

## The Meaning and Genesis of the Concept of Reading in Louis Althusser: A Corpus-Based Approach

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**Abstract.** This study explores the genesis and conceptualization of “reading” in Louis Althusser’s philosophy through a corpus-based analysis of his works and the writings of key intellectual predecessors. Althusser redefined reading as a critical, transformative act, emphasizing epistemological and ideological ruptures within texts, but in the same time engaging with conspiratorial, distrusting and unverifiable interpretations of texts. His approach relies more heavily on Lacan’s psychoanalytic methods, Bachelard’s dual reading framework, Foucault’s discourse analysis, and Cavaillès’ emphasis on scientific autonomy, in contrast to Canguilhem and Gueroult, whom he also references as “masters of reading” but engages with less directly. Althusser’s reading aimed to uncover hidden theoretical structures within Marx’s texts, imposing on them contemporary epistemological concerns. By leveraging computational corpus analysis, the research reveals how Althusser’s critical reading trying to balance between fidelity to the text and philosophical creativity, but fails to acknowledge autonomy of text’s lexis and semantics from reader’s concerns.

**Keywords:** critical reading; post-critical reading; corpus-based analysis; Louis Althusser; text interpretation.

### ES El significado y la génesis del concepto de lectura en Louis Althusser: un enfoque basado en corpus

**Resumen.** Este estudio explora la génesis y la conceptualización de la “lectura” en la filosofía de Louis Althusser mediante un análisis basado en corpus de sus obras y de los escritos de los principales predecesores intelectuales. Althusser redefinió la lectura como un acto crítico y transformador, enfatizando las rupturas epistemológicas e ideológicas presentes en los textos, pero, al mismo tiempo, se involucraba con interpretaciones conspirativas, desconfiadas e inverificables de los mismos. Su enfoque se apoya en los métodos psicoanalíticos de Lacan, en el marco de lectura dual de Bachelard, en el análisis discursivo de Foucault y en el énfasis en la autonomía científica de Cavaillès, en contraste con Canguilhem y Gueroult, a quienes también menciona como “maestros de la lectura” pero con quienes se relaciona de forma menos directa. La lectura de Althusser tenía como objetivo descubrir las estructuras teóricas ocultas en los textos de Marx, imponiéndoles preocupaciones epistemológicas contemporáneas. Mediante el uso del análisis computacional de corpus, la investigación revela cómo la lectura crítica de Althusser intentaba equilibrar la fidelidad al texto con la creatividad filosófica, pero no logró reconocer la autonomía del léxico y la semántica del texto respecto a las inquietudes del lector.

**Palabras clave:** lectura crítica; lectura post-crítica; análisis basado en corpus; Louis Althusser; interpretación de textos.

**Sumario:** 1. Introduction; 2. Literature Review: Critical and Post-Critical Reading; 3. Methodology; 4. The aim of the article; 5. Main text; 5.1. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Althusser’s article “From Capital to the Philosophy of Marx”; 5.2. The analysis of the lexeme of reading within Althusser’s corpus; 5.3. The analysis of the lexeme of reading within Lacan’s corpus; 5.4. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Foucault’s corpus; 5.5. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Bachelard’s corpus; 5.6. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Canguilhem’s corpus; 5.7. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Cavaillès’ corpus; 5.8. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Gueroult’s corpus; 6. Conclusion; 7. Bibliographical references; Appendix.

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## 1. Introduction

Reading is more than engaging with text – it is a transformative act that shapes our ethics, politics, and perception of the world (Ekegren, 2002). It mediates our relationship with others, with history, and with humanity's memory. Constantly requiring decisions – what to read, how, and why – it spans a spectrum from critical to empathetic, analytical to affective, and human to computational (Best and Marcus, 2009; Moretti, 2013). Reading not only meets expectations but also surprises, altering the reader in return. It grants access to the exo-intentional archive of culture and thought, inscribed in texts (Stiegler, 2018, pp. 86–89), and is both an appropriation and continuation of this heritage.

This study investigates the emergence of “reading” as a philosophical concept in the work of Louis Althusser, particularly his 1965 essay “From Capital to Marx’s Philosophy” in *Reading “Capital”*. While Simone Weil (2015) reflected on reading earlier, it was Althusser who conceptualized it as a theoretical practice. We analyze Althusser’s writings and those of his key intellectual references – Lacan, Foucault, Bachelard, Canguilhem, Cavallès, and Gueroult – to trace how “reading” evolved into a conceptual tool. Corpus analysis will illuminate the semantic patterns and intertextual dynamics that shaped this transformation.

## 2. Literature Review: Critical and Post-Critical Reading

This study adopts a typology of reading practices as the basis for interpreting its findings. Contemporary scholarship underscores the importance of distinguishing between modes of reading, particularly the divide between critical and post-critical approaches (Felski, 2015; Latour, 2004; Sedgwick, 2020). Critical reading seeks to expose hidden meanings, internal contradictions, and repressed structures within the text. It positions the reader as a detective, uncovering subtexts and revealing ideological distortions. While this mode has historically served emancipatory goals – highlighting inequality and mechanisms of power – it often leads to a repetitive cynicism that isolates the reader and forecloses generative engagement. –

In contrast, post-critical reading embraces the text’s multiplicity and its embeddedness within broader cultural, material, and intertextual networks. Rather than reducing the text to suspicion or contradiction, this approach foregrounds affective, relational, and creative potentials. It fosters empathy, trust, and collaborative meaning-making, offering pathways toward solidarity and collective action. Post-critical reading shifts the reader’s stance from critique to care, expanding awareness of human and non-human entanglements and reimagining the text as a site for dialogue and invention.

Against this backdrop, the study investigates whether Althusser and the thinkers he references aligned more closely with the critical or post-critical conception of reading.

## 3. Methodology

To investigate Althusser’s conception of reading and that of his intellectual predecessors, this study employs tools from corpus linguistics – a field that bridges computational analysis and philosophy. Corpus linguistics enables both quantitative and qualitative exploration of large textual datasets through curated collections of natural language texts, revealing semantic patterns that traditional close reading may overlook (Bluhm, 2016; Caton, 2020; Petrovich, 2024).

Corpus-based philosophy integrates techniques such as frequency lists, concordances, collocations (within a  $\pm 5$ -word window), and clusters to uncover conceptual structures while reducing interpretive bias (Sinclair, 1991; Stefanowitsch, 2020). This method enhances the empirical grounding of philosophical inquiry by aligning linguistic patterns with social and conceptual dynamics.

The methodological process involves constructing a corpus, identifying key terms, generating and analyzing concordances and collocations, and classifying their relevance according to a theoretical framework (McKinnon, 1977; Meunier & Forest, 2003; Alfano, 2019). This approach not only clarifies conceptual meanings but also situates them within broader philosophical discourse, offering a rigorous and innovative pathway for interpreting complex ideas.

