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Chapter 3

Word formation and word history: The case of CAPITALIST and CAPITALISM

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The treatment of the history of modern vocabulary in historical and etymological dictionaries is generally disappointing, especially with respect to the processes by which the words came into being. The *TLFi*¹ only provides the following information concerning the history of French *capitalisme* and *capitaliste*: “**Capitalisme** [...] Dér. de *capital*^{2*}; suff. *-isme*^{3*}”, “**Capitaliste** [...] Dér. de *capital*”; suff. *-iste*^{4*}”. Such a treatment, which is inadequate even from a synchronic point of view (in the sense ‘a supporter of capitalism’, *capitaliste* is derived from *capitalisme* by affix substitution), does not do justice to the manifold relationships that have developed between these two words and their common base *capital* in the course of the 300 years since the creation of Dutch *Capitalist* in 1621. The present paper retraces in detail the many steps of the unfolding of these two words in French. It is shown that each of their many senses constitutes a separate lexeme and must be provided with an etymology of its own. Particular attention is dedicated to the identification of the exact mechanism (borrowing, semantic extension, word formation) that was at work at each step.

1 In the beginning was the lexeme

Right from the beginning of the study of the internal structure of complex words, scholars have been divided between those who tried to put complex words together from smaller pieces in a bottom-up fashion (the Pāṇinian tradition) and those who tried to account for the internal structure by mapping words onto other words (the Greco-Roman tradition, based on analogy). This fundamental divide is still with us, in the form of an opposition between what we now call “morpheme-based” and “word-based” (or “lexeme-based”) approaches to morphology (see Aronoff 2007). In the French linguistic landscape, the morpheme-based approach held some sway before the turn of the millennium due to having been embraced by Danielle Corbin (see Corbin 1987), who played an important role in the renewal of the study of word formation in France. But more recently

¹*Trésor de la langue française informatisé*, available at <http://atilf.atilf.fr/>.



most French morphologists seem to be quite unanimous in preferring the lexeme-based approach, not least due to the forceful argumentation in its favour in Fradin (2003).

In my contribution, I would like to pour more water on the lexeme-based mill by looking in some detail into the history of the two words *CAPITALIST* and *CAPITALISM*, in which semantic change, calques and word formation – suffixation, conversion, but also suffix substitution, a notorious conundrum for morpheme-based approaches – have interacted in a complex manner. It will become apparent that these changes find a natural explanation within a lexeme-based framework, while they seem to be difficult to accommodate without contortions in a morpheme-based one. However, the chapter is meant to be of interest not only to morphologists or lexicologists, who constitute the main intended readership. Both words treated are key concepts of present-day intellectual vocabulary and as such have attracted considerable attention from scholars from other disciplines, mostly historians such as Fernand Braudel, Lucien Febvre, Henri Hauser or Edmond Silberner in France, or Richard Passow, Marie-Elisabeth Hilger and Annette Höfer in Germany. For such readers, the linguistic arguments of this contribution may sometimes seem to be a little far-fetched, while they would probably here and there like to receive more abundant encyclopedic information. This latter type of information, however, must be kept to a minimum here, providing just what is necessary for underpinning the linguistic argumentation. Even so, non-linguists will hopefully appreciate the new facets of the history of these two words, which I was able to add to the existing documentation due to the abundance of new material that we can now dip into thanks to Google Books and Gallica.²

In order to avoid misunderstandings, one formal proviso is in order before we start our investigation. It is established practice in linguistics to write lexemes in small caps. In this tradition, the English lexeme *CAPITALIST* would represent the set of English word forms { *capitalist*, *capitalists* }. I will not follow this usage here, but use small caps instead whenever referring to a word independently from its exact formal realization in individual European languages. Throughout this text, *CAPITALIST* therefore represents the set {English *capitalist*, German *Kapitalist*, French *capitaliste*, etc.}, and similarly for other words in small caps.

2 CAPITAL, CAPITALIST and CAPITALISM in synchrony and diachrony

For present-day speakers of European languages, *CAPITALISM* refers to a specific kind of economic system and is undoubtedly felt to be based somehow on *CAPITAL*, though many speakers will be hard-pressed to specify the exact semantic relationship between base and derivative or will construe it in different ways. This indeterminacy is mainly

²On the history of *CAPITALISTE*, see Rainer (1998). A short, updated entry on the history of French *capitaliste*, written together with Jean-Paul Chauveau, can be found on *TLF-Étym*, an etymological online dictionary that can be consulted at <http://www.atilf.fr/tlf-etym/>. The corresponding entry on French *capitalisme* can be consulted on the same site.

due to the fact that the word CAPITAL itself has various senses, not all of them equally familiar to non-economists, and that it is not obvious which sense is the relevant one for the construal of the meaning of CAPITALISM. The *Free Dictionary*,³ for example, manages to define CAPITALISM without recourse to CAPITAL: “An economic system in which the means of production and distribution are privately or corporately owned and development occurs through the accumulation and reinvestment of profits gained in a free market.” CAPITALIST, on the contrary, will most often be spontaneously analyzed as based on CAPITALISM, referring to a supporter of the particular kind of economic system denoted by this word. ‘A supporter of capitalism’, in fact, is the first sense in the online dictionary quoted above, which adds two more senses that seem to be less prominent today: 2. ‘An investor of capital in business, especially one having a major financial interest in an important enterprise’; 3. ‘A person of great wealth’. The foregoing remarks seem to be valid for European languages in general. In other respects, however, individual languages differ, for example, with respect to whether they tolerate the adjectival usage of CAPITALIST, possible in French and English, but not in German. The connotations of the members of this word family will also differ, depending on the stance that a speaker or speech community takes with respect to the economic system called CAPITALISM.

The etymological treatment of CAPITALISM and CAPITALIST in historical dictionaries seems to have been inspired by and large by such intuitions about the synchronic relationship between CAPITAL, CAPITALIST and CAPITALISM. The *TLFi*, for example, writes:

Capitalisme *subst. masc.* [...] Dér. de *capital*^{2*}; suff. *-isme*^{*}.

Capitaliste *adj. et subst.* [...] Dér. de *capital*^{*}; suff. *-iste*^{*}. L’hyp. d’un empr. au néerl. *kapitalist* (BL.-W.⁵) ne semble pas justifiée. Le corresp. all. *Kapitalist* « possesseur d’un capital » est attesté dep. 1694 (WEIGAND).⁴

As we will see, this kind of analysis in no way does justice to the complex interrelationships that have developed over time among the three words of this word family, nor to the inter-European relationships that link corresponding members in different European languages. I will now describe these relationships by following the evolutions of the individual words step by step from the 17th century up to the present time.

3 The evolution of the noun CAPITALIST from the 17th to the 19th century

3.1 CAPITAL

This is not the place to take up the complex history of CAPITAL at full length. Suffice it to say that by the time that the first derivative, CAPITALIST, appeared, CAPITAL gener-

³<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/capitalism>.

⁴[*Capitalisme* *masc. noun* [...] Derived from *capital*^{2*}; suffix *-isme*^{*}. / *Capitaliste* *adj. and noun* [...] Derived from *capital*^{*}; suffix *-iste*^{*}. The hypothesis that it be a loan from Dutch *kapitalist* (BL.-W.⁵) does not seem to be justified. The corresponding German word *Kapitalist* ‘owner of capital’ has been attested since 1694 (WEIGAND).]

ally referred to the property, not necessarily only money, that a rich person owned. In double-entry bookkeeping, the term referred to the net worth owned by the merchant after taking away the liabilities from the assets. Towards the end of the 18th century economists extended the meaning of the term to include the means of production (buildings, machines, tools) used in agriculture or industry, what is now called PHYSICAL CAPITAL. This more technical sense still has not really penetrated into common language, but it did play a role in the history of CAPITALIST and CAPITALISM, as we will see. More recent extensions of the concept, by contrast, such as HUMAN CAPITAL or SOCIAL CAPITAL, had no influence.

