (Sayers, 1989, p. 748). An association with Moore provided status, reinforcement of taste—and credibility as a professional writer for children. Because Moore herself operated within many strata of the field, a good relationship with her provided a cumulative snowball effect that extended beyond what British agent A.P. Watt afforded his clients in terms of social status. Gillies (2007) identifies an agent's primary role as being able to identify what would sell, and here Moore was the reigning expert. Her dual roles, first as a librarian who was responsible for collection development and programming with children, and second as a professional children's literature critic and reviewer, meant that she knew best—and controlled what would sell. The letters reveal that Moore

performed on multiple levels for those whom she mentored. She pre-viewed manuscripts before they were sold to editors, recommended publishers, reviewed works critically, and then bought finished copies for the libraries. As such, Moore's endorsement was invaluable to literary creators and to their publishers. According to Gillies (2007), one of British agent A.P. Watt's first clients was the writer George MacDonald, and by coincidence, his son, Greville MacDonald, a physician and children's book author, was mentored by Moore. His relationship with Moore is described in the next section.

Case Study#1: De facto client Greville MacDonald (1856–1944), 8 letters between 1923–1931.

MacDonald's relationship with Moore indicates that he thought he would have more success as an author in the United States than in England. In a letter of November 8, 1923, MacDonald praised the superior literary taste of Americans:

I am afraid literary taste amongst the people here is far inferior to that in the States. You have only to look at the innumerable magazines of fiction published here every month to realize how inferior the material is to that of the same sort of publications in America.

On January 26, 1925, MacDonald asks to send Moore a copy of a fairy tale he had written, again an indirect solicitation for this children's literature expert's opinion. He apologizes for not coming to see her (and it is not clear if he meant while Moore was in England, or while he was in the United States): "It is a loss to me that I cannot run over and shake hands with you: we should, I know, be good friends. But I am old now and very deaf, which forbids me all the usual social pleasures."

On December 30, 1925, MacDonald thanks her for a copy of her review column, *The Three Owls*, and asks if she would like him to send copies of Billy *Barnicoat* to

children's libraries in New York. He also mentions that he has a sequel to *Billy Barnicoat*, and asks for Moore's feedback:

I have in the stocks, and [sic] well-advanced, a further story of *Billy Barnicoat*, quite independent of the other and very different in plot and central idea. Before completing it I want you to be so uncommonly kind as to give me some advice, seeing that the book may possibly secure a public in the States even though again failing here.

He asked if he should remove Cornish vernacular language from the text, and if he should consider submitting it straight to an American publisher: "The fact that Messrs E.P. Dutton & Co have themselves reprinted in the States a second edition of *Billy Barnicoat* makes me ask the question." He even asked Moore for political advice on switching illustrators. Although he wanted to use the illustrator Willy Pogany, he did not want to disappoint his friend F.D. Bedford who illustrated the earlier edition (and on a practical note, Pogany was a lot less expensive than Bedford, according to MacDonald), so he asked Moore: "Do you think it essential that [the book] should be illustrated? . . . I hope you won't think I am presuming too much in asking this advice. One of the penalties of kindness is that more is sure to be asked! Believe me Yours sincerely Greville MacDonald." In this note, MacDonald acknowledged that not only was he asking for Moore's professional advice and guidance in preparing a manuscript for submission in the United States, but he was also cautious of burdening her. Across the letters from MacDonald (as with other letters in the collection), there is never any discussion of a fee for her services, even though advice from Moore was almost certain to lead to successful sales, especially when backed by Moore and her instruments of review and promotion.

Additionally, MacDonald attempted to get Moore interested in his biography of his father, George MacDonald, hinting

that perhaps she might help him secure an American publishing contract. Moore was at least familiar with his father, as MacDonald wrote ". . . I have still a very large correspondence consequent upon the recent celebrations of my father's Centenary, your delightful message to which I shall never forget." As Gillies (2007) writes, agenting spans the economic and the social realms, and Moore's relationships with her authors and illustrators did the same.

