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DON SPARLING

THE TRUE NORTH STRONG AND FREE

Early in the fall of 1866 Henry David Thoreau made a brief visit to Quebec. In *A Yankee in Canada*, his account of this trip, he remarks on how it was “a good deal colder” than it had been in New England, as he “might have expected”, adding how he “realized fully that I was four degrees nearer the pole, and shuddered at the thought” (45). This is of course amusing, coming as it does from the quintessential outdoors man in American letters. Rather more curious is the geographical relationship he assigns to Quebec, which in fact lies more than 5,500 kilometres from the North Pole. One wonders how Thoreau would have described Washington, D.C., which is roughly the same distance south of Concord as Quebec north. Would it ever have occurred to him to think of it as “four degrees nearer the equator”? Yet this attitude towards Canada is by no means unique, especially among Americans. One has only to think of Whitman noting, in the course of a brief visit to the Saguenay region during a somewhat longer sojourn in Canada in 1880, how the stars looked a little different “so far north” (roughly the same latitude as Vienna!), and speculating that it “must be a tremendous winter country, this, when the solid frost and ice fully set in” (883–4).

Canada: “The True North strong and free”. The phrase comes from “Oh Canada, the Canadian national anthem — or, to be precise, the English-language version (which in fact bears little resemblance to its French counterpart). In it, Anglophone Canadians make the claim that “With glowing hearts we see thee rise,/ The True North strong and free.” This image of Canada as the “True North” — the values it implies, its expression both in literature and in popular culture — is worth considering in more detail.

The associations usually conjured up by the word “north” have a long history in Western tradition, present already among the ancient Greeks and Romans, and they are overwhelmingly negative. Remoteness, emptiness, vast space; cold, storms and winds, whiteness, snow and winter, death. These may seem quite natural, but of course this is only true from the point of view of a southern-focused culture such as that of the West, with its Mediterranean roots. (It is interesting to note that Latin had few if any words of its own for north, and de-

pended on borrowings [Hamelin, 13].) But in fact these associations have less to do with objective physical realities and geographical space than with subjective psychological assumptions and symbolic space. For a fully northern culture, like that of the Inuit, the concept of “north”, “south”, and so on is in itself largely meaningless or irrelevant. In fact only in recent decades, with extensive travel by Inuit outside the North, has “south” come to have any meaning. This was caught nicely by an Inuit who said “I went south twice — Edmonton [for most Canadians a rather northern city], Saskatchewan; it’s hot down there — too hot to go outside” (Brody, 38). Traditionally, the Inuit oriented themselves by their relationship to land and sea, to what was near and what far, in a space that included not only the physical and visible space they inhabited, but a much greater space, that of other worlds beneath the sea, inside the earth, and in the sky where some gifted shamans had the power to journey to in trances and dreams (Houston, 899). Even in other more southern but still very harsh climates, north was not necessarily synonymous with negative qualities. Black Elk, the Sioux holy man, in the course of describing a ceremony meant to represent the origin of life on earth and the mystery of growth, speaks of “the great white *cleansing* wind” (Neihardt, 179; my italics). What is important for the Sioux is not the bitter cold of the blizzards sweeping down from the north, but a deeper reality; their symbolic space finds its essence in an overriding unity, as symbolized by the circle, the hoop, the cyclical processes of the natural world in which everything plays its own, and necessary, part.

This elaboration of a symbolic space probably reaches its greatest complexity in China, where instead of a clearly physical space with spatial directions, one finds what has been described as a “vast spatiotemporal edifice with moral-esthetic overtones”, with five directions, or more properly directional regions, and a whole series of other components, including the five colours, the five elements, the five animals, and the five offices. In this system, then, north is night and water, black (not white — the west, where the sun sets, is white, white being the symbol of death and mourning), and reptilian animals and commerce. The suggestion is of the unformed, the primordial — but not of emptiness or death, — for the overriding order in this whole symbolic space of the Chinese is achieved through the cosmic principles of yin and yang. So the triple figure of darkness, water and hibernating reptiles in the North also connotes renewal, fertility and life (Tuan, 174–177). It is interesting that this overarching sense of harmony must have been part of our Western cosmology at one time as well; in the Greeks’ most ancient creation myth, Eurynome, the Goddess of all things, rises naked from Chaos, turns to the south, and is fertilized by Boreas, the north wind, to bring forth the Universal Egg (Graves, 27). But of course Western thought was to develop in a different direction, and the inclusive principle so common among “primitive” peoples gave way to a binary one, that of oppositional dualism. And in this system, with its rigid either-ors, its clear positives and negatives, north was assigned the negatives.

