

Elizabeth Anna Matson. *The Birth of Children's Book Reviews, 1918-1929*. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2008. 88 pages. Advisor: Katherine M. Wisser

This study examines the beginnings of regularly published reviews of children's books in columns and journals from the period of 1918 to 1929. The influence of the historical context on this development is considered. The first year or volume of children's book reviews in *The Bookman* (1918), *New York Herald-Tribune Books* (1924), *The Horn Book* (1924), *Saturday Review of Literature* (1927), and *Library Journal* (1929) are analyzed with regards to audience addressed, the reviewer's intention, format used, and inclusion of bibliographic and other commentary or material. In addition, individual reviews of the 1922 to 1930 Newbery Award winners are analyzed as to the descriptive, critical, and sociological elements they contained, length, and reviewer's attitude towards the book. *Booklist* is briefly considered in addition to the previous journals in this section. The early reviews are characterized by an interest in promotion of reading and owning quality children's books to a general audience of parents. These characteristics still influence the reviews being published today for library professionals.

Headings:

Book reviews and reviewing -- Evaluation

Book reviews and reviewing -- History

Children's literature -- Evaluation

Children's literature -- History

Children's literature -- Reviews

THE BIRTH OF CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEWS, 1918-1929

by
Elizabeth Anna Matson

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2008

Approved by

Katherine M. Wisser

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Literature Review	4
Methodology	12
Historical Context	19
Children's Book Reviews, 1918-1929	27
<i>The Bookman</i> (Anne Carroll Moore), 1918	29
<i>New York Herald-Tribune Books</i> (Anne Carroll Moore), 1924	35
<i>The Horn Book</i> (Bertha E. Mahony), 1924	41
<i>Saturday Review of Literature</i> (Marion G. Canby), 1927	47
<i>Library Journal</i> (Helen Martin), 1929	56
Review of Newbery Award Books	60
Conclusion	70
Appendix A: Worksheets	78
Appendix B: Newbery Medal Reviews	80
Works Cited	82

Introduction

Reviews of children's books are an interesting and peculiar literary genre. Though the material reviewed is intended for children, the audience of a review is rarely the child herself. The audience is an adult who, whether for professional or personal reasons, is in a position to select books for a specific child or population of children. Developing not only an appreciative but critical view of children's literature is an important task for professionals whose work involves direct interaction with children and books, most specifically children's librarians and teachers. Few, however, have the time or inclination to devote hours to reading and evaluating all of the children's books published each year and thus turn to book reviews for guidance.

Since the power and influence wielded by book reviews can be considerable, it behooves such professionals to develop an equally critical eye regarding *reviews* of children's books. Professionals need to be able to identify the sources for reliable reviews. They need to know how to parse the reviews for the information they need for selection, recommendation, comparison, cataloging, school curricula, and other purposes. Training and experience can develop professionals' knowledge and skills in this area provided the reviews themselves actually address the needs of professionals. There has been some complaint in the library literature that, in fact, reviews are not adequately addressing those needs. Harrington's summary critique of children's book reviews, for instance, comments on a wide-range of concerns, including what materials are not

getting reviewed, lack of comparisons between titles, the need for more than one reviewer of potentially controversial titles, and a desire for clear “buy/don’t buy” recommendations. Harrington particularly complains that librarians don’t want reviews that focus on literary qualities but rather evaluations on whether children will like and/or use a book (34).

Analyzing the sources and content of contemporary children’s book reviews is one direction research can take to address these concerns. Another approach is to undertake historical research to trace the development of children’s book reviews. A historical analysis has the advantage of allowing us to uncover the continuing impact of the past on the present. The intent of the early critics in writing their reviews and the subsequent format and content of the reviews may no longer be relevant but still influence the reviews of today. It can also be easier initially to recognize the influence and context of the times on reviews of the past. By first recognizing past influences, we may be better able to see the current influences in our own times, placing us in a better position to advocate and instigate change, if necessary. It is also important for professionals to have a good grounding in the history of children’s literature. Evaluation and use of the children’s books published today requires the context of what has come before. The classics of children’s literature are read and enjoyed for generations. Other books might be popular or even critically acclaimed but have a short shelf life. Critical writing of the past is part of the history of children’s literature. Understanding the history of critical appraisal of children’s books is especially important for professionals not only to make the best use of reviews but also to broaden their knowledge of children’s literature itself.

Book reviews of any sort are relatively modern phenomena. Both the publishing and reviewing of children's books as a separate literary genre in the United States really began in the early twentieth century. This research examined the first year or volume of publication of the first regular columns or journals devoted to reviewing children's literature, starting in 1918 through to 1929:

The Bookman (Anne Carroll Moore), 1918

Horn Book Magazine (Bertha E. Mahony), 1924

The New York Herald Tribune (Anne Carroll Moore), 1924

The Saturday Review of Literature (Marion G. Canby), 1927

Library Journal (Helen Martin), 1929.

A broad examination of the editors and their reviewers, their philosophical approach or intent, and the overall format of the column during the first publication year provided a survey of what was available through the first twelve years of regular children's book reviews. In addition, individual reviews of the Newbery Medal books of the 1920s in these journals were examined in order to analyze the content of individual reviews more thoroughly.

Literature Review

Considering the important role book reviews play in developing children's collections and informing programming and the curriculum very little research has been done in this area. Most of the research that has been done focuses on contemporary sources and content of book reviews so it is worth summarizing some of that work before considering the more limited historical research that has been done.

Examination of contemporary review practices has been the focus of research undertaken from the 1970s through the 1990s. This research has focused on identifying the significant journals in the field, the content or criteria presented in the reviews, and the manner in which librarians make use of reviews. Weedman, for instance, attempted to identify the significant journals in the field of children's literature with an open-ended survey of members of the Children's Literature Association. By asking respondents to list important "U. S. journals which are publishers of literary criticism concerning children's literature," she derived a list of a total of ninety journals (36). The top five most frequently mentioned journals were *The Horn Book*, *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, *Children's Literature in Education*, and *Children's Literature*. Weedman derived three "impressions" from her research: first, that there was not a great deal of consensus as to the most important sources, second, that there were very few journals devoted primarily to literary criticism of children's literature, and, third, that a number of different professions and academic disciplines, including English, library science, theatre, and education, addressed children's literature (43-44).

It is important to note that Weedman used the term "literary criticism" rather than "book reviews." This terminology influenced the responses she received. Her population of members of the Children's Literature Association may also have prejudiced the selection of the top four journals towards a more academic interest in the subject. The population certainly included individuals with an interest in children's literature considerably beyond that of working librarians.

The majority of research studies in this area, however, has taken a different approach and has deliberately built on each other for comparative data to summarize the

content and patterns of book reviews used specifically by children's librarians (see for instance, Burchette, Busbin and Steinfirsh, Bishop and Van Orden, Kennemer, Weber, Wilson and Bishop, Witucke). These studies have made use of descriptive statistics to analyze the data. Bishop and Van Orden provided a comparative chart of data samples used and journals examined in eight previous studies from the late 1970s through the early 1990s (150). *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *The Horn Book*, and *School Library Journal* were examined in all of the previous studies as well as Bishop and Van Orden's and Wilson and Bishop's subsequent studies, providing a consistent data set for comparison between studies over the decades. A varying selection of other journals – *New York Times Book Review*, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, and *Publishers Weekly* – have also been included and subsequently excluded in these successive studies as too general in focus. Bishop and Van Orden added *The Horn Book Guide*, a newer biennial publication specifically designed to review and rate children's books annually (153-154). Unlike the wide-open selection of journals in Weedman's study, this fairly standard data set of four journals reflects the more narrow professional interest and reading sources of librarians for reviews of children's books.

Even when focusing exclusively on the four consistently evaluated journals, the studies are not entirely comparable, however. The samples used for actual books reviewed varied considerably, including ALA Notable books (Witucke), picture books (Stewig, Busbin and Steinfirsh), fiction titles (Kennemer), and all books reviewed in a given time period (Weber).

Different elements, such as expectation of good reviews, critiques of visual elements, literary qualities, authority, or usability, were examined or highlighted in the

studies depending on the samples used. Some of the published research has included a sample of the worksheet used for collecting the data on the elements of the reviews. Kennemer's worksheet is particularly notable for how she breaks down and analyzes the various literary elements, pictures, and other considerations into three categories: descriptive, analytical, and sociological (420-422). For the most part, however, these studies each examined such criteria as timeliness, inclusiveness, length, descriptive versus critical elements, and whether the reviews were ranked.

The conclusions of all these studies have established that librarians cannot rely on any single journal for all of their selection needs. Different journals have different strengths and weaknesses, although even these vary over time. Bishop and Van Orden's detailed content analysis study resulted in a table of journal recommendations to guide a children's librarian according to whether she specifically needed bibliographic and ordering information, cataloging information, reviews that include literary, usability, or comparative elements, and so on (179). The biggest criticism most of the studies have leveled at all of the journals is a lack of published critical review guidelines or criteria.

This research has been valuable in providing a series of contemporary snapshots of quantitative data. However, research on the contemporary picture has stagnated with results that have been largely similar and depressingly unchanging. Librarian complaints and perceptions of the failures of children's book reviews have been reinforced by the research findings without instituting any significant impact in changing published reviews.

There has been limited historical research undertaken on reviews of children's books. Eaton provides a brief overview of the publishing history of book reviews in an

un-referenced essay in *Reading Without Boundaries*, written as part of an official celebration of the life and work of Anne Carroll Moore. Eaton notes that book reviews of any sort are a relatively recent form of writing, starting with seventeenth century newspapers. She traces the beginning of reviews of children's books to 1918 when Anne Carroll Moore started writing regular reviews for *The Bookman*. In 1924, Moore began "The Three Owls," a weekly column in the *New York Herald-Tribune Books*, which in 1934 moved with her to *The Horn Book*. Eaton traced Moore's children's book review legacy through general news and literary publications: Bertha E. Mahony's 1924 founding of *The Horn Book* a magazine devoted to children's books; May Lamberton Becker's reviews in the *New York Herald-Tribune Books* after Moore left; Marion G. Canby's "Children's Bookshop" in *Saturday Review of Literature* starting in 1927; her own regular reviews in *New York Times Book Review* starting in 1930; reviews in *The Christian Science Monitor* starting in 1935. Though there is no doubt that Anne Carroll Moore had a significant impact and influence on both children's literature and children's librarianship, this tribute essay is not a sufficiently authoritative source on its own. Rigorous historical research tracing the appearance and development of reviews of children's books in general, library, and children's literature publications is still needed.

Meacham and Cockett have addressed some of this need with their research. Meacham traced the development of four journals, *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *The Horn Book*, and *School Library Journal*, from 1924 to 1984. Meacham deliberately chose the same journals on which the contemporary quantitative research concentrated in order to trace their development from the time the first journal,

The Horn Book, was founded in 1924 to the present day, as of her writing in the 1980s.

Meacham's main research questions examined:

1. How has children's book reviewing developed in relation to the historical context?
2. What were the typical style, quality, and length of review in each journal at different stages? (21-22)

Though useful at filling the void in historical research, Meacham's study is, on the whole, more descriptive than analytical. The description provided of both the journals and the historical contexts traces the broad developments and changes (or lack thereof) over time. By virtue of the great expanse of time covered, her research encompasses more of an overview than an in-depth coverage. Selected issues of the journals are described in detail but no reason for the choice of issues is given.

Meacham does point out, however, that while Anne Carroll Moore is widely credited with beginning regular reviews of children's books with her column in *The Bookman* in 1918, the American Library Association (ALA) journal *Booklist*, incorporated a regular section of children's book reviews at the back of the journal with its first issue in 1905. She also cites Richard Lewis Darling's work on post-Civil War reviews of children's books from 1865 to 1881 to demonstrate that children's books had been reviewed before the twentieth century (19). Moore may have popularized children's book reviews but she certainly didn't invent them. The early review sources that Meacham recognized are important to note. However, as will be discussed in more detail later, they serve more as precursors to the birth of regular critical reviews of children's

books when examined within the historical context of children's publishing, librarianship, and general promotion of children's books.

Cockett's research focused on mass market publications from 1900 to 1950. Rather than "book reviews" specifically, she examined a broader category of "writings on children's literature." Cockett's feminist analysis is framed by Kay Vandergrift's call to focus on the women who create youth literature and who act as intermediaries between books and young people (794). She also draws on the research published in Belenky et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing*, on women's learning styles and ways of knowing to view these writings on children's books as part of the "continuum of learning and the voice of motherhood" (Cockett 796). As a consequence, all of the writers Cockett examined were women. The intended audience of these writers was also women, specifically mothers. Cockett acknowledged that she found few women writers in her data set prior to the 1920s. The two she included, Elizabeth McCracken and Mary Mapes Dodge only had one article each published in *The Outlook*. Those that followed, in rough chronological order, were Anne Carroll Moore, Emily Newell Blair, Josette Frank, Maude Dutton Lynch, and Blanche Jennings Thompson. Cockett's research was guided by four research questions:

1. "[W]hat was being written for parents about children's reading in the first half of the twentieth century?"
2. "What was the intent of those who did this writing?"
3. "[H]ow did this writing reflect the contours of history?"

4. “[H]ow did these women function as intermediaries? Did they communicate knowledge about children, about literature, about educational theory?” (797-798).

All of these questions would be useful to apply to book reviews and writings on children’s books for different audiences and in different time periods. In Cockett’s examination of this specific data set, she found the writers had a great desire to promote respect for children and to help create “good little boys and girls” (810). This appeared to be a stronger focus than promoting children’s books in and of themselves. The degree to which this is a reflection of the time, the mass market nature of the publications, or the professional concerns of the writers would be interesting to explore through comparative studies. Cockett particularly recommended further complementary research on the writings on children’s literature by these women in professional journals and in daily and Sunday newspapers, more exhaustive research on a single decade, and research on the changing nature of motherhood as seen in mass market publications.

