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French Lexicography in Québec

The Works and Ideas of Oscar Dunn

Wim Remysen and Nadine Vincent[1]

Oscar Dunn (1845–1885) played a preponderant role in the history of lexicography in Québec. He stands out as one of the first intellectuals to have acknowledged the legitimacy of Canadian French in an era heavily marked by linguistic purism. Compared to his predecessors, all of whom were preoccupied with the purity and correctness of the language of French Canadians,[2] Dunn demonstrated a genuine scientific interest in the French used in Québec, which he was eager to describe rather than stigmatize. He expressed this interest, among other things, by studying the historical links between Canadian French and French from France, a theme well exploited in his *Glossaire franco-canadien*, the first glossary of Canadian French, published in 1880. Throughout his work, Dunn shows a genuine sense of confidence, freedom of thought, and thoroughness that contrasts with the lexicographical practice of his time.

In addition to its originality and modernity, Dunn's work is interesting from a broader sociopolitical standpoint, as his thinking about language is closely linked to his political and religious views, themes he frequently wrote about as a journalist during the 1860s and 1870s. Dunn addressed many issues concerning Québec's language and identity that are still of interest nowadays: to what extent is the French cultural heritage part of Québec's identity?[3] Does the French language belong to the Québécois in the same way it does to the French? And does the use of a distinct variety of French make Québec a distinct nation? As such, the case of Oscar Dunn presents striking resemblances with those of several lexicographers from other linguistic communities who are discussed in this book, namely Noah Webster (United States; see Finegan), John Jamieson (Scotland; see Rennie), Joost Halbertsma (Friesland; see Dykstra), and even the brothers Grimm (Germany; see Harm). Dunn indeed shares with these scholars an interest in

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the links between language, nationalism, and culture, as well as in historical material.

In this article, we will examine the ideas Dunn expressed on the French-Canadian nation (i.e., its identity, its destiny, and its relationship to France) and explore how they connect with his views on language and, especially, the legitimacy of the French-Canadian language. These ideas and interactions will be explored against the backdrop of Dunn's life, and in particular the key speeches and articles that brought him prominence among the intellectual circles of his day. We will of course take a special interest in his *Glossaire*, including its preface and its lexicographical contents. This book, which he published just a few years before his death, in a sense constitutes the culmination of his constant appeal for commitment to *la patrie* ('the homeland').

The presence of French in Québec and nineteenth-century sociopolitical context

In order to better understand Dunn's ideas about nation and language, it is necessary to begin with a closer look at the way French was established in Québec and how the nineteenth century affected the sociopolitical life of French Canadians. For more than 400 years,[4] French has been the native language of most inhabitants of Québec, a Canadian province that is today home to a population of more than 8 million. In 1534, Jacques Cartier seized this territory in the name of the King of France, François I. The ensuing decades were primarily devoted to exploration and trade, especially the fur trade, with Amerindian nations. The year 1608 marked the beginning of settlement, with Samuel de Champlain founding the first *habitation*[5] which would one day become the city of Québec. After difficult initial efforts at colonization, other cities were founded, notably Trois-Rivières (1634) and Montréal (1642), but the colony's demographic development remained modest: at the turn of the seventeenth century, the population is estimated to have stood at 13,815.[6] Around the middle of the eighteenth century, the population of New France (75,000 inhabitants) was still far below that within the British colonies making up New England, which already counted two million colonists during the same period. From the beginning of the French regime, French was the common language shared by all inhabitants of New France, unlike in France, where, at the time, a significant portion of the population spoke one of the country's many dialects or regional languages.[7] This did not go

unnoticed by a number of Frenchmen (and other Europeans) who visited Canada during the period, many of whom mentioned the purity of the local language in their memoirs or travel notes, at least up through the 1760s.[8]

After the decisive defeats of the French army at the hands of the British, France ceded New France to Great Britain in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris. The French-speaking inhabitants who formed the majority population on the territory were not worried about the fate of their language at this time. The British colonists were relatively conciliatory and the Québec Act (1774) guaranteed freedom of religion in the colony, in addition to recognizing French civil law. The British Crown hoped thereby to prevent the former French colony from being tempted to join the colonies to the south, which were already rife with the tensions that would lead to American independence. The British defeat south of the 49th parallel prompted the colonists who had remained faithful to England to migrate north. These 'loyalists' who came to the Canadian colony did not accept being a minority, on British territory, with respect to the Catholic Francophone majority. As a result, they demanded the creation of a distinct province where they would constitute the majority. The Constitutional Act of 1791 created Upper Canada (today Ontario), an almost exclusively Anglophone population of 10–15,000, and Lower Canada (today Québec), a mostly Francophone population of 150,000. From the first session of the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada in 1792, the question of the choice of language to be used by Members of Parliament stirred up tensions between the two language groups. After London's intervention in the matter, English was recognized as the sole official language, and French as a language of translation.