Symbolic space has, of course, a very real psychological existence. One has only to look at the English, with their "island" myth and mentality, and the various degrees of paranoia expressed at the idea — and now the reality — of the Chunnel bringing this to an end. In Australia, the symbolic space of the Aborigines centres on the spatial narratives of their Songlines, while that of "White" Australia accords little value to the cardinal points of the compass in comparison with the space of centre and periphery, and it is the heartland — the bush, outback, upcountry — though largely barren, that has gradually taken on mythic qualities of majesty and grandeur; much of the most "typical" Australian literature — the ballads of Patterson and Lawson, the fiction of White — is associated with it. In the United States, on the other hand, if Leslie Fiedler is to be believed, Americans from the earliest times have tended to define the country in terms of the four cardinal points (witness the standard grid system for laying out streets). And in his view, it is possible to distinguish four kinds of American books — the "Northern", "Eastern", "Southern" and "Western", though only the last has been called by its name — each with certain qualities: the tight, grey, low-keyed "Northern" set in a mythicized New England landscape; the "Southern", melodramatic, sexual by implication at least, played out in the blood-heat of a long, hot summer, and so on (Fiedler, 16–17). And of course America also has a geographical centre with mythic overtones — the Midwest, "the heart of the country", with its rich, fertile soil and powerful industrial base and the solid American values of its citizens.

If one looks at Canada from the point of view of symbolic space, several things are striking. First, although more than 90 per cent of the population lives in a narrow band only about 200 km wide in the south of the country along the American border, the term "southern Canada" simply has no currency. Instead, there is Western Canada (the prairies, sometimes the prairies and British Columbia), Eastern Canada (the Maritimes), Central Canada (Ontario and Quebec), the North or Northern Canada. (This of course is the point of view of that more than 90 per cent huddling close to the American border; in fact someone from the Yukon or Northwest Territories *would* refer to southern Canada and mean everything from the Atlantic to the Pacific.) And as often as not, "south" means the United States. Second, because of the strong sense of regionalism in the country, a phenomenon based on historical and demographic factors and strengthened by the way the regions are so effectively divided from one another by natural barriers, Canada has no heartland. The term "Central Canada" is no more than a geographical or political marker, and lacks any mythic resonance. Third, the North is both immense and amorphous; there has never been any — even rough — "line" of settlement (as in the phenomenon of the American frontier) and it is in no way bounded or contained by human settlement. It begins somewhere and nowhere, just beyond the thousands of points where settlement has managed to advance to, but ends on the almost empty shores of the *North Atlantic and the Beaufort Sea and fades away in the sea ice fused to the*

northern tip of Ellesmere Island. In other words, Canada has no South and no centre; instead, there is a North, with no clear shape, but a vast and brooding presence.

Clearly, the North *is* Canadians' symbolic space. Margaret Atwood has pointed out that "When we say 'south' as we often do, our conscious mind may be directed down there, towards crowds, bright lights, some Hollywood version of fame and fortune. But the North is at the back of our minds, always. There's something, not someone, looking over our shoulders." And that something is "the place you go to encounter your deepest self" (Kramer).

In a perception that has since become almost a cliché, Northrop Frye suggested that the Canadian sensibility had been profoundly disturbed not so much by the problem of identity — "Who am I? — as by what confronts that identity: "Where is here?" In a sense this is the classic post-colonial situation: an environment that exists only physically, that the artist has to come to terms with — in other words must create — imaginatively. In the case of Canada, for reasons outlined above, not to mention the extremes of temperature and climate, the question "Where is here?" is particularly appropriate, and the answer seems to be "Here is the North". But then there arises the even trickier question "Where is the North"? Trickier because logically, "the North" must be north in relation to somewhere else — which, as I have suggested, does not seem to exist — and also because, given the steady advance of what we like to call progress, "the North" is in addition, like the term "modern", almost by definition in continuous retreat.