In conclusion, the literature on writing reviews of children’s books encompasses research on the journals librarians currently consult and historical overviews. The research on contemporary book reviews has pretty much stalemated on repetitions of the same conclusion: No one source adequately provides all the review criteria book selectors need or desire. Historical research on reviews is paltry and could use some more rigorous research application. Meacham’s and Cockett’s valuable research suggest, however, that more study in this area could provide insight on how reviews reflect the times as well as the reviewers’ audience, professional background, gender, and personal

agenda. Understanding the origins of children's book reviews could provide insight into the problems encountered with contemporary reviews.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to broaden the body of historical research with an examination of the birth of regularly published review columns or publications devoted to children's literature from 1918 to 1929.

The decade of the 1920s has been chosen with consideration of Cockett's suggestion that deeper research on specific decades would be a fruitful way of expanding historical research in this area. Since Anne Carroll Moore started writing the first regularly appearing signed column dedicated to reviewing children's books in 1918, the beginning of the decade has been breached to include that pioneering effort in consideration with the others that followed throughout the 1920s. In terms of the big events of history, this period spans the end of World War I through to the stock market crash that signaled the beginning of the Great Depression. This provides an additional coherence to the period known in publishing circles as the Golden Age of the American children's book. The significance of this period for the development of critical writing on children's books will be examined in the section on the Historical Context.

It is apparent that writings on children's books can be more broadly defined than merely "book reviews" to include more general recommendations and advice to a mass market audience as well as academic analyses of the literature. As will be seen in the Historical Context section, the precursors to book reviews and critical writing on children's books were circulated lists of recommended books. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the columns included in this study is that they aspired to be more than

mere book lists. How successful they were in expanding the format from a simple enumerated list to description and especially to full-fledged critique varied, but these columns all attempted to answer the call expressed at the time for guidance in the selection of good books for children. The focus of this study is on the format and intentions of the columns or journals as a whole rather than the content of individual reviews. In other words, while the expressed purpose of the columns examined must be for the review and promotion of children's books, the material included for study may encompass additional material beyond reviews of individual books. Examining the format and content of the column or journal as a whole as well as the intended audience allows for analysis of what was considered to constitute a "book review" and what purpose it was designed to serve.

The journals included for examination in this study are *The Bookman*, *The Horn Book*, *New York Herald-Tribune Books*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, and *Library Journal*. The choice of the journals was guided by an examination of the research literature and the primary sources themselves. Eaton's list of successors to Anne Carroll Moore's first regular column in *The Bookman* included *The Horn Book*, *New York Herald-Tribune Books*, and *The Saturday Review of Literature* as all premiering during the following decade of the 1920s. These earned a place on the list of examined journals by fitting the criteria of regularly occurring reviews of children's books. All of these journals catered to a general, not professional, audience. Though *The Horn Book* is included among the contemporary review sources that professionals consult, its intended audience, especially in its early years, was not solely or even primarily professionals. *Library Journal* only began a short-lived children's review column late in 1929 but it was

included for examination in order to have a publication specifically aimed at a professional audience.

Booklist, *New York Times Book Review*, and *Publishers Weekly* are the only other contemporary journals used by professionals and examined in the research literature to begin publication early enough to be considered. *Publishers Weekly* was easily discounted as it served as a trade journal devoted solely to articles of interest to those in the book business rather than reviews during this time period. Though the *New York Times Book Review* did publish the occasional children's book review column throughout the 1920s, most notably by Mary Graham Bonner, it did not become a regular feature until Anne Thaxter Eaton started editing a column in 1930. As the name implies, *Booklist* began publication more as a glorified book list than a *bona fide* review journal. The short one- to three-sentence book annotations depended on voluntary contributions from members of the American Library Association which were then edited into an aggregate description or opinion for each book by May Masee. While these journals did not fit the criteria for inclusion in this study, it is important to note their existence during this period.

Under ideal circumstances, the entire run of each journal from its inception of regular reviews of children's books to 1929 would be thoroughly examined. Given the constraints of time for this research, the data-set chosen was the first year or volume of publication for each journal. As the journals began publication of children's reviews at different points in time throughout this period, the data-set provides an opportunity to see the development of reviews from one journal to the next as the decade progressed. The first year of publication is often one of exploration and change. The column and review

format was in an embryonic state, especially compared to the form it has evolved to in present times. The influences of the past and legacy for the future can be distilled from these early reviews. This approach is also complementary to Meacham's research which traced the evolution of specific journals over several decades.

The focus on the first year or volume and the over-all characteristics and format of the review columns was balanced with a comparative examination of reviews of Newbery Medal books during the 1920s. This provided an opportunity to look at individual reviews in more depth and get a snapshot of most of the journals in a couple of different time periods, while comparing the reviews in the different journals. The Newbery Medal was chosen as the guideline for selecting individual reviews for examination because the Newbery was first awarded in 1922 and all of the journals were in publication at that time or later and the award winning status suggested that these books would be more likely to have been reviewed. For this part of the study, *Booklist* was included for brief examination as an example of a professional journal during this time period, since *Library Journal* did not start its children's book review column until 1929.

Guided by Cockett's and Meacham's research questions, the four criteria that directed the examination of the early reviews in this research were:

1. *What was being written at this time?* What ideas were being communicated? What style or format were the reviews written in? What information was included in the review? Were books reviewed individually or as a group? Were the reviews descriptive or critical in

content? Aside from the review of the book, what content was included?

2. *For whom was the review written?* What was the audience being addressed? The most thoroughly researched area in library science has been quantifiable studies of journals librarians consult for book reviews. Librarians are often assumed to be the only audience for reviews of children's books in these studies. While this makes some sense when studying library professional journals, most of the early journals featuring children's book reviews were not aimed at professionals. How did the audience affect the format and content of the reviews? Was more than one audience recognized by the reviewers?
3. *Who were the reviewers and what was their intent in writing their reviews?* What message were they trying to convey? Were they functioning as intermediaries, educating readers on children's literature, child psychology, parenting, or other topics? Cockett embraced a feminist agenda in her research and focused on women reviewers in popular publications, but were all the reviewers of children's books women? Male or female, did the reviewers see themselves as advocates for children?
4. *How did contemporary events and concerns influence the reviews?* What were the issues that were most often addressed in reviews or in accompanying commentary? Are these issues still relevant today or do they only reflect the abiding concerns of another time?

Many of the research studies of contemporary children's book reviews have focused their analysis on compartmentalizing the different components included in a review. A common approach has been to divide the content of the review into descriptive, analytical, and sociological components. Kennemer, for instance, devised a worksheet that examined each review for its criticism of literary elements, book structure, illustrations, and its comparisons to other books or predictions of appeal and age appropriateness and categorized whether the reviewer's comments were descriptive, analytical, or sociological (420-422). Many of the distinctions of these categories are very finely drawn in these studies. They arise out of the stated or implied desire of library professionals for reviews that provide a good balance of all these elements: full description of the plot, critical view of the quality, and acknowledgement of any potential controversy. The focus of contemporary studies has been to document the current review format in an effort, so far unsuccessful, to change and shape the format into one more preferred by working librarians. Preliminary review of the material published in the 1920s, however, shows a different situation. Though librarians were clamoring in this period for reviews, more reviews, and better reviews (*Library Journal* 45:598-599), the main intended audience for reviews that were published was the general public. While the three basic categories are still worth distinguishing, this study examined them in generalities rather than in specific details, such as those used in the contemporary studies.

For the purposes of this study, descriptive, analytical/critical, and sociological elements of the review are defined as follows:

Descriptive elements of the review refer to any statement that simply describes the character, plot, setting, or theme of a book. A simple five point scale was used to

indicate whether the description provided was essentially a *Book Talk*, a *Plot Summary*, or somewhere in between. A *Book Talk* was considered to be a brief description designed to attract interest in the book (a teaser) while a *Plot Summary* was a full disclosure, outlining all the essential elements of the book (a spoiler).

Analytical/Critical elements of the review refer to any comments that specifically praise or deride the effectiveness or quality of the book, specifically regarding the literary quality, illustration quality, and book construction quality.

Sociological elements of the review refer to any comments that incorporate contemporary issues and events into the review of the book. Potential subjects identified in advance were technology, ethnicity/race/class, gender, and morals/values, though a category for other was also provided for.

Two worksheets were devised to be used while examining the first year or volume of each journal and the reviews of Newbery Medal books (see Appendix A). The first worksheet addressed the *Overall Format* of the column (or journal in the case of *The Horn Book*) and collected such information as how many books were reviewed, whether the books were reviewed individually or as part of a group, whether the column included other material such as a commentary, essay, or book list, what kind of bibliographic information was given and where it was placed, and the number, names, and gender of the reviewers. The second worksheet examined the *Reviews* specifically and included the title and author of the book reviewed, the reviewer, the length of the review, whether the review included descriptive, analytical, or sociological elements, and the reviewer's overall attitude towards the book.

It should be noted that there was no attempt to objectively quantify the scales used on the worksheet for the type of Descriptive elements included, from Book Talk to Plot Summary, or the Reviewer's attitude toward the book, from Positive to Negative. In fact, in practice it was found that the scales were difficult to apply beyond the two extremes as the results were heavily skewed towards the Book Talk and Positive ends of the scales.

Historical Context

The decade of the 1920s is often stereotyped by images of flappers, gin-runners, gangsters, and artistic rebels, suggesting an era of decadent excess and lawlessness. The period between the First World War and the Great Depression, however, was also an age of reason and science, marked by great technological change, prosperity, and political conservatism. In fact, the era can be characterized as one filled with a multitude of contradictions as individuals struggled to come to terms with the social and economic changes wrought by rapidly advancing technology and a shrinking world. Indeed, the origin of many of the issues we struggle with today, including immigration, information overload, technological advances, and consumerism can be traced to this period.

Prior to the Great War, the United States had a largely isolationist attitude and policy. When it emerged victoriously out of the War as a world leader, the United States embraced a deep interest and engagement in the peoples and countries around the world. At the same time, there was considerable backlash at home against those regarded as "not like us." The dismay of Protestant native-born Americans of British and Northern European ancestry at the latest wave of largely Catholic Southern and Eastern European immigrants was expressed in legislation passed to severely restrict immigration of

“undesirable” populations. Racial tension was signified by the revival of the Ku Klux Klan.

The concepts of a golden age of childhood and books as an Everyman’s recreational and self-educational pursuit were growing in importance in society at large at this time period. Some statistics from the January 1920 census that historian David Kyvig used to describe the realities of daily life in this period also help to provide some insight into why children’s issues were important. Of the 106.5 million people living in the United States, two-thirds of the population was thirty-five years old or younger. The median age was twenty-five. Children under fifteen comprised 31.6% of the population. Young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four made up 19.6% of the population (11). Not only was the population young, they were closely packed together. Almost half of the population lived within the northeast corner of the nation. In 1920 more people lived in urban areas than rural, a trend that continued to grow throughout the 1920s. While by today’s standards most of these urban areas were more on a par with small towns than big cities, population density was generally greater than it had been in the past (Kygiv 13). With this young population, the impact of women’s suffrage, the continuing decline of childbearing, government health and education initiatives, advances in technology, and the scientific approach particularly as applied to education, psychology, and parenting all contributed to the growth in interest in children and children’s books.

American women finally won the vote in 1920. Initially the expectation was that women would vote in a block and bring their nurturing maternal instincts to bear on political issues. This expectation inspired some women-oriented legislation such as the

Sheppard-Towner Maternity- and Infancy-Protection Act of 1921, which provided federal grants to states to establish maternity education programs. Once it became clear that women's political leanings were ruled by more than gender, such women-oriented measures were returned to the back-burner and the Sheppard-Towner Act was terminated in 1929 (Kyvig 4). Still, the Sheppard-Towner Act as well as general advances in science and medicine had an effect in greatly diminishing childbirth and childhood mortality and improving general health (Meigs 428).

At the same time, family size continued to decline (Kyvig 137). For women the emphasis in raising a family shifted from child-bearing to child-rearing. As work, educational, and residential patterns changed, having a large number of children was seen as not quite right. Children were no longer seen as providing free labor but as needing to be provided for. Among the growing middle class, that provision was more and more likely to include the expectation of college (Lynd and Lynd 131). Raising children to become healthy well-adjusted adults and responsible citizens increasingly became a task for which mothers felt the need to turn to experts for advice. The ideology of scientific motherhood and the popularization of child psychology by G. Stanley Hall emphasized for the first time the individuality of children and the stages of development every child must go through. Initially empowered by the scientific approach as the naturally-placed observers of children, mothers became disenfranchised as psychology strove to justify its credentials as a genuine science and insist that mothers needed training and education in order to become adequate caretakers, let alone to avoid permanently damaging their children (Grant).

As more emphasis was put on the development of caring relationships between parents and children, families became more child-centered. At the same time, parents were finding that much of their control and authority was being undermined by their children's school-centered lives and the independence provided by automobiles for adolescents (Kyvig 138). Education previously had been regarded as a family responsibility. Now, children routinely surpassed their parents' educational level and learned about new and unfamiliar technologies and topics at school. Parents' domestic and trade skills traditionally passed on father-to-son and mother-to-daughter were considered out-dated and irrelevant as home economics classes and expectations of different ways of making their livelihood increased (Lynd and Lynd 133). Parenting books and children's book reviews filled a growing need and desire for parental guidance on child-rearing.

The technology that arguably had the most profound affect on daily life in this period, especially on changes in reading habits, was electricity. Electric lighting allowed reading to become a past-time more people could enjoy during evening leisure times. It made reading easier for those with poor eyesight and could be used safely by young children, unlike gaslights (Kyvig 62). In 1907, only 10% of American homes had electric lighting. By 1929, that had risen to nearly 70% (Hunt 226). Compulsory school attendance and the electrification of school buildings had a lot to do with the impact on children of electricity during this period (Kyvig 62). Ironically, just as reading was becoming a more widely engaged leisure and educational activity, the growth of cinema and radio created competition for books. Book champions, particularly booksellers and

librarians, felt the need to actively promote books even as they became more popular to counter-act this.