3.2 CAPITALIST: the Dutch origins

As we saw in Section 2, the *TLFi* rejected the hypothesis of a Dutch origin of the French noun *capitaliste*, which had first been put forward by Barbier (1944–1952: nr. XXV). This decision was ill-advised, since the noun *Capitalist* was indeed coined in the Netherlands (then: “United Provinces”) back in 1621 by tax authorities in order to designate a wealthy citizen who possessed 2,000 guilders or more:

Special registers distinguished the taxpayers into two categories: those owning more than 2,000 guilders were called ‘capitalists’ (from 1621), and those owning 1,000 to 2,000 guilders were the so-called ‘half capitalists’ (from 1625). People owning less than 1,000 guilders were fully exempt from extraordinary property taxes. A proposal from 1641 to introduce another level, from 20,000 or 30,000 upwards, was not accepted. The word ‘capitalist’, here used in its earliest meaning, clearly designated someone owning property. (’t Hart 1993: 122–123)

Dutch *Capitalist* was derived from *Capitaal* ‘capital’ and followed the pattern of formations in -IST that designated persons engaged in some activity, not the supporter pattern, both of which were already well established at that time (see Wolf 1972). In order to understand the choice of suffix, we probably have to assume that the coiner conceived of a *Capitalist* as a money-lender or investor, not as a passive possessor of a huge sum of money or property. Dutch *Capitalist* was a complex concept, designating at the same time a wealthy person, mostly engaged in money-lending or investment activities, as well as a category of the tax authorities. Since both these facets were linked by mutual inference, we should view them as part of one and the same concept, not as two independent concepts, very much like *book* can designate at the same time the object on the table and its content. It is also highly probable that the precise original definition of *Capitalist* on the part of the tax authorities (‘a person worth 2,000 guilders or more’) was relaxed in common parlance to refer simply to very rich individuals in general.

The 17th century is called the “Golden Age” in Dutch historiography, because the United Provinces at that time were at the forefront of trade, military, science and art. This background, especially their eminent position in international finance, explains how a

Dutch neologism could spread abroad and start an astounding international career. Already by the end of the 17th century, we find loan translations in German and French. German *Capitalist* (today written *Kapitalist*) appears as early as 1671 in a document on the financial system of the United Provinces, where, due to its novelty, it is glossed as ‘money-lender’ (Rainer 1998: 10). The German word, as far as I can see, had no influence on French, which will be the focus of the rest of this paper.

3.3 French *capitaliste*: its semantic evolution until the Physiocrats

There can be no doubt about the Dutch origin of the French noun *capitaliste*. The oldest example, in fact, comes from the *Mercure Hollandois* of 1678, p. 13 and clearly refers to the very special fiscal meaning which the term had at that time in the United Provinces: “Pour cet effet [i.e. to put up an army of 100,000 men in a fortnight] ils posoient qu’il y avoit dans la Province de Hollande 65 500 Capitalistes, qui étoient taxés sur les Cahiers de l’Etat à 2.4.6.10.20. & 80 000 livres.”⁵ The few examples that we find in French until the middle of the 18th century (quoted under IIA in the corresponding *TLF-Étym* entry) refer to that same Dutch reality. In the second half of the 18th century, however, the noun *capitaliste* firmly established itself in French with a reference independent from the Dutch context. Here is a quote from the *Dictionnaire domestique portatif* (Paris: Vincent 1765), vol. 3, p. 505: “RENTIERS; ce terme est synonyme à *capitaliste*, c’est-à-dire, à celui qui fait valoir son argent, en le disposant suivant le cours de la place, & qui vit de ses rentes.”⁶

The diffusion of the term among a wider public was furthered by its adoption by the Physiocrats, an economic school that began holding much sway at that time, in France and abroad. The following example from Turgot’s *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses* illustrates the meaning that will be the dominant one throughout the 19th century:

§ XCIII

Le capitaliste prêteur d’argent appartient, quant à sa personne, à la classe disponible.

Nous avons vu que tout homme riche est nécessairement possesseur ou d’un capital en richesses mobilières, ou d’un fonds équivalent à un capital. Tout fonds de terre équivalait à un capital ; ainsi tout propriétaire est **capitaliste**, mais tout **capitaliste** n’est pas propriétaire d’un bien fonds ; et le propriétaire d’un capital mobilier a le choix, ou de l’employer à acquérir des fonds, ou de les faire valoir dans des entreprises de la classe cultivatrice ou de la classe industrielle. Le **capitaliste**, devenu entrepreneur de culture ou d’industrie, n’est pas plus disponible, ni lui ni ses

⁵[To that effect they assumed that there were in the province of Holland 65,500 capitalists, whose tax charge according to the state’s tax lists was 2, 4, 6, 10, 20 or 80 thousand pounds.]

⁶[RENTIERS ; this term means the same as *capitalist*, that is, one who invests his money according to the evolution of rates on the market and lives off his private income.]

profits, que le simple ouvrier de ces deux classes ; tous deux sont affectés à la continuation de leurs entreprises. (Turgot, *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses*, s.l. 1788, p. 125)⁷

As one can see, the term is now completely detached from its original fiscal context and simply refers to wealthy individuals who try to increase their capital by either lending money at interest or investing it in productive enterprises (directly, or on the stock market). The meaning, therefore, roughly corresponded to both senses 2 and 3 of the *Free Dictionary* quoted in Section 2. It was not really a French innovation: already the Dutch capitalists typically engaged in precisely these two activities. What is new is that the word could now be used without reference to the particular Dutch context and that the fiscal perspective to which the Dutch term was originally tied had sunk into oblivion. By the same token, the original concept was simplified, being stripped of its fiscal facet.

3.4 CAPITALIST spilling over to the Anglo-Saxon world

Nowadays we strongly associate capitalism with the Anglo-Saxon world, but the truth is that Great Britain and the United States were the last among the big, developed nations to take up the word CAPITALIST. In English, *capitalist* does not make its appearance before 1787, when the following example is attested in Madison's writings (*The Writings of James Madison*, ed. G. Hunt. New York/London: Putnam's Sons 1903, vol. 4, p. 123):⁸ "In other Countries this dependence results in some from the relations between Landlords and Tenants in others both from that source and from the relations between wealthy capitalists and indigent labourers." Four years later, the word is used in England by Edmund Burke:

On the policy of that transfer I shall trouble you with a few thoughts. In every prosperous community something more is produced than goes to the immediate support of the producer. This surplus forms the income of the landed capitalist. It will be spent by a proprietor who does not labour. (Edmund Burke, *The Political Magazine* 21, 1791, p. 75)

Up to that moment, capitalists were generally referred to as *monied men* in English, an expression that rapidly succumbed to the prestige of the newcomer, but not before giving rise, for a short period of time, to the blend *monied capitalists*. There can be no doubt that French was the donor language for the English calque.

⁷[§ XCIII / *The money-lending capitalist is part of the available class* / We have seen that any monied man necessarily owns either capital constituted of transferable riches or a property equivalent to capital. Landed properties are always equivalent to capital; therefore all landowners are capitalists, but not all capitalists own property; and the owner of transferable capital can choose to use it to buy property or to invest it in enterprises of the agricultural or industrial class. The capitalist who has become entrepreneur in agriculture or industry is no more available, neither he himself nor his profits, than the simple worker of these two classes; both are engaged in the continuation of their enterprises.]