So what — and where — exactly is "the North"? Any number of "objective" definitions exist, based on criteria of latitude or isotherm, vegetation or crops, water or ice cover, and over the years a whole set of methods known as nordology has been worked out. One of the most interesting concepts it has developed is that of "nordicity", the "northernness" of a place calculated by a sophisticated method that takes into consideration both natural and human factors (population, accessibility and so on) and arrives at an appropriate "polar value" (VAPO). Using this method, scientists have come to three significant conclusions (Hamelin, 20–22). First, at the time of the earliest exploration and settlement, all or virtually all of the country must be considered to have been northern. Second, there has been a steady "denordification" of the country: the past century, for example, has registered a 25 per cent decrease in VAPO, so that "only" about 70 per cent of Canada can now be considered "north". And third, of all the countries in the world, polar influences descend farthest south in Canada.

This is a strictly scientific definition of "the North". In a broader sense and to the popular mind, the North is much more: not only a space (and one somewhat more extensive than that defined by the nordologists) but even more an experience — that of the vast natural world of woods and waterways, empty and endless in summer, frozen and snow-covered in winter — and a series of moods —

certain kinds of fear and pleasure, both positive and negative responses. Nevertheless, if one looks at literature and art and popular culture, one can observe a certain correspondence to the findings of the nordologists.

First of all, one can witness the slow retreat of the North, or rather of the limits of the North. For Cartier, sailing along the northern shore of the St Lawrence River in 1534, this seemed to be "the land God gave to Cain" (10), and the next winter, as he and his tiny band of men huddled behind a stockade in Quebec, weakened and dying of scurvy, he bemoaned his fate as they "lay frozen up in the ice" (79), at the mercy of the natives. More than two centuries later, when Voltaire in *Candide* casually dismissed Canada as no more than "a few acres of snow", it was clear that not much had changed, at least as seen from without. But within Canada a fragile band of civilization had been created along the St Lawrence valley, and for the Canadiens "the North" was now "le pays d'en haut": the country "up there", "up north", the land the voyageurs set out for every year on their epic journeys in search of furs. So the North had now retreated slightly, but still began almost as soon as one moved away from the St Lawrence, extending indefinitely to the north and west. By mid-nineteenth century, the folk songs of the loggers in the Ottawa Valley tell of going up to the woods, and indicate that the North, too has been on the move. In the late 19th century, the first of the summer cottages appeared in the Muskoka region; in 1921 a review of Canadian poetry in *The Canadian Forum* refers to the song of the whitethroat in the Georgian Bay region as "the very voice of the North" (Gordon, 4). Slightly earlier, around the time of the First World War, an original school of Canadian painters, the Group of Seven, had begun to emerge, and by the mid 1920's their works had for the first time created compelling and distinctive visual images of the Canadian North, first in the area around Algonquin Park, then the Algoma region north of Lake Superior, and in later years, with advances in communications, the Northwest Territories and even the high Arctic. But this no longer meant the physical pushing back of the southern limits of the North; owing to the geography of Canada, large communities and continuous settlement cannot go much beyond a certain point, and so what we are witnessing from now on is rather a continuous imaginative expansion of the North, as it becomes verbally and visually inhabited. Poets like Frank Scott and A. J. M. Smith, novelists like Hugh MacLennan and Margaret Atwood and Marian Engel, set their works in the Laurentian Shield region of Quebec and Northern Ontario; novelists like Frederick Philip Grove and Rudy Wiebe and Margaret Laurence and Robert Kroetsch examine the sites where civilization and wilderness meet in the West; the novelist Farley Mowat and the poet Al Purdy "discover" the high Arctic for literature. What is significant is that the admittedly very vague boundary at which the North seems to begin corresponds at so many points with the old central route of the voyageurs, and even the nordologists' isoline.

In addition to this “shifting” of the North, its elements also change — or rather, the way these elements are perceived changes. The emphasis in the first half of the 19th century is almost universally negative. Oliver Goldsmith speaks of “bleak and desert lands” with “a wilderness of trees” (43); Standish O’Grady sees only a place where “hemlocks brood on unproductive land,/ Whose frozen air on one bleak winter’s night /Can metamorphose dark brown hares to white!”(1). Here we have what Said would call “standard commodities” (Said, 190) — the gloomy woods, the frightening emptiness, the melancholy silence, the ruthless cold. But the genuinely disturbing power of the natural environment for a European can be seen in the works of Susanna Moodie. When she came to Canada from England in 1832 she brought with her a whole set of assumptions about nature based on Romantic ideas of the picturesque and the sublime, and her account of her early experience in the country, *Roughing It In the Bush*, almost reads like the diary of a schizophrenic, as she swings violently — often from one paragraph to the next — between lyrical celebrations of nature and almost suicidal gloom when she actually admits to her inner feelings. But even in the course of her work one can witness her slowly growing into a wary acceptance of the land, and by the time she leaves her farm in the bush she seems almost to have begun to understand what she has experienced.