Having granted only partial powers to its two Canadian provinces, London repeatedly refused requests addressed to it by the Assemblies of Upper and Lower Canada. In 1837–1838, rebellion broke out, resulting, in Lower Canada only, in the deaths of 300 patriots on the battlefield, the hanging of twelve agitators, the deportation of some sixty patriots to Australia, and the pillaging and burning of dozens of farms. London sent Canada a new Governor General, John George Lambton, Earl of Durham, who recommended a union of Upper and Lower Canada, massive Anglophone immigration, and, above all, the swift assimilation of Francophones:

> . . . is this French-Canadian nationality one which, for the good merely of that people, we ought to strive to perpetuate, even if it were possible? I know of no national distinctions marking and continuing a more hopeless

> inferiority. The language, the laws, the character of the North American Continent are English; and every race but the English (I apply this to all who speak the English language) appears there in a condition of inferiority. It is to elevate them from that inferiority that I desire to give to the Canadians our English character. I desire it for the sake of the educated classes, whom the distinction of language and manners keeps apart from the great Empire to which they belong.[9]

In keeping with the recommendations of Lord Durham, London adopted the Union Act in 1840. As of February 1841, the two colonies were thus united into one—the United Province of Canada—and English was recognized as the sole official language, at least up to 1848. For the first time in their history on the continent, Francophones found themselves to be the demographic and political minority (the 1851 census shows that approximately 45% of the United Canadas' population, estimated at 1.8 million, was Francophone), a situation that would lead to the emergence of a nationalist movement.[10] The creation of Canada with the Confederation of 1867, which united three British colonies—United Canada (today Ontario and Québec), New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia—would definitively seal their fate, further accentuating their minority status, especially as new Anglophone provinces would join the Dominion of Canada a few years later. During this period, the central government paid little heed to the presence of French, and several provinces adopted anti-French measures, for example in education.[11]

Oscar Dunn: childhood and schooling

Oscar Dunn was born in Coteau-du-Lac (near Montréal) on 14 February 1845, precisely during this troubled period of significant political tension.[12] The great-grandson of a Scottish loyalist, he was likely raised to speak French.[13] He was orphaned in 1851 at the age of six when his Franco-Catholic mother Mathilde Beaudet and his Anglo-Protestant father William Oscar Dunn died, just a few months apart. Oscar and his sister Donalda, then four years old, found themselves at the centre of a dispute between their two grandfathers, who both claimed custody of the children. The matter would be settled in court in March 1855, with Oscar and Donalda being put in the care of their aunt Odile, their mother's sister, and her husband, the notary Louis Taché. The family settled in Saint-Hyacinthe and in 1856, at age eleven,

Oscar was admitted to the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe, which he would attend for eight years.

It was at this seminary, regarded as 'one of the bastions of French-Canadian patriotism in its day',[14] that Dunn would forge his convictions on religion, nationalism, and politics. It was also here that Dunn met an important figure in his life, Abbé François Tétreau, a teacher of literature and rhetoric. This 'nationalist intellectual who had a considerable influence on young people'[15] would regularly gather students around him to discuss the political issues of the times. For the rest of his life, Dunn would continue corresponding with Tétreau to discuss literature, spirituality, and patriotism.[16] Over time, Tétreau would become nothing short of an adoptive father to Dunn, who in one of his letters wrote, 'You have been a guide, a friend, and even more, a father. Is a child not grateful to his father?' ('Vous avez été pour moi un guide, un ami, plus que cela, un père. Un fils n'est-il pas reconnaissant envers son père?').[17]

In spite of his fragile health, Dunn became actively involved in the social life of the seminary, including the militia and a Catholic student association. He also joined the Académie Girouard, which served as a hub for young people with an interest in literature. It was at an event organized by the Académie in 1863 that Dunn gave his first speech (which he would subsequently put into writing[18]) on the topic of education, which he viewed as essential to informing the civic and moral sense of his fellow citizens. The speech touched upon a number of themes that would later resurface in his journalistic articles, including his devotion to the homeland and his worship of the past:

> Our teachers, while cultivating our minds and fashioning our hearts, urge us to stay faithful to the traditions of our Fathers and to preserve them religiously as a precious repository to be passed on in all its ancient purity. These traditions hark back to a glorious past, they revive the men of old, they kindle in our hearts a love for the homeland, the sense, the forceful and noble passion that inspires heroes and spurs them on to sublime action.[19]

In Dunn's view, this 'love for the homeland' (*amour de la patrie*) handed down through the generations, and all the sacrifices it entailed, were made possible by the Catholic faith:

> And do you know from where, Sirs, our fathers drew this sense of honor and this strength to do great things? From their living and genuine faith. Yet

> faith, for our Canadian heroes, was only one side of their chivalrous honour. When they led their armies into battle, when they were fatally struck to the heart on the fields of victory, the name of *God* escaped their dying lips along with that of their *Homeland*.[20]

Oscar Dunn as a journalist for the conservative and religious press

Dunn's interest in writing swiftly attracted him to journalism, leading him to become a *publiciste*, a journalist specializing in political affairs. After collaborating for several years with the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, a staunchly conservative publication,[21] Dunn went on to become its editor in 1866. In his first editorial in this capacity, he asserted his adherence to the newspaper's espoused values: 'our invincible and unwavering devotion to conservative principles, our respect for the traditions, institutions and language of our nation, and our cordial determination in the struggle'.[22]