⁸The first attestation given in the *OED* is from 1792.

3.5 The capitalist as entrepreneur

From the 17th century to the 19th century, the dominant meaning of CAPITALIST in all European languages was that of a wealthy person who made his capital “work” by lending it at interest, buying bonds or shares, or investing it in productive activities. In this last case, a capitalist could easily become an entrepreneur himself, directly engaged in the management of the firm he owned or of which he was an associate. By shifting the attention from the ‘monied man’ sense to this latter facet of the complex concept ‘capitalist’, the word eventually also became established in the new sense of ‘entrepreneur’, defined in the *Free Dictionary* as ‘a person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture’. As already observed by Passow (1927: 109–111), this shift in meaning occurred first in English:

When the manufacturing capitalist of Europe shall advert to the many important advantages, which have been intimated, in the course of this report, he cannot but perceive very powerful inducements to a transfer of himself and his capital to the United States. (*The American Museum*, Philadelphia: Carey 1792, Part I, from January to June, Appendix II, p. 19)

All the laws connected with our manufacturing system, appear to be founded on one erroneous principle, that the capitalists or masters are the only part to be protected against combination and injustice, though the artizans or workmen have an equal right to be protected in their property or skill [...]. (*The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time*. Vol. 23. London: Longman 1812. July 21, 1812 – column 1165)

The small farmer has disappeared, and the smaller manufacturers are superseded by large capitalists, who alone can afford to purchase expensive machinery. (*Remarks on the Practicability of Mr. Robert Owen’s Plan to Improve the Condition of the Lower Classes*. London: Leigh 1819, p. 6)

The new sense may have arisen in English at that time due to the lack of specific word for ‘entrepreneur’ (*entrepreneur* in the relevant sense dates from the mid-19th century). What is more surprising is that this English usage should be taken over by French, where the word *entrepreneur*, which English was to borrow a few decades later, was already well established. One precocious example which, at least at first sight, seems relevant in our context is the following from Charles Caseaux’ *Considérations sur les effets de l’impôt dans les différens modes de taxation*:⁹

[...] on doit toujours distinguer avec le même soin deux espèces de capitalistes ou propriétaires ; j’appelle les uns *capitalistes de la terre*, et les autres *capitalistes de l’industrie* : —les capitalistes de la terre ou territoriaux, sont non-seulement les propriétaires du grand capital de la terre mais ceux de toutes les espèces de capitaux

⁹Note that Caseaux lived in London at that time.

nécessaires pour tirer du grand capital, tout le produit dont il est susceptible : — les capitalistes industriels, ou de l'industrie, sont les différens propriétaires non-seulement du capital en argent qui met journellement le travailleur en action dans l'industrie comme il le met sur la terre, mais de tous ces autres capitaux appelés bâtimens, ustensiles, machines, *crédit* même etc. (Charles Caseaux, *Considérations sur les effets de l'impôt dans les différens modes de taxation*, London: Spilsbury 1794, p. 98)¹⁰

This use of *capitaliste* by Caseaux straightforwardly ties in with his Physiocratic background: the capitalist, for him, is not simply a money-lender but the person who provides capital in the broad sense of the word, that is, including both fixed (land, buildings, machinery, tools) and circulating (intermediate goods, operating expenses) capital. Jean Baptiste Say, in the fourth edition of his *Traité d'économie politique*, is well aware of the potential dangers of the polysemy of the term CAPITALIST and therefore carefully demarcates the concept 'capitalist' from that of 'entrepreneur':

CAPITALISTE ; est celui qui possède un *capital* et qui le fait valoir par lui-même, ou bien le prête, moyennant un *intérêt*, à l'*entrepreneur d'industrie* qui le fait valoir, et dès lors en *consomme* le *service* et en retire les *profits*. [...] Un entrepreneur d'*industrie agricole* est *cultivateur* lorsque la terre lui appartient ; *fermier* lorsqu'il la loue. Un entrepreneur d'*industrie manufacturière* est un *manufacturier*. Un entrepreneur d'*industrie commerciale* est un *négociant*. Ils ne sont *capitalistes* que lorsque le *capital*, ou une portion du capital dont ils se servent, leur appartient ; ils sont alors à la fois *capitalistes* et *entrepreneurs*. (Jean Baptiste Say, *Traité d'économie politique*, 4th edition, Paris: Deterville 1819, vol. 2, pp. 456, 469)¹¹

Despite Say's efforts at clarifying the meaning of CAPITALIST, some of his French compatriots yielded to the new English semantics, using *capitaliste* in lieu of *entrepreneur* or *patron* 'master' and opposing it with *ouvrier* or *travailleur* 'worker'. The English usage may have crept into the French language through translations such as the following:

Nouveau système d'association entre les petits **capitalistes** et les ouvriers, proposé par l'auteur (Babbage, Charles *Traité sur l'économie des machines et des manufactures*. Traduit de l'anglais par Éd. Biot. Paris : Bachelier 1833, p. xiv)

¹⁰[one always has to distinguish carefully two types of capitalists or owners; I call the first one *landed capitalists*, and the other *manufacturing capitalists*: —the landed capitalists are not only the owners of the important capital of the land but also of all kinds of capital necessary for deriving from the land all the produce it can yield: —the manufacturing capitalists are owners not only of the money that makes workers become active in the factory as it does on the land, but of all the other capitals called buildings, tools, machines, even *loans*, etc.]

¹¹[CAPITALIST: one who possesses capital and puts it to use himself or lends it to an entrepreneur on interest who then consumes its service and reaps the profit made. [...] An entrepreneur in *agriculture* is called a *farmer* if he owns the land, a *tenant* if he rents it. An entrepreneur in *industry* is called a *manufacturer*. An entrepreneur in trade is a *merchant*. They are only *capitalists* if they own the *capital*, or part of the capital they use; in that case, they are at the same time *capitalists* and *entrepreneurs*.]

Les marchandises étant le produit du capital et du travail, sont la propriété commune du **capitaliste** et du travailleur (ici ouvrier). (*Contes de Miss Harriet Martineau sur l'économie politique. Traduits de l'anglais par B. Maurice. La Haye : Vervloet 1834, p. 179*)

From the mid-1830s onwards, this new usage also became quite frequent in texts written by French authors and was to establish itself alongside the more restrictive traditional use (respectively senses II.A and II.B in the *TLFi*):

Maintenant cherchons la loi qui détermine le taux des profits. Cette loi devra avoir un rapport intime avec celles des salaires, car le **capitaliste** et le travailleur se partagent le même produit. (*Journal général de l'Instruction publique, nouvelle série, vol. 7, nr. 95 (1838), p. 1005 [Pellegrino Rossi]*)

Il s'agissait de la grande question de la lutte établie entre le **capitaliste** et le salarié, entre l'entrepreneur et l'ouvrier, de la question du paupérisme enfin. (*Mélanges Religieux, vol. 1, nr. 21, 11 juin 1841, p. 331*)

Malheureusement la question du salaire se compliqua de celle de la jouissance de la case et du terrain en dépendant, et, ainsi enchevêtrées, elles donnèrent lieu aux plus grandes difficultés entre le **capitaliste** et le travailleur. (Milliroux, Félix *Demerary, transition de l'esclavage à la liberté. Paris: Fournier 1843, p. 31*)

It is easy to see that the rise of the 'entrepreneur' sense of CAPITALIST goes hand in hand with the progress made by the Industrial Revolution, where France followed England with a certain time lag. It was the Industrial Revolution that provided capitalists with new opportunities to put their wealth to use by engaging in industrial activities, instead of lending money on interest or speculating on sovereign debt or the shares of trading companies. This new opposition between capitalists and workers will be of crucial importance for the further fate of our word family from the mid-19th century onwards.

