13. Anglicization

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First Anglicization of the Elite Classes (Before 1774)

The cession of Canada by the Treaty of Paris of 1763 marked the beginning of a permanent British presence in Canada. Admittedly, several hundred Anglo-American colonists had come to settle in the St. Lawrence Valley before the Conquest, some of their own volition, such as Timothée Sullivan, known as Sylvain, a physician in Montréal, some by force, as prisoners of war. However, these Anglophones had to agree to convert to Catholicism and, through marriage, would rapidly integrate into the Francophone population. Others, arriving in the wake of the invading armies, sought fortune by supplying the troops, but for many, their presence was linked to the occupying forces and, with the reduction in the size of the garrison after 1763, many left again. The return of peace prompted merchants to try their luck in the new British colony where they benefited from privileged ties with suppliers in Great Britain. Demobilized soldiers chose to settle St. Lawrence Valley, notably the Scots of the Fraser regiment who settled in the seigneuries granted to their commanders. The number of Anglophones, however, was not very high and, in 1765, did not exceed 600.

Despite the instructions to promote immigration and Anglicization given to Sir James Murray, the first Governor-General, favouring immigration and Anglicization, the supremacy of French in the colony was not threatened. The St. Lawrence Valley was not a privileged destination for British immigrants, who still headed for the possessions along the Atlantic coast.
For many years, the British presence in Canada was limited to four groups of people: administrators from Great Britain, merchants, a few urban artisans and soldiers.

Administrators and military officers, for the most part from the aristocracy, spoke fluent French and sympathized with the seigneurial and clerical elite of colonial society. Although those in the highest positions had imperial ambitions and scarcely integrated into local society, as had been the case under the French Regime, soldiers were more inclined to marry and make plans to settle in the country. Marriages between soldiers and young women of the seigneurial elite were common, as is attested in the Baby family genealogy of which Philippe Aubert de Gaspé the famous author of *Anciens Canadiens*, was a member. Brought up in a milieu that frequented the colonial elite and attended balls given by the Governor, Aubert de Gaspé married Suzanne Allison, the daughter of a British officer and Thérèse Baby.

At the outset, the merchants who settled in the city or rural areas were less inclined to be bilingual but market forces rapidly forced them to learn to communicate with their clients in the language of the country. Samuel Jacobs, a Jewish merchant who arrived with Wolfe’s army, settled in Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu in 1768, with his companion, Marie-Josette Audet. Clerks, the majority of whom were Canadian, worked at his side, and several, including Henri Laparre, became important merchants. There were certain disadvantages to using both languages in the store and an Anglophone store assistant explained the loss of a pile of wheat by claiming it was “owing to people vesen leur poche on top of it.” With the economic growth at the turn of the
century, the number of rural merchants increased, but it was mainly Canadians who dominated this lucrative trade.

Some British artisans settled in the cities following the Conquest but, until the boom that followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars, their numbers were minimal. Demobilized soldiers and a few solitary farmers settled among the well-established rural population and, in very little time, blended with the Canadian *habitants*, or farmers, among whom Anglo-German names are to be found.

In spite of imperial policies, the survival and domination of French was not questioned during the first years following the Conquest. Notaries always drew up their deeds in the language of Molière and registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials continued to be written in French by priests, as they had previously been. However, the acquisition of the language of the conqueror was useful for ensuring social and economic promotion and the Canadian elite slowly began to learn the new language. As the majority of immigrants were men, marriages between British men and Canadian women were common. Among the popular classes, these unions most often led to the man adopting the language and culture of his in-laws but among the elite, the women were more inclined to adopt the English culture which allowed them to enter the upper echelons of colonial society.
The Upheavals of the Revolutionary Period (1774-1815)

By including all the land in the Great Lakes region in the province of Québec, the Québec Act of 1774 led to a migration of fur traders from Albany, henceforth deprived of their hinterland, towards Montréal enabling the city to assert its domination in the fur trade. This massive influx led to strong competition and pushed traders further and further west, thus increasing operating costs. Considerable capital was therefore required to survive in these conditions. In 1787, the principal Anglo-Scottish merchants joined with Robert Ellice, John Forsyth, John Richardson and Joseph Frobisher to form the North West Company and succeeded in eliminating their competitors. Most of the newcomers, like Canadian merchants, were excluded from this powerful trading company. Henceforth, the main levers of the economy were in the hands of the British.