Even with only eight letters in the MacDonald collection, evidence of Moore's *de facto* agenting is present. An even more lucrative relationship is explored next in Moore's 33-year correspondence with Walter de la Mare.

Case Study #2: De facto client Walter de la Mare (1873–1956), 47 pieces between 1921–1954.

Letters from Walter de la Mare to Moore substantiate her position at the center of a sphere spanning the field of production of children's literature including author, editor, librarian, and critic. The de la Mare file is stuffed with letters (handwritten and typed) and Western Union Cablegrams such as the following in which he acknowledged a personal relationship with Moore by sending Christmas greetings to her and, of course, also to Nicholas:

December 20, 1926

47 1E MAIDENHEAD 22

WLT MISS ANNE CARROLL MOORE
PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWYORK.

(5th Avenue & 42nd Street)

WE ALL WISH YOU AND NICHOLAS
A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND

NEW YEAR,

DELAMARE.

Throughout their correspondence, de la Mare humors Moore by writing many letters directly to Nicholas and Ann Carraway

(Nicholas's "owner" in the Nicholas book, and most likely a pseudonym for Anne Carroll Moore). For example, upon publication of Moore's first Nicholas book, he acknowledged Moore's power, and subsequently also the importance of Nicholas as he wrote: "Has Nicholas indulged in the same pursuit—story-writing? How on earth did he get into the Times?" Another letter of December 23, 1927 closed: "We all send our love and best wishes for the New Year. Would A.C. (please pass these on to N. and would N. please pass them back to A.C.)."

While the letters provide evidence of a strong friendship between Moore and the de la Mare's, filled with social news about the arrival of de la Mare's grandchildren, or visits (actual and proposed) between them, it is also obvious from the content that a parallel purpose of de la Mare's letter writing is business, such as the example below from July 3, 1923, which was typed, and thereby indicative of a more business-like style of correspondence:

"Dear Miss Carroll Moore,

As I said in my last letter, I am very sorry that negotiations with Harcourt broke down, but it seemed to me that it was imperative that if the book is to appear in America at all, it should be set up there. I know how precarious the system of supplying by sheets is. The present arrangement is that Alfred Knopf will be publishing it. Do let me know what you think of it when it appears."

In the letters, he described in great detail his issues with publishers, from the status of publications, to problems with delays, such as in a letter from November 16, 1927, in which he complained about Knopf's failure to publish his story collection in time for the holiday season, despite the fact that he delivered his work on time, and wrote "I wonder what you will think of the illustrations; also, indeed, the tales themselves." By keeping her up-to-date with publication delays, he also provided

a hint of when (as a reviewer) she should look for his books. Throughout the letters, it is clear that de la Mare sent drafts of work to Moore and that she responded with editorial comments. Besides condoning Nicholas, like many other authors and illustrators, de la Mare was clearly beholden to Moore, and anxious about not insulting her or behaving inappropriately in any way, whether this meant addressing including Nicholas as one would address a human child, or asking forgiveness for typing, or apologizing for a late reply to a letter or cable from Moore. One such example is a letter from January 4, 1933: "I am so sorry that somehow or other I didn't write to thank you for my copy of the new *Three Owls* . . ."

Because of her influence, many of those whom Moore supported had successful careers. On December 8th, 1937, de la Mare thanked Moore for choosing his book *This Year, Next Year* as a selection in her *Children's Books Suggested as Holiday Gift* pamphlet. In the same letter, he gossips about the publishing industry, expressing concerns about Henry Holt, and the commercialization of publishing:

But what you say concerning Holt's is disquieting. I knew that, until recently at any rate, it was one of the best old-established firms in America; and we have always been on the best of terms. I don't know how far the general commercialisation [sic] of books has gone in America, but there are symptoms enough that it is fairly rampant in England. Far too many books are published; it is largely a question of quick returns, and in consequence the better kinds of books are apt to be neglected. Nevertheless, I feel sure there are many more potential readers—the Public Libraries prove that. Also the sales of such a series as the Penguins. It is the people who can easily afford to buy books who, by and large, seem impervious to the decoys of the advertiser. (8th December 1937).

