

THE ROAD TO BLACK MOUNTAIN

by Joseph Bruchac

criticism by Vera Bazzo

THE ROAD TO BLACK MOUNTAIN is a lively description of Camp Fordwood, a place for delinquent boys (whose only crime is to be negro and poor) and the people who work in it.

Bruchac presents the staff and the boys through the main character's point of view, and the result is a subtle criticism of everything. The director is a black man, the boys are black too, and, ironically, the two men in charge of them are racist and cruel.

Racism and social injustice are the main themes of the book and what makes it great literature is its ability to rise above pamphleteering into language/style that is careful, precise, almost "imagistic". It's a pro-reform book by a stylistic master.

A basic book for the understanding of the multi-layered structure of American reality, the book may be a bit dated and a trifle paranoid in the 70's - after Nixon, after Viet Nam... the whole thrust away from Democracy to Dictatorship. Still...even today the book remains a reminder and perhaps a forewarning.