From a linguistic point of view, this second semantic change of CAPITALIST is another example of a shift of emphasis that took place within a complex concept, mirroring changes that had previously occurred in the extra-linguistic world. Examples such as these make it clear that what we call "semantic" change in historical linguistics cannot be described on the basis of a minimalist semantics as conceived by the structuralists and other semanticists, but needs to take into account concepts in all their encyclopedic richness. It should also be mentioned here that the rise of the 'entrepreneur' sense led to a decrease in transparency of CAPITALIST, since the new technical sense of CAPITAL on which it was based, introduced by the Physiocrats and focusing on land, buildings, machinery, raw materials and intermediate goods more than solely money, had not become familiar to the speech community at large. The relationship between base and derivative, which had been quite transparent in the 'monied man' sense, thereby became somewhat obscured for ordinary speakers.

4 CAPITALISM

Throughout the 17th century and most of the 18th century, the noun CAPITALIST was an “only child”, pertaining to a word family with only two members, CAPITAL and CAPITALIST. At the beginning of the 19th century, however, this nuclear family started expanding in several directions. With CAPITALISM, a little brother was born, and CAPITALIST itself brought into the world an adjectival progeny, as we will see in Section 5. At the same time, complex incestuous relations developed between CAPITALISM and CAPITALIST, both in their nominal and adjectival uses. In this section, we will follow the development of CAPITALISM from its obscure beginnings to its establishment as one of the key notions of modern economic and political discourse in the mid-19th century.

4.1 CAPITALISM ‘condition of being rich’ (1753): a ghost word?

Dauzat (1972) claimed that French *capitalisme* was used as early as 1753 in the *Encyclopédie* with the meaning ‘état de celui qui est riche’.¹² He was followed on this point by the *TLFi*, while Braudel’s search for the text alluded to by Dauzat yielded no result: “Le texte invoqué reste introuvable.”¹³ (1979, vol. 2, p. 205). I could not find it either in the electronic version of the *Encyclopédie* that we have at our disposal nowadays.¹⁴ It is difficult to imagine that Dauzat should have invented his early first attestation, but something must have gone wrong. In fact, neither can the French word be found with Google Books in the entire second half of the 18th century.

However, this latter source provides one isolated early attestation of German *Kapitalismus*, a clearly jocular occasionalism from Itzehoe’s *Komische Romane* (Göttingen: Dieterich 1787, vol. 4, p. 304), in a text full of somewhat contrived neologisms. It seems to express very much the same sense as the one indicated by Dauzat for French: “Der Redakteur dieser Papiere, der, wie aus allen seinen Schreibereyen hervorgeht, sich voll tiefer Ehrerbietung gegen jegliches Menschengesicht fühlt, das nur halbwege mit dem Stempel der Vornehmigkeit und des Kapitalismus gemarket ist, sieht sich hier in großer Verlegenheit.”¹⁵ Since there are no other examples for German either until around 1840, it is best to leave this potential proto-use of CAPITALISM as a riddle for future research and turn to its first appearance in the 19th century.

4.2 CAPITALISME ‘high finance’ (ca. 1810)

At the time of the French Revolution, the noun *capitaliste* had acquired distinctly negative overtones, referring to individuals who had enriched themselves in the political and economic turmoil of those years, to the detriment of the general good (see Höfer 1986). We should keep this background in mind in order to understand the following passage,

¹² [condition of being rich]

¹³ [The text alluded to is nowhere to be found]

¹⁴ Cf. <http://portail.atilf.fr/encyclopedie/>.

¹⁵ [The editor of these papers who, as can be seen in all his writings, feels deference for any human face that somehow expresses high rank and capitalism, faces great embarrassment here.]

written at the moment when Napoleon had reached the climax of his power (around 1810) and drawn from a letter addressed to a statesman by an “agent observateur” whose name is not disclosed:

Mais qui [sic] dire de cette puissance nouvelle du **Capitalisme**, qui née du commerce qu'elle ruine, a succédé avec toute son immoralité, à la puissance si morale de la fructification du sol qu'elle opprime en détournant ses capitaux ? de cette puissance qui sacrifie l'avenir au présent, et le présent à l'individualité, cette lèpre contemporaine. Cette puissance égoïste, cosmopolite, qui s'empare de tout, ne produit rien et n'est infiniment liée qu'à elle-même ; souveraine des souverains qui ne peuvent sans elle ni faire la guerre ni demeurer en paix ; et qui s'enrichit également de leur prospérité et de leur ruine, des biens du peuple qu'elle partage, de leurs maux qu'elle accroît ? (Alphonse de Beauchamp, *Mémoires tirés des papiers d'un homme d'État*. Paris: Michaud 1836, vol. 11, p. 46)¹⁶

The ‘high finance’ sense of *capitalisme*, however, does not seem to have had a wide circulation. We meet it again in 1822 in Georges Laurent Aubert du Petit-Thouars’ *Toujours la guerre au cadastre français*, where it is used as antonym of *propriété*, designating a society dominated by rentiers rather than the landowning class:

Deux individus, l'un capitaliste et l'autre propriétaire, ont chacun vingt-cinq mille livres de rente ; [...]. Ainsi la propriété, seul et véritable soutien des monarchies, perd tous les jours en France de son ascendant au profit du *capitalisme* qui de sa nature tend toujours au républicanisme : chaque jour nous le prouve. (Georges Laurent Aubert du Petit-Thouars, *Toujours la guerre au cadastre français*, Paris: Trouvé 1822, p. 42)¹⁷

Significantly, the word is written in italics in order to highlight its novelty. Our third example appears three years after the publication of Beauchamp’s work, in which the anonymous observer’s invective quoted above had been made public, in Pons Louis François de Villeneuve’s *De l’agonie de la France*:

Avec le malaise ou l’instabilité de la fortune privée, concorde le malaise encore plus pénétrant de la fortune sociale : et un mal nouveau, le **capitalisme**, insinuant et dangereux serpent, étouffe en ses plis et replis l’une et l’autre. [...] Autre et plus féconde proie est pour le **capitalisme** la fortune publique. Il en pompe les budgets

¹⁶[What should one say about this new power of capitalism, which arose from the commerce that it ruins and with all its immorality succeeded the highly moral power of agriculture that it oppresses by diverting its capital? About this power which sacrifices the future to the present, and the present to individualism, the leprosy of our days. This egoistical, cosmopolitan power that grabs everything, does not produce anything and is only infinitely tied to itself; sovereign of sovereigns, who cannot without it make war nor remain in peace; and that enriches itself both by their prosperity and their ruin, at the expense of the goods of the people that it divides up, of their troubles that it increases?]