Clearly, de la Mare was concerned about quality and establishing value, and

above all, his reserve and sense of propriety in his relationship with Moore is clear. Despite the fact that they corresponded together for sixteen years, the letter dated December 8, 1937 marks the first time he referred to her by her first name: "Dear Anne—says Jack [de la Mare's own nickname], if he may be so bold . . ." And by the next letter, of May 6th, 1938, "Anne" has become the even more familiar (and diminutive) "Dear Annie." A mutual fondness is apparent, even from the one-sided exchange.

De la Mare's letters provide evidence of a long and fruitful relationship based on friendship and business, which is only rivaled by the next case study: seventy-seven letters from British illustrator Leonard Leslie Brooke.

Case Study #3: De facto client Leonard Leslie Brooke (1862–1940), 77 letters between 1921–1940

The Brooke file spans seventy-seven letters over nineteen years. Brooke's letters to Moore are long and chatty, filled with details about his family: his wife and her illnesses (migraines, jaw issues, need for holiday and rest); his sons—one died in World War I, the other, Henry, married Barbara, had children, and went into politics; about the weather; and about moving from the countryside to London. Not only did Brooke correspond with Anne Carroll Moore, but there are 41 letters in the collection from his wife Sybil, and two lengthy letters from his son Henry, and one from Henry's wife Barbara. Clearly, the entire Brooke family was deeply invested in the relationship with Moore.

When Moore thought highly of an author or illustrator, she worked to promote such person, and those receiving her attentions sent grateful thank you notes. In a letter from April 25, 1925, Brooke humbly thanked Moore for an article about his book *Ring O' Roses*, which she had written about in *The Horn Book*. Modestly he wrote: "Really I don't know what to say—

or indeed which way to look as I read all the nice things you say about me. And about my work—the descriptions of me as I know I'm not but would be delighted to be and the planning of my books on a level with those of 'the golden age.'" On February 7, 1927, he thanked her for dedicating an entire chapter to his work in her new book—which was most likely a collection of her reviews called *Crossroads to Childhood*, published in 1926. And Moore shows him perhaps the ultimate symbol of her respect (albeit it a bizarre one for those unfamiliar with the significance of her doll) by sending Nicholas to stay with Brooke. On August 17, 1925, Brooke wrote: "Nicholas—a most welcome visitor—arrived here safely on Saturday—and I know he will become both an honored and an entertaining guest." Brooke obviously understood the significance of the doll's visit.

Despite this, much of the correspondence (which is one-sided in the file, as Moore's voice is only reflected in Brooke's letters) is dedicated to business. In a letter from September 2, 1928, he addressed Moore's question about why his British books were not dated, speculating that perhaps the publisher did not want to appear to be selling "old stock." Across the letters, he often thanked her for sending him copies of publications such as *Publishers Weekly*, *The Horn Book*, *Tribune Books*, and Moore's own column, *The Three Owls*, as well as copies of recently published American books (such as the 1930 Newbery Winner *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years* written by Rachel Field and illustrated by Dorothy Lathrop)—all of which helped educate him about American illustration styles, and connected him with other illustrators, such as the illustrator Dorothy Lathrop, with whom he corresponded as a result. As was the case for other authors and illustrators, Brooke's friendship with Moore was perhaps the best possible promotional tool he could have, as she promoted his work in her own articles, included his work in her collections, served as a liaison between

him and his publishers, and most likely bought copies for the New York Public Library. Brooke was well aware of Moore's influence, and in a letter of April 7, 1930, in which he charmingly told her of a new publication: "I have committed the indiscretion of a new picture book. The drawings are now being engraved, and Messrs. Warne [publisher: Frederick Warne] propose to bring it out for the autumn season," he astutely acknowledged her power, and described her as: ". . . living at the very pulse of the children's book world, and being in the confidences of all its publishers."