As part of this study, we will first analyze the article “*From Capital to the Philosophy of Marx*”, followed by Althusser’s entire corpus, and subsequently the corpora of works available to us by Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, Jean Cavallès, and Martial Gueroult. The analysis will focus on the lexeme of reading (*relecture, lecteur, lecteurs, lecture, lectures, lire, lis, lisait, lisant, lise, lises, lisez, lisent, lisible, lisibles, lisons, lu, relire, relu, lisible, lisibles, lisibilité, relisant, relis, relise, relisent, relises, relisez, relisons, relue*), and, in its absence, synonyms, hyperonyms-hyponyms, metonyms, and other related terms. Additionally, we will examine key theoretical terms of high frequency, such as “method,” with the aim of uncovering or constructing the concept of “reading” (Cabre 1999; L’Homme 2020; Maynard and Ananiadou 2008). Concordance and collocation generation was performed using AntConc 4.1.3 (Anthony 2022). Text lemmatization, which optimized collocation generation by reducing all words to their dictionary

forms, was conducted with TagAnt (Anthony 2024). The corpus of works and a detailed description of the search operations performed on the philosophers' corpora can be found in the Appendix.

#### 4. The aim of the article

The aim of this article is to conduct a corpus-based analysis of the works of Louis Althusser and his predecessors in relation to the lexeme of reading. The study seeks to determine which elements of critical and postcritical reading are inherent in Althusser's understanding and concept of reading, as well as those of his predecessors. It further aims to uncover how the initial conceptualization of the notion of reading was realized in philosophy and to identify which predecessor had the greatest influence on this conceptualization.

#### 5. Main text

##### 5.1. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Althusser's article "From Capital to the Philosophy of Marx"

In the article "From Capital to the Philosophy of Marx", Althusser defines reading as one of the "simplest gestures of existence, which connect humans to their works" ("*des gestes les plus 'simples' de l'existence... ces gestes qui mettent les hommes en rapport avec leurs œuvres*") (Althusser 1973, p. 12). Why did he feel the need to turn reading into a distinct concept? The philosopher explains this by noting that, in the 20th century, other gestures of existence – such as seeing, listening, and speaking – had become objects of study, with the latter two referring to psychoanalysis and the former to the research of Michel Foucault and Georges Canguilhem. Althusser refers to Georges Canguilhem, Michel Foucault, Gaston Bachelard, and Jean Cavailles as "masters of reading works of knowledge" ("*maîtres à lire les œuvres du savoir*") (Althusser 1973, p. 13). Jacques Lacan is mentioned in the context of re-reading Sigmund Freud (Althusser 1973, p. 13). This creates a necessity to analyze the works of these predecessors of Althusser's effort to conceptualize the notion of reading within philosophy.

Althusser characterizes his reading as "philosophical reading," which interrogates the object of knowledge in the text, the relationship between discourse (the level of scientific development and problematics) and the object of knowledge in the text, the discourse-object unity (*l'unité discours-objet*), and the specificity of the object in *Capital* relative to the objects of classical political economy and Marx's earlier works. This constitutes the culpability of his reading (Althusser 1973, pp. 10–13). At the same time, other forms of reading *Capital* – logical, historical, and economic – take this object for granted, falsely considering their readings to be innocent.

Consequently, "philosophical" reading 1) reduces the theoretical text to its epistemological aspect (the question of knowledge production) and 2) assumes the operation of a hidden logic of knowledge production beneath the surface of the text.

Althusser argues that Marx read the texts of political economists – such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo – in a similar manner. Marx developed two principles of reading: retroactive and symptomatic. The retroactive reading identified the gaps and absences in the texts of political economists from the perspective of Marx's current theory (Smith does not see what he does not see). The symptomatic principle, on the other hand, captured the theoretical achievements of the political economists that were not explicitly conceptualized by them in theoretical terms (e.g., "value of labor" versus "value of labor power") – Smith does not see what he does see. These theoretically unarticulated yet present elements within the text indicate, in Althusser's view, that classical political economy created an object of knowledge that could not be perceived within its own discourse, problematics, or level of scientific development, but which became visible only through the lens of a more advanced discourse – Marx's. Classical political economists provided an answer (the labor theory of value) but lacked the question to which this answer corresponded (e.g., what constitutes the "value of labor?") (Althusser 1973, pp. 16, 19–20, 28). Smith's text, according to Althusser, is split into two layers: one rooted in the problematics of classical political economy and the other prefiguring the Marxist problematic. The second text – Marx's text – is constructed upon the theoretical gaps of the first text (Althusser, 1973, p. 29). Althusser identifies a similar division within Marx's own text as well (Althusser 1973, pp. 29, 32).

Consequently, "philosophical" reading also: 3) divides the text into visible and invisible problematics, effectively creating two texts; 4) assumes that the reader serves as the measure of the text's theoretical evaluation, positioning themselves as the bearer of the latest problematic and the contemporary level of scientific development, thereby functioning as a critic who dominates the text and assigns it its place in the history of science; 5) presumes that in all instances of Marx "reading" the works of political economists, genuine reading (in the specified sense of the term) occurred, rather than critique, interpretation, understanding, or development, thus retroactively attributing Althusser's concept of reading to Marx – even though Althusser himself promised to show that Marx understood reading through the terms *lesen* and

*herauslesen* (Althusser 1973, p. 13); and 6) is based on selective reading – Althusser chooses fragments from Marx's and Engels' texts that align with his rationalist epistemology (Althusser 1973, pp. 29–30, 33–34).

Althusser opposes the empirical or religious myth of reading (“*mythe religieux ou empiriste de la lecture*”) (Althusser 1973, pp. 34–35). According to Althusser, the empirical involves: a) the identification of the ideal with the real, that is, extracting a certain essence from the immediate text, deriving the essence of sensory facts of history as though the abstract exists within the concrete and is revealed, like the logos of God in the book of history, in objects of religious ceremony, or like mathematics in the book of nature, alienation in the phenomena of capitalism, etc. (Althusser 1973, p. 13). In this view, truth is transparent, immediate, and readable in both text and history (with history being equated to text) (Althusser 1973, pp. 13, 38); b) the empirical reading generalizes the text but does not contribute to the development of theory (Althusser 1973, pp. 13, 35); c) the empirical constitutes the knowledge of an immediate subject, but such knowledge is based on the specular myth of knowledge (*le mythe spéculaire de la connaissance*), where the subject either sees or fails to see in a predefined object or text, depending on what their perspective allows; this results in subjective explanations of gaps in knowledge (Althusser 1973, p. 17). The empirical thus reaffirms the presumed essence of reality, contributes to the justification of reality, and fosters dogmatism (as in Hegel's concept of the end of History) (Althusser 1973, p. 17).

Thus, empiricism, from Althusser's perspective, presupposes an a priori understanding of reality and is therefore devoid of theoretical innovation (it does not create concepts) or the discovery of new knowledge (the immediate and transparent is not a source but a phenomenon behind which an essence is concealed). According to Althusser, the empirical model of reading imposes the reader's own theoretical concepts onto the surface of the text. Hence, Althusser's position is that reading does not assume the text can autonomously and self-sufficiently speak for itself; rather, it points to a hidden reality presupposed by rationalist epistemology. Conversely, the position of the empirical myth of reading, as described by Althusser, assumes that reading conveys the transparent, immediate meaning of the text, as anticipated by the reader.