In 1868, at the age of twenty-three, Dunn spent nearly a year in France to complete his training as a journalist. During this stretch, he also worked as a correspondent for the Montréal newspaper *La Minerve*, which at the time had a conservative editorial line.[23] Dunn was disappointed upon discovering certain aspects of France, which had become secular following the French Revolution. He was deeply shocked by the tight grip on the press under Napoleon and by French citizens' ignorance about Canada, and displayed surprising independent-mindedness toward the 'mother country':

> Thus it was that a poor Canadian, dazzled by the splendours of Paris, found comfort in the humble destiny of his country, in the belief that there can be no beauty where freedom has no altar. My dear compatriots, we would be wrong to constantly bow down before strangers; for when we look at ourselves, we are small, but when we compare ourselves to others, we are great indeed.[24]

Later, the ideas Dunn would develop about the language of his compatriots would display a similar independence from France and a comparable pride in the Canadian language. This detachment on Dunn's part stands out all the more since this was a time when the French-Canadian elite, fearing

assimilation into Anglophone America, encouraged their compatriots 'to become French once more'.[25]

His stay in Europe also gave Dunn an opportunity to be received by Pope Pius IX in Rome. From this brief meeting on 25 January 1860, Dunn would take away a statement uttered by the pontiff, midway between an exhortation and a blessing—a sentence that would stay with him throughout his life and that he would later reproduce in an epigraph to the book *Lectures pour tous*, published in 1877: 'You are a good Catholic; be of right intention, and God will keep you from all errors'.[26]

Upon his return from Europe, Dunn took on a more active role in public life while continuing his career as a journalist for the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe* as well as for *La Minerve* and *L'Opinion publique*, a liberal-leaning, nationalist newspaper.[27] He also became co-owner of the *Revue canadienne*, a publication dedicated to preserving and defending the French and Catholic heritage of French Canadians.[28] His speeches and articles during this period clearly outline the evolution of his political thought. In this respect two texts are particularly significant: 'Pourquoi nous sommes français', a speech delivered and published in 1870 in memory of the fallen French soldiers of the Franco-Prussian War, and 'Nos gloires nationales', a speech given in 1874 on the occasion of the *Fête nationale des Canadiens-français* or national holiday of French Canada.[29]

The contrast between these two speeches, given four years apart, plainly reflects the evolution in Dunn's thought. In the first, Dunn explains to his audience the unwavering ties that still bind French Canadians to France, writing: 'Yes, France is still our homeland. We feel this strongly today as she is suffering the most terrible of trials . . . her pains are our pains, and God knows how impatiently we await the day of her triumph to break out into hymns of joy . . . '.[30]

Dunn even goes so far as to make this belonging to France a reasoned decision, a legacy from the ancestors that allows French Canadians to survive in America and that underscores their cardinal values of religion and homeland:

> [Our fathers] understood that if they sacrificed their nationality, they would also renounce any mission on this continent, and that to be something, to represent something here, they had to continue to be French. To become English would be to fall in with the neighbouring colonies; to stay

> French meant to found a nation and to become the proxy of France and the Catholic Church.[31]

At the same time, Dunn's texts expressed an 'attachment to British institutions' (*attachement aux institutions britanniques*),[32] although this did not prevent him from viewing French Canadians as a distinct national group:

> No one better than us understands the need for harmony between the diverse nationalities which share Canada, no one more than us desires and favours such a harmony; but harmony does not mean merging together.... Politically, we are English; socially, we remain French, or if you prefer, we are, in public affairs, English in mind and French at heart.[33]

Even if in the second speech, Dunn continues to glorify the French legacy and to honour the sacrifices of the 'fathers of the nationality' (*pères de la nationalité*),[34] he puts more emphasis on the independence of French-Canadian nationality, thus echoing his earlier words during his 1868 visit to Paris (quoted earlier) in his evolving ideas:

> After the conquest, our fathers showed an unshakeable devotion to their nationality, a constant faith in the future . . . : they founded a people of French nationality on this English continent, and it seems to me that this glory is one of the noblest that one could ever envy. To govern a powerful country, the grandeur of which has been firmly established for centuries, is doubtless a task worthy of high ambitions; but to *make a nation*, to link one's name to the birth, development and every progress of a people, is a rare fortune worthy of the greatest minds.... Not only did [our fathers] *preserve* New France in its traditions, even as Louisiana, Illinois and Michigan became English; they *founded* a nationality that is developing and growing stronger every day.[35]

The specific context in which he uttered these words—at the first Francophone gathering organized in Montréal in June 1874—also gave Dunn an opportunity to reflect out loud on what a French nation in North America might look like. Extensively covered by the press at the time, the event brought together French-Canadian associations from across North America, including Western Canada as well as the United States, whose developing industries had been attracting numerous French Canadians since

the mid-nineteenth century.[36] Like others, Dunn hoped that the significant players of the French-Canadian nation would come together in the province of Québec. He viewed this reunion as a necessity for the survival of the nation:

> We cast so much of our strength to the winds! We would be a great force indeed if we were all gathered together in this province of Québec, which is vast enough to contain a great nation and rich enough to feed it! Our dispersion is our chief national problem. . . . If you were all here with us in this province, you would have a direct and immediate influence on Parliament.
>
> The real question is whether or not we want to found an independent people. If we do not have this noble ambition, if we agree to turn our backs on our past, if all the work, struggles and hardships of our glorious forebears do not make us honour-bound, then we may as well disperse; let us scatter about our fortune in foreign countries. But if our gaze is set higher, if we wish to make something of ourselves and for ourselves, to have a homeland that we can call our own, it is clear: we must close our ranks, we must converge on one and the same territory. Only then will we realise our full potential among peoples, for the first condition of national existence is to have location, to be grounded in the earth. A homeland is a place marked out by a border; let us choose ours.[37]

Dunn's political ideas once more exhibit the vision of a united and independent French Canada that is proud of itself and confident in its future. His vision is reflected in the way he describes its language as a lexicographer, more precisely in his *Glossaire franco-canadien*. Interestingly, in some respects, his ideas are not that far from those Noah Webster set forth nearly a century earlier on America and its relationship to England and the English language, i.e., a relationship marked by 'sameness' and 'differentness' at the same time (see Finegan this volume).

Oscar Dunn, the lexicographer: the 1880 *Glossaire franco-canadien*

As a journalist, Dunn took a continued interest in language issues. In addition to focusing on the defence and survival of French in America—concerns that were closely connected with the patriotic and religious values

he championed, as we have seen—he assigned great importance to the mastery of written French. His articles in the *Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe* did not hesitate to single out typos and language errors printed in rival newspapers.[38] This practice was commonplace in the press at the time, and often served to discredit the political ideas of adversaries.[39]

But when it comes to reflections on language, Dunn is best known for his *Glossaire franco-canadien*, a collection of Canadian words published in 1880 whose original outlook shook up French-Canadian lexicography during this era. The description of the language of French Canadians that he set forward in this tiny book—a 16° format approximately 4.5 inches high—marked the culmination of his reflections on identity, which extended to language, culture, faith, and homeland. Indeed, the glossary raised what could have been a merely personal concern up to a national issue.

To properly understand the book's importance and originality, it is necessary to look back to the beginnings of French-Canadian lexicography some forty years earlier. The first dictionaries to be published in Québec were prescriptive collections aimed at correcting the language of French Canadians, which was deemed to be of dubious quality.[40] The genre was inaugurated in 1841 by Abbé Thomas Maguire, a teacher at the Séminaire de Québec, and, like Dunn, the son of Loyalist immigrants. In his *Manuel des difficultés les plus communes de la langue française*, Maguire offered up a compilation of 'language errors particular to Canada' (*des erreurs de langage particulières au Canada*).[41] The author's prescriptive posture was guided by a single principle: teaching Canadians to speak like the French. Maguire's initiative soon inspired others, ushering in a purist movement that reflects the linguistic insecurity among the French-Canadian elite during this period.[42] But although it was intended to restore Canadians' French, the development of prescriptive lexicography at the end of the nineteenth century only fuelled insecurities. Its influence was all the more detrimental as the authors of collections of errors were not always thorough, but frequently contented themselves with criticizing the slightest hint of an error and condemning any and all resemblances to English, however small, often resulting in unjustified condemnations.

This malaise among the elite emerged after a relative period of isolation following the British conquest, when diplomatic ties were renewed and more regular contacts entertained with France. This rapprochement with the French led up to the conclusion that the language used on either side of the Atlantic was not quite the same, a fact that worried the Canadian elite. How, indeed, would it be possible to defend a language not reputed

to be 'real' French? The elite's linguistic insecurity was swiftly exacerbated by the tenacious and widespread prejudice in the Anglophone community that Canadians spoke an imperfect language labelled as 'French Canadian Patois' and deemed un-prestigious compared to 'Parisian French'.[43] As is well known, the word *patois* is pejorative and implies that anyone who speaks such a language is lacking in education and culture.

Dunn adamantly opposed the myth of a French-Canadian patois as perpetuated by Anglo-Canadians and Americans in his day. In 'Notre "patois"', a text published in *L'Opinion publique* in 1874, Dunn criticized foreign newspapers for spreading the notion that Canadians spoke an old Norman patois: 'This Norman patois is completely unknown to Canada. All French-Canadians speak the same French language . . . which is entirely free of the numerous patois existing in France'.[44]

Dunn instead upheld the idea that 'the Canadian language is much purer than that of the French peasant', all the while admitting that it contained some errors, particularly in terms of the French-Canadian accent, and 'certain English words that have been abused or half-translated'.[45] A few years later, he would revisit this topic in 'À propos du "patois canadien"'. This text, which sets forth a more substantial reflection on the matter, aptly shows Dunn's constant irritation with the falsehoods circulating on the language of his compatriots: '[Some foreign writers] like to say that we speak a Norman patois, and to support this, they quote words that they have heard used by our *habitants* [peasants], but that these same *habitants* would not understand if they were repeated back to them'.[46]