¹⁷[Two individuals, a capitalist and a landowner, both have an income of 25,000 pounds; [...] In that way ownership, the only true support of monarchies, loses influence day by day to the benefit of *capitalism*, which by its very nature tends towards republicanism: each day proves this to be the case.]

par la rente ; il fait comme à son gré la paix ou la guerre. (Pons Louis François de Villeneuve, *De l'agonie de la France*, Paris: Perisse 1839, pp. 139-140)¹⁸

These three examples of *capitalisme* are still transparently tied to the old sense of the word *capitaliste*, referring to a very wealthy individual lending his money at interest or placing it in bonds or shares. What is less immediately obvious is the patterns of word formation by means of which this word came into being. Was it derived from *capitaliste* by affix substitution? Was it an independent derivation from *capital*? Nouns in *-isme*, at any rate, were already in use at that time for designating economic systems, witness *colbertisme* (1775, *TLF-Étym*) and *mercantilisme* (1809, *TLF-Étym*).¹⁹ Thus, from a chronological perspective, these words could have served as models for *capitalisme*. The corresponding nouns in *-iste*, *colbertiste* and *mercantiliste*, designated the supporters of the respective doctrine. Since *capitaliste* did not refer to a supporter, but to a profession or occupation, *capitalisme*, for semantic reasons, could not be derived by affix substitution according to a proportional analogy of the kind *colbertiste* : *colbertisme* = *capitaliste* : *x*. The more plausible solution, therefore, is to consider *capitalisme* to have been an independent derivation on the basis of *capital*, following the general pattern noun + *-isme* '(economic) system somehow related to N'.

4.3 CAPITALISM as the antonym of SOCIALISM

As we saw in Section 3.5, CAPITALIST acquired the sense 'entrepreneur' after having crossed the Channel (and the Atlantic), a sense that migrated back to France from the 1830s onwards, where it has cohabitated with the original sense ever since. *Capitaliste*, in that way, became the antonym of *ouvrier*, *travailleur* (both 'worker') and *prolétaire* 'proletarian', just like *capital* 'capital' had become the antonym of *travail* 'work'. This lexical opposition simply reflected an extra-linguistic phenomenon, namely the well-known social divide created by the Industrial Revolution. In the 1840s, French *capitalisme* was also attracted by this lexical field and thereby was converted into the standard designation of the new economic system characterized by the exploitation of workers in factories owned and often run by a small group of capitalists/entrepreneurs. Here are some of the first examples of this new sense, which are probably attributable to Louis Blanc:²⁰

Une lutte récemment engagée entre Lamartine et L. Blanc a donné naissance à un nouveau mot ; le capitalisme. Ce n'est pas au capital, s'écrie ce dernier, que nous avons déclaré la guerre, mais au capitalisme ; c'est-à-dire, sans doute, aux

¹⁸[The difficulties and instability of private fortunes matches the even greater difficulties of public fortune: and a new evil, capitalism, this insinuating and dangerous snake, suffocates in its folds the one and the other. (...) Another, even more fertile prey for capitalism is the public fortune. It sucks the budgets by means of government bonds; it makes war and peace as it pleases.]

¹⁹Similar formations from outside the economic sphere were already older; see *marianisme* (1665, *TLF-Étym*), *spinozisme* (1685, *TLF-Étym*), etc.

²⁰See already Silberner & Febvre (1940).

capitalistes. (*Mémoires de l'Académie royale des sciences, belles-lettres et arts de Lyon* 1, 1845, p. 282, n. 1)²¹

L'orateur compare la féodalité ancienne avec le capitalisme actuel. La féodalité protégeait du moins l'exploitation de la terre, et par conséquent le travail de l'ouvrier, tandis que le capitalisme exploite l'ouvrier lui-même. (*L'Ami de la religion* 138, 1848, p. 621)²²

In this new 'economic system' sense, *capitalisme* became the antonym of an alternative system where the workers themselves would own the capital that forms the basis of their activity. Avril, V. *Histoire philosophique du crédit* (Paris: Guillaumin 1849, vol. 1, p. 153) already explicitly opposed CAPITALISM and SOCIALISM: "la différence radicale qui sépare le capitalisme du socialisme".²³ *Socialisme* (1831, *TLFi*) had already been in use for more than a decade when *capitalisme* in this new sense appeared, and *communisme* (1840, *TLFi*) for a few years. Both may well have served as its immediate models.

The case of *capitalisme* in the sense discussed here aptly illustrates the complex factors that come into play in the creation and diffusion of a neologism. The *TLFi*'s statement that it is composed of a base *capital* and a suffix *-isme* is acceptable as a synchronic, though not particularly revealing, description of the word's internal makeup, but hardly qualifies as an etymology doing justice to the circumstances of the word's creation. At the outset, we have to admit that the lack of documentation does not yet allow us to gain full certainty about how it came into being, the most plausible scenario being the following: Assuming that the 'high finance' sense was known to the coiner, which seems likely, we should consider the process as one of semantic change, a conceptual adaptation of the 'high finance' sense to the new situation of capitalists acting themselves as entrepreneurs, and not just as financiers. From that perspective, the new lexical opposition with *socialisme* and *communisme* could be viewed either as a consequence of this conceptual change, or as its trigger. In fact, the relevant meaning of these two terms, namely an 'economic system where the means of production pertains to the workers or to society as a whole', called for a designation for the opposite concept of an economic system where the means of production was concentrated in the hands of a small group of wealthy individuals. Since this means of production was referred to technically as *capital* and the entrepreneurs had come to be called *capitalistes*, *capitalisme* was a natural choice. This reconstruction of the word's origin also neatly explains why the word was used with negative connotations right from the beginning: it was launched by the opponents of capitalism, while capitalists themselves and circles close to them used to call the then prevailing economic system *libéralisme* (*économie de marché* 'market economy' is of much more recent vintage). The transition from the 'high finance' sense to the 'economic system' sense was therefore essentially a process of conceptual rearrangement within an existing lexeme. Nevertheless, word formation also came into play, namely by

²¹[A quarrel that recently opposed Lamartine to L. Blanc has given rise to a new word, capitalism. It is not to capital, claims the latter, that we have declared war, but to capitalism; that is, no doubt, to capitalists.]

²²[The speaker compares feudalism with present-day capitalism. Feudalism at least protected the exploitation of the land, and hence the activity of the worker, while capitalism exploits the worker himself.]

²³[the radical difference that opposes capitalism and socialism]

licensing the pattern noun + *-isme* with the overall meaning ‘system somehow related to N’ (note that both *socialisme* and *communisme* have adjectival bases; therefore, strict proportional analogy with these two words would not suffice).

4.4 The further fate of CAPITALISM

The French neologism *capitalisme* in its ‘economic system’ sense had an immediate and resounding international success in the wake of the 1848 revolution. I will not describe here the diffusion of the term in different European languages,²⁴ but concentrate instead on its further development in French.

By a simple metonymic process, designations of systems and similar abstract entities are routinely taken to refer to the persons who represent or support the system. Such was also the case with *capitalisme*. The first example of Section 4.3 could already be interpreted in that sense. Here is a later and clearer example of this collective sense (Burg, Joseph *De la vie sociale...* Rixheim: Sutter 1885, p. 739): “Le capitalisme, dur et arrogant, coudoie le paupérisme, exaspéré et découragé.”²⁵

A more interesting conceptual change occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, academic circles began using the term not only to refer to the contemporary economic system, what we now call INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM, but also to economic systems of past times that, in their opinion, presented sufficient similarities with the contemporary system to be called CAPITALISM. Proto-capitalism was located in the Renaissance, in the Middle Ages, or even in Antiquity. This conceptual change, which was the result of conscious conceptual manipulation for scientific purposes, resulted in a more abstract concept of capitalism, freed from some of the more contingent aspects of 19th century industrial capitalism, as well as its negative overtones. In France, the historian Henri Hauser was the first to deal with the origins of capitalism in *Les Origines du capitalisme moderne en France* (Paris: Larose) in 1902. However, the international success of this scientific sense was certainly due to the publication, some months before, of Werner Sombart’s monumental *Der modern Kapitalismus* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot 1902). If Hauser had been inspired by Sombart, the new sense would have to be classified as a calque.

