

Neither Uncle Sam nor John Bull: Canadian English comes of age

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The picture of Canadian English that emerges from *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (1998) is of a language variant that has cast off the yoke of both external and internal colonialism. In its pages, Canadians found an affirmation that they are different from Americans, as the elusive Canadian identity took tangible form in all the words they had been using all their lives without knowing they were Canadianisms. But the vocabulary recorded in the dictionary also reflected an assertion of non-anglophone cultural identities within Canada. The numbers of words borrowed into English from immigrant languages such as Ukrainian and Italian demonstrated a recognition of those cultures by Canadian society which would have been unimaginable two generations ago. The increasing influence of Canadian French, especially in Quebec, coincided with the growing rejection of perceived Anglo colonialism in that province, while the Native peoples' cultural renaissance and rejection of definition by the colonializing culture has resulted in a wave of new self-designations and words designating Native cultural realities. But some remnants of colonialism linger, as demonstrated by the reluctance of some users, often virulently expressed, to accept some of the facts about Canadian English recorded in the dictionary.