Hence, with his *Glossaire* in 1880, Dunn undertook a veritable attempt to restore Canadian French. The book was a product of its time and Dunn did not entirely escape the prevailing prescriptive posture, as attested by the book's subtitle, *Vocabulaire de locutions vicieuses usitées au Canada*. But unlike his purist predecessors, Dunn did not decry Canadians' linguistic particularities wholesale: rather, he sought to 'reveal the true nature of the errors we make'.[47] In other words, he showed greater caution in addressing proper usage and avoided condemning expressions which, while seemingly borrowed from English, were in fact French through and through:

> Our genuine Anglicisms are much less numerous than they are exaggerated to be; many words and locutions are attributed to English even though they come to us directly from Brittany and Normandy, or Old French. Let us take the example of the word *Acertainer*. Although it brings a smile to our

> lips, and we assume it to be a Francisation of the English verb 'to ascertain', the truth is exactly the opposite. François I, in a letter to the Parliament of Paris dated April 9 1526, wrote, 'And because we are duly certain [*acertenés*] that, etc.'[48]

Even more strikingly, Dunn's *Glossaire* shows a bias in favour of certain Canadianisms, and, above all, he refuses to subscribe to the principle that French dictionaries are the only authorities on language,[49] writing: 'The question arises first and foremost of whether a Canadian locution not approved by the Academy might be correct. I answer in the affirmative'.[50] Indeed, Dunn mentions a number of words that are absent in French dictionaries, but are nevertheless entirely acceptable in his view.

The Canadian usages that Dunn recognized as legitimate fall under two categories. First, according to Dunn, it is entirely normal for French Canadians to have formed words that designate specifically Canadian realities: 'France, which is unfamiliar with the matter at hand, had no word to offer us: we consequently created one, as was our right'.[51] To put it differently, a number of Canadian words were legitimized for cultural reasons. Second, Dunn points out that many words used in Canada, despite being absent from French dictionaries, are still French in nature because they are documented in some regions of France—especially those from which the first Canadian settlers originated—or are attested in the history of the French language, even if they are no longer part of contemporary French usage. Dunn set out to systematically trace the origins of all such words with the help of regional glossaries published in France,[52] and stood up for 'their recognition here at home'.[53] In his view, these words held special value for French-Canadian identity, as they harked back to the origins of the ancestors—a fact that ties in with Dunn's frequent worship of the past in the context of his patriotic writings. They are indicative of the parent-child relationship between Canada, regarded as 'a *French province*', and its home country:

> In France, some may be fond of pointing out our people's use of old locutions dating back to Montaigne and Rabelais, words from Norman, Breton, Picardy, and Berrichon country, which, although not approved by the Academy, nevertheless come to us from France. These expressions prove our origins; they are so many proofs of nationality.[54]

A few examples are worth citing to illustrate the views Dunn set forth in his book and to show how he thought to present words in use in Canada:

> **Bin.** Pour *Bien.* Faute de prononciation très commune même en France.
>
> **Blackaille.** Pop. Angl. *Black-eye. Œil poché, œil au beurre noir.* On va jusqu'à dire: Il a reçu une blackaille sur le nez.
>
> **Blasphémer.** "Il m'a blasphémé". Ctre de la Fr. Outrager en jurant.[55]

While Dunn presents *bin* as an incorrect pronunciation, importantly, he notes that the error is also commonplace in France. This clarification produces two effects: in addition to confirming that the language of French Canadians is indeed French, it underscores that the French also make pronunciation errors, and that therefore this is not a Canadian specificity. The entry for *blackaille*, for its part, is presented as a Gallicized spelling of the borrowing 'black eye'. Dunn mentions the English form, gives the French equivalents, and remarks that the term may be used with an extended meaning that proves that certain French Canadians use the word without knowing the original meaning and hence without speaking English. Indeed, the fact that one can get a '*blackaille* on the nose', and that the word is in the feminine in French, shows that the word 'eye' does not register for some French speakers. This is very mild criticism, especially compared with that found in contemporaneous purist collections of such words.[56] Finally, under the entry for *blasphémer*, Dunn first gives an example ('Il m'a blasphémé') before indicating the French region that shares this usage with Canadians (central France), and finally provides a definition. He thus justifies the use of the word by re-tracing its presence in a regional French spoken language, this being an important feature of his glossary.