Here, we observe two extremes: the assumption of the hidden (a duality of the world) and the assumption of the explicit meaning (the inseparability of the world and its meaning). Strictly speaking, in both scenarios, reading reduces the text to the reader's assumptions, and in both cases, the objectivity of the text is called into question. Objectivity is crucial because, without it, reading becomes merely a reflection of oneself, prompting the question, “Was there ever a text at all?” rather than fostering an understanding of the text, an encounter with the other, the radically different. Only in the latter case can knowledge be produced rather than merely reproducing one's own theoretical premises. However, in both scenarios outlined by Althusser, there is an implicit ideal of an omnipotent reader who has already grasped the essence of the text by assuming the role of a bearer of contemporary problematics or an oracle of eternal truth. Is it possible to read without theoretically subsuming the text, without aligning it with the reader's theoretical expectations? Can reading aspire to uncover something new within the text?

Firstly, in his statement about philosophical reading as an inquiry into the discourse-object unity and the notion of two texts, Althusser essentially conveyed the idea that a text is not identical to theory. Consequently, reading is not equivalent to working with theory (it is more a task of interpretation), meaning that the text contains numerous elements that are absent in the theory and thus open to being conceptualized. Therefore, reading unveils the text as a space for seeking alternative theoretical pathways. However, in Althusser's framework, these elements are reduced to the rational-epistemological expectations of his time, with conceptualization grounded in contemporary theories (as the reader is a bearer of contemporary problematics). The alternative theoretical pathways align strictly with the reader's questions. For Althusser, it is necessary to introduce an epistemological distinction in Marx's text – to clearly separate the fragments reflecting Marx's “transparency of alienation” (which should not be read, as this is the unscientific Marx) from those embodying Marx of “hidden commodity fetishism.”

Secondly, for Althusser, the question posed to the text represents the activity of a new problematic engaging with an older one. In this dynamic, there are answers within the old problematic that lack corresponding questions (which are present in the new problematic), and there are questions that always find their answers within the old problematic. Thus, the question reveals the non-identity between the text and theory. However, this revelation is short-lived, as theory is subsequently attached to the text within the framework of a particular problematic imposed by the reader.

Such an understanding of the question is restrictive but aligns with Althusser's critically rationalist approach to reading, and also with the concept of critical reading in contemporary philosophy.

## 5.2. The analysis of the lexeme of reading within Althusser's corpus

Althusser was fully aware of the arbitrariness of his reading of Marx, as he acknowledged offering an alien interpretation of Marx and admitted that he was not entirely familiar with his major works (Althusser 2011, pp. 171, 253–254). Nevertheless, he sought to modernize Marx, positioning him against Stalinist orthodoxy, thereby underscoring the political engagement inherent in any act of reading. Althusser also defended *critical reading* (*lecture critique*), which identifies gaps and ruptures within texts, effectively splitting them

into a literal text and a hidden text (Althusser 1973, pp. 88, 105–106; Althusser 2007, pp. 31, 51–52; Althusser 2018, p. 261). As an example of the necessary work with texts, Althusser cites Lacan's practice: Freud employed foreign, imported (*importés*) terms for his theory, and Lacan replaced them with terms more appropriate, domestic (*domestiques*), to Freud's theoretical framework (Althusser 1996, p. 26). Additionally, a notable finding of our corpus analysis was the identification of a new source for Althusser's conceptualization of reading – Martial Gueroult (Althusser 1994, pp. 400–401).

Now, let us turn to the theoretical predecessors of Althusser's consideration of the problem of reading, beginning with Lacan.

### 5.3. The analysis of the lexeme of reading within Lacan's corpus

Althusser likened his re-reading of Marx to Lacan's re-reading of Freud. Lacan advocated for a literal reading of Freud's texts, emphasizing close attention to original texts, their terms, metaphors, and objects of study (Lacan 1966; Lacan 1974). Reading, according to Lacan, must be conducted without preconceived notions. Its primary purpose is to reject interpretations of Freudian psychoanalysis that strip the German psychoanalyst of the uniqueness of his discovery – the unconscious (Baños 1999, p. 92). For Lacan, Freud's terms should be understood strictly within Freud's context, without reliance on external, particularly philosophical, theories. Lacan criticized interpreters for exploiting the homonymy of Freud's terms with pre-existing concepts (e.g., instinct, unconscious, ego) and substituting their own meanings (Lacan 1966b; Lacan 1966a, p. 246).

Thus, reading, according to Lacan, must originate from the text itself to reconstruct the theory beyond anachronistic interpretations. In this sense, reading disrupts and separates Freud's theoretical text from the theories of its interpreters. Reading complicates the theory, demanding its connection to psychoanalytic practice rather than the simplified versions offered by interpreters. The text of Freud's theory, therefore, represents the authentic theoretical content of the psychoanalyst's works, discerned through a literal reading of the text. Interpreters, by failing to engage directly with the text of Freud's theory, replaced Freud's contexts by their own.

However, reading also separates the text of a theory from the theory of its author, as Freud himself lacked the necessary theoretical resources to shape his theory into a proper form. Nevertheless, his text implies the potential for such development. While interpreters engage in retrograde interpretations of Freud, Lacan initiates a retroactive reading of Freud. He suggests that the German psychoanalyst, effectively functioning as a linguist, discovered the unconscious as structured like a language, employing a linguistic method (Lacan 2001, p. 406; Lacan 1957; Lacan 1966b). Drawing on already established structural linguistics (Saussure, Jakobson), Lacan reinterprets Freud's texts, identifying linguistic traces and language phenomena throughout them (Lacan 1966b; Lacan 2006, 218; Lacan 2001, 406; Lacan 1957). Thus, Lacan's reading combines exceptional fidelity to Freud's text with the derivation, rearticulation, application, and translation of Freud's concepts and metaphors into the register of linguistic theory. Lacan explicitly claims that Freud had almost invented the concept of the signifier and that the mechanisms of dreams – “condensation-displacement” – should be translated into Jakobson's terms as “metaphor-metonymy,” among others (Lacan 1971b, p. 106; Lacan 1966b). In this sense, Lacan's assertion that Freud left his readers with a method by which to read him – a method seemingly visible to the naked eye – should be understood (Baños 1999, p. 92). Thus, Freud's texts contain the theoretical resources necessary to formalize his theory scientifically, meaning that a literal reading of Freud's texts allows for a more accurate understanding of his theoretical innovations while simultaneously discarding or reframing all elements inconsistent with contemporary science.

A similar idea is expressed by Althusser regarding Marx: within Marx's works, the concept of symptomatic reading is already implicitly present, and this method should be applied to Marx himself. Both Lacan and Althusser, however, presuppose the existence of corresponding concepts within Freud and Marx from the outset. To construct these interpretations, new textual fragments are engaged, marginalia are examined, and seemingly insignificant or previously unnoticed terms are highlighted. This undoubtedly justifies their calls for literal reading, yet at the same time, both theorists risk closing off the very texts they have just opened to new readings. The leap toward the materiality of the text coexists with an infinite distancing from the text in the approaches of Lacan and Althusser. How is this paradox possible?