5 CAPITALIST going adjectival

CAPITALIST, as we saw in Section 3, started out as a noun, and it remained exclusively nominal until the end of the 18th century. It is at that time when French *capitaliste* developed adjectival uses that are still parts of the language. Three different adjectival senses must be distinguished: 1. ‘owning (a huge amount of) capital’, 2. ‘of capitalists’, and 3. ‘of capitalism’.

²⁴For German, see Hilger (1982).

²⁵[Capitalism, hard and arrogant, rubs shoulders with pauperism, exasperated and discouraged.]

5.1 *Capitaliste* adj. ‘owning (a huge amount of) capital’

As early as 1790, Charles-Nicolas Ducloz-Dufresnoy, in his *Observations sur l'état des finances*, quotes a “publiciste” called Cerruti who wrote:

On ne peut appauvrir la Capitale sans appauvrir les Provinces dont elle assemble, grossit, répartit et multiplie les richesses territoriales et industrielles.

Voilà la véritable idée d'une Capitale.

Voilà la véritable idée des Capitalistes.

Le **peuple Capitaliste** est composé de tous ceux qui par leur économie ou par leur activité, ont formé des trésors disponibles prêts à circuler, prêts à se reposer, prêts à se transformer en papier, prêts à se réaliser en terres. (Charles-Nicolas Ducloz-Dufresnoy, *Observations sur l'état des finances*, Paris: Clousier 1790, pp. 14-15)²⁶

In the first half of the 19th century this possessive use of *capitaliste* established itself in wider circles, as the following examples show:

l'aristocratie territoriale adoucit vis-à-vis des campagnes l'aristocratie **capitaliste** (Laborde, Alexandre de *Des aristocraties représentatives*. Paris: Le Normant 1814, p. 96)²⁷

comme s'il ne suffisait pas [...] d'un imprimeur **capitaliste** ou laborieux pour multiplier ces produits (*Revue encyclopédique*, t. 49, janvier-mars 1831, p. 452)²⁸

[la législation des Émigrés] a rendu le peuple propriétaire et la noblesse **capitaliste** (Lahaye de Cormenin, Louis-Marie de *Droit administratif*. Paris: Thorat 1840, t. 1, p. xxxvii)²⁹

La bourgeoisie moderne [...] forme une espèce d'aristocratie **capitaliste** et foncière, [...]. (Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph *Organisation du crédit et de la circulation*. Paris: Garnier 1848, p. 21)³⁰

Ce n'est pas la bourgeoisie qui est boursière, c'est la société tutta quanta qui veut être **capitaliste** en exploitant les éventualités des échanges. (Bianchini, Lodovico *La science du bien-être social*. Bruxelles: Librairie universelle 1857, p. 351)³¹

²⁶[One cannot make the capital poorer without making poorer the provinces whose agricultural and industrial wealth it assembles, increases, distributes and multiplies. / This is the true idea of a capital. / This is the true idea of capitalists. / The capitalist people is composed of all those who through their savings and activity have formed treasures ready to circulate, ready to lie idle, ready to be transformed into paper, ready to be realized as landed property.]

²⁷[the landed aristocracy makes the capitalist aristocracy more acceptable for the countryside]

²⁸[as if it were not enough [...] to have a well-capitalized or hard-working type-setter in order to multiply these products]

²⁹[[the legislation on emigrants] has turned the people into owners and the aristocracy into capitalists]

³⁰[The modern bourgeoisie [...] forms a kind of capitalist and landed aristocracy]

³¹[It is not the bourgeoisie who is crazy about the stock market, it is the entire society that wants to be capitalist by taking advantage of the opportunities of trading.]

From a linguistic point of view, the meaning ‘owning (a huge amount of) capital’ constitutes a case of noun-adjective conversion, the base being constituted by the noun *capitaliste* with the meaning ‘person owning (a huge amount of) capital’. This conversion pattern does not seem to have had any direct model among words in *-iste*, none of which had a possessive meaning, by the way, if we exclude obsolete *actioniste* ‘shareholder’, which was also of Dutch origin. As argued in Section 3.2, *capitaliste* should be classified as a marginal member of the agentive niche represented by words such as *aubergiste* ‘innkeeper’, *copiste* ‘copyist’, *ébéniste* ‘cabinetmaker’, *latiniste* ‘Latin scholar or student’, *psalmist* ‘psalmist’. Such nouns, however, do not seem to have developed adjectival uses (of the relevant kind), according to the information provided by the *TLFi*.³² The model must therefore be sought outside derivative patterns in *-iste*.

5.2 *Capitaliste* adj. ‘of capitalists’

The second adjectival sense – which, incidentally, the *TLFi* fails to mention – corresponds to a relational use referring to the corresponding noun *capitaliste*. Again, we find one early outlier in 1791, this time in a translation of Adam Smith’s *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* :

Lorsque ces compagnies [...] commerceront avec des capitaux réunis, et que chacun des membres a sa part dans le bénéfice commun ou dans la perte commune, en proportion des fonds qu’il y a mis ; on les appelle compagnies CAPITALISTES. (Adam Smith, *Recherches sur la nature et les causes de la richesse des nations*, translated by J. A. Roucher, Paris: Buisson 1791, vol. 4, p. 90)

This passage translates the following one from Smith’s original (I quote here from the 9th edition, where, as we can see, *joint stock company* corresponds to the translator’s *compagnie capitaliste*).

When they trade upon a joint stock, each member sharing in the common profit or loss in a proportion to his share in this stock, they are called joint stock companies. (Adam Smith, *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 9th edition, London: Strahan 1799, vol. 3, p. 110)

Compagnie capitaliste must therefore be considered to be a neologism created by the translator. The only other example provided by Google Books until the mid-19th century is the following, which is obviously inspired by the example just quoted:

La confection ou entretien d’un canal navigable qui ne peuvent guère être exécutés que par des **compagnies capitalistes**, sont des entreprises qui portent avec elles le privilège qui garantit aux entrepreneurs le bénéfice qu’ils doivent en retirer. (Roux,

³² Appositions such as *rabbin cabaliste* ‘cabalist rabbi’, *moine copiste* ‘monk copyist’, *ouvrier ébéniste* ‘cabinet worker’, etc. are classified as adjectival in the *TLFi*, but this is highly questionable. Some of the nouns quoted are indeed used as adjectives, but in a relational sense (e.g. *la tradition ébéniste* ‘the tradition of cabinet-making’, etc.).

Vital *De l'influence du gouvernement sur la prospérité du commerce*. Paris: Fayolle 1800, p. 257)³³

Overall, however, Rouchet's neologism did not catch on. The more common way throughout the 19th century of denominating a company composed of various capitalists in French was *compagnie de capitalistes* 'company of capitalists' or *société de capitalistes* 'society of capitalists', both amply attested since the time of the French Revolution.

On a larger scale, the relational sense 'of capitalists' only appears from the second half of the 19th century onwards. These examples, it seems, were independent from the use of *capitaliste* by Roucher in 1791 in the term *compagnie capitaliste*. It is not always easy to distinguish the relational sense 'of capitalists' from the sense 'of capitalism', since *capitalisme* can also be understood metonymically as the totality of capitalists. In the following list, I have chosen examples where reference to capitalists seems more plausible than to capitalism as an economic system.

