

it is a long text and not suitable for a dual language edition, then I won't publish it as a bilingual book," says Aldana.

Interestingly, the founder of Greenwood is not fond of bilingual books. "If I had a choice," Aldana states, "I would publish dual language editions. I think bilingual books have design issues. They don't allow children to immerse themselves in the language. If you do a good bilingual book there are so many limitations. There is a real compromise in quality. Two separate editions are much better." Aldana goes on to say, "I think that it is terrible that people aren't buying books in Spanish. I've always been bilingual. If you have access to both languages you are always checking the translations rather than immersing yourself into the language. I don't think bilingual books are the way to do it. I think it is a cop-out on the part of publishers and the education system to prefer them." Despite her misgivings, Aldana's bilingual books sell very well. Two of her bestselling books include *Sky Blue Accident/Accidente celeste* (Luján & Grobler, 2007) and *Rooster/Gallo* (Luján & Monroy, 2004).

Lectorum Publications

Originally opened as a bookstore and later purchased by Bob Mlawer, Lectorum Publishers has been around for 47 years and claims to be the "oldest and largest Spanish-language book distributor in the United States." During her 32 years of tenure, Teresa Mlawer, the president of this New York-based publishing division of Scholastic, has catapulted Lectorum from a small bookstore to a distributor and finally, after its acquisition by Scholastic in 1996, to a publisher of Spanish and bilingual titles. Although the bookstore recently closed, Lectorum continues as a publisher and distributor of Spanish and bilingual books.

As a distributor, the Cuban-born Mlawer is sought out by many authors who want to create bilingual books. However, she asserts, "Not every book should be turned into a bilingual book. Some lend themselves to that, such as short picture books for small children. For older children, why would you do a bilingual book?" According to Mlawer, the publisher creates bilingual books only for very small children. "If there is a lot of text, then we don't turn it into a bilingual book. Bilingual books are four to five lines per page. If the text is longer than that, then we make dual editions. We don't want to scare children with length of text."

Once Mlawer has chosen titles for bilingual editions, she takes great care to ensure the quality of the translation. "Our number one goal is to respect the voice of the original author. We don't want a translation to sound like a translation; we want the language to flow. We try to keep the meaning and structure the same for both languages." Mlawer, who also translates for Cinco Puntos Press, does most Lectorum's translations herself. However, she does employ other qualified people on the staff and will go outside the house if a book calls for skills that are absent within the publishing house. "We try to get the best translators, editors, and copy editors," Mlawer affirms. "Our books go through several revisions—which is the key to coming out with a great translation and still maintaining the quality. Even my personal translations are edited by someone else."

These translations are written in a universal Spanish (neutral Latin American Spanish) that Mlawer believes any Spanish

speaker will understand. However, if Lectorum decides to publish a bilingual edition of a story originally from a particular country, such as Puerto Rico, and the original author uses a word specific to Puerto Rico, then Mlawer will leave the word in the text and explain it at the end as needed. She believes it is important for children to learn the different words particular to a specific Latino subculture. "The more vocabulary being taught to the children, the better," she comments.

In addition to retaining specific Spanish regionalisms, the publisher also tries to ensure that the illustrator understands the particular culture from which the book originated. As an example, Mlawer mentions the series *When the Great Ones Were Small*. "We have made sure that we verified the information and that we have illustrators that match the author's country of origin" and/or the setting of the book. She also maintains, "We never use comic illustrations, especially when we do a culturally relevant book. We want children to identify themselves in illustrations, so we use ones that are realistic."

Much like the other publishers interviewed, Lectorum does not use different colors or italics to denote the Spanish text. Generally, they print one language on top of the page and the other on the bottom. Mlawer remarks, "We want to keep the languages separate but don't want to confuse the children with the different [type settings]. It is my personal decision to do this. If the story is originally written in Spanish, then I'll keep the Spanish author first over the English author, and vice versa. It is just a question of who did the original text."

All of these precautions and attentions to detail seem to have paid off for the publisher. Mlawer acknowledges that their books are becoming more and more popular with both Latino and non-Latino families. Some of the publishers' bestselling bilingual children's books include Montijo's *Cloud Boy/Niño Nube* (2006), Ellery's *If I Had a Dragon/Si yo tuviera un Dragón* (2006), and Kesselman's *Este monstruo me sueña/This Monster Rings a Bell* (2004).

Lee & Low Books

Founded in the early 1990s by Philip Lee and Thomas Low, Lee & Low Books is one of the few minority-owned publishing companies in the United States. As an independent publisher of multicultural children's books, the company was one of the first to acknowledge the need for children of color to see themselves reflected in their books. Jason Low, one of the current co-owners of Lee and Low, remarks, "Although I am not one of the founders, my ten years with the company has allowed me to witness significant growth over the years. Lee & Low was established with the mission of filling a void in children's publishing and providing diverse books with contemporary multicultural themes. We purposely avoid publishing talking animal stories and folklore, since there is nothing new we can bring to these genres."

The publisher has been issuing Spanish and bilingual books since 1994. In the early years, they translated only books with Latino themes into Spanish. Later, they decided that quality stories from all cultures should be made available to Spanish readers. Low stresses, "It is important for Spanish readers to be exposed to universal themes that cross cultural barriers and captivate children by revealing cultures, customs, and traditions that are different but the same."