In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt established the White House conference on Children and Youth to be held once every decade to examine the health and welfare of children. The importance of reading as one of the essential requirements for children's recreational play was noted for the first time in the 1919 White House conference on Children and Youth (428). By 1930 in reviewing the past decade, an entire section was devoted to "Youth's Reading" with the opening declaration that "next to persons, books are our greatest influencers of character." The publication of children's books had doubled in the last decade and children under sixteen accounted for 39% of the library books in circulation (*White House Conference 1930* 262-264).

Until the 1920s, American publishers regarded children's books as little more than an occasional sideline or a way to make a quick profit with cheaply produced series or dime-novels. Children's books were not classified or promoted as a separate category (Tebbel 13). In 1920, Macmillan was the first publisher to create a children's department with Louise Seaman (later Bechtel) at its head. Throughout the 1920s, women were appointed heads of similar departments at Dutton, Longmans Green, Stokes, Little Brown, Doubleday Page, and Harper Brothers, many of them coming from library backgrounds. Half the books in the first catalog Seaman produced were British imports (Hunt 242). The reliance on British reprints rapidly decreased as more American books were published throughout the decade. In 1919 there were 433 new works published for young people. By 1929, that number had risen to 931 (Meigs 431).

The development of children's publishing resulted in large part from the collaboration of booksellers, librarians, and others advocating for good books for children. One key component of this collaboration was the creation of Children's Book Week. The initial concept for Children's Book Week originated with Franklin K. Mathiews, librarian for the Boy Scouts of America. Mathiews was a librarian with a missionary zeal. He preached against the addictive and deadly poison of dime novels and series books that inappropriately portrayed scouts and promoted moral and uplifting books based on the bedrock of Christian values (Miller 60). Mathiews' mission took on a more national and inclusive agenda when he met Fredric Melcher, a former bookseller and editor of *Publishers Weekly*. Melcher was already engaged in making connections between book stores, librarians, and publishers in promoting quality children's literature. He convinced Mathiews to expand his concept to include girls and a broader definition of what constituted a "good" book to include such things as quality of writing, illustration, and book construction. In 1919, with the support of children's librarian Anne Carroll Moore, Melcher convinced the American Library Association and the American Booksellers Association to join as sponsors of Children's Book Week. An annual event in November, Children's Book Week became the cornerstone for the subsequent cooperation between libraries, book stores, and publishers in promoting good children's books to the public. Children's Book Week often provided the inspiration for the publication of book lists and reviews of children's books in November that eventually encouraged regular columns and reviews on children's books.

Fredric Melcher was also instrumental in founding the John Newbery Award for excellence in children's literature in 1922. Melcher's idea for the Newbery Award was

stimulated by his desire to build upon the interest in Children's Book Week by directing the public to some certified award winning quality books. In 1921, Melcher suggested to the Children's Services Division of the American Library Association that a medal named after an early British author and printer, John Newbery, be given annually for the most distinguished book by an American author (citizen or resident) written for children fourteen and under and published in the previous year. The idea was enthusiastically embraced. Melcher donated the medal and to this day the children's division of the ALA administers the award.

One of the interesting aspects of Children's Book Week was that it actively promoted the ownership of books, not just reading and good books. Jessie Wilcox Smith's 1921 poster for Children's Book Week showed two children surrounded by books on the floor and on bookshelves while boldly admonishing "More Books in the Home!" This was not just a consequence of being spearheading by a bookman. Librarians promoted having books in the home as an essential part of raising children to be life-long readers. Ione Morrison Rider, advisor to children's librarians in the Los Angeles Public Library, wrote in an article for *The Library Journal* published October 1, 1926:

Joy in the ownership of a beloved book is a spiritual experience. If children are to be led to avail themselves of everything that will make for richer and fuller living, then it is not enough that we inculcate them in the "library habit." Most children will read, if provided with a type of material to which they can respond. But an abiding love for books comes from living with books, rereading them, absorbing that which they have to give. This higher thing is a part of the spiritual experience of ownership. (51:823)

In the 1920s, most people obtained their reading material from the public library. Public libraries were essential and active institutions in the community. In Lynd and

Lynd's in-depth study of Muncie, Indiana during the 1920s, they noted that the library had loaned out "approximately 6,500 public library books for each thousand of its population during 1924, as against 850 for each thousand of population during 1890" (230). New books were purchased almost exclusively by a small number of the business class. The only exception to that was the purchase of religious books, children's books, and books as Christmas gifts by the general population. The development of a new style of advertising featuring attractive visuals and preying on consumer anxieties and desires replaced the matter-of-fact announcements of products and services of the past (Kyvig 189). Books, especially children's books, started being promoted heavily. Confused and overwhelmed, parents turned to their familiar public librarians for guidance on what books to buy for their children.

Librarians, already concerned about discerning quality in children's books for their own collections, embraced their role as advisors and discriminators of quality. Books on librarianship for children published at this time emphasized the importance of selecting good books for children. Effie Power's *Library Service for Children*, a manual for children's librarians, maintained that the purpose of a children's library was threefold:

1. To provide children with good books;
2. To cultivate the love of reading, discriminating taste in literature, and judgment and skill in using books as tools;
3. To cultivate higher thinking, better living, and active citizenship (10).

She expended a great number of pages in her manual on the proper evaluation of children's books. In his *A Manual of Children's Libraries*, W. C. Berwick Sayers also devoted several chapters on the skills of critical evaluation that children's librarians

needed. He specifically noted the following criteria for evaluating a children's book as art and as craftsmanship:

The Book as Art

1. A Book must have literary style, or at least good English.
2. It must have wholesome imagination.
3. It must be true.
4. It must be law-abiding.
5. It must have a right sense of wit and humour.

The Book as Craftsmanship

1. It must be on a slightly yellow paper with correct margins.
2. The type must be large enough.
3. The illustrations must be good and in correct register.
4. It must be sewn with linen thread through its folds, not with steel wire, and must never be stabbed.
5. It must be cased in good cloth over sound boards. (37-38)

Children's librarians were being deliberately trained throughout the 1920s to be discriminating judges of children's books, both inside and out, as a service not only to children and their parents but to teachers, publishers, writers, and illustrators as well.

Given the times, it should not be surprising that regular reviews of children's books developed when they did. The general economic prosperity, advances in technology, the more child-centered family and scientific approach to parenting, and promotion of reading for education and enjoyment, all fueled the post-War euphoria and desire to create a better world for the next generation. Guidance in choosing the best books to lead children into the future was ready and waiting in the book reviews columns that appeared starting in 1918.

Children's Book Reviews, 1918-1929

Of course, children's book reviews did not just appear out of the void in full-blown form, like Athena from Zeus' forehead. Children's books had been reviewed prior to 1918. But, like the publishing of children's books, it was an occasional and

exceptional occurrence or limited to small local publications as in Richard Lewis Darling's work on post-Civil War reviews of children's books from 1865 to 1881 that focused on small religious publications (as evaluated in Meacham 19).

This study looks at the beginning of regular reviews of children's books starting with Anne Carroll Moore with her column in the *Bookman* in 1918. Moore saw herself as following in the footsteps of her mentors and heroines, Mary Mapes Dodge and Caroline M. Hewins. Mary Mapes Dodge was the author of the children's classic, *Hans Brinker, or The Silver Skates*, but it was her editorship of the long-running children's literary magazine *St. Nicholas* that Moore saw as paving the way for her own work. Though Mapes' nourishment of writers and good writing for children falls more into the category of promotion than evaluation, this was, as we shall see, a large part of what Moore actually accomplished in her review columns. Children's librarian Caroline M. Hewins compiled the list of essential children's books for all libraries to have when libraries were only just starting to open their doors to children. Already out of print in Moore's time, she nonetheless cherished this list for its inclusion of many of the well-loved books of her own childhood. Moore very much believed that familiarity with children's classics was essential to evaluating the new books being published.

Indeed, one of the reasons for the continuing popularity of book lists even as reviews of children's books were becoming more common was the inclusion of cherished classics that adults had loved as children. Transitioning from book lists which promote to reviews which evaluate was a difficult one for many of the early reviewers to completely embrace. The other reason, of course, for the continued popularity of lists was that they were short and to the point, including only books worthy of mention. This required less

work on the part of both the compiler and the reader than reading or writing a longer critical evaluation.

***The Bookman* (Anne Carroll Moore), 1918**

Director of children's services at the New York Public Library, Anne Carroll Moore first started reviewing children's books for *The Bookman* in 1918 and continued to do so until 1927. Born Annie Carroll Moore and originally publishing under that name, Moore changed her name to Anne Carroll Moore in 1923 at the suggestion of her editor Eugene Saxton of George H. Doran Company with the publication of her book *New Roads to Childhood* in order to avoid confusion with Annie E. Moore who was also publishing on the topic of children's reading (Sayers, F. C. 3-4). It was Eugene Saxton who invited Moore "to assume responsibility for the space ... allotted to books for children" when the George H. Doran Company took over the publication of *The Bookman* with the September 1918 issue (Sayers, F. C. 211). *The Bookman* had started publication in 1895 and was a major literary journal of its day. When the George H. Doran Company began publishing the journal, the change of ownership statement stated the journal's purpose was "to cultivate and foster the art of reading" by focusing on "the best in current literature" and reassured readers that the journal would not be an organ for any one publishing company, meaning presumably the George H. Doran Company itself (*The Bookman* 48.3).

Moore was already known at this time for her promotion of children's books through her work in the children's rooms first at the Pratt Free Institute Library, then at the New York Public Library and through the library classes she taught at the Iowa Summer School. She actively encouraged librarians to focus on personally evaluating

new books as they were published and purchasing only the well-made quality books that children would enjoy rather than succumbing to administrative pressure to purchase only older books or the cheapest editions available. She promoted good books and their authors, illustrators, and publishers through events at the New York Public Library and the compilation of book lists, including *A List of Books Recommended for a Children's Library* prepared for the Iowa Library Commission in 1902 and the annually released *Children's Books Suggested as Holiday Gifts* issued by the New York Public Library starting in 1918 (Sayers, F. C. 85-87).

To a certain degree, Moore has earned the title as the first regular reviewer of children's books more on the basis of her name and reputation than for the actual regular occurrence of her reviews. Her column in *The Bookman* did not have a consistent title and appeared on an erratic schedule. In 1918, volume 48, the first year Moore wrote for the journal, her reviews appeared in only two issues. The George H. Doran Company did not assume ownership until September of that first year, so such few outings by Moore is not surprising. However, Moore's column did not reappear until a year later in September 1919 (volume 50). Thereafter, her columns appeared one to three times per volume up through 1927 (volume 66). It seems there was an intention of regularity, however. In Moore's introduction to her new column in the *New York Herald-Tribune Books*, she claimed that the series of reviews appeared in *The Bookman* "at intervals of about three months" (Moore 2). Though the actual appearance was more erratic than that, Moore's column was published consistently over the years and was certainly the forerunner in that respect.

Moore's reviews in 1918 (v. 48) are particularly revealing as each one demonstrates a different approach to the writing and format of the book review. There were two reviews included in the November 1918 issue of *The Bookman* penned by Moore. Her first review was for *A Little Boy Lost* by W. H. Hudson, and it was included under the title of "Nine Books for the Month." For this column, nine different books were reviewed, each by a different reviewer. Only Moore's review was for a children's book. If this review had been Moore's only appearance in this issue, it would be hard to see it as a debut for the first regular column of children's book reviews. Still, it is worth including in this overview for two reasons: the establishment of the well-familiar format and a call for regular reviews of children's books.

Moore implemented the format of a critical review for her treatment of *A Little Boy Lost*, a balanced mix of descriptive, analytical, and sociological elements, along with comparisons to other books and identification of the most suitable audience. In the twenty-four sentences of her review, Moore gave enough description of the story to fall between a Book Talk and a Plot Summary. She declared the literary quality excellent, the illustration quality poor, and suggested that color illustrations be used in future editions. She commented that the book was "true to boy nature," dealt with problems familiar to parents and vocational experts, and introduced the reader to South America. She made favorable comparisons to many classics of children's literature and expansively summed up the appropriate audience as children of "different ages" and adults, especially when enjoyed as a read-aloud or as summer vacation reading. Moore's review was similar in format and content to the other eight reviews in the column, including the

subtle tucking of the bibliographic information of title, author, and publisher (but no price) of the book reviewed as a small-font footnote.

In addition, Moore included in this review an articulated case for regular reviews of children's books:

That it [*A Little Boy Lost*] should have been published five years ago in England and remain unknown and unread by those who have the education of American children at heart is conclusive evidence of the need of more illuminating reviews of books for children. (48.3:329)

Fortuitously, the type of reviews she apparently had in mind was included in her first column devoted to children's book in the very same issue.

Titled "Some Recent Books for Children," Moore's column reviewed four books within a grouped essay format. She included some general commentary of praise about new editions of old classics being published with wonderful new illustrations. She also addressed the different kinds of books boys like to read and girls like to read. She particularly lamented the general quality of stories for girls. The number of sentences she devoted to each book ranged from five to fifteen. While she provided critical commentary on all four books, only two books merit any description. Three of the reviews were positive. In the five sentences of her review of *A Boy of Bruges* she allowed a quotation of another un-credited reviewer's negative opinion to apparently stand for her own. The bibliographic information (title, author, publisher) of all the books reviewed was provided in a list at the end of the column. Moore maintained something of a balance in this column between general commentary and critical reviewing. The grouped format is not conducive to full-fleshed reviews of each book but she did manage to give each its due.