The central issue with Lacanian reading (and Althusserian reading inspired by it) lies in the inability to distinguish the text of the author/their theory from the text of the reader/their theory. The text being read is subsumed by the reader's theory and speaks what the reader compels it to say. Notably, both Lacan (Lacan, 1971a) and Althusser (see above) acknowledge such imposition, violence, and neglect of the text being read. Lacan justifies this phenomenon psychoanalytically: Freud does not teach that psychoanalysis consists of an imaginary identification of the client with the personality of the psychoanalyst. Therefore, instead of being in “self-like” dependence on Freud's text, one must extract and reconstruct a theory from it that corresponds to Freud's implicitly linguistic method. This involves avoiding uncritical apologetics and creatively recreating Freud's theory and texts, even assigning them a theoretical sequence that does

not align with the chronology of their appearance (for instance, “repetition compulsion” becomes Freud’s theoretical starting point, even though it appears in his later works) (Lacan, 1966c; Lacan, 1981, p. 275). By creating a new theory out of Freud’s texts, equipped with linguistic terms and translating Freud’s concepts into linguistic ones, the danger arises that the question posed in the context of Althusser’s work might also emerge: “Was there ever a Freud (or Marx) text before the reader at all?”. According to Jacques Derrida, Althusser’s radical re-reading of Marx, which results in an entirely new theory, hardly requires referencing its supposed source (Marx), as the connection to the original becomes increasingly tenuous (Derrida 1993, pp. 223–224). The necessity of anchoring one’s reading in the field of a given theory, its interpretations, and practices is justified; however, the problem with such critical reading lies in its claim to be authentic and the only correct reading, supported by the assertion that this was precisely the intention of the foundational authors. Lacan even proclaimed himself to be “the one who read Freud” (Baños 1999, p. 92). Lacanian reading belongs to the category of critical readings – implicit, unverifiable, noticing certain fragments and aspects of the text while ignoring others. Reading is elevated to the level of epistemology, allowing the transmission and development of theoretical knowledge while revising previous theories and critical readings.

Thus, reading is established in Lacan’s works as a method of separating the text of a theory from the theories of its interpreters and even from the theory of its author, with the aim of developing the author’s theory. However, this separation, while highly progressive for the theory of reading, is based on the assumption of the implicit existence of another theory within the author’s text. This understanding of the duality of any text, also adopted by Althusser, is central to critical reading. Such reading equates the advanced theoretical position of the reader with a set of new empirical discoveries within the author’s text (metaphors, terms, concepts, objects of study, methods, etc.), risking the replacement of the author’s text and theory with those of the reader. It fails to recognize that the text speaks what the reader wishes to hear, as the will of the text is forever suppressed.

How, then, can the text and the author’s theory be liberated? Without a doubt, this requires the use of a corpus-based approach and postcritical reading. Reading must trust the text, respect its lexicon and semantics, and recognize the theoretical boundaries of the text while also acknowledging the autonomy of the reader – their questions, hypotheses, and positions. The separation of the text from the reader, facilitated by computational tools, enables an understanding of the uniqueness and otherness of the text, allowing for the delineation of its boundaries without forcing the text to conform to the theoretical horizon of the reader.

#### **5.4. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Foucault’s corpus**

Foucault believed that a text must be examined synchronically, noting its elements and determining the nature of their interactions without imposing any initial interpretation (cultural, historical, anthropological, phenomenological, etc.) or employing exegesis (Foucault 2019, p. 182; Foucault 1994b, p. 280). His method of textual analysis is descriptive and empirical, relying on the explicit content and meaning of the text, aligning with structuralist traditions. At the same time, texts should be considered alongside other texts of the same era, from similar or alternative domains of social life – a perspective he called the “principle of exteriority,” making the investigation inherently interdisciplinary (Foucault 1994b, p. 276; Foucault 2011, pp. 191–192). This approach aims to uncover discourse – the network of institutions, practices, rules, and laws that shape knowledge and determine the production of subjects (as both objects of knowledge and self-knowing subjects) and statements in one historical epoch as distinct from another (Foucault 1969, pp. 66, 182; Foucault 2019, p. 181; Foucault 2011, p. 187; Foucault 1994a, p. 682). In this context, Foucault follows ethnology, referring to his method as (an)archaeology. This method avoids the search for origins, causes, or deeper meanings of phenomena, focusing instead on the concrete existence of discourses, their conflicts, and their disappearance under specific historical conditions (Foucault 1994b, pp. 128, 269; Foucault 1994c, p. 480; Foucault 2014, pp. 78–79). The result of such research constructs a single overarching Text of the corresponding epoch or discourse – one that lacks closure, teleology, or necessity, yet provides knowledge about the subject beyond humanist approaches (such as anthropology, phenomenology, or psychoanalysis) (Foucault 1969, pp. 25–26; Foucault 1969, p. 390; Foucault 1994c, p. 464; Foucault 1994d, p. 581).

The selection of texts is based on their direct or indirect relation to the phenomenon under investigation (for example, if the study concerns prisons, thematic texts are chosen alongside those addressing imprisonment and punishment), without establishing strict boundaries for the text corpus (Foucault 1994b, p. 741). Foucault also reflects on other methodological challenges of working with a corpus of texts, such as the application of methods, including quantitative and frequency-based approaches, and the choice of analytical levels (Foucault 1969, p. 19). A defining principle in working with texts, however, is the identification of antagonism, struggle, conflicts, strategies of power, and hegemony that permeate the will to knowledge, which is rooted in the will to domination (Foucault 1994c, pp. 604–605; Foucault 2011, pp. 25–26). This focus underscores the Nietzschean motif in Foucault’s work and shapes his approach to describing texts and discourses.

The Nietzschean motif in Foucault's work also shapes a corresponding understanding of the affect of reading: to uncover the conditions of possibility for the reader-subject as one formed by knowledge and produced within a network of power-laden discourses, enabling the desubjectivation of the reader's subjectivity (Foucault 1994d, pp. 42-43; Foucault 2015, p. 39). It is assumed that the reader-subject is already shaped by historical discourses and discursive events, making the study of discourses akin to tracing the genealogy of the contemporary reader-subject. This process allows the reader to experience a defamiliarization effect of astonishment at their own constructedness, while simultaneously understanding the contingency (singularity, randomness) of the existence of a particular configuration of power and knowledge (Foucault 1994c, p. 167; Foucault 1994d, p. 574; Foucault 2014, p. 79).

Reading is understood as a mode of subjectivation (care of the self, a continuation of the practice of freedom) and desubjectivation (the history of the subject, knowledge, and power). It involves internalizing certain knowledge about oneself that enables the production of self-knowledge, altering one's relationship to this knowledge and, consequently, to the reality constituted by it (Foucault 1994d, pp. 574, 793). This subject-epistemic dimension of reading, as Foucault notes, is evident in the works of ancient philosophers, Nietzsche, Canguilhem, and Lacan, and is also relevant in the context of reading Foucault's own texts (Foucault 1994d, pp. 56, 205; Foucault 1994a, p. 561). Reading texts that both subjectivize and desubjectivize, including those of Foucault, transforms the subject, enabling a new perspective on oneself, others, and institutions, thereby creating possibilities for action with respect to all three. Desubjectivizing reading initiates alternative forms of subjectivity production: it turns readers from objects of knowledge into subjects of knowledge, enabling them to notice the micro-levels of their own subjectivation and to use these texts for self-overcoming, for resisting corresponding rules, practices, and institutions (Foucault, 2015, p. 39). Like the discourses embedded in the spaces of texts, rules, and knowledge, Foucault's works operate on the same level but in a different register – uncovering explicit connections, combinations, and similarities between the organization of knowledge, spaces, institutions, everyday life, and the strategies of institutionalized power.