Like all publishers of bilingual books, Low realizes that only specific books will support a bilingual format. "If a book is too text heavy, the words and pictures cannot interact in a fluid way, and the delicate harmony between the two elements of story and illustrations are lost. We find some of the best candidates for bilingual books are poetry, since the text is usually spare, leaving plenty of room for words in English and Spanish to coexist." Two of Lee & Low's books that reinforce this rule are Delacré's *Arroró, mi niño: Latino Lullabies and Gentle Games* (2004) and Alarcón's *Poems to Dream Together/Poemas para soñar juntos* (2005).

In addition to deciding which books will be produced in a bilingual format, Low acknowledges that selecting a translator is perhaps the biggest challenge faced by his company. "We don't want a translation that is simply grammatically correct. The translation, or adaptation, must also capture the style, spirit, and intention of the author." Low explains that there are several factors Lee & Low takes into account when choosing a translator. First, the translator must be a native Spanish speaker. Low suggests, "Such people not only have knowledge of the proper use of Spanish, but they can employ regional and colloquial usage appropriately." Another consideration in choosing a translator is that he/she must be a good writer. "It is not enough to know Spanish grammar and syntax. The translator must reinterpret the English text as a storyteller in Spanish. The translator must be able to maintain the voice of the author, yet be able to rewrite it clearly for the Spanish-speaking reader. This is a particular challenge for poetry and verse." A final concern in selecting a translator relates to his/her knowledge of the subject matter being translated. "Each translator has special strengths," says Low. "Some translators are particularly good storytellers, while others may have expertise in certain subjects. When we translated *Gracias te damos/Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message* (Swamp & Printup, 1996), we looked for someone who had studied Native American cultures. For *¡Béisbol! Pioneros y leyendas del béisbol Latino/¡Béisbol! Latino Baseball Pioneers and Legends* (Winter & Rodríguez, 2002), we selected a translator who was knowledgeable about baseball and its terminology."

Low is also quick to point out that the company's Spanish translations are edited for accuracy. "Even though we place great emphasis on finding the best translator for each book, it is critical that the translated text be edited. Even the best writers need a good editor, and translators are no exception. Therefore, copy editors and proofreaders must have extensive knowledge of Spanish as well as a good command of the book's subject matter. Translations often require several rounds of editing."

Similar to Lectorum, Lee & Low does not use different colors or italics to denote the Spanish text. They also generally use a universal Spanish in their bilingual books, unless the original author employed a specific regional voice in the English edition. Low clarifies, "If the book has a specific setting in the English edition, such as Mexico or Puerto Rico, or if the characters speak in a local dialect, then the translation should reflect this."

The many precautions and measures taken by the publisher to ensure the quality of the translations results in books that exemplify Lee & Low's emphasis on cultural authenticity. "Accurate portrayal of different cultures is one of the key reasons why our books have been so successful," Low admits. "Our stories resonate with people of all cultures and help to establish connections

between people of different backgrounds as they realize that the personal stories shared by individuals of one culture are surprisingly similar to those of other cultures." Indeed, the publisher's books are successful. Some of their bestselling bilingual books include Nikola-Lisa's *America: A Book of Opposites/Un libro de contrarios* (2001), Suen's *Toddler Two/Dos años* (2002), and Alarcón's *Poems to Dream Together/Poemas para soñar juntos* (2005).

Children's Book Press

Founded by Harriet Rohmer in 1975, Children's Book Press (CBP) is a nonprofit multicultural and bilingual children's book publisher that was the nation's first publisher to specialize exclusively in multicultural literature for children. Children's Book Press is also one of the pioneers of publishing children's books in a bilingual format, with books written in numerous languages, including Chinese, Korean, Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Spanish. According to Dana Goldberg, the executive editor of CBP, "We've been publishing Spanish/English bilingual books for children for over 30 years. Harriet Rohmer founded CBP to fill a void in the children's publishing field; back then there were few, if any, bilingual titles for children and few that showcased stories for and from communities of color in the United States. Our mission today is the same as it was back then: to provide children from the African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American communities with books that reflect them—their experience, culture, history, and languages."

In an effort to ensure cultural authenticity, CBP generally publishes stories by authors and artists whose heritage represents the culture being portrayed in the text and illustrations. "By no means do we feel that people can't produce successful stories and art about experiences other than their own, but it is our guiding principle to ensure that our books are culturally authentic, sensitive, and accurate," asserts Goldberg. When faced with the challenge of determining which books to publish in bilingual formats, the publisher chooses bilingual over monolingual whenever there is a relevant second language. CBP also asks their authors of Spanish bilingual books to provide their manuscript in both English and Spanish. When this is not feasible, they employ translators who are native Spanish speakers. The publisher then sends the translation to Spanish readers, who check for cultural accuracy, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. These readers examine the narrative or poetic flow (to ensure that the Spanish version can stand on its own) and verify the consistency between the English and Spanish texts. "This process can be very time-consuming," admits Goldberg, "but is a really crucial step in producing high-quality bilingual literature. Our ultimate goal is that a reader who is fluent in both languages wouldn't be able to tell which language the story was written in first, and which is the translation."

Comparable to the other publishers, CBP's translations contain Spanish regionalisms as well as a Spanish that is understood by most Spanish speakers. Goldberg maintains, "There is no one pure Spanish, the same way that there is no pure English. Keeping that in mind, we try to strike a balance between culturally appropriate regionalisms that reflect the author's background, and Spanish that will be clear and understandable to all Spanish-speaking children." The publisher seeks regionalisms in Spanish that will