Moore's final column in this first year of analysis was a mammoth eight pages long and includes forty-seven books. Titled "From the Child's Holiday Books of 1918," it reveals Moore's attachment to the book list. Though there is some critical comment, it is far closer to a survey than a review. Moore opened her column with reflections on some of her experiences as a children's librarian and the need parents have for guidance in choosing quality books for children. She followed this with the declaration that "I have come to feel that no reviewer should approach the children's books of the year without calling upon at least one child, preferably not his own, to blaze a trail" (48.5:470). She then introduced Edouard, a nine-year-old library regular who was the son of an engineer. She took him to her office crammed full of the new books of the season and invited him to take a look and see what appealed to him. For the first half of the column she described Edouard's reactions to the books. This approach revealed its difficulties quickly, however, as Edouard had no opportunity to read or be read to more than a short passage of the books and what he gravitated towards was based largely on the visual attractiveness of the books and his familiarity with the authors. Moore was forced to insert her own favorites and justify some of Edouard's more dubious favorites – in her or her readers' eyes (such as the latest in Thornton Burgess' animal series) – until finally she largely dropped Edouard half-way through the column in order to make a mad dash to the end in order to fit in all forty-seven books. Within the column most books were mentioned at least by title in at least one sentence. Bibliographic information (title, author, publisher) was given, in order of appearance in the column, in a long list at the end.

Not only does the reader feel overwhelmed by the end, she gains the impression that Moore herself was overwhelmed by the quantity of books on hand to be reviewed. Rather than judiciously selecting the best or most appropriate ones to thoroughly read and write about, she tried to give the reader a taste of everything at the buffet table. Though Moore may have purposely intended to impress the reader with the variety and abundance of books available for children, the effect the reader is left with is more that of an uncomfortable bloatedness from having indulged too much. The abundance of books in the Christmas publishing season certainly encourages this sort of approach and it is one that continues to this day. Moore's succeeding columns for *The Bookman* tended to follow the format of the large group review or survey – if they included reviews at all – as they generally managed to come out in time for the spring or fall publication season. In her columns without reviews, she just wrote essays about children's books (usually classics) and children's reading.

Other writers occasionally reviewed or wrote essays about children's books in *The Bookman*. It is unclear whether these were done under Moore's direction or as separate enterprises. The lack of regularity of appearance of or title for Moore's column rather suggests the latter. Certainly, editor John Farrar, who succeeded Eugene Saxton, had an interest in promoting children's books generally. He introduced an essay contest for children in conjunction with Children's Book Week and tried to institute a feedback column for children to write in their comments on the books they were reading. Since *The Bookman* was not a journal that had much appeal to children, the effort was largely unsuccessful.

Moore did not always directly identify the audience of her columns but when she did it was most clearly parents. Given the nature of the journal, those parents were educated and well-read. The provincial attitude in much of *The Bookman* – “The Gossip Shop” section, for instance, makes constant reference to people in the New York book scene without actually identifying who they are or why they are of importance or interest – suggests that even if most readers did not actually live in New York or, at least New England, they ought to.

New York Herald-Tribune Books (Anne Carroll Moore), 1924

In 1924, Moore branched out and started editing “The Three Owls” column for the *New York Herald-Tribune Books*. Again, the editors approached her first and she wasn’t sure initially whether she wanted or could to do it. By this time, she herself was tired of the large survey reviews. Her time at *The Bookman* had given her some idea of what she liked to do and how much control and responsibility she liked to have. When she did agree to do the column, she delivered to the publisher a manifesto of her requirements:

No advertising was to appear on the page. [Moore] was to be responsible for a lead article every week, for the selection of books to be reviewed as well as for the matching of reviewer’s talents and interest to the titles under consideration. The date of a book’s publication was not to preclude discussion of books of former years. [Moore] was to have control of the illustrations chosen for the page and to be free from the burden of responsibility for makeup. (Sayers, F. C. 232-233)

The editors accepted the manifesto in full. This time Moore really did preside over a first; a weekly column on children’s books had never been done before.

Moore approached the column more as an editor than as a writer and was credited as such at the top of the page. As editor, she was freed of the responsibility of the actual

reviewing except when she wanted to but was still able to insert her own opinions about particular books into her essays. With a few exceptions all reviews on the page were clearly marked as such by the byline “reviewed by” whether reviewed by Moore or another. Moore’s weekly essay was characterized by her habitual flights of fancy, her liberal dispensation of advice and personal opinion, her enthusiastic promotion and recommendation of her favorite books, authors, and illustrators of both the past and present, and her devoted appreciation of the art and illustrations of children’s books. These characteristics made her columns highly publishable as collected volumes, which she proceeded to do at regular intervals.

Moore’s fanciful inclinations are particularly apparent in her choice of name for the column. In her first column, she described how and why she decided to accept editorship of this page on children’s books. Noticing five owls on the weather vane on the Children’s Library in Westbury, Long Island where she was visiting, she imaginatively engaged in a conversation with them about the decision she had to make. Winnowing the owls down to three, she decided that they represented the writer, the critic, and the illustrator or perhaps the reader (she was never quite clear about the third owl). Thereafter the owls (sometimes five, sometimes three) were often featured in her columns having lengthy conversations about not only books but events and decisions in Moore’s life.

On the whole in volume 1 (1924-1925), Moore did very little actual reviewing of children’s books herself, though she did sometimes insert her opinions disagreeing or supporting the reviews written by others in her column. As she had insisted in her manifesto, the column almost always featured a lead essay by her on some topic relating

to children's books or reading and often relating in theme to the accompanying review(s). On occasion someone else wrote the lead essay or a lengthy review would take its place. Though they were not without critical comment, Moore's essays leaned heavily towards personal opinion, advice, and general education of the readership.

"The Three Owls" was a weekly column that filled one page of the journal. The space limitation succeeded in reining in Moore's tendency towards verbosity and curtailed the number of books that could actually be reviewed or even mentioned in passing. On the other hand, the weekly deadline did appear to grate on her at times. From June 7 to July 26, 1925, no books at all were reviewed. Coming as close to a hiatus as possible without actually stopping publication, Moore filled the column during those two months with annotated lists and general essays, including a tribute essay on her mentor Caroline M. Hewins. Moore often overcame limitations of both frequency and space by resorting to book lists, guest columnists, and long reviews, such as Leonore St. John Power's full page critical essay on a new illustrated edition of *Pinocchio* (1.52).

Unlike her experimental first year at *The Bookman*, "The Three Owls" maintained a fairly consistent format throughout its first year of publication. Bibliographic information was much more front and center than in *The Bookman*, at least of books actually reviewed or included in a book list. Title, author, publisher and price headed every review before the reviewer's byline. Publication information for books mentioned within the essays, especially the old favorites that Moore was fond of highlighting, was not so easily found, however. Though there was some variation as just noted above, in general each column featured a lead essay, usually by Moore, reviews of one to two books, and some other material, such as a poem, book list or other commentary, the latter

most often about the artist or author of the book(s) being reviewed. Moore was particularly fond of using a theme to tie the essay, reviews, and any additional material together into a cohesive whole. Among her favorite themes were those drawn from her Children's Room experience with seasonal celebrations or occasions appropriate for buying books as gifts for children, such as Hallowe'en, St. Nicholas Day, Children's Book Week, Christmas, birthdays, and summer camp reading. Two early successive columns focused on books for boys and books for girls respectively with featured essays "Kindling Flames in Books for Boys" and "Exploring Girlhood in Books for Girls."

In some respects, it is misleading to regard "The Three Owls" as a review column. Only two columns included reviews of more than three books and many did not bother with reviews at all. Promotion of children's books and providing general guidance on their selection was on the agenda, however.

The November 9, 1924 issue was devoted to Children's Book Week, an annual event Moore had assisted in founding with Frederic Melcher and Franklin Mathews. Melcher wrote a highly laudatory promotional piece on the history of Children's Book Week for the column. Moore's own essay in the same issue was sensitive to the growing commercial aspect of the event:

My invariable reply, then to the questions: What lies behind Children's Book Week? Is it purely commercial – mere advertising of children's books? is, that Mr. Melcher's sense of the book needs of children has been behind it from its inception and also his solid background of genuine interest in the authorship, illustration, production and distribution of children's books, extending from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. (1.8)

Her reply to the imagined question could be equally extended to herself in her approach to "The Three Owls." She perceived as her mission the promotion of authors, illustrators, and good books, new and old, rather than the systematic review of the current crop of

children's books being published. Current research on children's book reviews certainly suggests that today the expectation is that reviewers will provide critical appraisal and guidance on the best of the current year's publications to buy. Fewer children's books were being published in the 1920s than now, of course, but it was still a large and rapidly growing number compared to what had come before. "The Three Owls" didn't even begin to cover in reviews what was currently being released. In the New Year issue of January 4, 1925, the Owls piteously asked themselves, "What can we write about now the books are all published?" (meaning, now that the Christmas publishing season is over) (1.16). The Owls' conclusion that they can write about authors as well as their books merely confirmed that Moore planned continue to populate her column with more essays than reviews. Moore was far more interested in imparting reader's advisory in her promotional essays than in actually providing that evaluation and review herself. In fact, in the May 31, 1925 issue, Moore's essay provided her readers with her "Tests for Children's Books." Her instructions included two main points:

1. Try reading books aloud. Do they bore or delight you, and why?
2. Insist on having books well produced (1.37).

These are followed by a long list of further instructions to apply to particular types or genres of books.

On the other hand, Moore had no reservations about having her own children's book, *Nicholas*, reviewed in the column. The entire September 28, 1924 column, the second one to appear, was devoted to *Nicholas* with an essay by Moore on her inspirations for the book and an article on the illustrator, in addition to the review. At least she had someone other than herself review the book (1.2). In her September 1923

column published in *The Bookman*, she positively reviewed her own book, without any mention of her connection to it, on the basis of the illustrations (58.1). In all fairness, the provincial air of *The Bookman* may have convinced her that everyone already knew she was the author of the book and, while this kind of self-promotion reeks of conflicts of interest to our modern eyes, the boundaries of appropriateness were not so clearly drawn in this early age of commercial advertisement.

Though they were few in number given the number of issues (43 reviews total in 52 issues), children's books were reviewed in "The Three Owls." In addition to Moore, fifteen other reviewers were featured during the first year of publication. Six of those reviewers were men. Of those that could be identified most were authors by profession. Some, like Henry Beston, Charles J. Finger, and Elva S. Smith, were children's book authors. In the column, only the librarians (Alice M. Jordan, Josephine Adams Rathbone, Katherine Tappert, and Leonore St. John Power) were identified by professional affiliation. As a librarian herself, Moore certainly betrays some prejudice in that regard, but the identified affiliation also suggests that Moore was deliberately promoting the concept of librarians as experts in selection and evaluation of books. The authors appeared to have been matched up with books to review that were similar to the kind of books they themselves wrote.

The books reviewed, whether by herself or others, tended to reflect Moore's own interest in the fanciful or adventurous tale. In the February 15, 1925 column, she relates the suggestion of the editor of publications for the Cleveland Public Library for more coverage on the realistic stories and books of information. Moore replies that,

The Three Owls are ready for anything.... Their own first absorbing interest is in creative work, but they recognize the need for considering books in general, and

they are looking for reviewers who have the experience and judgment to appraise books of the realistic and informational type. (1.22)

In that same issue, librarian Alice M. Jordan answers the call with a group review on non-fiction books about the world. In general, however, the column, at least in the first year, continued to be biased towards reviews and essays on the more imaginative story books.

While negative critical comment was expressed, both in the reviews and the essays, in general the reviews were positive in tone. Moore wrote the greatest amount of reviews with negative criticism or incorporating a balance of both negative and positive evaluation. Even when serious criticism was leveled at a book, especially with regard to facts or choice of stories in a collection, the reviewer often managed to recommend the book on some level in the conclusion. Josephine Adams Rathbone, for instance, derided George Philip Krapp's non-fiction book, *America*, as being written with the emphasis on story and "unencumbered of facts." Yet, she concludes that while

...this is decidedly *not* the American history of our hopes ... it is a readable, well articulated narrative that, with its limitations understood and allowed for, will form a useful addition to the history shelves of a children's room, intermediate or high school library. (1.23)

Given the youth of children's book publishing in America and the clear desire of advocates like Moore to encourage and promote their development, it is perhaps admirable to note that negative criticism was offered at all. Couching reservations and concerns gently no doubt assisted in convincing authors, illustrators, and publishers to do better next time.

***The Horn Book* (Bertha E. Mahony), 1924**

In 1924, the same year that Anne Carroll Moore started "The Three Owls" column in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Bertha E. Mahony (later Miller), proprietor of

the Bookshop for Boys and Girls in Boston started *The Horn Book*. Unlike *The Bookman*, which made claims after its purchase by the George H. Doran Publishing Company that it would not be an organ for any one publisher, in its inception *The Horn Book* was very much an organ of the Bookshop for Boys and Girls. Both the Bookshop and *The Horn Book* were brainchilds of Bertha Mahony. Though thoroughly a bookwoman by the time she started *The Horn Book*, Mahony might well have become a librarian if she could have afforded the schooling. As it was, after training as a secretary she became involved with the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. This organization supported social and educational reform as well as served as an incubator for businesses. After initial support of a business and having demonstrated how such a business could and should be operated, the Women's Educational and Industrial Union turned the business over to a responsible agency and moved on to new demonstrations (Ross 27, 35-36). Mahony started the Bookshop for Boys and Girls under the auspices of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in 1916.

In preparing herself for the book world, Mahony embarked on a private tutelage in children's books with librarian Alice M. Jordan. Her main texts for her study were two highly regarded book lists, one by Caroline M. Hewins and the other by Clara Whitehall Hunt. Suitably impressed by the book list format, Mahony, despite expert advice against it, insisted on producing her own book list, *Books for Boys and Girls – A Suggestive Purchase List*, to coincide with the opening of the Bookshop. Mahony's list included the added attraction of descriptive notes, quotations, and illustrations. It was so successful in driving both local and long-distance sales and in such great demand that Mahony produced a second edition in 1917, a third edition in 1919, and finally a fourth edition in

1922 (Ross 50-51). In many respects, the 1924 debut of *The Horn Book* can be said to have arisen directly out of those book lists and it still showed its allegiance to those beginnings in its first volume.

