dre ici, c'est l'absence relative d'études et de comptes rendus consacrés à la littérature de jeunesse de l'auteur, qui est quand même considérable. Ainsi, sous la rubrique "Comptes rendus des livres pour enfants et adolescents," on ne relève que 25 références. (Il est vrai que l'on n'y trouve ni le compte rendu de *Kuanuten, vent d'est*, publié par Margot Dalingwater dans le no 31/32 de *CCL*. ni l'"Hommage à Yves Thériault" offert par François Paré dans le même numéro; ce qui soulève une question importante, car les informations concernant la diffusion et la réception des oeuvres de Thériault dans le monde extérieur sont en général beaucoup moins abondantes et complètes que celles pour le Québec. Pour le chercheur comme pour le bibliothécaire, il s'agit là d'une lacune importante et fâcheuse, surtout quand on se rappelle le grief formulé par Michel Bernard contre Thériault, qui aurait, selon le critique, contribué à perpétuer à l'étranger des représentations fausses du Québec. (Voir, sous ce rapport, l'article 974 de la *Bibliographie analytique*, p. 144.) Les indications fournies dans l'introduction quant à la démarche poursuivie dans l'élaboration de la bibliographie sont à cet égard insuffisantes: une liste complète des bibliographies consultées et des revues épluchées aurait été d'une utilité inestimable et aurait dû faire partie d'un appareil liminaire autrement exemplaire.) Espérons donc que le défi lancé par François Paré, à la suite de la mort de Thériault survenue en 1983, sera enfin relevé par des spécialistes de littérature de jeunesse: "à nous maintenant de poursuivre l'oeuvre prolifique" (*CCL*, no. 31/32, 1983, p. 6). L'ouvrage de Denis Carrier représente un premier pas important dans ce sens.

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HISTORY LESSONS

White mist, Barbara Smucker. Irwin Publishers, 1985. 159 pp. $9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7725-1542-5.

Always caring and committed in her historical fiction for young people, Barbara Smucker in her newest book stresses the influence of the past upon the present. A history of exploitation, greed and racial discrimination has left modern communities on the Great Lakes with a legacy of environ-

mental and social problems whose range is suggested in *White mist* through the pollution of a beach and the personal anxieties of two Native Indian teenagers. Smucker has chosen to develop these parallel concerns not, as she usually does, through a straightforward, realistic narrative, but through the device of time-travel fantasy. Unfortunately, an awkward handling of this device and a cargo of too many social issues cause the novel to founder.

We have to admire, nonetheless, Smucker's attempt to show the interconnectedness of many different social problems. To understand why Lake Michigan's beaches are polluted, and why unemployment and alcoholism drive native youths to suicide, she looks back 150 years to the destruction of the forests and the forced removal of native people from their lands. May Apple, who denies her Indian identity and withdraws from her schoolmates, meets a boy, Lee Pokagon, who has quit school and is acutely depressed. Working one summer for May's adoptive parents near a polluted beach, the two young people are drawn by a swirling white mist on a strange journey — back into the mid-nineteenth century boomtown of Singapore (later buried by the shifting sands of Lake Michigan). May works for a pioneer woman, cooks at a logging camp which is decimating the timber stands around Lake Michigan, then joins Lee at the village of Chief Pokagon of the Potawatomi to participate in a life lived in harmony with nature. Just before the Indians are forcibly evicted from their lands, Chief Pokagon gives Lee and May a message for their own time, from which he has called them:

"If we destroy the earth, we destroy ourselves.
We are one with the earth."

Lee and May return with a new pride in their heritage, and pass on the wisdom of this heritage at a citizens' meeting about the polluted beach.

That their experience in the past could, however, make such a sudden positive change in the attitudes of Lee and May, and that inspiring volunteers at a local meeting is likely to do much to halt the pollution of the Great Lakes, would seem to be optimism almost as fantastic as the time journey itself. One thinks, instead, of the moving conclusion of John Craig's *Nobody waved goodbye*, where two boys discover that their inter-racial friendship, and well-meaning local efforts to protect native rights, are not, in themselves, sufficient to combat the big corporations and development interests. While such a conclusion as *White mist* offers may make everyone feel better, it denies the complexity of the real issues which the novel elsewhere has tried to present.

Indeed, *White mist* is overweighted with the earnest presentation of issues. And, as so often happens in this genre, the journey through time is a pretext for history lessons — in logging methods, in maple syrup making,

in traditional Indian clothing, and so on. May Apple even conveniently recalls passages from history books! Because the action of the novel, particularly during the adventure in the past, lacks a clear sense of direction, and because few of the characters are vividly developed, the didactic intent of the many references to social and political history is very obvious. In Smucker's *Underground to Canada* such passages were much more effectively concealed by the urgency of the story itself.

White mist has no magic, although it does have an honest concern for important social problems and the teenagers who are about to inherit them. What might be magical in this novel is simply improbable, and the transition from present to past is confused by too many pretexts and devices. Without some real sense of magic, fantasy cannot succeed; and without much artistry, fantasy does not easily cohabit with social realism. More artistry is needed in order to turn the diligent research and social consciousness of this novel into absorbing fiction.

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A DELIGHTFUL ANTHOLOGY

Prairie jungle: songs, poems and stories for children, Wenda McArthur & Geoffrey Ursell. Illus. Dennis Nokony. Thunder Creek Publishers, 1985. 105 pp. $7.95 paper. ISBN 0-919926-45-2.

There are a lot of animals in the *Prairie jungle* that you wouldn't find anywhere outside the pages of a wonderful children's story book. Written especially for children in the 6-12 age group, *Prairie jungle: songs, poems and stories for children* can be enjoyed by children as young as three if they have a parent available who is willing to read and hum to them. I discovered this on a rainy autumn day, when, lacking any of the prescribed 6-12 year olds, I found my three and a half year old a very willing test subject.

Prairie jungle is a well-rounded volume consisting of fifteen songs, twenty-five poems and ten short stories. Each of the songs is accompanied by music for piano or guitar or banjo, for that matter. For those of us who are musically inclined, the melodies are simple and straightforward. For the tone deaf, the words are often funny enough on their own. You can make up your own simple melody or use an old standby, such as "Yankee Doo-