Dunn also defends certain Canadian creations, especially those that designate significant cultural practices or that name realities for which no French term existed at the time. For example:

> **Entailler.** Can. Opération qui consiste à faire une entaille à une érable et à lui poser une goudrelle (v. ce mot), au moyen de laquelle l'eau qui suinte de l'arbre tombera dans une auge ou un vase placé au pied. Nous disons absolument: 'Entaillez-vous cette année?' pour Vous proposez-vous de faire du sucre? V. *Sucrerie.*[57]

We are dealing here with the cultural vocabulary of maple syrup production, a French-Canadian specialty, and Dunn takes care to make analogical connections with other words of this language, such as *goudrelle* ('spigot') and *sucrerie* ('sugar shack'). In addition to using the abbreviation 'Can.' to indicate the Canadian origin of this usage, he also uses the pronoun *nous* (we) to emphasize the bond and sense of belonging between the author and his readers, thus going against the usually respected rule of neutrality in lexicographical entries.

This is not the only convention that Dunn flouts in his lexicographical entries. For example, defending the use of the word *carré* under the entry for this term—which Canadians prefer over its equivalent 'square', an Anglicism used in France—he writes: 'Let us therefore continue to say *le Carré Viger, le Carré de la Place-d'Armes*. We will still have the opportunity to say *Square* when we go to Paris'.[58] Whether consciously or not, with his glossary, Dunn clearly undertook an effort to restore the French in use in Québec. He also challenged French usages, in particular Parisian ones, and by extension, the hierarchy to which his contemporaries generally deferred.

Conclusion

The descendant of a Loyalist, Oscar Dunn could naturally have inherited the language and religion of the British conquerors. But instead, the law, which entrusted him to the Beaudet side of his family, and then his schooling at the Séminaire de Saint-Hyacinthe, fashioned him into a fervent defender of Francophones in America as well as the '[Catholic] faith, so closely bound up with nationality'.[59] In spite of his conservative and traditionalist positions, Dunn embraced a novel outlook on the language of French Canadians, and more broadly speaking, on their destiny as a people in their own right in North America. Dunn appears to have been unscathed by the worries of his contemporaries—many of whom denounced the poor quality of Canadians' language—or by their growing linguistic insecurity and fear of assimilation. Confident in the legitimacy of the French in use in Québec, which he did not subordinate to Parisian French, he paved the way for other lexicographers who, from the nineteenth century to our day, have strived to describe rather than criticize and sanitize their own variety of French.

This legitimization of Canadian language, in which Dunn firmly believed, is in many ways a testament to his independent-mindedness toward France,

the *mère-patrie* ('motherland') venerated by so many of his contemporaries, which led him to embrace the idea of a French nation in America. Moreover, Dunn's focus on the emergence of Canadianisms helped introduce research questions into the origins of Canadian French, which would continue to guide linguistic study beyond his lifetime. Even if the second, much-expanded edition of the book which he had envisioned would never come to pass,[60] the *Glossaire franco-canadien* marked a decisive step in the development of Québec lexicography, and Oscar Dunn may rightfully be acknowledged as 'the one who opened the way for descriptive and historical lexicography'[61] in Québec.

Notes

1. The authors would like to thank Joachim Lépine for the English translation of this essay as well as all the quotations from the original French texts.
2. The designation of *Québécois* emerged only in the 1960s. Previously, Francophones in Québec were called 'French Canadians', and their variety of French, 'Canadian French'.
3. Lamonde has tried to capture Québec's identity in the following formula: 'Q = (F)+(GB)+(USA)^2-R'. The formula contains the different historical compounds that make Québec unique in the North American context: 'F' and 'GB' for the French and British heritage, 'USA' for the American character of Québec society (which Lamonde finds to be very important, hence the exponent two) and 'R' for the influence of Rome, i.e., the Catholic Church (one that has significantly decreased over the years, as pointed out by the use of the subtraction sign).
4. See Lacoursière et al. or Gossage & Little for an introduction to the history of Québec and Canada. See Mercier et al. (2017) for the situation of French in Québec.
5. The *habitation*, or settlement, consisted in a cluster of buildings surrounded by gardens and protected by ditches and a palisade.
6. Asselin and McLaughlin, p. 105.
7. See Poirier in Mougeon and Beniak (1994) and Rey.
8. Caron-Leclerc.
9. Durham, p. 126.
10. Roy.
11. Martel and Pâquet.
12. More details on the life of Oscar Dunn can be found in Provost (1973) and (2003).
13. Provost (1973), p. 27.
14. Savard, our translation.
15. Dufour and Hamelin, our translation.
16. The correspondence between the two has been partially preserved by the Fonds abbé François Tétreau, in the archives of the Centre d'histoire de Saint-Hyacinthe.
17. Letter from Dunn to Tétreau, 23 July 1863, cited in Provost (1973), p. 49.