Foucault does not describe discourse from the perspective of another, hidden, interpretative discourse but instead remains on the surface of texts, treating them as documents and monuments of the past, aiming to describe them and reveal their political implications ("not the logic of the unconscious, but the logic of strategy" (Foucault 1994b, pp. 719-720)). Consequently, Foucault's theoretical intervention is inherently political and carries political consequences in the act of reading, as it places the reader-subject in a different position relative to knowledge.

Thus, Foucault initiates a surface-level, explicit, empirical form of reading that engages with the functioning of the reading subject (the moral dimension of reading). The philosopher closely aligns with corpus linguistics and postcritical reading by emphasizing the compilation of text corpora and focusing on the description of documents. He trusts that documents, people, and epochs speak for themselves – constructing knowledge about themselves and others, creating institutions, shaping spaces, and competing among themselves. However, it is unlikely that Foucault can be regarded as the primary contender for transforming the concept of "reading" into a scientific term. At this point, such recognition seems more appropriately attributed to Lacan. For Foucault, the term "reading" is associated with a subject-epistemic effect rather than the act of working with the text, whereas for the psychoanalyst, attention is centered on engaging with Freud, interpreting psychoanalysis, and framing his own activities in terms of reading.

Althusser inherits from Foucault, particularly in *"From Capital to the Philosophy of Marx,"* the ideas of the discontinuity of history and the discourse-object unity. These concepts are crucial for Althusser as he seeks to demonstrate that Marx constitutes a new problematic-episteme in the history of knowledge, a new object of knowledge, and a new method of reading (symptomatic, doubled; identifying gaps and logical errors in the texts of political economists that Marx himself fills and overcomes within the framework of this new problematic). Althusser's antihumanist reading of Marx is confined to pointing out that it is not the thinker who sees or fails to see specific theoretical content, but rather that their vision or blindness is conditioned by the historical-theoretical problematic and the level of scientific development of their time. Althusser believed Marx developed a theory of overdetermined phenomena rather than a dialectical, humanist, or teleological unfolding of categories and history. However, as we have seen, Foucault's approach to reading extends far beyond such ideas, emphasizing surface-level, explicit readings of texts rather than dividing them into explicit and implicit (symptomatic) meanings. The anthropologism inherent in the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework that underpins Althusser's understanding of implicit reading poses a fundamental problem. Such implicitness is unverifiable and can be filled with any content, leading to the question of whether Althusser ever truly engaged with Marx's text. Foucault, by contrast, clearly delineates the boundaries of his research and the potential falsifiability of his conclusions. Nevertheless, Foucault's studies are predominantly interpreted through the lens of Nietzschean will to power and the analysis of hegemonic discourses. This focus, however, somewhat limits the political effects of desubjectivizing reading, as it neglects the reading of texts by those who resist particular discourses or power structures.

Consequently, it overlooks collective practices and solidarity in desubjectivation within the framework of protests and revolutions.

### 5.5. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Bachelard's corpus

Bachelard developed the concept of double reading in the context of working with poetic and alchemical texts. This concept distinguishes between rational, intellectualist, fast, and dismissive reading of images (the first reading, which involves a detached, analytical evaluation) and oneiric, slow, psychoanalytic reading of images (the second reading, which involves the text engaging with the reader's unconscious, uncovering unconscious and sexual associations with material objects – such as in alchemy, where a person suffering from depression may find healing by contemplating a diamond as a symbol of perfection – or with natural phenomena, such as the womb of a river or water and fire as feminine and masculine elements) (Bachelard 2011, pp. 15, 25, 62-63, 104, 120, 146, 174, 197; Bachelard 2002, pp. 119-120, 212, 240, 260-261, 268; Bachelard 2013, p. 26; Bachelard 2014, pp. 122).

Bachelard approached both prescientific and scientific texts to uncover the psychoanalytic foundations of prescientific misconceptions and scientific inquiry. He argued that prescientific reason employs unconscious motivations, affects, and judgments in its investigations, striving for possession of absolute truth (unconscious possessiveness and intellectual miserly tendencies among thinkers; the desire of scientists to possess truth and absolute knowledge). It believes in the harmonious and teleological unity of the world, rushes to make broad generalizations, anthropomorphizes its subject of study (e.g., viewing the Earth as a vast digestive system or a nurturing mother), and excessively relies on metaphors, analogies, and wordplay to explain phenomena. Furthermore, it engages in shallow, uncritical empiricism, lacking any theoretical or methodological culture. In contrast, scientific reason is self-critical in assessing its own affects, initiates empirical research based on rational hypotheses, and verifies the results through intersubjective validation. It purifies scientific inquiry from everyday, mundane, sexualized, and utilitarian knowledge, maintaining a rigorous methodological foundation (Bachelard 1947, pp. 9-10, 16, 21-22, 41, 45, 48, 54, 62-63, 65-67, 71, 73, 83-84, 87-88, 94-95, 127, 137, 170, 176, 250-251; Bachelard 1980, pp. 46, 51, 74, 180, 190; Bachelard 1963, pp. 223-224; Bachelard 2020, p. 34; Bachelard 1966, p. 73; Bachelard 1949, p. 61).

It is likely that Bachelard served as the source of Althusser's conceptualization of reading, as well as his theory of double reading (retroactive and symptomatic – see above). For both thinkers, the second reading is prioritized, as it reveals the hidden, non-obvious nature of the text. The splitting of the text emerges as a result of the unconscious at work – whether as the unconscious functioning of poetic imagination and scientific creativity in Bachelard's framework, or as the unconscious emergence of a new theoretical paradigm within texts shaped by the context of an older paradigm, as in Althusser's approach. It is important that both thinkers operate within a psychoanalytically inspired perspective. Consequently, immanent, slow, and deep reading is a product of uncovering a psychoanalytic interpretation of poetic imagination and scientific creativity, which has been preemptively injected into the texts.

In *“From Capital to the Philosophy of Marx”*, Althusser critiques empiricism and the use of metaphors in scientific texts. According to Althusser, empiricism involves extracting the supposed essence of things from real objects, conflating the object of knowledge with the actual object, and embedding within the real object the truth or idea already assumed by the reader. This form of reading is deemed religious, as it “reads” the Book of Nature written by God or extracts any other philosophical principle from reality. Like his mentor, Bachelard, Althusser calls for rationalism in science – emphasizing that scientific problematics evolve rather than truths being empirically discovered. For Althusser, the formulation of a question within a given theory must precede empirical investigations. This aligns closely with Bachelard's rational materialism, or more precisely, his “di-philosophy,” which combines rationalism and empiricism, giving primacy to the former. Regarding metaphors, Althusser critiques their use in Marx's works, attributing it to Marx's unawareness of his position within a new problematic that required new terms. Instead of these terms, Marx, unfortunately, relied on inadequate metaphors, such as “inversion” (Althusser 1973, pp. 29-30). Interestingly, Althusser acknowledges his own use of metaphors, suggesting that this might also stem from an unconscious engagement with a new problematic (Althusser 1973, p. 27). While Althusser did not conduct a psychoanalysis of Marx or classical political economy, he epistemologizes the logic of psychoanalysis in the context of shifting theoretical problematics. This refers to the unconscious coexistence of old and new problematics within texts. However, the source of this unconscious presence is not psychological but epistemological, rooted in the development of science – the emergence of new answers without corresponding questions (the new problematic) within old texts.