With the creation of a Canadian nation in 1867 a self-consciousness arose, a desire to define the “Canadian”, to create a “national” literature. Handily enough, this coincided with a period of European thought in which the virtues of the “northern” were being heavily promoted: the superiority of the strong, manly, active “northern” peoples — the “Anglo-Saxons” and “Scandinavians” — over the weak, feminine, passive “southern” peoples; the heroic qualities of the old Icelandic texts and the Ring cycle (Bassnett, 104–108). So the intellectual mood was receptive to precisely those qualities which Canada could naturally boast. There was increased emphasis on the “northern” roots of the Canadians; in a spirit of generous tolerance, even the embarrassing anomaly of the French Canadians was ingeniously overcome by the assertion that most had come originally from Normandy, and hence were essentially Northmen racially, of good Viking blood. As cities grew, a conscious cult of the countryside appeared, with people streaming out to enjoy the beauty and challenges of the natural world: this was the golden age of the canoe clubs and the snowshoeing clubs.

In literature, the obvious subject was, of course, the land. Much of what was written then — subsequently referred to disparagingly as “the maple-leaf school” — is, as might be expected, very bad, but in the best work one sees the beginnings not only of a kind of *modus vivendi* with the land, but of an appreciation of it on its own terms: powerfully accurate descriptions in the poetry of the “Confederation poets”, gradually a new kind of realism shorn of romantic diction and attitudes, a reversal of values that sees the beauty of the clear, cold winters, the spare ruggedness of the wilderness, and finally the admission that

this is not a land to be tamed, an acceptance of the land on its own terms, without any imposition of human purpose or even human relevance. This is a slow development, but the end state is perhaps best caught in a passage in Hugh MacLennan's *The Watch That Ends the Night*: "He at last accepted that he had merely happened into all this loveliness that nobody could understand or possess... and that to be able to love the mystery surrounding us is the final and only sanction of human existence" (372). This refusal to possess, while at the same time identifying totally, is rendered perfectly in the hesitant words of Al Purdy:

and if I must commit myself to love
for any one thing
it will be here in the red glow
where failed farms sink back into earth
the clearings join and fences no longer divide
where the running animals gather their bodies together
and pour themselves upward
into the tips of falling leaves
with mindless faith that presumes a future (147)

The subsuming of the human in the animal world that Purdy suggests so subtly here is highly appropriate, for one of the key stages in this development of the relationship of Canadian literature to the land was marked by the invention around the turn of the century by Ernest Thompson Seton and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts of the modern animal story, in which for the first time animal tales are based on observation and dispense with sentimentality and didacticism; the attempt to see animals naturally in their environment is then paralleled by, and strengthens, the effort to achieve the same for humans.

But actually experiencing the North, getting out into the wilderness, has not always been simple. In this connection one recalls that, despite the canoe clubs, for much of the past canoeing was not primarily a sport. Until well on in the nineteenth century, and throughout much of the country, virtually the only way of moving about was by canoe, and in some ways it gradually took on the status of an icon. With some exaggeration, one might compare its symbolic value for Canadians to that of the gun for Americans: the technological tool that made possible the extension of European control, the means by which this new space was most intensely experienced. So the frequency with which journeys by canoe appear in Canadian literature comes as no surprise; one could almost speak about a sub-genre in this regard. The canoe's literal function is that it enables one to move about in an otherwise impenetrable country, but symbolically it allows one to meet dangers and overcome challenges, to experience the land in the most intimate possible way, to identify with the native inhabitants, to achieve varying degrees and kinds of freedom. Interestingly enough, the earliest use of this motif to suggest some of these qualities seems to be found in the work of women writers in the 1830's; one recalls Anna Jameson's account of her thrilling canoe journeys in *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, and Susanna Moodie's contentment at being able to paddle off in a canoe and