18. Oscar Dunn transcribed the speech in a notebook entitled '*Compositions académiques présentées à l'Académie Saint-Grégoire de Nazianze*'. It is from this manuscript, available at the archives of the Centre d'histoire de Saint-Hyacinthe, that the present quotations are drawn.
19. Original: 'Nos professeurs, tout en cultivant notre intelligence, tout en formant notre cœur, savent nous dire de rester fidèles aux traditions de nos Pères et de les conserver religieusement comme un dépôt précieux que nous devons transmettre dans toute son antique pureté. Ces traditions rappellent un passé glorieux, elles font vivre les hommes d'autrefois, elles ravissent dans nos cœurs l'amour de la patrie, ce sentiment, cette passion forte et noble qui inspire les héros et fait accomplir les actions sublimes'. Dunn (1863), p. 18.
20. Original: 'Et savez-vous Messieurs, où nos pères puisaient ce sentiment de l'honneur et cette force des grandes choses? Dans leur foi vive et sincère. La foi, pour nos héros canadiens, n'était qu'un côté de leur honneur chevaleresque. Lorsqu'ils conduisaient leurs armées aux combats, lorsqu'ils tombaient frappés au cœur sur les champs de victoire, le nom de *Dieu* s'échappait toujours de leurs lèvres mourantes en même temps que celui de leur *Patrie*'. Dunn (1863), p. 13. Dunn's emphasis.
21. Beaulieu and Hamelin (1973), pp.181–83.
22. Original: 'notre attachement invincible et sans réticences aux principes conservateurs, notre respect des traditions, des institutions, de la langue nationales, notre fermeté courtoise dans la lutte'. Dunn (1866), p. 2
23. Beaulieu and Hamelin (1973), pp. 55–58.
24. Original: 'C'est ainsi qu'un pauvre Canadien, ébloui des splendeurs de Paris, se console de l'humble destinée de son pays, en croyant que rien n'est beau là où la liberté n'a point d'autels. Mes chers compatriotes, nous aurions tort de faire sans cesse acte d'humilité devant les étrangers; car si nous nous considérons, nous sommes de petite taille, si nous nous comparons, nous sommes très grands'. Dunn (1868), p. 2.
25. Poirier (2006), p. 82, our translation.
26. Original: 'Vous êtes bon catholique; soyez droit d'intention, et Dieu vous sauvera de toute erreur'. Dunn (1877), unnumbered introductory page.
27. Beaulieu and Hamelin (1975), p. 145–50.
28. Beaulieu and Hamelin (1975), p. 49–51.
29. Both speeches were published in *Dix ans de journalisme*, a collection of texts published by Dunn in 1876, and later reproduced in 1877 in another collection, *Lecture pour tous*.
30. Original: 'Oui, la France est encore notre patrie. Nous le sentons vivement aujourd'hui qu'elle subit la plus terrible des épreuves . . . ses douleurs sont nos douleurs, et Dieu sait avec quelle impatience nous attendons le jour de son triomphe pour chanter l'hymne d'allégresse. . . . ' Dunn (1870), p. 40.
31. Original: '[Nos pères] comprirent que s'ils sacrifiaient leur nationalité, ils renonçaient en même temps à toute mission sur ce continent, et que pour être quelque chose, pour représenter quelque chose ici, ils devaient continuer d'être Français. Devenir Anglais, c'était se mettre à la remorque des colonies voisines; rester Français, c'était fonder une

nation et devenir les mandataires de la France et de l'Église Catholique'. Dunn (1870), pp. 30–31.

32. Dunn (1870), p. 15.
33. Original: 'Nul mieux que nous ne comprend la nécessité de la concorde entre les diverses nationalités qui se partagent le Canada, nul plus que nous ne la désire et favorise; mais concorde ne signifie pas fusion. . . . Politiquement, nous sommes Anglais; socialement, nous restons Français, ou plutôt, si l'on préfère ce mot, nous sommes, dans les affaires publiques, Anglais de tête et Français de cœur'. Dunn (1870), pp. 14, 16.
34. Dunn (1876c), p. 29. Here we quote the text published in 1876, two years after Dunn delivered the speech.
35. Original: 'Après la conquête nos pères ont montré un attachement inébranlable à leur nationalité, une foi constante en l'avenir. . . : ils ont fait souche de peuple, de nationalité française sur ce continent anglais, et il me semble que cette gloire est une des plus nobles qu'il soit possible d'envier. Gouverner un pays puissant et dont la grandeur est solidement assise depuis des siècles, est sans doute une tâche digne des ambitions élevées; mais *faire une nation*, attacher son nom à la naissance, au développement, à chaque progrès d'un peuple, voilà une fortune rare qui peut tenter les meilleurs génies. . . . Non-seulement [nos pères] ils ont *conservé* la Nouvelle-France dans ses traditions, pendant que la Louisiane, l'Illinois, le Michigan devenaient anglais; mais de plus ils ont *fondé* une nationalité qui va tous les jours s'affermissant et se développant'. Dunn (1876c), pp. 28–29. Emphasis in original.
36. See Ali-Khodja et al.
37. Original: 'Que de forces nous jetons à tous les vents! Et quel surcroît de puissance nous aurions si nous étions tous agglomérés dans cette province de Québec, assez vaste pour contenir une grande nation, assez riche pour la nourrir! Le fait de notre dissémination constitue pour nous le principal problème national. . . . Si vous étiez tous avec nous dans cette province, votre influence serait directe et immédiate sur le parlement. [/] Au fait, la question est de savoir si nous voulons, oui ou non, fonder un peuple indépendant. Si nous n'avons pas cette noble ambition, si nous consentons à tourner le dos à notre passé, si tous les travaux, les luttes et les souffrances de nos glorieux devanciers ne nous obligent pas en honneur, dispersons-nous, c'est bien; promenons notre fortune dans tous les pays étrangers. Mais si nos regards portent plus haut, si nous voulons être quelque chose par nous-mêmes et pour nous-mêmes, et avoir une patrie qui soit réellement à nous, songeons-y, il faut serrer nos rangs, il faut nous grouper tous sur un même point de territoire. À cette condition-là seulement nous donnerons notre pleine mesure parmi les peuples, car la première condition d'existence nationale, c'est d'être localisé, fixé au sol. Une patrie est un domaine borné par une frontière; choisissons la nôtre'. Dunn (1876c), pp. 30–31.
38. Provost (1973).
39. Remysen (2017).
40. Poirier (2008).
41. Maguire, *Avertissement*, unnumbered page.