It is noteworthy that, within the framework of Althusser's reading, rational hypotheses and questions posed to Marx's texts supplanted the empirical reality of Marx's writings and ideas. Instead of extracting Marx's own problematic from his texts, the problematic of French epistemology was imposed, while all empirically verifiable statements by Marx about reading and his reading practices were dismissed. What, then, prevented Althusser from employing Bachelard's theoretical and methodological principles to read Marx without losing Marx in the process? How can texts be studied without imposing one's own biases, without

appropriating texts through one's own logic (possessiveness-miserliness), and how can one ensure the discovery of the unexpected and new, rather than merely finding one's reflection in the texts? Bachelard suggests that achieving this requires self-criticism, formulating hypotheses, conducting empirical research, engaging in dialogue with other theories, and subjecting one's knowledge, findings, and methods to intersubjective verification. This is a perspective with which one can readily agree. However, what textual data can serve as the foundation for objective knowledge and adequate empirical investigations of texts? In other words, what methodology can separate human observations of a text from non-human observations? In our view, only corpus linguistics offers this possibility. The data it provides – on word frequencies and collocations – are not influenced by unconscious affects or theoretical predispositions. Rather, such predispositions can be cross-verified against the data it produces, ensuring a more objective and rigorous engagement with texts.

### **5.6. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Canguilhem's corpus**

Unlike Lacan, Foucault, and Bachelard, the lexeme of reading in Canguilhem's works does not carry even a partially terminological character. Continuing Bachelard's project, Canguilhem traces the moments in the history of science that constitute the object of scientific knowledge in contrast to prescientific, ideological representations (Canguilhem 1966, p. 60). Canguilhem argues that the blending of the scientific and the ideological – the existence of scientific ideology – is a recurring phenomenon in the history of science. This reflects the tendency of researchers to emulate science by creating protoscientific, metaphorical terms, which can later become legitimate within real science, acquiring new meanings and shedding their evaluative, subjective, or crypto-political connotations (Canguilhem 2000, pp. 34, 38, 44-45, 102). In this sense, Canguilhem establishes a more dialectical relationship between science and non-science, agreeing with Bachelard's concept of the epistemological break but supplementing it with the possibility of epistemological continuity. However, this continuity remains largely formal, as scientific research reprocesses the prehistory of science. Moreover, for Canguilhem, the development of science is not a linear progression but rather a complex and discontinuous process (Canguilhem 2000, pp. 39-40, 43-45, 62).

For Canguilhem, the reading of past scientific works is both a practice of uncovering the criteria of scientificity and a tool for constructing the object of science (Canguilhem 2000, pp. 33, 44). In his view, in science, the object of inquiry is constructed through theoretical-experimental work, the use of technologies, the integration of quantitative methods, the application of deduction, and the establishment of invariants and causality (Canguilhem 2000, p. 111). This complex process is contrasted with empiricism, which captures the essence of an object defined in highly abstract and value-laden terms through theoretical speculation that reproduces prevailing natural-philosophical and metaphysical beliefs. These beliefs often revolve around the unity of the world, divinity, vitalism, and the teleology of all processes, effectively tying reality to human aspirations (Canguilhem 1952, pp. 189-190; Canguilhem 1966, p. 132; Canguilhem 2000, p. 119).

For both Bachelard and Canguilhem, reading serves as a means of identifying the criteria of scientificity. Althusser's interest in this type of reading aligns with his goal of liberating Marx's texts from the empiricism of humanist, value-laden, and "Stalinist" interpretations. His aim is to uncover the structural, asubjective conditions for the development of knowledge and the emergence of a scientific, rather than ideological, mode of reading Marx. However, unlike Althusser, Canguilhem recognized the importance of metaphors and scientific ideology in the formation of science. Canguilhem also emphasized that in fields like biology and physiology, it is impossible to avoid value judgments because these disciplines deal with life and organisms, which cannot be reduced to mere physico-chemical elements. Organisms exhibit purposiveness, make choices, prefer one thing over another, struggle for life and health, and avoid illness and pain. Judgments about pathology, disease, and anomalies are inherently biological and subjective (Canguilhem 1966, pp. 132, 136). The devaluation of life, he argued, leads to its exploitation: for Aristotle, slaves were reduced to the status of speaking tools, while for Descartes, animals were mere instinct-driven machines (Canguilhem 1952, p. 132). In this context, Canguilhem's perspective diverges from Althusser's. For Canguilhem, reading is not only about uncovering the criteria of scientificity and constructing the object of science but also about understanding the dialectical relationship between value-laden and value-free judgments in science.

### **5.7. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Cavallès' corpus**

According to Jean Cavallès, science is autonomous from non-scientific influences, empirical reality, psychology, and individual researchers. It operates within the logic of concepts, theories, procedures, the objects it creates, and the problems it addresses (Cavallès 1994, pp. 471, 505, 554, 593, 598, 603-604, 663). Science is an activity that cannot be given a universal or reductive definition, as it is a continuous process of solving and generating problems. This is why mathematics, for example, cannot be formalized into

a comprehensive and coherent system of axioms, as demonstrated by Gödel's incompleteness theorem, which points to its reliance on non-logical foundations (Cavaillès 1994, pp. 598, 601).

Scientific objects are constructed through the activity of scientists within the framework of their theories and current problems; they do not exist independently of science (Cavaillès 1994, pp. 176-177, 185, 594-595, 602). The development of science arises from the internal necessity of solving problems embedded in existing theories. These theories impose limits that demand their own overcoming, but they are preserved as integral elements within new theories (Cavaillès 1994, pp. 180, 186, 626).

Thus, in the framework of Cavaillès, reading can be understood as the pursuit of the inherent logic underpinning the progression of scientific knowledge. It involves stripping science of accidental influences and errors introduced by empirical, psychological, or historical interpretations, while rejecting misguided attempts to generalize science in favor of fostering its continued development.

It can be said that Althusser borrowed a significant portion of his ideas from Cavaillès for his conception of reading: anti-psychologism, anti-empiricism, an objectively rationalist understanding of science and its development, and the notion of science as autonomous from society and ideology, possessing its own criteria for verification. Cavaillès also provides the overarching framework for understanding Bachelard, Canguilhem, and Foucault, as he preceded and influenced their work.

### 5.8. The analysis of the lexeme of reading in Gueroult's corpus

Gueroult proposes recognizing the history of philosophy as an empirical fact reflecting the diversity of doctrines and establishing the condition of possibility for this fact (Gueroult 1979, pp. 64-65; Gueroult 1984, pp. 15-16; Gueroult 1967, p. 379). To achieve this, he turns to Kantian transcendentalism, arguing that it is necessary to establish a priori the categories that make it possible to conceptualize the diversity of the history of philosophy. At the same time, Gueroult warns against the extremes of imposing theoretic-conceptual a priori characteristics on philosophical doctrines from the standpoint of a particular philosophy. Such an approach risks elevating that particular philosophy to the status of the ultimate criterion for evaluating, criticizing, and dismissing the value of other philosophies in history, as seen in the histories of philosophy by René Descartes, Friedrich Hegel, and the Neo-Kantians (Gueroult 1984, pp. 183-184; Gueroult 1979, pp. 256-257; Gueroult 1953, p. 33). Therefore, Gueroult insists on the necessity of formal, transcendental categories to conceptualize the diversity of philosophical doctrines without subordinating them to any single philosophical framework (Gueroult 1956, pp. 18-19; Gueroult 1979, p. 270).