Following the American Revolution (1774-1783), thousands of Anglo-American colonists who had remained loyal to the monarchy emigrated to the colonies which were still part of the Empire. These Loyalists settled mainly in Nova Scotia and what was to become New Brunswick. Some 6,000 refugees, for the most part from Pennsylvania and New York, settled in the province of Québec. Sorel, re-baptized William Henry, became an important reception centre for Loyalists, but it was above all a transit point and few Anglophones settled there. The colonization of the southern boundary of the province was not encouraged by the authorities, and it was only during the 1790s that colonists from neighbouring New England states settled in what was to become the Eastern Townships.
Before the outbreak of the French Revolution, ethnic relations in the colony were marked by tolerance and understanding. The members of the elite, such as Judge Adam Mabane and Governor Sir Guy Carleton (later Lord Dorchester), shared social affinities with the Canadian elite, which they much preferred to British merchants who came from a different social class. Francophones and Anglophones from middle-class milieus formed commercial and family alliances and joined forces to demand an elected assembly. The Revolutionary Wars in Europe, which pitted the French Empire against the British, led to an animosity and a “garrison mentality” among the British elite who mistrusted all things French. Henceforth, the bureaucrat party and Governors, such as Sir James Craig, sought to assimilate Canadians and were hostile to any initiative aimed at improving the status of French. This hostility was expressed in the pages of partisan newspapers such as the Quebec Mercury and Le Canadien, which brought ethnic conflicts into the open. The Royal Institution (1801), aimed at Anglicizing the population through education, and the acrimonious debates on the Union Bill of 1822, which foreshadowed the anti-French spirit of the Durham Report that led to the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1840, are a reflection of a hardening of official policy on the French language.

The creation of a parliamentary regime based on British practice, forced lay elites to set out to learn the ways of the British constitution. Major political authors such as Locke, Blackwell and Hume were to be found in the libraries of the lawyers and deputies of the Assembly. To fuel their demands, politicians eagerly followed events which, in other parts of the Empire, pitted the elected against governors. Parliamentary usages brought English terms such as “bill” into everyday use in French.
Despite strong Canadian representation in the legislative assembly, the central public administration was carried out in English. In the courts, both languages were used but judges most often gave judgments in English. Legal proceedings left a bad impression on Alexis de Tocqueville:

[Lawyers] speak French with the Norman accent of the lower middle classes. Their style is vulgar and mixed with oddities and English expressions. They say a man is charged with ten Louis to say he owes ten Louis. – Enter the box (la boîte, an Anglicism) they cry to the witness to tell him to take a seat in the witness box where he is to testify. The whole situation is somewhat strange, incoherent, if not burlesque.\textsuperscript{40}

Even though there were a good number of Francophones among local agents, both captains of the militia and justices of the peace (except during the mandate of Francophobe Governor Dalhousie in the 1820s, when Canadians were replaced by the British), the use of forms and procedures inspired by English law led to a shift towards bilingualism which corrupted the French language.\textsuperscript{41}

**Settlement by an English Population after 1815**

The end of the Napoleonic Wars marked the beginning of an increase of the British population in Lower Canada. For some thirty years, Canada became a privileged destination for emigrants fleeing the social and economic upheavals caused by the Industrial Revolution. Tens of thousands of immigrants arrived in Québec every year. Although the majority were only passing through on their way towards the lands of Upper Canada, a good number stayed and the British population rose from 30,000 in 1812 to over 200,000 in 1851.
The influx of British immigrants, then, mainly transformed the cities of Québec and Montréal. Almost half the population of Québec City was Anglophone at the time of the Union, while in Montréal the British were a majority from 1831 to 1867. Elsewhere, British presence was very uneven: dominant in the townships neighbouring the American border and in the upper Ottawa valley, it was significant in the Gaspé but very low in the long-established seigneurial lands. However, not all these immigrants were Anglophone. Among the Scots and Irish, there were indeed people who only spoke Gaelic. Often in distinct communities, these groups preserved their language until the end of the 1840s when public education became widespread and forced them to choose French-language schools or, more often, English-language ones.