simply achieve solitude for a while. Certainly part of their delight stems from the ability that moving about in a canoe gave them to escape their usual gender roles, something that would not have applied to men. But as the century wore on, the canoe motif is increasingly found in works by men as well, in the form of poems and prose in which the writers go out to deliberately encounter and experience the wilderness (Lampman's "Temagami" is a good example of this). Increasingly in the twentieth century these journeys are seen as retreats, or at least temporary withdrawals from civilization, spiritual journeys, journeys into a symbolic space: for Duncan Campbell Scott the journey to "The Height of Land" brings a mystic sense of the harmony of the contradictory forces of life; for Douglas Le Pan, his "Canoe Trip" offers an opportunity to attain respite from the tensions of contemporary living, to recover a lost wholeness. Again, this corresponds to the general trend towards employing the wilderness for symbolic purposes.

Canoes, of course, immediately conjure up the image of Indians, and these too can be classed among the "standard commodities" of Canadian literature. But they differ considerably from their role in the American imagination. For the most part, Canada avoided the Indian wars so familiar from United States history. This was partly the result of official policy, partly a result of the fact that most Indians did not live on lands that were suitable — and coveted — for farming. In any case, the result was that instead of large numbers of natives being exterminated, they tended to be marginalized: pushed to the edges of settlement if they were not in fact there to begin with. So the picture of the North has always included Indian natives as well as Inuit. Their image has not been *primarily* one suggesting danger or aggression; and so their presence too came to be accepted by non-Natives as part of their image of the North. An essentially sympathetic picture of the Natives was created around the turn of the century by Duncan Campbell Scott, with his poetry and tales of Indians' endurance and their dignity in the face of great adversity, and the insensitivity of Whites, and by the half-Indian poet Pauline Johnston, with her stirring poetic depictions of Indian defiance and life in the open. In the course of the twentieth century many non-Natives appropriated the voices of Natives, either literally, as in the case of Grey Owl, or literarily, writing poetry and prose set in all parts of the North and the far North and presenting Indians and Inuit in a positive way. And since the 1950's there has been a steadily increasing flood of works by Natives and Inuit themselves, a phenomenon paralleled by the slightly earlier emergence of, first, Inuit and then Native art and its enthusiastic acceptance by Canadians everywhere. Nowadays these artworks — prints, sculptures and paintings — have become so firmly a part of Canadian culture that many middle-class Canadian families are likely to have at least one example of them, and they have attained the status of national icons. I would suggest that historical circumstances, and the long process of incorporating the North imaginatively as a symbolic space, have made the acceptance of these new Indian and Inuit artists and writers ex-

tremely rapid and natural. What we are finally seeing in both literature and art, then, is all of the North, near and far, now viewed not as an exotic setting for the Other or a hinterland — a source of wealth, an area to be exploited, a place to be endured — but as a homeland (whether literally or not), the source of one's living, an area to explore, a space that strengthens one, a place to be celebrated.

This “presence” of the north is not just something fashionable, something dreamed up by writers and critics and existing solely in “high” literature and art. It is a pervasive feature of Canadian life at all levels. One sees it, to take a simple example, in the slides offered to the public by the provincial tourist boards,¹ where two things are striking. First, there is the theme of winter, promoted to varying degrees by every province except Prince Edward Island, and massively so by some, such as Manitoba and Alberta and Quebec. (Not surprisingly, for a province and a people that first began the process of incorporating the North, and whose “unofficial anthem” is sometimes said to be Gilles Vigneault's song “*Mon pays ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver*”, Quebec's tourist brochures proudly claim that “Winter in Quebec is an occasion for celebration.”) Second, there is the way in which so many of the slides from different provinces could be interchanged: the fisherman holding up his catch (sometimes, a Canadian squared, an ice fisherman), the wooded hills and bare rocks and waterfalls, and above all, in province after province — 8 out of 10 — the essential view: the forest fringing the lake (or river), usually at sunset, upon which a canoe can be seen. Or to take another example, *Macleans* — “Canada's national magazine”. The 1 July 1994 issue takes as its feature story “the ties that bind”: the concepts and institutions that unite the country. The first illustration, on the contents page, shows rugged mountains (British Columbia?), trees, a lake. The photo on the first page of the lead article itself includes the seemingly compulsory lake, low hills, sunset and — boldly foregrounded — canoes. And so it continues. Leafing through this and other issues of *Macleans*, one comes across the “standard commodities” again and again. An article on “getting away from it all”: “thrills and tranquility, the best way to find both is by canoe.” Or an article about the spectacular expansion of canoeing, particularly to genuine wilderness areas in the far north — including Ellesmere Island (the ultimate Canadian trip: canoes and snow simultaneously). Or there is an advertisement for a video pack about former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, which refers to him as a voyager — a term that might seem odd to foreigners, but has all the resonant associations of “voyageur” for Canadians. (Trudeau is well known as an avid canoeist.) Most amusing of all, to my mind, is a review of a new detective novel, the third featuring its hero, who is an Inuit detective. This seems the perfect Canadian variant of the classic British detective story; instead of the aristocratic house party at a stately home set in the gentle English countryside, more or less cut off from the outside world and so offering a fairly limited number of suspects, you