Moore evidently felt the same way about Brooke, and in his letter of November 29, 1928, he thanked her for describing him as: "Maker of Picture Books"; as "B is for Brooke who drew Johnny Crow"; and for her kind reviews of his work, which she described as: "Just [striking] the right note"; "charming"; and "very tactfully done."

On April 18, 1931, in response to Moore's letter telling him that her *Three Owls* column in the *N.Y. Times & Tribune* had ended, Brooke wrote that while she may have been happy to be relieved of this responsibility, he felt that it was a "a great convenience to you to have this space ready to your hand each week for the spread of your teaching as writer or *editor* [emphasis is mine]." In calling her "editor," he acknowledged the role she played in his work, and in a later letter from January 1, 1932, he even called her his "representative agent in America."

You are rapidly becoming my representative agent in America! When Messrs. Warne opened [?] to me some time ago the proposition of supplying a number of copies of *The Golden Goose Book* at a special rate to a certain firm I was wholly at a loss how to form a judgment and felt then there was nothing to do but to agree—when the sudden idea of you came and I made my agreement provisional on your approval. And you, with [illeg.] discretion, vetoed the whole thing & it has been abandoned.

In the same letter, he asked her advice about a publisher, who proposed publishing a cheap edition of his bestseller *Johnny Crow* in order to undercut a pirated edition for sale in the US: "I should very much like to know how much the American House is influenced by a desire to meet the pirate menace or if it is mainly by a desire to have a chapter edition for its own purposes!" Clearly, within the frame of a chatty letter from a friend, Brooke asked Moore business-related questions, and while he realized that he might be burdening Moore with his requests, he used her interest in his work to justify them. Continuing the piracy conversation on May 29, 1932:

I think that the Warne's American House have told you of the threat of pirate *Johnny Crows* and of the endeavour to hang up the pirates by facing them with an edition of the two J.C. books at a dollar each. . . A word in the confidence of your private ear! To bring the dollar edition out in good enough style, my royalty has had to suffer (and, as you now, these picture books in colour, of a cheaper type—unlike the large Rackham & other expensive books, cannot carry a high royalty at best). I shall get less than half of what I did, so more than double will have to sell for me to get the same result. On the other hand, I am to have an increase on my former royalty on the original style at 1.75—the strongly bound one, so that the chance of this having even a moderate sale would mean much to me. The interest you have always shown in my books is my excuse for telling you of these sordid details.

After Brooke's 1934 head injury (alluded to, but not described in letters), on February 2, 1934, he asked Moore to intervene on his behalf with the American branch of Frederick Warne, just as an agent would. As a result of accident, he felt "much slower," but would like her to give them an update on his behalf.

In June of 1934, Moore received proofs of his work—possibly from her role as a reviewer, as reviewers see advance proofs,

but perhaps also on Brooke's request, and Brooke wrote that he was pleased that Moore has seen "the first proofs of the colour drawings—so you know all there is to tell about the book so far." On September 25, 1937, Brooke wrote: "I have not been at Warne's since our holiday, so I know not what they may have ready. Please use your discretion in inquiring-or not." Also notable about this letter is that it veered from Brooke's usual salutations of "yours sincerely," "yours always," "yours ever," and instead closed on a far more affectionate note: "With my love, yours always, L: Leslie Brooke."

From an initial interest in his work, to a friendship, to a relationship in which Brooke eventually called Moore his "representative agent in America," it is clear that Moore's relationship with authors and illustrators went far beyond a friendly interest in their work. Beyond the three case studies of this paper, others benefitted from their relationship with Moore, as is briefly explored next.