[...] à fin de se délivrer de l'exploitation **capitaliste** et usuraire, comme ils se sont délivrés de la tyrannie monarchique et jesuitique (Eugène Sue, *Mystères du peuple*, 1851, vol. 2, p. 90, quoted in: *Archiv des Criminalrechts*. Neue Folge. Jahrgang 1851, p. 57)³⁴

Comme nous le disions hier, la conjuration **capitaliste**, l'alliance offensive et défensive du privilège contre le prolétariat est formée ; il y a entente cordiale entre tous ces hommes que nous supposons ennemis : [...]. (Proudhon, P.-J. *Mélanges. Articles de journaux 1848-1852*. Premier volume. Paris: Lacroix, Verboeckhoven & Cie 1868, p. 229)³⁵

la tyrannie **capitaliste** et mercantile (Colins, Jean Guillaume *L'économie politique source des révolutions et des utopies prétendues socialistes*. Paris: Librairie générale 1856, p. 56)³⁶

Ce sera donc bien une association ouvrière. — Ce sera une association **capitaliste** où [...] le travail sera subordonné au capital. (*Journal des économistes*, t. 15, juillet à septembre 1869, p. 172)³⁷

la classe **capitaliste** et la classe ouvrière [...] dans le milieu **capitaliste** (Marx, Karl *Le capital*. Tr. de J. Roy révisée par l'auteur. Paris: Lachatre 1872, pp. 248, 285)³⁸

³³[The building and maintenance of a shipping canal, which can hardly be undertaken but by a capitalist company, are enterprises that come with a privilege that guarantees the entrepreneurs the profit they can make on it.]

³⁴[in order to free themselves from capitalist and usurious exploitation, as they had freed themselves from monarchic and jesuitic tyranny]

³⁵[As we said yesterday, the capitalist conspiracy, the offensive and defensive alliance of the privilege against the proletariat already exists; there is an entente cordiale between all these men that we deemed enemies]

³⁶[the capitalist and mercantile tyranny]

³⁷[This will therefore indeed be an association of workers. — This will therefore indeed be a capitalist association where work will be subordinated to capital]

³⁸[the capitalist class and the working class (...) in capitalist circles]

Marx est donc bien loin d'appeler subjectivement le profit **capitaliste** un vol (*Revue internationale du socialisme rationnel*, t. 8, 1883, p. 147)³⁹

le député Rasseneur parlerait de "l'oppression **capitaliste** et de la revanche prolétarienne" (Bonnetain, Paul *emphL'Opium*. Paris: Charpentier 1886, p. 581)⁴⁰

l'avidité **capitaliste** contraint les mécaniciens des chemins de fer à effectuer des journées de travail de dix-huit et vingt heures (*La Revue socialiste*, t. 10, 1889, p. 685)⁴¹

la moyenne de la vie ouvrière est inférieure à la moyenne de la vie **capitaliste** (*La Réforme sociale*, t. 25, 1893, p. 467)⁴²

incapables [...] d'opposer aux **exigences capitalistes** une résistance efficace (*La Société nouvelle*, t. 2, 1894, p. 448)⁴³

These examples should suffice to prove the existence of the relational sense 'of capitalists' from the mid-19th century onwards. This relational use followed a pattern of conversion turning personal nouns into relational adjectives that was already quite well established by the middle of the 19th century, even with nouns in *-iste* (see Rainer to appear). Outside nouns in *-iste*, we find the relational use of *ouvrier* in collocations such as *association ouvrière* 'workers' association' and *classe ouvrière* 'working class; lit. workers' class' as early as 1802 in the *TLFi*. The same relational sense is also attested in the *TLFi* for *prolétaire* (in the example from Bonnetain above, though, the synonymous suffixal derivative *proletarien* is used). Since the noun *capitaliste* by the mid-19th century had become the antonym of *ouvrier* and *prolétaire*, it could well be that its relational use was induced by the relational use of these two antonyms. There is no need to choose between these two hypotheses: the influence of *ouvrier* and *prolétaire* may well have worked in tandem with the pattern converting nouns in *-iste* into relational adjectives.

5.3 *Capitaliste* adj. 'of capitalism'

The relational sense 'of capitalism' was also established in the French language in the middle of the 19th century. As we saw in Section 4, *capitalisme* in the relevant sense was itself a neologism at that time. Here are some early examples in which the sense 'of capitalists' definitively seems less adequate than the sense 'of capitalism'.

Le système **capitaliste** a été établi en France sous des conditions bien moins propices (Sagra, Ramon de la *Révolution économique*. Paris: Capelle 1849, p. 81)⁴⁴

le plus grand écrivain de vos théories **capitalistes** (Avril, V. *Histoire philosophique du crédit*. Paris: Guillaumin 1849, p. 69)⁴⁵

³⁹ [Marx is therefore far from subjectively calling capitalist profit theft]

⁴⁰ [MP Rasseneur was said to speak about "capitalist oppression and proletarian revenge"]

⁴¹ [capitalist greed obliges the train drivers to work for 18 or 20 hours]

⁴² [the lifetime of a worker on average is shorter than a capitalist's lifetime]

⁴³ [unable to counter the demands of capitalists with an efficient opposition]

⁴⁴ [The capitalist system has been established in France under much less favourable conditions]

⁴⁵ [the greatest writer on your capitalist theories]

la négation du régime capitaliste, agioteur et gouvernemental, qu'a laissé après elle la première révolution (Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph *Idée générale de la révolution au XIXe siècle*. Paris: Garnier 1851, p. 107)⁴⁶

Le résultat sera donc un accroissement de population dans le pays capitaliste B. (De Laveleye, Emile *Etudes historiques et critiques sur le principe et les conséquences de la liberté du commerce international*. Paris: Guillaumin 1857, p. 88)⁴⁷

From a present-day perspective, this usage seems straightforward, since most nouns in *-isme* referring to ideologies and similar notions are flanked by a relational adjective in *-iste*: *marxisme/marxiste*, *racisme/raciste*, etc. Morphologically, the relationship between such pairs is one of affix substitution. What is crucial in our context is whether this relation of affix substitution was already operative in the middle of the 19th century. The *TLFi* does not provide reliable evidence bearing on this question, since in most entries a date of first attestation is only given for the nominal use of *-iste*. However, relevant examples are not difficult to come by. In many cases, one may waver between the interpretations 'of Xists' and 'of Xism': "mouvement anarchiste" (d'Ivernois, Francis *Les cinq promesses*. Londres: Cox 1802, p. 149), for example, could be glossed equally naturally as 'movement of anarchists' and 'movement inspired by anarchism', "journal légitimiste" (*Procès de M. Gisquet contre Le Messager*. Paris: Pagnerre 1839, p. 1) as 'newspaper of/for legitimists' and 'newspaper inspired by/defending legitimism'. In "une thèse matérialiste" (Gibon, H. *Fragments philosophiques*. Paris: Hachette 1836, p. 69), however, 'a dissertation inspired by materialism' would seem to be the only reasonable gloss.

We can therefore safely assume that the 'of capitalism' sense could be derived, by the middle of the 19th century, from *capitalisme* by means of affix substitution. For the sake of completeness, however, let us still check an alternative possibility which some might wish to entertain. As we have seen, CAPITALIST already spilled over to the Anglo-Saxon world at the end of the 18th century and since then it has been a much-used term in the English language. Could it not be, therefore, that the relational sense in question was simply due to a calque from English? In order to answer this question, let us observe the dates of first attestation⁴⁸ of the English collocations corresponding to those quoted above for French: *capitalist country* (1861), *capitalist system* (1862), *capitalist regime* (1863), *capitalist theories* (after 1900). As we can see, the English collocations follow the French ones by a lapse of time of some 10 years. It may therefore safely be assumed that English imitated French, not vice versa.