¹ I obtained these sets of slides from the ten provincial tourist bureaus in the fall of 1989.

have Inuit in their village (perhaps even igloos?), totally cut off from the outside world by several hundred kilometres of snow and so with an even more effectively circumscribed company of suspects.

Another convenient example that might be taken from the area of popular culture is beer — itself a central part of that culture in many countries. Especially in North America, beer is a quintessentially “masculine” drink, and so it is perhaps not surprising that attempts should be made to enhance this feature by associating it with other “masculine” qualities and pursuits. One prominent field of activities of this type centres round “the great outdoors”, and a quick visit to any beer store in Canada reveals just how many Canadian beers boast motifs taken from the world of unspoiled nature, far surpassing those from other countries in number. (A very few American beers use such motifs, but virtually no European brands.) The Moosehead and Algonquin breweries, a brand such as “Niagara Trapper”, Upper Canada brewery’s beer labels depicting canoes and waterfalls amidst trees and panoramic views of pristine lakes shining in the summer sun — all these could perhaps be explained by their association with “masculine” outdoor activities or the cooling and thirst-quenching qualities of beer or both. But there would seem to be much less justification for things like the “Arctic Wolf” brand, or Carling’s trademark use of snow-capped mountain peaks on its labels, or Northern brewery’s predilection for wolves outlined against a starry northern sky. In icy settings like these, beer would seem to be somewhat inappropriate. Yet such is the mystique of the North that — presumably following cold-blooded market research — a great many breweries have chosen to make it the basis for their advertising strategies.

It might be thought that this northern bias would no longer be valid at the end of the twentieth century, when the vast majority of the Canadian population is found in urban areas, and new immigrants (mainly from Third World, non-northern countries) congregate there in increasing numbers. However, the situation of the cities themselves has not changed; they are still located in an extremely inhospitable climate, one in which, for a good part of the year, it is dangerous and indeed fatal to spend the night outdoors. It should be remembered, for example, that Ottawa is the second coldest capital city in the world (after Ulan Bator), and the snowiest; one of the highlights there is the annual Winterlude carnival, and many other cities celebrate the winter in a similar fashion. Moreover, contact with the wilderness is maintained by city-dwellers through the institutions of the summer camp and the cottage, which form part of the normal experience of millions of Canadians every year. And along with this elemental absorption of the reality of northern living, there are more conscious attempts to stress the country’s northern heritage. A final example of this in the multicultural context can be seen in *Meeting Place*, a 1990 National Film Board production. Among other things, it depicts a Toronto high school where the students represent 56 nationalities and 62 languages. In such a school, one of the prime responsibilities of the teachers is to familiarize students with Canadian

society and help them to adapt to the Canadian way of life. Not surprisingly, the film shows classes ranging from learning the language to debating free trade, the leading issue in Canadian society at the time. But we are also shown an outing that the school has arranged for the students in order to introduce them to another aspect of Canadian life — the wilderness, the North. So the film ends with the rather amusing spectacle of a large group of immigrant young people of all colours and, presumably, faiths (including one Sikh boy with his turban) trudging across a frozen, snowy lake on snowshoes, being exposed to the “real” Canada. Having struggled awkwardly through a woods on their unaccustomed footgear, they gather by a roadside watching the wildlife and, in our last view of them, are learning wolfcalls, laughing but determined. One is left with the final impression that — in the eyes of the teachers who have organized this outing, at least — a new generation of immigrants, city-dwellers all, is learning something of what it means to be a citizen of “the True North strong and free”.

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