The establishment of British communities strongly marked several regions. The populations of the Eastern Townships were predominantly of American origin and retained their social, economic and religious ties with their relatives who had stayed south of the border. Before 1850, they were relatively isolated from the Canadian populations living further north and they only began to colonize the region around the time of the Confederation in 1867. In the Gaspé, the domination of the fishing industry by enterprises from the Channel Islands, such as the Robin Company, strengthened ties with Europe and the credit system in effect forced the inhabitants to procure supplies from the company’s stores, thus limiting contacts with the rest of the province. In the Ottawa region, the Irish formed an unruly proletariat which, on the lumber sites, defended its jobs against outsiders. It was in the cities, however, that the English presence had the greatest impact.
Economic and Social Anglicization

With the increase of the Anglophone population, cities became cosmopolitan centres where English had the upper hand. The economic domination of British merchants made English the everyday language of business. Whether Anglophone or Francophone, notaries had to know how to draw up contracts in the language of Shakespeare. This requirement explains why English terms infiltrated deeds in which the French equivalent was nonetheless known such as, for example, the use of *mahoganey* (sic) for *acajou*, a choice wood for cabinet-making. New fashions also introduced articles whose name was not translated, such as the word *sideboard* for *buffet* in an estate inventory following the death of Charles Foucher, drawn up in Montréal by notary Jean-Guillaume Delisle on May 22, 1799. However, as the liberal professions were mainly practiced by Francophones, it was not uncommon for an Anglophone to sign a deed written in French. Even though the majority of tenants were of British origin, most rental leases in Montréal were in French, at least until the 1830s.44

Marriages between Anglophones and Francophones made social relations in the cities highly complex. The experience of a young clerk called George Jones illustrates the different facets of sociability at the beginning of the 1840s. Son of a British father and Canadian mother, George was Protestant but his two sisters attended the Catholic Church. His beloved, Honorine Tanswell, was also born of a mixed marriage but her father had converted and her entire family attended the Congregation Chapel in Québec City’s upper town. The young lovers spoke English together but wrote their love letters in French. All George’s friends were Francophone and his parents’ visitors were more often Francophone than Anglophone. Honorine’s father was opposed
to the marriage for he intended his daughter to marry a young Canadian called Gingras, but love conquered all the family reluctances and George and Honorine were married in 1847. Religion was not a major obstacle for George and Honorine but the rise of ultramontanism led to a hardening on the part of clerical authorities who feared Protestant influence; by the middle of the century, mixed marriages had become less and less frequent.

The technical progress that marked the nineteenth century made many traditional artisan techniques obsolete. It was therefore immigrants, bringing with them their new expertise, who imposed their new work methods while keeping the vocabulary of the country of origin. Employers demanded that their employees remain silent so they would not reveal expertise considered as industrial secrets. For example, inventors, engineers and technicians from England or the United States shared their expertise during lectures given in English only at the Mechanics Institute in Québec City. It was therefore necessary to understand English in order to master the new techniques and, even when Canadians were initiated to new production methods, they kept the English terminology to describe tools and procedures. 45

