

Reading Capital
The Complete Edition

Louis Althusser,
Étienne Balibar,
Roger Establet,
Pierre Macherey
and Jacques
Rancière

Reading Capital: The Complete Edition

By Louis Althusser

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Originally published in 1965, *Reading Capital* is a landmark of French thought and radical theory, reconstructing Western Marxism from its foundations. Louis Althusser, the French Marxist philosopher, maintained that Marx's project could only be revived if its scientific and revolutionary novelty was thoroughly divested of all traces of humanism, idealism, Hegelianism and historicism. In order to complete this critical rereading, Althusser and his students at the École normale supérieure ran a seminar on *Capital*, re-examining its arguments, strengths and weaknesses in detail, and it was out of those discussions that this book was born.

Previously only available in English in highly abridged form, this edition, appearing fifty years after its original publication in France, restores chapters by Roger Establet, Pierre Macherey and Jacques Rancière. It includes a major new introduction by Étienne Balibar.

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Editorial Review

Review

“One of the central texts of French structuralism (and of modern Marxism as well). Its critique of humanism and what Althusser called historicism remains relevant and ought to be renewed in our time.”

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“The complete edition of *Reading Capital* returns us to the excitement of the book’s first publication. It not only makes available some remarkable essays not included in previous English editions but also allows us to see clearly how the essays emerged from the dynamic interactions of a university seminar.”

—**Michael Hardt, co-author of the *Empire* trilogy**

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About the Author

Louis Althusser (1918–90) taught philosophy for many years at the École normale supérieure in Paris. He was a leading intellectual in the French Communist Party.

Étienne Balibar is Anniversary Chair at Kingston University and Professor Emeritus at the Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense.

Jacques Rancière is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris VIII.

Pierre Macherey is Emeritus Professor at the University of Lille III.

Roger Establet is Emeritus Professor at the University of Provence.

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