The first volume of *The Horn Book* only encompassed four issues. It is clear from these first four issues that it took awhile for the journal to develop into one of the primary children's book review sources for which it has come to be known. In these early issues, there were very few recognizable reviews and a good many book lists. Issue number 4 (June 1925), in fact, included no reviews at all, though it did have a very long annotated book list for summer reading along with general articles on books and authors. Those reviews that were present in the first volume consisted predominantly of descriptive comments rather than analytical or critical ones. Along with the reviews and book lists, there were author profiles and pieces on various products and aspects of the bookstore, including poems and articles by the store doll, Alice-Heidi. The overall effect is that of a promotional publication, like a bookstore newsletter, rather than a serious review journal. The journal did not contain a complete table of contents until the March 1926 issue. It would be years (1934) before *The Horn Book* officially separated from the Bookshop as Mahony shifted her own professional interest from full-time bookstore proprietor to full-time editor. Even then, *The Horn Book* retained ties with the Bookshop until the Women's Educational and Industrial Union sold it in 1937.

The introduction in the first issue (October 1924) of *The Horn Book* recognized that there was little available in the way of written description and criticism of children's books. In a fanciful turn of phrase, not unlike one that Anne Carroll Moore was given to, the three jovial huntsmen in the illustration by Randolph Caldecott that graced the cover

of the journal were said to be blowing their horns “for fine books for boys and girls – their authors, their illustrators, and their publishers” – and, it soon becomes obvious as you turn the pages, for the Bookshop for Boys and Girls (1.1). Though the promotion of the Bookshop was not directly acknowledged in the grander statement of purpose given in the introduction, it was alluded to in the additional purpose given of keeping their long-distance customers connected. The journal was explicitly intended to replace the successive editions of the suggested purchase Book list by directing readers to the best books for children available. Though not quite the same thing as providing critical review and evaluation of everything that is being published, *The Horn Book* review process was to do some pre-selection on behalf of their customers/readers. In addition, the journal planned to include book news not covered elsewhere, sketches of people important in children’s literature, and to answer book questions.

The Horn Book identified its audience as boys and girls themselves, parents, librarians, and teachers. The store contests, invitations to store events, and articles and poems “by” the store doll Alice-Heidi were especially designed to attract the interest of the younger audience. Most of the writing, however, was directed to adults choosing books for children.

Almost all the material, reviews and articles, in the journal are unsigned. They can be presumed to have been written by one of the Bookshop staff, if not Mahony herself. The three signed reviews were clearly given to outsiders on the basis of their areas of expertise. In the November 1924 issue, Reverend John W. Suter, Jr. reviewed three Bible-story books; John M. Little, M.D. reviewed *Yourself and Your Body* by Wilfred T. Grenfell; and Olia A. Jacob, identified as “a Russian friend of Cossack

ancestry” reviewed the translation of the Russian book *Little Princess Nina* by L. A. Charskaya (1.2).

Not surprisingly, given the promotional and pre-selective nature of the journal, if any evaluation of a book was given at all, it was entirely positive. The only review that expressed any reservations about a book at all (though still recommending it) was by Reverend John W. Suter, Jr. Many reviews in the first volume included no analytical or critical comments at all – only descriptive. Some of that description was actually presented as quotations (not always clearly marked) from the book itself. This was a standard practice for the time. While Anne Carroll Moore would include quotations of both real and fantasy conversations in her columns, usually the author’s note, short poems, or descriptive passages would be quoted by reviewers. In *The Horn Book*, though, whole passages might be quoted and often encompassed almost the entire text of the “review.”

These positive and descriptive reviews were written very much as suggestions for books to buy. The November 1924 in-house review of *America – The Great Adventure* by George Philip Krapp (the same book Josephine Adams Rathbone recommended despite its paucity of factual information in the *New York Herald-Tribune*) recommended it on the basis of a related encounter with a customer in the store. The customer wanted “a book on American history to give to one of her maids who was preparing for citizenship.” After being shown a selection of possible books, this title was declared “just the thing” by the customer and recommended in the review on that basis (1.2).

Perhaps as a consequence of the descriptive and promotional approach towards reviewing, several reviews tend to be more literary and experimental in their

composition. The “review” of a new edition of *The Peterkin Papers* in the November 1924 was written as a fanciful piece about the characters coming for a visit to the Bookshop. The book was apparently presumed to be so well-known by its characters that it was never fully identified by title, let alone by any other bibliographic information. Only the following article about other new editions of old classics gave the uninitiated a clue that the previous piece was about a book not real people. Another “review,” for *The New Moon* by Cornelia Meigs also in the November 1924 issue, was written in the second person, describing to you how you feel as you read the book, as in, “you are amused at their landing in Philadelphia....” (1.2). Naturally, there was no opportunity for critical comment when using these more literary descriptive approaches. These reviews also tended to be on the long side. Recognized today as providing longer, more literary reviews, *The Horn Book* clearly started that tradition as early as its first volume. There were also some shorter reviews of two or three sentences included, however, revealing that the journal’s close-to-the-surface roots in book lists was prevalent in the early years as well.

Curiously, by modern standards, the first volume is very inconsistent in the content and placement of bibliographic information. For a journal serving primarily as a promotional organ for the Bookshop in the early years, it seemed strangely unconcerned about giving customers the information needed to order or buy the books. Title and author were usually – but not always – included in the body of the review if not in a separate list. Publisher and price were occasionally given. No doubt the provincial nature of the small Boston shop and the personal service provided were expected to easily fulfill any vague customer questions on a book read about in *The Horn Book*. It must be

remembered, however, that *The Bookman* also tended to put title and author information in small size font at the end of a review. Though suggestive advertising and blatant marketing were beginning to be a part of life in the 1920s, the more subtle and matter-of-fact approach of the past was still in use.

Similar to Moore's *New York Herald-Tribune Books* column, *The Horn Book* also featured articles by and about authors and books, both current and past childhood favorites. Even in the first volume, *The Horn Book* began its tradition of following a profile of an author and his/her books with an article by that author. Mahony visited and established relationships with many of her favorite authors. The bookseller's gushing and reverent tones precluded including much in the way of criticism though the personal touch and insider view provided by these articles is part of the charm of the journal.

In some respects, the focus of this study on the first year or volume of the first regular columns and journals reviewing children's books could be said to be delivering an inaccurate view of *The Horn Book*, given its current reputation in the field. *The Horn Book* is well-represented, however, in previous research studies on contemporary children's book review sources and review of its development through the years has been done by Meacham. What is particularly interesting to note in examining the first volume is how the book lists of the past, current interests of the Bookshop specifically, and of the times generally shaped what the journal was to become.

***Saturday Review of Literature* (Marion G. Canby), 1927**

The *Saturday Review of Literature* was founded by Henry Seidel Canby in 1924. His entire writing staff from the *Literary Review*, the book section of the *New York Post*, which he had previously edited, moved with him to the new journal. As he described it,

this new journal was intended to be the “old literary journal come of age, more humorous, more literary, broader in scope, better looking, but with the same will to further the cause of good thinking, good feeling, good writing, and good books” (quoted in Tebbel and Zuckerman 215). The journal addressed a literate readership interested in both the high-brow and the popular, classic works and new releases, as well the new ideas put forth by scholars, philosophers, and scientists that were challenging long-held theories (Tebbel and Zuckerman 215).

“The Children’s Bookshop,” a column devoted to children’s books debuted in the fourth volume in the October 1, 1927 issue. Unlike Anne Carroll Moore and Bertha Mahony whose strong personalities, interests, and opinions forthrightly influenced the format and content of their publications, the editor of “The Children’s Bookshop” appeared as an invisible guiding hand. Marion G. Canby’s identity as editor of the page is only evident in the cumulative index under the entry for “The Children’s Bookshop.” The column itself, though expressing personal opinion in the opening essay and closing suggestions, did not provide a byline or any other revelation of the editor responsible for the material. Her name does not appear even in the masthead.

Along with being the wife of the editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Marion Canby was a poet and a mother of two children. The philosophy presented in the column itself suggests that it is particularly the attribute of motherhood that qualified her for the position. It is quite likely that this is also the reason that her role as editor was uncredited.

In the opening essay “We Begin” in the October 1, 1927 issue, Canby set forth the reasons for the column and the plan for its content and reviewers. The column was

deliberately envisioned as a virtual bookstore with intangible wares of the “idea” of the book to provide practical guidance to the buyers of children’s books. Those buyers were inclusively labeled “parents” though “anyone else interested in the development of children by means of books, teachers, publishers, librarians” was graciously invited to enter as well (4.10). Unlike *The Horn Book*, there was no expectation that the column might actually be addressed to and of interest to children.

Continuing the bookstore metaphor, Canby proposed to set forth the column’s “wares on three shelves, marked comment, criticism, suggestive information.” She further elaborated:

That is, usually there will be: first, a short discussion reflecting the eager talk abroad nowadays about juvenile needs; second, reviews of good books; third, lists of special kinds of books, suggestions that may aid the puzzled bookbuyer, or any other idea that will give concrete help to the department’s readers (4.10).

The column would appear fortnightly at least during the “rush-season” of the publishers’ fall releases, a schedule that was fairly closely maintained throughout the remainder of volume 4, which ended with the July 21, 1928 issue. Most intriguingly, Canby proclaimed that the column would have as wide a variety of reviewers as possible and that non-experts and non-professionals are especially encouraged to write for the column. “We are convinced that many people with authoritative things to say about children and their books are to be found for the calling, perhaps most often outside the range of professional reviewers – notably ‘intelligent mothers’”(4.10).

As the unidentified editor to the column, Canby certainly made no claim to expertise. The opening gambit of the column seems rather deliberately to set itself up in contrast to the expert advice and idiosyncratic opinion that could be found in the increasingly well-known writings of Anne Carroll Moore and Bertha Mahony. It is also a

deliberate means by which to support and empower those “intelligent mothers” in their own expertise as parents. The rise of scientific thinking applied to all facets of life in this period was influencing the increasing belief that women needed to be educated in order to be good mothers: they needed the advice of experts (be they child psychologists, librarians, teachers) in order to not only raise healthy, intelligent, productive children and to do them no harm. Canby was sounding a clarion call in opposition to this increasing reliance on experts.

This is not say that Canby agreed with and supported all of the opinions of those “intelligent mothers.” In the June 23, 1928 column, for instance, the “suggestive information” section was written Katharine M. Frick (4.48). She wrote that she had been battling with her children for several years over their desire to read “merely innocuous” and well as “trash” books. Believing that eyesight is too valuable to waste on anything but good books, she had struggled in vain until discovering Terman and Lima’s book, *Children’s Reading*. After vetting the list of recommended books carefully and showing her children that certain of their favorites were included, her children “voluntarily agreed to ask at the library only for books on the Terman & Lima list.” In turn, she agreed to no longer interfere with their reading choices.

The headline for Frick’s piece read “For Docile Children.” That Canby was making a more ironic comment than that of domestic peace is apparent from the accompanying essay by E. M. F. and H. D. F. in the “comment” section of the same column as well as Canby’s own previous writings. These authors declared that children needed to be gently guided by degrees, not forced, to read better books by presenting books that followed their interests. This closely aligned with Canby’s own philosophy,

which she particularly expressed in the opening essay in the Dec.10, 1927 column. She recognized children's attraction to trashy or "innocuous" books as a stage of development on their way to developing more mature or sophisticated tastes. The child will "calmly persist in finding his own treasures, no matter what we do or do not do to help or hinder" (4.20). She suggested that the parent's role was to accept and support the treasures wherever the child found them and to gently expand the child's horizon with books that are alive and beautiful. Anne Carroll Moore blatantly expressed both her supporting and dissenting opinions of her reviewers' assessment of the books in her columns. Marion Canby's approach was more subtle but her guiding hand gently shaped and responded to the voices in her column just as she envisioned the parent doing for her child's reading.

It is difficult to say how many of the reviewers in "The Children's Bookshop" actually were among those "intelligent mothers" that Canby invited to participate. The unsigned reviews are presumed to be by Canby herself. Though other reviewers and contributors of comments and suggestions were given a byline, no further information beyond name, such as profession or area of expertise was given. Thirty-two reviewers were given a byline in "The Children's Bookshop" in volume four. The reviewers were evenly divided between men and women. At least twenty-three of them were recognized authors, including H. M. Tomlinson, Allan Nevins, Elizabeth Woodbridge, and Bray Hammond. Several, such as Margery Williams Bianco, Barbara Newhall Follett, and Edwin L. Sabin, were children's book authors. Others were staff writers and editors of the journals included in this study, such as William Rose Benet of *Saturday Review of Literature* and John Farrar of *The Bookman*. No recognized librarians were included among the reviewers. Librarians, with their professional affiliations acknowledged in

their bylines, did make contributions, however, to the comments and suggestions sections, typically in the form of advice and book lists.

One of the more prolific reviewers was Margery Williams Bianco, still known today as the author of the children's classic, *The Velveteen Rabbit*. She is interesting to note because she specialized in reviewing foreign books. She expressed delight and enthusiasm for international children's books in her reviews. Though the books reviewed were translated into English, she often revealed her familiarity with the author or the title in its original language.

Though reviewers such as Bianco had their specialties, "The Children's Bookshop" as a whole made a concerted effort to review a wide variety of books, including books for boys, books for girls, informational books, international books, adventure stories, fantasy stories, realistic stories, books for younger children and for older children, even the occasional book about books for children. This is in contrast to Moore who tended to focus on the fanciful and adventurous books that personally appealed to her tastes and Mahony who tended to focus on authors who were personal favorites and with whom she had developed personal relationships.

In her introductory essay, Canby wrote that the reviews in "The Children's Bookshop" would be of "good books" and, like its predecessors, this column generally only presented positive reviews. This was not entirely true, however. There were a couple of decidedly negative reviews, such as John Farrar's review of *Forward Ho!* by Percy Newberry in the December 10, 1927 issue, which he found a dull, dry, undramatic, humorless, dehydrated book about war "that I hope no child of mine ever reads" (4.20). There were also some middle of the road, balanced, or recommended-with-reservations

reviews. Some reviewers still recommended or excused a book for identified errors or inaccuracies if they judged that such problems fell outside of the author's intention or purpose in writing the book. The trend toward inclusion of criticism and evaluation of books that are not recommended or are recommended with reservations is small and subtle but present in comparison with other sources..

