

MINI-REVIEWS: CO-PRODUCTIONS OF A SORT

This mini-review has been subtitled “Co-productions of a sort” because of the complicated nature of Canadian co-productions. For the purpose of this article, the Canadian publisher input is necessary in order that the books be considered co-productions. Texts which are available simultaneously in Canada and in some other countries, and merely carry a Canadian imprint are certainly tributes to the business acumen of Canadian publishers. However, without actual Canadian input to the book production in some way, the books themselves are not considered to be Canadian. Some Annick Press and Greenwood/Douglas & McIntyre books are considered here.

Annick Press usually translates its co-productions if they are in languages other than English. In the “All About Us” series, Annick translated Spanish words into English, then sent the layout sheets back to Europe for printing. Annick imprint and copyright are on the books. In *Malcolm’s village* the graphics as well as the translation were sent to Annick. Annick did its own typesetting, films, and layout, and then sent the book to Italy for printing. Thus, Annick determined the look of the Canadian version of this book. Although the translation was provided for *Malcolm’s Village*, Annick usually translates the text as it did for *The streets are free* (1985) and *Charlie’s pillow* (1985).

The Greenwood/Douglas & McIntyre co-productions are normally translated into English in Europe, but then the Greenwood editor usually polishes the translations for the Canadian market, thus giving the books a Canadian editorial input.

The city, Shopping, What we do, The weekend, Roser Capdevila. Annick Press 1986. Unpaginated \$4.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920303-45-5, 0-920303-43-9, 0-920303-46-3, 0-920303-44-7.

Annick Press has added four titles to their toddlers’ wordless board “Books about us” series, which originated with La Galera, Spain, 1984. The tone of the series is definitely European, yet Canadian children will have no difficulty identifying any of the myriad objects and activities so colourfully illustrated. This series is recommended for both home and library purchase. Children will pour over the details much in the way they do over L.L. Brooke’s, or even Richard Scarry’s illustrations.

Malcolm’s village, Gunilla Lundgren. Photos Lars Jacobsson, Graphics Militta Wellner. Annick Press, 1985. 42 pp. \$9.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920303-28-5.

Malcolm’s village is the moving, true story of the peaceful death of an old

beloved African grandmother and the effect the death has on young, Swedish, Malcolm. Not only is the book successful in its design, but also in its gracious emotional tone. The death, burial and sense of loss are sensitively handled. The gentle acceptance by the village of Grandma's death, the African traditions that the stories-within-the-story pass on, the spirit of unity with time and nature which permeates the text certainly make this book a worthwhile library purchase. The whole text may be a little long for storyhour but passages can be used and the photos enjoyed.

The sleepy owl, Marcus Pfister. Trans. J.J. Currie. Illus. author. North South Books, 1986. Unpaginated \$15.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88894-764-X.

The sleepy owl tells the story of a little boy and an owl who want to play together. Owing to their opposite sleeping times they must agree to be friends apart. The dreamy watercolours add a lovely atmosphere, but because of the weak plot the book is best left alone. North-South books suffer a little from a stilted translation into English. (The co-producer, Douglas & McIntyre, as yet has no editorial input with these books.)

Billy the brave, Anne-Marie Chapouton. Trans. Anthea Bell. Illus. Jean Claverie. North-South Books, 1986. Unpaginated \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88894-766-6.

Billy the brave is also best left alone. The illustrations are dramatic and accurately expressive, depicting Billy as he fearlessly faces a multitude of imaginary foe. In one instance, when Billy is home alone after school, there happen to be two burglars hiding in the room. Regardless of the fact that these burglars are imaginary, the outcome provides false bibliographic reassurance for the young picture book listener.

Flora's magic horse, Binette Schroeder. (Trans. not given.) Illus. author. North-South Books, 1986. Unpaginated \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88894-772-0.

Although the colours are sombre and figures stilted, the toys are full of pluck and determination, making Flora's story, in which the doll's wish to fly is realized, a true Aristotelian drama, arousing pity and fear, then resolving to a happy ending. The text is wordy for library story time, but it certainly could be used.

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