To address this, Gueroult introduces the concept of *philosophical experience* as the condition of possibility for the history of philosophy, the diversity of philosophical systems, their intrinsic value, and irreducibility (Gueroult 1979, p. 252). According to him, philosophical experience lies in the fact that each philosopher creates their own philosophical reality, simultaneously destroying, borrowing from, or disputing with other philosophical realities (Gueroult 1979, pp. 224, 229-230, 232, 243, 254). In the philosopher's thinking, there occurs a projection of the philosophical reality they uncover and construct onto the general reality (Gueroult 1979, pp. 126, 234-236). However, the history of philosophy is made possible by the fact that the general reality, which each philosopher seeks to define, always remains indeterminate (akin to Kant's thing-in-itself) (Gueroult 1979, pp. 105-106). This indeterminate general reality is the condition of possibility for the creation of philosophical realities. The general reality is not a criterion for determining the value or legitimacy of any particular philosophy. The realities with which people engage are philosophical and are articulated by philosophers, but the overarching, extra-philosophical reality remains inaccessible and indeterminate (Gueroult 1979, pp. 119-120). The establishment of a "true" reality is itself a philosophical assertion and therefore represents an attempt to capture the indeterminate general reality – an impossible task, yet one that every philosopher strives to achieve (Gueroult 1979, p. 230).

All philosophies can be actualized by the philosopher, as they teach one to think and freely create reality. Thus, all philosophies possess intrinsic value and are not subject to any logic of interconnection, hierarchy, evolution, or progress. In this regard, Gueroult aligns with Charles Renouvier, though he rejects the necessity of establishing a hierarchy of systems (Gueroult 1967, p. 370; Gueroult 1979, pp. 50, 180-181, 254). The history of philosophy serves as the bearer of eternal philosophy, acting as a reservoir of possibilities for activating philosophical creativity and continuing the freedom of philosophy. At the same time, it contains historically determined philosophies that hold varying degrees of significance and creative force ("philosophies are not equal in their value or the amount of reality they create" (Gueroult 1979, pp. 190-191), but they are equal in their existence and in the act of creating reality) (Gueroult 1979, pp. 54-55, 57, 63, 248). In this sense, the history of philosophy becomes philosophical – it becomes philosophy itself. It enables participation in a dialogue among various philosophers and serves as a training ground for one's own ability to create worlds.

In this understanding of philosophy as a creative, reality-generating process, one can see a justification for what Althusser did with his interpretation of Marx. By employing the tools of contemporary philosophies, Althusser transformed Marx into a poststructuralist thinker, focusing on concepts like overdetermination and structural causality. Althusser effectively created his own philosophical reality by "reading" Marx in a

distinctive way. Essentially, Althusser embodies what Gueroult envisioned as the role of the philosopher: freely creating reality while negating and contesting the realities of previous interpretations of Marx and even the reality of Marx's own text, thereby forming his unique version of Marx's doctrine.

Thus, instead of condemning Althusser's position as "interpretative violence" (Derrida), turning to Gueroult provides a justification for Althusser's approach. Althusser was doing exactly what, according to Gueroult, every philosopher must do: freely create a philosophical reality, regardless of external constraints or criticisms.

Gueroult emerges as yet another rationalist among the "masters of reading" referenced by Althusser, who enabled him to reject the importance of empiricism within his philosophical project. Althusser himself acknowledged this rejection, which perhaps underscores that the creation of a philosophical reality is justified only when it is grounded in a careful dialogue and empirical verification of readings of primary texts.

## 6. Conclusion

The corpus-based approach employed in this study has made it possible to identify the sources and mechanisms by which the term "reading" was transformed into a philosophical concept in the works of Louis Althusser. Through a systematic analysis of Althusser's corpus and those of his six "masters of reading" – Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, Jean Cavailles, and Martial Gueroult – this research has, for the first time, brought together all six intellectual influences in a single framework and examined their role in shaping Althusser's epistemological framework of reading.

An analysis of the six "masters of reading" referenced by Louis Althusser in his corpus – Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Gaston Bachelard, Georges Canguilhem, Jean Cavailles, and Martial Gueroult – reveals how their ideas shaped Althusser's theoretical framework for conceptualizing reading. These philosophers, on the one hand, enabled Althusser to approach Marx's texts directly rather than relying on commentators. On the other hand, they facilitated a departure from the original significance of Marx's writings – something Althusser himself later acknowledged as the arbitrariness of his reading.

Psychoanalysis, as advanced by Lacan, emphasized the materiality and significance of the text, encouraging both holistic engagement and meticulous attention to its details. However, it also introduced the notion of doubling texts – identifying hidden meanings, theories, and the unconscious pathologies of their authors. Lacan's literal reading of Freud served to highlight the inadequacy of Freud's categories, recasting them within the framework of later structuralist and linguistic theories. Althusser mirrored this approach in his "return" to Marx, tying Marx's text to a contemporary theoretical horizon.

Bachelard's psychoanalytic insights inspired his concept of dual reading – fast-rational versus slow-oneiric – and his recognition of the duality in scientific texts, where rational thought is interwoven with unconscious, metaphorical, and anthropomorphic elements. While psychoanalysis's greatest contribution was its insistence on close reading, its major limitation lay in subordinating the semantic meaning of texts to psychoanalytic interpretations.

Foucault's structuralist, anti-psychoanalytic, and ethnological methods influenced Althusser's focus on the surface of texts and the analysis of discourse, which constructs its own objects of inquiry. Foucault's methodology, nearing corpus linguistics, allowed for detailed dissection of texts into their constituent elements while situating them within discursive formations and epistemes. However, Foucault's Nietzschean emphasis on the will to power and historical antagonism framed all discourses within a reductive paradigm of domination and struggle – an aspect Althusser incorporated in his attempt to separate Marx from the constraints of his own text and interpret him through contemporary philosophical frameworks.

The rationalist and transcendentalist approach of Bachelard, Canguilhem, Cavailles, and Gueroult offered Althusser justification for interpreting Marx through the lens of modern philosophy. This interpretation prioritized theoretical constructs over the lexicon and semantics of Marx's texts, aligning them with current theoretical concerns. These thinkers demonstrated that science operates solely through the theoretical construction of its objects, free from empirical or metaphorical assertions about reality. Yet, Canguilhem acknowledged the impossibility of fully disentangling science from ideology and value-laden statements.

Gueroult's vision of philosophy as the creation of new philosophical realities provided a further rationale for Althusser's "structuralist Marx." Gueroult's insistence on the philosopher's mission to construct and contest realities resonates with Althusser's project, even though Gueroult's historical-philosophical work leaned toward empiricism.

Ultimately, the ability to recognize the materiality of a text while denying its autonomous significance depends on the absence of tools to separate the text from the reader. This absence grants complete interpretive power to the reader, leaving the text unable to resist external assumptions – a hallmark of critical reading.

