

Editorial

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Picture it, last Saturday. It's very late at night or very early in the morning, depending on your perspective. People roam the streets whooping and hollering, parties drag into the wee hours, and television screens are filled with pictures of guys in funny outfits partying their brains out. If you were to wake up to this you might think that Hallowe'en had come a week early, but it's something far stranger and more rare than that. Canada's own Toronto Blue Jays have won the World Series, and Canada's usually apathetic populace is going just plain nuts over the whole business.

Analytically speaking, it really was a humdinger of a series: six games, almost all of which were nail-biting, ulcer-spawning, ratings-boosting cliffhangers, and just about everybody tuned in for game six (even a usually jaded newspaper editor) to see if the Jays could do it.

It was the stuff "Canada 125" commercials are made of: bottom of the ninth, the Jays leading by only one run, and the Braves at bat with only one out left and runners on the bases. The third out came but not before the Braves had batted in the tying run, and you could hear jaws dropping from Toronto to Tignish as the game was forced into extra innings, two extra innings in which the Jays went on to score two more runs and become the first Canadian team to ever win the World Series. The usual champagne-drenched festivities ensued, the crowds went wild, and it was very late indeed before the ball game and its aftermath surrendered the screen to the long-suffering late-night newscasters, who really didn't have much to talk about other than the ball game anyway. It's a darn good thing that was the night we roll our clocks back an hour.

The end result is a rare opportunity for Canadians to be full of themselves. It started modestly enough at first: there was the usual tentative hopefulness for the Jays' chances this year; then, the country went golly-gosh-gee in unison when the Jays won the American League Pennant ... and that's when things started to get strange. People weren't just hoping that the Jays would win, they were betting they would. When the Jays took three straight games to come within one win of it all, Canadians were already poised to celebrate victory. Souvenir salesmen dispensed more blue trinkets than consumers have seen since the Smurfs craze. The city of Toronto had already mapped out the route for the victory parade. The entire nation was gleefully waiting to vicariously flatten the big, bad United States through the Blue Jays. We were smugly assured of our team's power. We were being more American than the Americans, as unlikely and unsavoury as that might seem.

Perhaps this is the most striking and seductive symptom of our

long-feared cultural absorption by the United States. Our pop culture is largely borrowed from them, and some of that aggressive, killer instinct may be seeping into our heretofore idyllic mindset. We've beaten the Americans at their own sacred sport, baseball, and we've enjoyed it! Can it be that we bleed red, white, and blue? Will the bald eagle bump off the beaver? Will we forever abandon the national modesty that once defined us?

Probably not. We're just too darn bland, and proud of it. They've got Steven King, we've got Pierre Berton, and never the twain shall meet. We're still friends and neighbours, though; it's only natural that we have an influence on each other, and there's nothing to say how we should or shouldn't be. That said, there's probably no real harm in Canadians feeling real proud of all this, especially seeing as how there are so few things that Canadians seem to agree on these days. It's not every day that a Canadian team wins the World Series. Why not brag a while for once? After all, them Yankees have been hoarding our Stanley Cup lately anyway.

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