Under the French Regime, stores had generally used pictograms as signs because the population was mostly illiterate. When elementary education became widespread around 1850, words began to replace images as a method for attracting customers. With the appearance of printing, the publication of advertisements to announce new articles and services offered now became possible. Since the beginning of the British Regime, official signs had been bilingual but the language of commercial signs depended on the merchant. Signs were often in French or
bilingual during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. However, with the increase of the
Anglophone population in the principal urban centres, English began to get the upper hand and
even Canadian artisans put up signs in English above their doors. On a trip through Montréal in
1831, Alexis de Tocqueville noted with slight exaggeration:

> Although French is almost the universal language, most newspapers, signs, even the signs
> of French merchants, are in English. Almost all commercial businesses are in their hands.46

However, the phenomenon was mostly limited to cities and regions dominated by a
population of British origin. Elsewhere in the countryside, and therefore for the vast majority of
the Canadian population, signs were in French.

The beginning of industrialization led to a concentration of production in workshops of
impressive size and entrepreneurs were proud to display their firm’s name on factory walls. The
acceleration of this trend in the middle of the nineteenth century, under the impetus of capitalists
of British origin, led to a proliferation of signs and gave the main urban centres and even towns
of lesser importance an increasingly English face.

This visual Anglicization, perceptible in the cities was but an outward sign of a more
subtle process that touched all levels of the population and all regions. Canada’s economic
integration into the British Empire had serious consequences which gathered momentum at the
turn of the century, when rural areas finally began participating in the economic boom, which
widened local horizons and transformed culture.
Food production was the first to be touched. From the very start of the military regime, Governor Murray had encouraged cultivation of the potato to which his Scottish soldiers were particularly partial. Canadians took a long time to adopt this type of crop, which nonetheless became extensive at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Canadian farmers began to colonize more marginal land for wheat farming. Rum replaced brandy as the most sold alcoholic beverage and was retailed in ‘gallons’ instead of jugs or barrels and beer production took off with the arrival of brewers such as John Molson. More significant, however, was the increase in tea consumption, the British beverage par excellence. This consumption rapidly extended to all levels of society and teacups and teapots, sometimes even today referred to by the English terms, abounded in estate inventories.

Recent historiography has put aside the image of the autarchic habitant, or farmer, living off his own production. Habitants were always good consumers, particularly of textiles and England, in the process of industrialization, possessed great quantities of fancy goods for sale. Even in remote rural areas, imported fabrics and clothing made up over half of a person’s wardrobe. In the city, the popularity of British consumer goods forced the bourgeois to keep abreast of the latest London fashions, for fear of being considered unrefined. Articles of current consumption, such as china embellished with patterns recalling the glories of England, were present in all households and contributed to a certain Anglomania, as D.-T. Ruddel concludes:

The Francophone custom of imitating British fashion in the areas of furnishing, clothing and even livery for horses, as well as in the use of English technical terms, all these elements demonstrate that the purchase of foreign manufactured goods is no longer a simple act of consumption but has become a integral part of the population’s mentality.
This mimicry of British customs was even apparent where it was least expected. The Scottish custom, already widespread in the United States, of having rental leases begin on May 1 of each year, was slowly introduced in Montréal, becoming predominant as of the 1820s, later becoming an integral part of Francophone culture.48

At the outset, the Anglicization policy instituted by the government at the beginning of the French Regime was not very successful because of the lack of a sufficiently numerous British population. However, the Canadian elites gradually began to learn English, which enabled them to maintain their rank and to hope for social promotion. For the majority of the population, it was only at the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the mass arrival of immigrants from the British Isles that the impact was truly perceptible. Henceforth, the populations of major cities included a large number of Anglophones who mastered the new techniques. These artisans dominated the transfer of knowledge whose terminology was only in English. The increasing number of shops kept by Anglophones and of factories where signs were in English gave cities an English appearance. At the same time, the colony experienced an economic boom that brought British products into all households and transformed mentalities, adapting them to the customs of British society.

Above and beyond the transformations due to economic and social dynamics, mention must also be made of the fact that the British authorities adopted a policy aimed at Anglicizing Canadians. Thanks to the resistance of the Canadian political and religious elite, these legislative and political measures were largely unsuccessful.