Generally, "The Children's Bookshop" reviews were not written in a fanciful or experimental style as found occasionally in Moore's and Mahony's writings. Canby did make use of the second-person in a review of Rachel Field's *The Magic Pawnshop*, however. In *The Horn Book*, Mahony used the second-person to simulate "you" actually in the process of reading and reacting to the book. Canby's use of the second-person was more directed at the reader of the review to simulate the experience of searching for a particular type of children's book, as in this example, "You have read many a fantastic child's story, compounded of magic and nonsense, and you have read not so many naturalistic stories of real little girls in familiar settings" Though this stylistic approach was unusual in "The Children's Bookshop" reviews, its use in guiding the reader to using critical skills in evaluating children's books was not. Though the column focused on presenting "good books" to its readers, it was far more devoted to providing practical evaluative reviews of those books than the earlier journals examined had been.

During its first year, "The Children's Bookshop" maintained the format Canby had outlined in the beginning. The comment section contained an essay about children's reading, sometimes given a headline, sometimes not. In early issues, these essays were unsigned by the editor but as the volume progressed, bylines by guest writers appeared more often. Suggestions included things like tips on forming book groups and buying

children maps to supplement their reading and advice and book lists on choosing specific types of books. The reviews took up the bulk of the column. Only the May 19, 1928 column featured no reviews at all. On the whole, the reviews evaluated only one book at a time and were shorter than those in the previous journals examined. Though there was one full-column individual review of twenty-four sentences (4.43), most individual reviews were four to five sentences in length. The occasional group reviews were always done on a theme, for instance, folk tales or children of other lands, in which each book might get between two to twelve sentences of specific coverage.

It is also interesting to note that reviews of children's books were not confined to "The Children's Bookshop" column. Prior to and after the inception of the column, *Saturday Review of Literature* included reviews of children's books under the heading of "Juvenile" within the short reviews of new books. Small print references directed readers back and forth to "The Children's Bookshop" column and any other juvenile book reviews in an issue. Since those directions made a distinction between what reviews were considered part of "The Children's Bookshop" and what were not, the additional reviews were not included in this study. Another place children's books showed up occasionally was May Lamberton Becker's regular column "The Reader's Guide." This column answered reader's questions about books. The questions and responses consisted essentially of Readers' Advisory and often featured children's books. Canby had declared in the opening essay of "The Children's Bookshop" that children's literature would not be treated as children's literature but as "simply literature with all due deference to children's requirements" and that "we will try our best to estimate children's books in the same standards that apply to any other class" (4.10). The journal as a whole

seemed to take that same approach as it sprinkled children's book reviews throughout its pages. At the same time, the presence of "The Children's Bookshop" recognized that readers particularly desired guidance in selecting books for children.

Of all the sources examined, the *Saturday Review of Literature* gave the most thorough and consistent bibliographic information. Every review was headed by the bibliographic information, which included title, author, illustrator and translator if applicable, publisher, year of publication, and price. Like the virtual bookstore it imagined itself as being, the column made it easy for the reader to find and purchase every book reviewed. This is also the thorough kind of bibliographic information that research on current children's book reviews suggests that librarians are looking for. Though occasionally older books and classics would be mentioned, the focus of the reviews was very much on what was currently being published. This was emphasized by the inclusion of the year of publication in the bibliographic information provided.

The commercial aspect of the column was acknowledged upfront in its name. It was carried out in the thoroughness of the bibliographic information and in the short, accessible, easy-to-read individual and group-themed reviews. The *Saturday Review of Literature* was also the only source examined that noticeably had publishers' advertisements encroaching into the reading experience. Moore had insisted that there would be no advertisements on the same page as her column in the *New York Herald-Tribune*. Though there were advertisements throughout the journal, there were none on the full-page spread of her column. The first year of publication *The Horn Book* had no paid advertising. In the *Saturday Review of Literature*, advertisements mixed with reviews on all the pages of the journal, in a manner very familiar to modern eyes. "The

Children's Bookshop" was not confined to one page. It took up as much space as it needed, sometimes continuing on several continuous pages. Even when the column only covered one page, it shared it with advertisements. For example, the first column shared half the page with an ad for Alfred A. Knopf for "Important Borzoi Books." The mix of critical reviews with paid promotional ads certainly supported Canby's goal of guiding the buying as well as the actual reading of books. It was also very much a sign of the times. Clearly by 1927, the newly developed concept of marketing products by surface glitter or by appealing to a buyer's insecurities or vanity was coming into its own.

In other respects, "The Children's Bookshop" tried to mitigate the problems that fancy packaging and aggressive advertising caused for parents trying to select good books for their children. Children's author Rachel Field wrote a piece for the November 26, 1927 column that lamented that people still labored under the belief that "brightly colored wrapper, gay pictures, and large print constitute a good children's book" (4.18). In the December 3, 1927 column, Canby suggested that when no reliable printed or human guide was on hand that hurried mothers rely on their own memories of books they loved as a child. "If there is no saving glimmer at all of pleasure recalled or anticipated, why, then it would seem that the child might fare better with a tinker-toy than with the resultant book" (4.19). "The Children's Bookshop" recognized and embraced the commercial promotion of books. Its mission was to provide its readers guidance in selecting the best books to buy for children.

Library Journal (Helen Martin), 1929

The column, "Through the Looking Glass: A Monthly Review of Children's Books and Reading" by Helen Martin debuted in the Children's Book Week issue of the

1929 *Library Journal* (54:904). Since that issue appeared in November to correspond with the observance of Children's Book Week, the column ran only twice in 1929. The column was short-lived. It only ran through part of the next volume, ending with the June 1, 1930 issue. As such, it barely fits the criteria of a regularly appearing publication of children's book reviews under consideration in this study. It is included for consideration, however, because *Library Journal* is a professional journal of the American Library Association (ALA). Though Anne Carroll Moore was a librarian and made liberal use of her experience and expertise as a librarian in her columns, the publications she wrote for were directed at a general rather than professional audience.

The early professional reviews are not exemplary. As already noted, the ALA publication *Booklist* debuted in its first publication in 1905, children's book "reviews," which bore greater resemblance to annotated book lists than to critical evaluations. While *Saturday Review of Literature* seemed to be step forward in terms of accessible and useable reviews, "Through the Looking Glass" in *Library Journal* is a throw-back to the most scrambled style and format used by Anne Carroll Moore in *The Bookman*. Martin provided little more information than an annotated list except that it was harder to pick out that information since it was written in an essay style, with individual books identified only by an italicized title.

Helen Martin, of course, was a librarian. The second column identified her under her byline with "Library Work With Children, Western Reserve University School of Library Science." Her reviews were sometimes so brief as to be misleading. For instance, she wrote that "Prize-winning books are always interesting, and *Courageous Companions* is no exception." She neglected to spell out that it was author Charles J.

Finger's previous book *Tales from Silver Lands* that was the prize winning book (of the 1925 Newbery Medal), not *Courageous Companions*.

Unlike the sources being directed at a general audience, Martin made no attempt to teach or instruct. As part of the service to librarians of separating the wheat from the chaff, Martin reserved her space solely for books worthy of attention. Martin made her intention to assist librarians in sorting through the bounty of newly published books explicit when she wrote in her opening paragraph that "librarians are reading with accelerated speed the many brightly colored volumes coming this autumn from the various presses. In fact, with limited appropriation careful selection grows increasingly difficult and toward a partial solution of this problem the following titles are suggested" (54:904). In order to include as many good books as possible, her column reads more like a brief survey of titles than the kind of reviews we expect today. In only two columns in 1929, she managed to review a total of twenty-nine books. The inclusion of the book in her column was enough to recommend it for purchase by librarians. The details she provided were briefly descriptive and generally indicated the approximate age-level the book is appropriate for.

Though Martin gave little in the way of critical analysis of a book, she did show concern with the quality of children's books. She declared *Pelle's New Suit* as a "delightfully colored but fragile picture book." *Hitty – Her First Hundred Years* was admired for its colorful sketches and calico cover as well as its imaginative historical tale. Despite its unusual larger quarto size, *The Goldsmith of Florence* was appraised as an invaluable reference that would not be forgotten on the shelf. The craftsmanship of

Karoo the Kangaroo was praised as marking “a radical departure in book making” for its use of warm yellow-toned paper to set off the pastel-like drawings (54:986).

“Through the Looking Glass” was one full-page in length. In the column itself, only the title of the book was reliably given. Full bibliographic information was given in a separate list. That list included author, title, illustrator, notes on whether the illustrations were in color, publisher, and price. Unfortunately, a small note at the bottom of the column directed the reader to find the book list several pages hence at the back of the journal under the vague headline of “Bibliography.” Even more frustrating, the list was alphabetical by author, even though the author was often not listed in the review of the book.

Despite *Booklist* in 1905 and *The Bookman* in 1918, children’s librarians were clamoring for useable reviews of children’s books according to the section notes in the January 15, 1920 issue of *Library Journal*. May Masee, editor of *Booklist*, responded that her journal was “only as good or as poor as those who check its tentative lists make it and asked for more help from children’s librarians in checking and annotating” (45:598-599). Apparently not appreciating that the children’s librarians were asking for assistance in selection, the *Booklist* did not change its format of amalgamated contributor reviews under Masee’s leadership.

The short-run of “Through the Looking Glass” indicates that children’s librarians in 1929 were not satisfied by Martin’s approach either. This is especially clear when, after an absence of several months, “Through the Looking Glass” was replaced in the September 15, 1930 issue with “The Children’s Librarian’s Notebook.” This monthly

column featured individual book reviews in an easy-to-read format. Bibliographic information headed each review and the initials of the individual reviewer closed it.

Reviews of Newbery Award Books

For a closer examination of the format and content of the different reviews in the various journals, reviews of Newbery Medal winners were selected for comparison. For all but the earliest (*The Bookman*) and latest (*Library Journal*) journals to start regular reviews of children's books, selecting reviews of the Newbery Medal winners allows a cursory examination of the same journal over time as well. The Newbery Medal was first awarded in 1922 for the best contribution to children's literature published in 1921 and written by an American citizen or resident. The Newbery Medal winners from 1922 to 1930 were:

The Story of Mankind by Hendrik Willem Van Loon (1922)

The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle by Hugh Lofting (1923)

The Dark Frigate by Charles Hawes (1924)

Tales from Silver Lands by Charles J. Finger (1925)

Shen of the Sea by Arthur Bowie (1926)

Smoky, the Cowhorse by Will James (1927)

Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon by Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1928)

The Trumpeter of Krakow by Eric P. Kelly (1929)

Hitty: Her First Hundred Years by Rachel Field (1930).

Reviews of all the Newbery medal winners appeared in the children's review columns of the journals examined with the exception of *Smoky, the Cowhorse*, which apparently had

cross-over appeal and was reviewed as an adult book in two journals. The full list of the reviews examined of these books in each journal can be found in Appendix B.

To broaden the comparison somewhat, the reviews in *Booklist* were included in this examination. Since *Library Journal* did not start publishing children's book reviews until the end of 1929, *Booklist* was the only other librarian-specific source available at this time. In its favor, *Booklist* was the only journal to review all the books that were consequently awarded the Newbery Medal in the 1920s. This is not entirely surprising since it is the only publication that was in print during the entire period of study. It is worth noting, however, that the other journals did not review some of the books even though they were published when the journals were actively reviewing. *The Horn Book*, for instance, started publication in 1924. Though it published a tribute piece in 1925 on Charles Hawes, author of the 1924 Newbery, after his unexpected death, the first actual review of a Newbery book was of *Smoky, the Cowhorse* in 1927.

The Newbery Medal winners were chosen by a committee based on nominations submitted by children's librarians among the American Library Association's membership. As described earlier, the "reviews" that appeared in *The Booklist* were amalgamations of voluntary contributions from librarians as edited by May Masee. It is commendable to note, therefore, that all of the eventual Medal winners received prior recognition by the membership at least to the point of inclusion in the journal. The reviews published in *The Booklist* did not give librarians much on which to base an opinion, however. Five of the reviews were only two to three sentences long. Only one review was over four sentences long. That review was a seven sentence review of *The Story of Mankind*, which came the closest to foreshadowing the short, concise evaluations

the journal is known for currently publishing. Since this was the earliest review examined, however, it cannot be regarded as a sign of actual progression towards that format. The reviews throughout this period all primarily consisted of brief descriptive annotations of the book. A consensus of a positive attitude towards the book, if present at all, was implied by short adjectives included in the description rather than by any in-depth analysis or critique. Phrases such as “conversational manner, clear, without cluttering details,” “well told,” “artistic retelling,” and “told in a sprightly manner” were often the extent of the evaluation.

As a professional journal, *The Booklist* was certainly not above singing the praises of one of its own. The main reason the review of *The Story of Mankind* rated seven sentences was the inclusion of Leonore St. John Power of the New York Public Library (and, not incidentally, a member of the Newbery selection committee) who had contributed a “useful” historical reading list to the back of the book, which *The Booklist* had received permission to reprint as a separate publication (18.4).

Though *The Booklist* may have lagged behind the more general audience publications in providing actual reviews, rather than annotations, of books, the one thing it did provide that its professional readership no doubt appreciated was thorough bibliographic and even cataloging information. Each book entry was headed by a listing of author, title, publisher, number of pages, notes of whether illustrations or maps were included, and price. By 1927, the name of the illustrator was also provided. Cataloging subject headings sometimes appeared at the end of the entry as well, such as “Poland—Hist.—Cesimir IV—Fiction” for *The Trumpeter of Krakow* (25.3). *The Booklist* also acknowledged the cross-over appeal of *Smoky, the Cowhorse*. Though it was reviewed in

the general (adult) fiction section, there was a cross-reference to that review in the Children's Book section (23.5).