42. Others who followed in Maguire's footsteps include Boucher-Belleville, Gingras, Caron, Manseau, Lusignan, and Rinfret.
43. Bouchard (1990, 2002).
44. Dunn (1874), p. 1.
45. Original: 'la langue canadienne est beaucoup plus pure que celle du paysan français' . . . 'certains mots anglais écorchés ou traduits à moitié'. Dunn (1874), p. 1.
46. Original: '[Certains écrivains étrangers] se plaisent à dire que nous parlons le patois normand et citent pour le prouver des mots qu'ils ont entendus chez nos *habitants*, mais que ceux-ci ne comprendraient pas s'ils leur étaient répétés'. Dunn (1876a), p. 262.
47. Original: 'montrer la vraie nature des fautes que nous commettons'. Dunn (1880), p. xvi.
48. Original: 'Quant à nos anglicismes véritables, on en exagère le nombre; on met au compte de l'anglais bien des mots, bien des locutions qui nous sont venus directement de Bretagne et de Normandie, ou qui appartiennent au vieux langage. Citons comme exemple le mot *Acertainer*. Il appelle le sourire sur nos lèvres, nous le prenons pour une francisation de l'anglais *To ascertain*; mais, de fait, c'est le contraire qui est la vérité. François I^er^, dans une lettre au parlement de Paris, datée du 9 avril 1526, disait: "Et parce que nous sommes duement *acertenés* que, etc" '. Dunn (1880), pp. xiv–xv.
49. See Vincent.
50. Original: 'On se demande tout d'abord s'il se peut qu'une locution canadienne, non sanctionnée par l'Académie, soit bonne. Je tiens pour l'affirmative'. Dunn (1880), p. xx.
51. Original: 'la France, ignorant la chose n'a pu nous fournir le mot: nous l'avons donc créé, c'était notre droit'. Dunn (1880), p. xx.
52. Mercier (1996).
53. Original: 'leur droit de cité chez nous'. Dunn (1880), p. xxiii.
54. Original: 'En France, on aimera sans doute à retrouver au sein de nos populations ces vieilles locutions qui datent de Montaigne et de Rabelais, tous ces mots du pays normand, breton, picard, berrichon, qui ne sont pas sanctionnés par l'Académie, mais qui n'en sont pas moins de provenance française. Toutes ces expressions prouvent notre origine; elles sont autant de certificats de nationalité'. Dunn (1880), p. xx.
55. 'Bin. For *Bien*. Very common pronunciation error, even in France. Blackaille. Colloquial. Engl. *Black-eye. A black eye, bruising around the eye*. Some go so far as to say: He got a *blackaille* on the nose. Blasphémer. "He *blasphémé* me". Ctrl. France. To insult with a swear'. Dunn (1880), p. 22.
56. In contrast, Rinfret does not give the French spelling but lists the word as an 'all too common English term' (1896), p. 30.
57. 'Entailler. Can. Operation that consists of tapping a maple tree and affixing a spigot (see this word), thanks to which the water leaking from the tree drips into a bucket or jar placed at the foot thereof. We say, in the absolute: 'Are you tapping this year?' for 'Are you planning to make maple sugar?' See *Sucrerie* [sugar shack]. Dunn (1880), p. 75.
58. Original: 'Continuons donc à dire le Carré Viger, le Carré de la Place-d'Armes. Il sera toujours temps de dire *Square* lorsque nous irons à Paris'. Dunn (1880), p. 34.

59. Original: 'foi [catholique], si intimement liée à la nationalité'. Dunn (1863), p. 22.
60. In a text published on 3 February 1885, two months prior to his death, in the newspaper *La Patrie*, Dunn mentioned his hope to publish a second edition: 'Here is what readers will find [about the word *chouayen*], unless I am told I am mistaken, in the second edition of the *Glossaire franco-canadien* which I will be publishing soon'. ('Voici ce qu'on lira [à propos du mot *chouayen*], si l'on ne me dit pas que j'ai tort, dans la seconde édition du *Glossaire franco-canadien* que je publierai bientôt'.)
61. Mercier (1996), p. 240, our translation.

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