A 1949 letter from a discouraged Marcia Brown, who went on to win the 1955 Caldecott Award for illustration, illuminates Moore's influence: "Your confidence in me at a time when I sorely needed it did so much to make that book possible" (Hanson, n.d.). Dorothy Lathrop was an American illustrator, whose most famous work, *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years: The Story of a Doll*, written by Rachel Field, won the Newbery Medal in 1930. She also won the first Caldecott Medal in 1938 for *Animals of the Bible* (1937). For the work Moore provided to Lathrop, on October 6, 1940, Lathrop asked Moore's permission to dedicate her book *Presents for Lupe* as follows:

"To
Anne Carroll Moore
whose enthusiasm for children's
books is boundless and contagious
and the inspiration of all who
make them"

A pioneering author of multicultural

literature, American Florence Crannell Means wrote over forty books for children and young adults. On March 13, 1936, Crannell Means wrote Moore asking for: more details about what Moore had disliked about *Dusky Day* so that she could consider this for her next book; Moore's feedback on comments she had received from an editor; and Moore's opinion of whether Crannell Means' next book should be a novel or a story. In asking for comments from Moore before progressing with her next project, it is clear how deeply Crannell Means valued Moore's opinion (and respected her power).

Moore established a friendship with British author and illustrator Beatrix Potter, and there are 32 letters in the collection from 1921–1943. Potter wrote and illustrated many best-selling children's titles including: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, and *The Tale of Mrs. Tiggly-Winkle*. Potter, too, humored Moore about Nicholas, and sent her a Christmas card of Peter Rabbit, tucked into bed, with Nicholas perched on the wooden bed frame watching over him. In a Christmas letter from December 12, 1925 Potter wrote:

"Dear Miss Carroll Moore,

I do not know the home address of Nicholas: Peter and Flopsy want to wish him a very Merry Christmas"

Moore's influence on Potter's career extended posthumously, as Moore wrote the appreciation and introduction for *The Art of Beatrix Potter*, which was published by Frederick Warne & Co. in 1955.

Conclusion

Not only was Moore's work for children appreciated by many, including authors, illustrators, and the child patrons of the libraries, but her work was recognized by prominent figures in the political arena as well, as demonstrated by the following telegram to Moore dated October 14, 1931:

MISS ANN [SIC] CARROLL MOORE,
THE CHILDRENS ROOM

NEWYORK PUBLIC LIBRARY 42 ST
AND FIFTH AVE

MANY CONGRATULATIONS ON THE
COMPLETING OF YOUR TWENTY
FIVE YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL WORK
WITH CHILDREN MAY THE FUTURE
BRING YOU HAPPY REWARDS AND
MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR USE-
FULNESS

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT MRS. FRANK-
LIN D ROOSEVELT.

In addition to the authors and illustrators who wrote to Moore, she also received letters from many appreciative publishers. While she famously had contentious relationships with editors including Ursula Nordstrom (Marcus, 1998) and Virginia Kirkus (Eddy, 2006), most respected her work. A letter from publisher Alfred A. Knopf, on the occasion of Moore's 25th anniversary as Supervisor of Work with Children in the New York Public Library, acknowledged Moore's contribution to the field of children's literature:

There is no one who has given more time, thought and energy to the cause of good children's books. As publishers we are happy to express our appreciation of your fine service during all these years. You have adhered to high standards and the uncompromising belief that only the best is good enough for boys and girls.

Because of Moore's work, children's rooms in libraries went from being non-existent in New York City public libraries to becoming integral parts of a library. The fact that the first lady recognized and congratulated Moore on her work meant that her work had become an important part of the public discourse on childhood.

Moore's work also helped establish a matriarchy within the field of children's literature, spanning librarians, critics, booksellers, editors, and authors and illustrators, which still exists today. Moore's

mentoring work influenced the direction of children's literature as she shepherded authors' and illustrators' works from story idea, to manuscript to finished book, then provided critical reviews of their work, and finally as she purchased the books for the New York Public Library system. Her work connecting authors and illustrators with editors helped determine which books got published at a time when children's literature was first becoming professionalized and established as a genre. While her opinions did not always hold (Marcus (1998) describes her famous dislikes of *Stuart Little* by E.B. White or the *Little House* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, both of which became famous without Moore's intervention and despite her disdain), nonetheless, she greatly influenced the course of children's publishing. In addition to her work as a librarian and as a critic, the unpaid service Moore provided far exceeded the job requirements of the "literary agent" as described by Gillies (2007), and positioned her at the center of a sphere of influence.

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