In rather characteristic fashion, Anne Carroll Moore recommended *The Story of Mankind* in the November 1921 issue of *The Bookman* without first, as she admitted, actually reading it. Her fanciful premise for this column was that the reader was about to undertake a sailing trip to France or England, something, curiously enough, she just happens to have done herself. She offered to the reader the advice to take along *The Story of Mankind* on the basis of her having taken the author's previous book, *Ancient Man*, on her trip to France where she subsequently "left it in the children's library at Soissons as one of the most distinctive and original of the children's books published in America in 1920" (54.3).

Moore provided an actual review in the January 1922 issue as she wraps up a selection of holiday books for children for her readers. She devoted a lengthy twenty-two sentences to her evaluation of this book, including review of descriptive, critical, and even sociological elements. In both columns, the bibliographic information (title, author, and publisher only) were given in a composite list at the end of the column, in order of appearance. She recommended the book particularly for boys partly based on having given the book to a boy who was currently enjoying it and partly on her own evaluation that the book was conceived, written, and illustrated with "the heart of a boy and the brain of a man." Though she wrote of the book in glowing terms as the "most influential children's book for years to come" for making the comparatively new concept of universal history "a living thing to growing boys and girls," she also was quite critical of elements of the book's construction. She criticized the reading list (by Leonore St. John

Power) as hard to read since it lacked differentiation in type and forthrightly declared an index is needed for a library edition of the book (54.5). Moore's critique of the book elements and construction is not atypical of her reviews. In general, she tended to be more critical of the publisher than the creator. This was probably partially due to the fact that she generally did not review a book unless she liked it.

Five of the Newbery Medal books were reviewed in Moore's column "The Three Owls" in the *New York Herald-Tribune*. *Smoky, the Cow Horse* was reviewed in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, as in *The Booklist*, as an adult title. Though the review was long and quite favorable, there is no mention that it might be a children's title or also appeal to children. Of the Newbery books reviewed in her column, Anne Carroll Moore reviewed three titles herself. Harry Hansen reviewed *Tales from Silver Lands* and Josiah Titzell reviewed *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years*, though in both cases Moore contributed her own supporting opinions, personal experience of reading the books, and tidbits about the authors in her essay part of the column as well.

Bibliographic information was always presented at the top of the review and included title, author, illustrator, publisher, and price. All the columns were consistent in having a thematic format to the reviews or other material included. The October 26, 1924 column, for instance, consisted of Harry Hansen's review of *Tales from Silver Lands*, Moore's column giving her personal experience of the book, and a profile on the illustrator of the book. All of the reviews were lengthy, running from seventeen up to forty-four sentences long. With that luxury of space, consideration of all review elements, descriptive, critical, and sociological, were included. Moore provided the slightest amount of space to description of the books. All of the descriptions were

strongly on the Book Talk side of the scale, being brief, vague, and quoting passages of the book. Curiously, the other two reviewers used almost their entire review to give quite thorough Plot Summaries. Their critical comments were generally brief and favorable. For the sociological elements, Harry Hansen referred to the “modern applications” of one story from *Tales from Silver Lands* that he re-told in full though the reader had to divine for herself that those applications might be to the increasing industrialization and stratification of society (1.6). Josiah Titzell emphasized the “American character” that the little wooden doll Hitty exemplified, a view that Moore emphasized as well in her supporting essay (6.8).

All of the reviews revealed a positive attitude towards the book, though some reservations were expressed, most notably by Moore. Titzell injected a brief complaint that the text was too crowded on the page for *Hitty*, though he otherwise praised the book’s construction, the excellent illustrations, and the “poetic sensibility” and “period accuracy” of the writing (6.8). Moore devoted most of the space of her reviews to her critical and sociological comments. On both these elements, she had a tendency to express more subjective opinions and personal experience than objective criticism, except when writing about the book’s construction. She was pleased with the portrayal of Chinese life and custom in *Shen of the Sea*, as there was little accurate and accessible material on Eastern life available for children. She found the book construction attractive and the stories original and convincing (2.12). Though she recommended the book for its originality and vitality, Moore expressed her strongest reservations for *Gay-Neck*. She wrote quite a diatribe in objection to the story’s propaganda and moralizing in what she regarded as a trend after every war to tell children how to think (3.49). On the other

hand, the heavily patriotic elements of *The Trumpeter of Krakow* did not seem to bother her. Her only criticism was her more typical nagging of publishers for a better constructed book as she did not feel its cover, general format, or the reproduction of the illustrations as worthy of the praiseworthy content of the book. Moore praised the authenticity and vibrancy of the Polish setting in greater detail than the actual story. Many other reviewers of the time, including *The Booklist*, gushed about the Polish setting as well. Poland, having recently achieved independence after the War, was a potent symbol for many people of democratic international brotherhood and a topic of great current interest (5.15).

The personal characteristic of Moore's reviews can also be seen in her typical inclusion of some reference to her own reading experience, her work as a librarian, or the New York Public Library. In the review of *The Trumpeter of Krakow*, for instance, she admitted that she would have reviewed the book earlier except that she wanted to wait until the actual Krakow trumpet had arrived for display at the New York Public Library (5.15). A good portion of the review was devoted to description of this current exhibit of not only the trumpet but the original illustrations for the book. Besides demonstrating Moore's own qualifications as a children's literature expert, the library references also helped promote libraries generally and could certainly be considered one of her intentions in writing her column.

The reviews in *The Horn Book* show an interesting variety in format in comparison to the fairly consistent approaches in the journals already considered. *Smoky, the Cowhorse*, which was reviewed after the book had already received the Newbery, garnered ninety-two sentences of consideration, essentially a literary review several

pages in length. Bibliographic information was slight. The title and author of the book formed the headline for the review. The last sentence of the text announced that a new edition would be shortly available at the price of \$1.00 (3.3). *Gay-Neck* was reviewed in a short individual review of seven sentences within a column titled “Twenty-Five Outstanding Books of the Fall and Spring” (3.4). Bibliographic information of author, title, illustrator, publisher, and price was given as the heading of the review. *The Trumpeter of Krakow* was reviewed in a group article entitled “From Alchemy to Science” by Alice M. Jordan, Supervisor of Work with Children at the Boston Public Library, the only reviewer among these three to receive a byline. The bibliographic information, including title, author, publisher, and price, of each book was listed in small print at the end of the article (4.4).

Within its lengthy review, *Smoky, the Cowhorse* was praised on all fronts as having writing that is “alive”, “good and numerous illustrations,” and “commendable choice in paper and print.” A good part of the review consisted of a thorough descriptive Plot Summary. Praise of its authenticity of western life, unlike the movies, and a description of personal encounters with librarians making the choice of the Newbery were included as well (3.3).

The seven sentences devoted to the individual review of *Gay-Neck* expressed a positive, largely emotional response to the book. The descriptions are picturesque and atmospheric as the reviewer takes the reader on the journey of her/his experience of reading the book, for example, “We find our own spirits soaring as we follow Gay-Neck...” (3.4). The moralizing that Moore objected to was briefly praised as a message of courage.

Alice M. Jordan devoted eleven sentences to *The Trumpeter of Krakow* in her three page review article. Though not quite providing a plot summary, the entire review consisted of description except for the last sentence. In that sentence, she added her voice to those that appreciated the book's symbolic and newsworthy elements concerning Poland: "Eric Kelly writes from a real knowledge of Poland, its history and traditions, as well as its picturesque beauty of landscape." Her critical comments and positive opinion of the book are mostly inferred by the insertion of adjectival phrases, such as "exciting adventure," in her descriptive comments (4.4).

The variety of reviewers for the Newbery books in *Saturday Review of Literature* reflects the journal's commitment to encouraging outside reviewers. *Gay-Neck*, *The Trumpeter of Krakow*, and *Hitty* were reviewed in the journal though only two of them were included in "The Children's Bookshop" column. *Hitty* was reviewed by Margery Williams Bianco, a regular contributor to "The Children's Bookshop" in the November 16, 1929 issue but not as part of the column (6.17). Though "The Children's Bookshop" was still included, the entire issue was devoted to Children's Books. Bianco's review was published as one of the separate reviews, perhaps on the basis of her own reputation as an author and critic or the length of the review (twenty-seven sentences). This separate children's issue in 1929 is an interesting development. Other research studies might find it profitable to trace its origins and continuation in this and other review journals. Whether in "The Children's Bookshop" or separately in the Children's Book issue, all the books were reviewed individually and the review headings included the same bibliographic information: title, author, illustrator, publisher, publication date, and price.

All the reviews included elements of descriptive, critical, and sociological comments except H. Noble MacCracken's review of *The Trumpeter of Krakow*, which included no description of the story (5.14). MacCracken who is identified in the byline as being of Vassar College expended most of the six sentence review extolling the virtues of the city of Krakow. The Polish setting particularly appealed to the reviewer, having recently visited Krakow. There are brief critical comments regarding the "sober, informational style" in a story yet "full of action." The book's appeal to someone other than the reviewer was based on the testimony of a "young lady of fourteen summers, who could not sleep until the book was finished."

Mary Gray reviewed *Gay-Neck* in the October 15, 1927 issue (4.12). Her description of the book balanced somewhere between a Book Talk and a Plot Summary. Her brief critical considerations regarded the writing as being "vivid" and "thoughtful" and having an "excellent style." The illustrations' "striking Indian flavor" complemented the story. Again in contrast to Anne Carroll Moore, she was quite taken with the Indian philosophy about conquering fear. She addressed other sociological elements such as the after-effects of the Great War in acknowledging that *Gay-Neck* had to overcome "what we have learned to call 'shellshock'." In Gray's judgment *Gay-Neck* "will please the taste of even effete little movie fans."

The 1930 Newberry winner, *Hitty: Her First Hundred Years*, was the only Newbery Medal book to be reviewed during the time period under consideration in *Library Journal*. In Helen Martin's "Through the Looking Glass" column, *Hitty* was granted seven sentences (54:986). This was a considerable bit of space within this rather hodgepodge group review format. Though title and author are mentioned in the body of

the review, full bibliographic information including author, title, translator and illustrator, notes on illustrations or illustrations are present, publisher, and price were all only given in a list that a note at the bottom of the column refers the reader to several pages away. The description provided mentions a few isolated incidents in the book in a Book Talk come-hither fashion. Her brief critical comments referred to the author as an “ever-delightful scribe” and praised the “expressive sketches.” No sociological comments were made.

Conclusion

Anne Carroll Moore was the forerunner in reviewing children’s books on a regular basis with her columns in both *The Bookman*, starting in 1918, and the *New York Herald-Tribune*, starting in 1924. In both these columns, Moore promoted libraries, authors, and illustrators as well as books. Some of that promotion was assuredly self-serving, even if presented as a service to the public. Moore particularly advocated for quality book construction in her criticisms. Her columns in both journals were marked by her strong personality and her personal opinions, though the reviews in *New York Herald-Tribune* were more accessible in format and bibliographic information for potential readers and buyers.

The Horn Book promoted the bookstore, authors, and illustrators as well books. It was more experimental and varied for a longer period of time in the style and format of its reviews. The early penchant for annotations started to veer towards more lengthy literary reviews, though reviews commonly mixed with general promotion in author profile articles. Bertha Mahony’s recounts of personal visits to and letters from authors and illustrators created a warm homey atmosphere to the journal. In these early years

examined, the in-house reviewers were self-effacing, receiving no byline or other identifier even when personal commentary was included. Outside experts, including librarians and subject specialists, however, did receive bylines and professional identification.

The *Saturday Review of Literature* was a literary journal directed at the general public. The children's book review column was set up in an accessible and democratic format and style. It invited and welcomed a variety of reviewers, especially "intelligent mothers." Though librarians figured among them, a good many of the reviewers came from a literary background. This development is in direct contrast to the promotion of expertise or insider knowledge that the earlier debuting publications of Moore and Mahony emphasized.

As a late-blooming and short-lived column aimed at library professionals, *Library Journal* provided among the briefest and least sufficient reviews for their purported purpose of guiding children's librarians in selection. Although there was some critical comment, on the whole the column read as one long Book Talk rather than a review. The other professional journal featuring children's books, *Booklist* must be credited for its early beginning (1905). However, its reliance on amalgamated annotations did not provide much in the way of real review. *Booklist* did have real value at this time, though, in the thoroughness of the bibliographic information it provided that ably assisted librarians in ordering and cataloging, if not in selecting.

In all of the journals considered here (except *Booklist*), books were reviewed both individually and as part of themed group reviews or essays. There was a trend in the later part of the decade towards more individual reviews. Bibliographic information of at least

author, title, and publisher was typically provided but not always in a very prominent manner. Again, there was a trend towards more complete and easily accessed bibliographic information as the decade proceeded. *Library Journal* was the major exception to both of these trends until it started “The Children’s Librarians’ Notebook” column in 1930.

On the whole the reviews contained more description than anything else, with a general emphasis on Book Talk enticement rather than Plot Summary thoroughness. Critical examination of the books reviewed was usually brief and often focused on book construction quality. Personal opinion and subjective response was difficult to separate from more objective analysis. Sociological comments particularly focused on aspects of modern life and the value of an international outlook. One of the most interesting characteristics discovered was the large amount of commentary both in and accompanying the book reviews. The commentary especially encompassed advice to parents on how to select good books and entice their children to read them. This finding parallels Cockett’s on the writings in popular, rather than literary, publications. Other additional material profiled authors and illustrators, supporting and promoting their creative work. Further research and analysis specifically on this commentary and additional material would be a rich avenue for further exploring the influences of societal trends and contemporary events on the promotion of children’s literature.

The earliest review sources were more interested in promoting old favorites, providing reader’s advisory, or general advice than in systematically reviewing new books being published. *Saturday Review of Literature* in 1927 was the only journal to put a major emphasis on reviewing new books, although it also included commentary and

suggestions. *Booklist*, though not providing full-fledged reviews, also focused its coverage on new books.