⁴⁶[the negation of the capitalist, speculative and governmental regime left over from the first revolution]

⁴⁷[The result will therefore be an increase in population in the capitalist country B.]

⁴⁸Using the first book allowing a full view of the text, front matter included, in Google Books.

6 A 20th-century codicil: CAPITALIST ‘supporter of capitalism’

As we saw in Section 3, in the middle of the 19th century, the ‘entrepreneur’ sense had been added to the ‘monied man’ sense. In the 20th century, a third sense was added to these two, namely that of ‘supporter of capitalism’, which has largely superseded the other two. In the second half of the 19th century, CAPITALISM had evolved from a name characterizing an economic system to that of an ideology. Especially after the international success of Marxism, CAPITALISM became the antonym of COMMUNISM, which could also denote both an economic system and an ideology. Due to this status of CAPITALISM as an antonym of COMMUNISM, CAPITALIST followed COMMUNIST in designating a person that embraced the ideology expressed by the corresponding word in -ISM. The following example illustrates this last transformation of CAPITALIST with French *capitaliste*: “Outre la question de l’attitude du Chrétien, un point irrite particulièrement André Gide ; c’est le reproche qui lui est fait d’être à la fois **capitaliste** et communiste et il s’ingénie à retourner l’accusation contre les chrétiens.”⁴⁹ (Fillon, Amélie *François Mauriac*. Paris: Société Française d’Éditions Littéraires et Techniques 1936, p. 330). What the author wanted to say here is that Gide was accused of having embraced the ideologies of capitalism and communism at the same time, not that he was a financier, investor, or entrepreneur. In this latest sense one can even be a capitalist without possessing any money or property.

From a linguistic point of view, this last transformation of CAPITALIST is to be regarded as a case of affix substitution on the basis of CAPITALISM, as the gloss ‘supporter of capitalism’ suggests. What is less easy to tell is whether this affix substitution first took place in French or in some other European language, notably English or German. The question is almost impossible to answer since at that time these three languages were already in perfect harmony concerning CAPITALIST and CAPITALISM as well as the -ISM/-IST pattern. In French, for example, this kind of affix substitution could base itself on a sizeable number of potential models: an *anarchiste* was a supporter of *anarchisme*, a *communiste* a supporter of *communisme*, etc. It is worth mentioning that, from a historical perspective, the derivative in *-iste* tended to occur earlier than that in *-isme*, but at some point in time the names of the supporters came to be reinterpreted as dependent on the names of the doctrines.

7 Conclusion

After having accompanied CAPITALIST and CAPITALISM in their unfolding since the 17th century, it is time to draw some general conclusions about the relationship between word history and word formation and to highlight the role of the lexeme in this affair.

⁴⁹[Apart from the question of the attitude of the Christian, one point in particular irritates André Gide: the reproach that is addressed to him of embracing at the same time the ideology of capitalism and communism, and he is at pains to return the charge against the Christians.]

As we have seen, semantic change, borrowing and word formation have all substantially contributed to the evolution of these two key words of our politico-economic vocabulary. And in each of these three modes of lexical enrichment the lexeme has been seen to play a key role. What is traditionally called *semantic change* in reality should better be called *conceptual change*, as Andreas Blank convincingly argues in his 1997 book. The semantic changes observed in the history of CAPITALIST and CAPITALISM affected holistic concepts tied to lexemes, in close interaction with changes in extra-linguistic reality, not affixes or roots. Borrowing also repeatedly played a role: in the migration of CAPITALIST from the United Provinces to France, from France to the Anglo-Saxon world and back again, to mention just those involving French. Now, calquing is a process that is also located at the level of the lexeme. It can be conceived of as an analogical process where model and copy are located in different languages (though in the same speaker's mind). If seen in this light, calquing is close to word formation, which is also best conceived of as an analogical, pattern-based process. This is particularly obvious in the case of affix substitution, which played a prominent role in derivatives with -IST and -ISM.

We have also seen that a full understanding of the evolution of our two words requires taking into consideration the structure of the lexicon at the relevant points in time. A lacuna in the lexicon may induce semantic change, as Passow already surmised in relation to the rise of the 'entrepreneur' sense of English *capitalist*. The absence of a specific word for 'entrepreneur' around 1800 may have prompted the English speakers to adapt the meaning of *capitalist*, originally referring to a rich money lender or investor, in order to fill this empty slot. Another case in point may have been the introduction of the 'economic system' sense of French *capitalisme* in the 1840s, which filled the need for an antonym of *socialisme* and *communisme*. Similarly, the specific configuration of a semantic field may induce change, as we have seen in the case of the opposition 'entrepreneur' vs. 'worker', which may have helped to establish the relational use of French *capitaliste* in the 'of capitalists' sense, providing a ready counterpart for the already established relational use of *ouvrier* and *prolétaire*. The same search for formal/semantic parallelism was probably also operative in the rise of the 'supporter' sense of French *capitaliste* in the 20th century. These latter processes can be accounted for straightforwardly as proportional analogies.

At many points in our discussion we have seen that the French historical dictionaries that we have at our disposal, notably the *TLFi*, only provide a shaky basis for detailed investigations into the history of word-formation patterns in post-Renaissance French. In some sense, the *TLFi* is a marvel of a dictionary, second probably only to the *OED*. Nevertheless, it is obvious in many entries that the lexicographers were overwhelmed by the wealth of raw data at their disposal and hampered by the lack of a sound theory of word formation (or an inconsistent application of the theory, if they had one). The relationship between words in *-isme* and the corresponding relational adjectives in *-iste*, for example, is not given a separate etymological treatment but identified with that of nouns in *-iste*, which are themselves handled in different ways in different entries:

Anarchiste: "Dér. du rad. de *anarchie**; suff. *-iste**"

Animiste: "Dér. du rad. du lat. *anima (âme*)*; suff. *-iste**"

Colbertiste: “du rad. de *colbertisme*, suff. *-iste*”

Cubiste: “Dér. de *cube**; suff. *-iste*”

Fétichiste: “Dér. de *fétiche** formé sur le modèle de *fétichisme**; suff. *-iste*”

Piétisme: “Dér. de *piétiste**; suff. *-isme*”

Quiétiste: “Dér. de *quietisme** par substitution du suff. *-iste** à *-isme*”

In a proper etymological treatment, each step in the history of a word, which roughly corresponds to a word's subentries in a well-ordered dictionary, must be provided with a separate etymological explanation, and each explanation should explicitly name the change according to a catalogue of standard mechanisms of lexical change. In the case of semantic change and borrowing, a list of universal mechanisms such as *calque*, metaphor, and metonymy will generally be sufficient, though some of these mechanisms also show language-specific patterns that should then be named explicitly.⁵⁰ For word formation, by contrast, it is vital to make sure that the pattern alluded to in a certain etymological explanation was productive at the moment in question.

The rather glaring shortcomings of the *TLFi* in that respect are now being emended by the *TLF-Étym* project, to which I am happy to contribute from time to time. Word histories in the *TLF-Étym* style are a necessary prerequisite for a history of word formation in modern French,⁵¹ which constitutes a great desideratum. At the same time, detailed studies on the history of single word-formation patterns would yield important contributions to historical lexicography. The two fields are so intimately intertwined, that they of necessity must evolve in tandem.

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⁵⁰For example, in French or Spanish the name of the central product can be used to designate the respective economic sector or activity, while this is not an established metonymic pattern in German or English, witness *travailler dans la tomate* / *trabajar en el tomate* vs. **in der Tomate arbeiten* / **to work in the tomato*.

⁵¹On French *-isme*, see Roché (2007). For Spanish, Muñoz Armijo (2012).

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