

ingly commonplace items are. For example, did you know aspirin, vacuum cleaners, subways, escalators, hamburgers, and hot dogs all date to the first decade of the twentieth century? The almost 700 illustrations which are linked to the text also provide a "search-and-find" component to the book. If the book has a weakness, it is that the colours of the sidebars are not always distinct enough, which complicates the illustration search.

In Western tradition, the dragon is a ferocious creature to be feared and something to be slain, but, in *A Time of Golden Dragons*, the father-and-son combination of Song Nan Zhang and Hao Yu Zhang, both Canadians originally from China, provides an illustrated explanation of how the dragon has come to be the symbol of the Chinese people. The year 2000 C.E. was a most appropriate time to produce this book for, as the authors explain, a western millennium and the Chinese Year of the Dragon coincide only every 3,000 years, and 2000 C.E. was one of these times. Making the year even more significant is the fact that this Dragon Year also coincided with "metal" in a cycle of five elements, hence the "Golden Dragon." Using an essentially chronological approach, each of the book's 10 pairs of facing pages treats one aspect of the dragon. For example, "Where Dragons Come From" illustrates how the dragon has been artistically portrayed in China from its first appearance around 3600 B.C.E., through the various dynasties, and concluding with the Qing Dynasty of 1644-1911 C.E. Children who live in communities that stage Dragon Boat Races can now have a better appreciation of the event, since the authors provide the history behind this event, which commemorates the death of one of China's greatest poets. "Dragon Time" explains how each day was divided into twelve equal time units which, in turn, were each named after one of twelve animals while "The Year of the Dragon" shows how the Chinese calendar moves through a twelve-year cycle of animal symbols and allows readers to ascertain the symbol under which they were born.

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Plasticine, Fabric Collage, and Button Blankets: Illustration Prevails

The Golden Goose. Barbara Reid. North Winds, 2000. 30 pp. \$19.99 cloth. ISBN 0-439-98719-9. *Hannah and the Seven Dresses*. Marthe Jocelyn. Tundra, 1999. Unpag. \$16.99 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-447-9. *Hannah's Collections*. Marthe Jocelyn. Tundra, 2000. Unpag. \$17.99 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-521-1. *Aunt Mary Buttons*. Diane Jarvis Jones. Self-published, 1995. Unpag. ISBN 0-9699407-0-X. *Larry, Red and Blue*. Diane Jarvis Jones. Self-published, 1997. Unpag. ISBN 0-9699407-2-6. *The Lucy Doll*. Diane Jarvis Jones. Self-published, 1999. Unpag. ISBN 0-9699407-3-4.

These titles were developed by visual artists rather than by writers. In two cases, the illustrations are magnificent and work successfully with the story, and in the third case the illustrations are intriguing yet problematic. Unquestionably, advances in contemporary technologies of illustration have produced astonishing results.

The illustrations in these books are remarkable in conceptualization, colour, clarity, and the engagement they set up with the reader. Reid is a Michaelangelo with plasticine; Jocelyn uses fabric collage with great artistry; and Jones works with photographs of her button blankets.

Reid's *Golden Goose* is an updating of an old tale, rendered in workable prose and exquisite illustrations, rich with sly humour (the suitors bring egg beaters, vacuum cleaners), brief nods to diversity (a black barber), and palettes of subtly controlled colour and detail to get lost in — cups spilling tea, a notice that repeats from page to page. Reid moulds and textures new worlds with her plasticine mastery, creating skies with depth, bread with doughy texture, work boots with dripping mud, steaming hot chocolate, and characters with animated expressions. Her message is clear without being didactic: the environment must be more present in contemporary life and consumerist agendas must give way to reciprocal exchanges. In one area we disagreed: Furnival thought that the handling of characters reflected unnecessary stereotypes and Wien thought it was an old tale in which the artist humorously acknowledged contemporary conditions.

The content and illustrations of Jocelyn's books, appropriately developed for three- to four-year-olds, are inviting as explorations of emergent literacy and mathematics for young children. The fabric collages are rich in texture, colour, patterning, and attention to diversity: in *Hannah's Collections*, coins, stamps, and dolls from travels reflect diverse interests and cultures present in Canada, but in *Hannah and the Seven Dresses* the representation is more limited. It addresses a genuine concern of young girls (wearing dresses), but its concluding illustration of a girl in black pants sends a restricted message that only pants are appropriate for older girls.

Coping with grief is the theme of Jones's three books: either the loss of family members or the stress of being bullied. These books suffer the problems of self-publishing: the texts are wordy, unfocussed, and require editing and mastery of language. The match between illustrations and text is feeble. The text sets up expectations in the reader that are consistently unmet: for instance, the text mentions a pony, but the illustration highlights clowns and houses drawn in buttons. The child reader will likely be confused and unengaged. The illustrations themselves have a glittering, abrasive quality that comes across as hard-edged and even aggressive. In themselves, the illustrations are intriguing and inviting and hint at worlds to explore. We suggest that the button blankets on which they were based may stand alone as works of art, but that combined with text they are off-putting. *The Lucy Doll* is the best of the three, for it conveys real emotion — being bullied — but does not set up a consistent worldview. It takes too long to know the narrator is a doll and not a child, and the story is too full of inconsistencies and confusions. The images of the doll may in fact be overly disturbing for young children. There is no coherent sense of structure in these books. Although they are professionally produced, we do not recommend the books by Jones.

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