The audience of all but the professional journals was clearly parents, especially mothers. Other interested parties, specifically librarians and teachers, were invited to read along, and sometimes were directly addressed, but generally they took a back seat to the need to advise parents on the best books for their children. The challenge for both authors and reviewers of pleasing parents in order to reach the eventual child reader was often acknowledged in the columns' commentary. The focus on parents as the audience is particularly interesting given the expectation of much of the current library research that library professionals are the primary audience for today's reviews. It is also interesting that the reviews oriented towards the general public proved far more useable as a selection guide than those provided by the professional journals of the time. Continuing research focusing on this and other decades as Cockett suggests could help uncover when and how professional journals followed the example of general-audience journals in style and format and how that has helped and hindered their effectiveness for today's professionals.

Anne Carroll Moore and Bertha Mahony are certainly considered the most influential of the early reviewers and are still well-known today. Both of them approached book reviewing from the standpoint of an expert, though Moore tended to be self-aggrandising and Mahoney self-effacing in promoting that expertise. Marion Canby's background and influence on children's book reviews particularly deserve some more research in order to pull this important early reviewer out of the shadows of her predecessors. Though the reviewers included librarians, booksellers, subject experts,

and, presumably, “intelligent mothers,” the majority appear to have been authors. The cross-pollinating effect of authors reviewing their peers and its effect on the development of quality children’s literature would be worth exploring in further research.

All of the reviewers certainly intended to provide guidance with their reviews. The mere inclusion of a book in a review generally implied recommendation. The reviews were certainly also a medium for expressing personal opinions and vendettas. Criticism was most often pointedly addressed at publishers, even though they were never identified as the audience for the reviews. The reputation and influence of figures like Moore and Mahony as well as their location in New York and Boston does suggest that publishers paid attention to reviews. The coinciding establishment of children’s departments in publishing houses, prominently staffed by former librarians, during this period also suggests publishers were attuned to the criticisms and suggestions offered by these reviewers. In many cases, the commentary and additional material was given more prominence than the actual book reviews, implying that this contained what the reviewers actually wished to convey to their readers. This material provided guidance on developing critical skills in the buyers and consumers of children’s books. It also showed a desire to support and encourage good writing and illustration for children through promotion of the best rather than critiques of everything being published.

Contemporary events certainly influenced the development and content of children’s book reviews in this period. With the technological developments and health advances, the time was ripe for books and reviews of books for children. The contemporary trends and concepts most visibly prominent in the reviews were promotion, ownership, and expertise vs. “intelligent mothers.” Early reviews went hand-in-hand

with promotion. This includes Moore's self-promotion of her own book and Mahony's promotion of the Bookshop. Promotion of individual writers, illustrators, libraries, and bookshops often accompanied reviews. Moore's and Mahony's promotion of their professional roles and personal contacts with authors and illustrators played a part in establishing their credentials as experts on children's literature. In contrast, the growing conception that parents required training and expert guidance in order to properly raise their children was directly challenged by Marion Canby's column in *Saturday Review of Literature*. The greater number of reviews in her column provided guidance in selection certainly, but, at least purportedly, on a peer-to-peer basis.

The interleaving of advertisements with reviews found in the *Saturday Review of Literature* opens up the possibility of research on the development and impact of early advertisements of children's books. It could also be a way of further exploring publishers' response to the criticisms leveled at them by reviewers. The active promotion of the concept that it is important for children to not only read but *own* books was an unexpected finding and very reflective of the times. Though most people acquired the majority of their reading material from the library, children's books were among the books most likely to be purchased. *The Bookman* and *The Horn Book* had associations with a publisher and a bookstore respectively so their promotion of buying books is not surprising. The fact that the bibliographic information that would aid purchase was least consistent and accessible in these sources is surprising. This situation can probably be accounted for by the gradual change during this time from discreet and matter-of-fact to manipulative and eye-catching advertising. By 1927 and the debut of "The Children's Bookshop" in *Saturday Review of Literature*, the commercial aspect was present in the

column's name as well as in the commentary and the accessible reviews and bibliographic information.

Regular publication of reviews of children's books in designated columns and journals rose out of the era of their birth. The period between 1918 and 1929 was a time of rapid growth and changes on many fronts that especially impacted children's book publishing in America. Early reviewers sought to be promoters and arbitrators of quality in children's book writing, illustrating, and construction. The reviewers wished to encourage the creators and producers of children's books as much as they wished to provide expert guidance to the buyers and readers of the books. Nostalgia for the children's classics of the past tempered the warring feelings of excitement and trepidation about the rapid commercial growth and excess of children's publishing. Despite the professional clamor for critical reviews, parents were clearly the designated audience for the most developed and successful review sources. The legacy of this popular beginning, with its emphasis on highlighting only the best and getting books in the homes can be seen in the continued complaints in research on contemporary review sources for professionals. Though individual librarians were certainly influential, it was the popular literary media, not the professional journals, that was the leader in developing children's book reviews and the legacy of that is still felt today.

This research has provided only a brief examination of the first year of the pioneer children's review publications. More in-depth research on these journals and the ones that followed in later decades still needs to be done. There are many other related avenues that can be explored, such as publisher's advertisements, other period writings about children's literature besides reviews, and connections between the books and their

reviews in terms of changing evaluations over time. There is much yet to be done to deepen and broaden our collective knowledge of the history and development of children's literature and its evaluation and promotion. This research on the early years of regularly published review columns on children's books reveals the origins of many of today's reviewing practices and provides a base from which further historical analysis can profitably continue to illuminate the legacy of the past on the present.

Appendix A: Worksheets

PUBLICATION:

VOL/ISSUE:

Overall Format

Column Name: _____

Editor: _____

Total number of books reviewed: _____

General commentary/essay:	NO	YES
		Subject:

Number of reviewers: _____

Name/Gender of reviewers: _____

Individual Book Reviews?	NO	YES
--------------------------	----	-----

Group Book Reviews?	NO	YES
		Theme:

Other material present:	NO	YES
		Describe:

Bibliographic Information Given

Title:	NO	YES
--------	----	-----

Author:	NO	YES
---------	----	-----

Publisher:	NO	YES
------------	----	-----

Price:	NO	YES
--------	----	-----

Placement of Bibliographic Info:

Appendix B: Newbery Medal Reviews

Booklist

- *The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik Willem Van Loon (1922)
 - o v.18, no.4 (January 1922)
- *The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle* by Hugh Lofting (1923)
 - o v.19, no.3 (December 1922)
- *The Dark Frigate* by Charles Hawes (1924)
 - o v.20, no.3 (December 1923)
- *Tales from Silver Lands* by Charles Finger (1925)
 - o v.21, no.3 (December 1924)
- *Shen of the Sea* by Arthur Bowie (1926)
 - o v.22, no.4 January 1926)
- *Smoky, the Cowhorse* by Will James (1927)
 - o v.23, no.5 (February 1927)
- *Gay Neck, the Story of a Pigeon* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1928)
 - o v.24, no.2 (November 1927)
- *The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly (1929)
 - o v.25, no.3 (December 1928)
- *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* by Rachel Field (1930)
 - o v.26, no.3 (December 1929)

Bookman

- *The Story of Mankind* by Hendrik Willem Van Loon (1922)
 - o v.54, no.3 (Nov. 1921)
 - o v.54, no.5 (Jan. 1922)

Horn Book

- *Smoky, the Cowhorse* by Will James (1927)
 - o v.3, no.3
- *Gay Neck, the Story of a Pigeon* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1928)
 - o v.3, no.4
- *The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly (1929)
 - o v.4, no.4

Library Journal

- *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* by Rachel Field (1930)
 - o v.54 (December 1,1929)

New York Herald-Tribune

- *Tales from Silver Lands* by Charles Finger (1925)
 - o v.1 (October 26, 1924)
- *Shen of the Sea* by Arthur Bowie (1926)
 - o v.2 (October 18, 1925)
- *Smoky, the Cowhorse* by Will James (1927)
 - o v.3 (October 3, 1926 – not in Moore’s column)

- *Gay Neck, the Story of a Pigeon* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1928)
 - o v.3 (August 21, 1927)
- *The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly (1929)
 - o v.5 (December 30, 1928)
- *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* by Rachel Field (1930)
 - o v.6 (November 3, 1929)

Saturday Review of Literature

- *Gay Neck, the Story of a Pigeon* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji (1928)
 - o v.4, no.12 (October 15, 1927)
- *The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly (1929)
 - o v.5, no.14 (October 27, 1928)
- *Hitty, Her First Hundred Years* by Rachel Field (1930)
 - o v.6, no.17 (November 16, 1929)

Works Cited

- Belenky, Mary, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule. *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
- Bishop, Kay and Phyllis Van Orden. (1998). "Reviewing Children's Books: A Content Analysis." *Library Quarterly* 68.2 (1998):145-182.
- Booklist* 18.4 (January 1922).
- Booklist* 19.3 (December 1922).
- Booklist* 20.3 (December 1923).
- Booklist* 21.3 (December 1924).
- Booklist* 22.4 (January 1926).
- Booklist* 23.5 (February 1927).
- Booklist* 24.2 (November 1927).
- Booklist* 25.3 (December 1928).
- Booklist* 26.3 (December 1929).
- The Bookman* 48 (1918-1919).
- The Bookman* 58 (1923-1924)
- Burchette, Rebecca. *An Examination of Children's Book Review Media*. Unpublished master's paper, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1992.
- Busbin, O. Mell and Susan Steinfurst. "Criticism of Artwork in Children's Picture Books: A Content Analysis." *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* 2.3 (1989):256-266.

- Cockett, Lynn S. (1996). "Writing for Parents about Children's Literature in Mass Market Publications, 1900-1950" [Electronic version]. *Library Trend*, 44.4 (1996):794-812.
- Doll, Carol Ann. "Research and Juvenile Reviewing Media." *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 31 (1990, Fall):150-152.
- Eaton, Anne T. "Reviewing and Criticism of Children's Books." *Reading without Boundaries: Essays Presented to Anne Carroll Moore on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Inauguration of Library Service to Children at The New York Public Library*. Ed. Francis Lander Spain. New York: The New York Public Library, 1956:55-58.
- Gerhardt, Lillian Noreen. "On Critical Reviewing." *School Library Journal* 33.2(1986):70.
- Grant, Julia. *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Harrington, Janice N. "Children's Librarians, Reviews, and Collection Development." *Evaluating Children's Books: A Critical Look: Aesthetic, Social, and Political Aspects of Analyzing and Using Children's Books*. Ed. Betsy Hearne and Roger Sutton. Urbana-Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 1993:27-36.
- The Horn Book* 1 (1924).
- The Horn Book* 3 (1927).
- The Horn Book* 4 (1928).
- Hunt, Peter, editor. *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 1995.

Kennemer, Phyllis K. "Reviews of Fiction Books: How They Differ." *Top of the News* 40.4 (1984):419-422.

Kyvig, David E. *Daily Life in the United States, 1920-1940*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004.

Library Journal 45 (1920).

Library Journal 51 (1926).

Library Journal 54 (1929).

Lynd, Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd. *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929.

Meacham, Mary. "The Development of Children's Book Reviewing in Selected Journals from 1924-1984." Diss. Texas Woman's University, 1989.

Meigs, Cornelia, Anne Eaton, Elizabeth Nesbitt, and Ruth Hill Viguers. *A Critical History of Children's Literature*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1953.

Miller, Marilyn L., editor. *Pioneers and Leaders in Library Services to Youth: A Biographical Dictionary*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003.

Moore, Anne Carroll. *The Three Owls: A Book about Children's Books*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924.

New York Herald-Tribune Books 1 (1924-1925).

New York Herald-Tribune Books 2 (1925-1926).

New York Herald-Tribune Books 3 (1926-1927).

New York Herald-Tribune Books 5 (1928-1929).

New York Herald-Tribune Books 6 (1929-1930).

Power, Effie L. *Library Service for Children*. Chicago: American Library Association,

1930.

Ross, Eulalie Steinmetz. *The Spirited Life: Bertha Mahony Miller and Children's Books*.

Boston: The Horn Book, Incorporated, 1973.

Saturday Review of Literature 4 (1927-1928).

Saturday Review of Literature 5 (1928-1929).

Saturday Review of Literature 6 (1929-1930).

Sayers, Frances Clarke. *Anne Carroll Moore: A Biography*. New York: Atheneum, 1972.

Sayers, W. C. Berwick. *A Manual of Children's Libraries*. London: George Allen &

Unwin Ltd. and The Library Association, 1932.

Stewig, John Warren. "Picture Books: What do Reviews Really Review?" *Top of the*

News, 37 (1980):83-84.

Tebbel, John. "For Children, With Love and Profit: Two Decades of Book Publishing for

Children." *Stepping Away from Tradition: Children's Books of the Twenties and*

Thirties. Papers from a Symposium. Ed. Sybille A. Jagusch. Washington: Library

of Congress, 1988:13-35.

Tebbel, John and Mary Ellen Zuckerman. *The Magazine in America, 1741-1990*. New

York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Vandergrift, Kay. "A Feminist Research Agenda in Youth Literature" [Electronic

version]. *Wilson Library Bulletin* 68.2 (1993):22-27.

Weber, Rosemary. (1979). "The Reviewing of Children's and Young Adult Books in

1977." *Top of the News* 35.2(1979):131-137.

Weedman, Judith. (1986). "Literary Criticism of Children's Books: The Significant

Journals." *Public Library Quarterly* 7.1/2(1986):35-44.

White House Conference 1930: Addresses and Abstracts of Committee Reports. White House Conference on Child Health and Protection called by President Hoover.

New York: The Century Co., 1931.

Wilson, Margo and Kay Bishop. (1999). "Criteria for Reviewing Children's Books."

Library Resources & Technical Services 43.1 (1999):3-13. 26 October 2007

<http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/results/results_single_ftPES.jhtml>.

Witucke, Virginia. "A Comparative Analysis of Juvenile Book Review Media." *School*

Media Quarterly 8.3 (1980):153-160.