This research not only reconstructs the intellectual genealogy of Althusser's reading but also demonstrates the necessity of a corpus-based methodology in philosophical inquiry. By enabling a systematic and empirical study of textual patterns, corpus analysis provides a means of assessing how philosophical

concepts evolve, interact, and transform over time. In this sense, it offers a powerful alternative to traditional hermeneutic approaches, allowing for a more precise and verifiable reconstruction of philosophical concepts.

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- Stiegler, B. (2018): *The neganthropocene*. Open Humanities Press.
- Weil, S. (2015): *Late philosophical writings*. University of Notre Dame Press.

## Appendix

### Althusser's Corpus

In the corpus of Althusser's French-language works, 1,494 concordances with the lexeme *reading* were identified (20 works, corpus size: 2.1 million tokens). Additionally, 488 concordances were found in the English translations of his works, which were not available in the original French (6 works, corpus size: 395,000 tokens).

In French

- Althusser, L. (1973). *Réponse à John Lewis*. Paris: François Maspero.
- Althusser, L. (1974). *Philosophie et philosophie spontanée des savants*. Paris: François Maspero.
- Althusser, L. (1976). *Positions (1964-1975)*. Paris: Éditions Sociales.
- Althusser, L. (1994). *Écrits philosophiques et politiques 1*. Textes réunis par François Matheron, Stock / IMEC.
- Althusser, L. (1995). *Sur la reproduction*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).
- Althusser, L. (1996). *Psychanalyse et Sciences Humaines: Deux Conférences*. Librairie Générale Française.
- Althusser, L. (1997). *Écrits philosophiques et politiques 2*. Textes réunis par François Matheron, Stock / IMEC.
- Althusser, L. (1998). *Lettres à Franca (1961-1973)*. Paris: Stock/IMEC.
- Althusser, L. (1998). *Solitude de Machiavel et autres textes*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).
- Althusser, L. (2003). *Montesquieu: La politique et l'histoire*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).
- Althusser, L. (2006). *Politique et histoire, de Machiavel à Marx*. Paris: Seuil.
- Althusser, L. (2007). *Pour Marx*. La Découverte, Poche.

- Althusser, L. (2009). *Sur le contrat social: Précédé de Troublante clarté* (P. Hochart, Ed.). Éditions Manucius.
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- Althusser, L. (2011). *Lettres à Hélène (1947-1980)* (O. Corpet, Ed.; Preface by B.-H. Lévy). Paris: Bernard Grasset/IMEC.
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- Althusser, L. (2018). *Écrits sur l'histoire*. Presses Universitaires de France.
- Althusser, L., & Balibar, E. (1973). *Lire le Capital. 1* ([Nouvelle édition entièrement refondue]). Maspero.

#### In English

- Althusser, L. (1976). *Essays in Self-Criticism* (G. Lock, Trans.). London: New Left Books.
- Althusser, L. (1978). What must change in the party. *New Left Review*, 109, 19-45.
- Althusser, L. (2001). *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Althusser, L. (2006). *Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings, 1978-87*. London: Verso Books.
- Althusser, L. (2020). *History and Imperialism: Writings, 1963-1986*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Althusser, L., & Goshgarian, G. M. (2020). *What is to be done?*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

### Lacan's Corpus

The corpus of the French psychoanalyst consists of 28 works, totaling 5.3 million tokens. A total of 2,605 concordances were generated. To refine the search and make it more precise, less labor-intensive, and time-efficient, collocations with these words were generated. The following frequent collocations with the lexeme *reading* were selected for generating concordances: *aristote, discours, désir, freud, histoire, inconscient, joyce, livre, sujet, texte, textes*. This process resulted in 449 concordances.

- Lacan, J. (1953-54). *Les écrits techniques de Freud*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1956-57). *La relation d'objet*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1958-59). *Le désir et son interprétation*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1961-62). *L'identification*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1962-63). *L'Angoisse*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1965-66). *L'objet de la psychanalyse*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1966-67). *Logique du Fantasme*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1966a). *Écrits*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (1967-68). *L'Acte psychanalytique*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1971). *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1971b). *D'un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant* (Séminaire, 1971). Version AFI.
- Lacan, J. (1972-73). *Encore*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1973-74). *Les non-dupes errent*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1974-75). *R.S.I.* Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1975-76). *Le Sinthome*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1976-77). *L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre*. Published by *École lacanienne de psychanalyse*.
- Lacan, J. (1981). *Le Séminaire, Livre III : Les Psychoses*. Paris : Éditions du Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (1991). *Le Séminaire, Livre 17: L'envers de la psychanalyse*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (1998). *Le Séminaire, Livre 5: Les Formations de l'inconscient*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2000). *Écrits* (Amateur edition: A collection of articles and interviews from 1926 to 1981). [Self-published].
- Lacan, J. (2001). *Autres Écrits*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2001). *Le Séminaire II: Le moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse, 1954-1955*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2001). *Le Séminaire, Livre 8: Le transfert*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2004). *Le Séminaire, Livre 10: L'angoisse*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2005). *Le Séminaire, Livre 23: Le Sinthome*. Paris: Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2006). *D'un Autre à l'Autre (1968-1969)*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2011). *Je parle aux murs: Entretien de la Chapelle de Sainte-Anne*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lacan, J. (2011). *Le Séminaire, Livre 19: ... ou pire*. Paris: Seuil.

## Foucault's Corpus

The corpus of Foucault's works consists of French-language texts (30 books; corpus size: 3.9 million tokens) and English translations that replaced the originals (9 books; corpus size: 687,000 tokens). A total of 1,481 concordances with the lexeme *reading* were generated. Relevant frequent collocations were then selected: *livre, texte, écriture, écrire, Nietzsche, ouvrage, suffire, écrire, écrit, Heidegger, Descartes, auteur, déchiffre, connaissance*. This process yielded 303 concordances. Additionally, 63 concordances were generated from English-language books.

However, unlike Lacan, the lexeme *reading* in Foucault's work cannot be fully terminologized, as it addresses only the subject-epistemic effect of reading without revealing a specific method of working with texts. Therefore, the search for relevant terms was expanded in the French-language corpus to include general scientific terminology, focusing on the term *method* and its collocations: *analys, utilis, structural, appliqué, linguistique, archéologie, déchiffre, expériment, employe*.

The term *document* was also examined to better understand Foucault's approach to working with documents. Concordances were generated based on frequent collocations of the word *document*: *mass, traite, concerne, atteste, datan, traver, corpus, utilise, rassemble, dispos, collection, cumu, échantillonnage, enregistremen, constitue, annote, collationne*.

Furthermore, the term *text*, which appears 3,800 times in the corpus, was analyzed by generating concordances for its frequent collocations: *analys, discours, théorique, philosophe, critique, terme, méthode, interprété, structur*. Finally, the word *corpus* was also reviewed for deeper insights.

### In French

- Foucault, M. (1954). *Maladie mentale et personnalité*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).
- Foucault, M. (1961). *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. Paris: Plon.
- Foucault, M. (1962). *Maladie mentale et psychologie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).
- Foucault, M. (1963). *Raymond Roussel*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1966). *Les mots et les choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1969). *L'archéologie du savoir*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1971). *L'ordre du discours: Leçon inaugurale au Collège de France prononcée le 2 décembre 1970*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1973). *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (Illustrations by R. Magritte). Montpellier: Éditions Fata Morgana.
- Foucault, M. (1984). *Histoire de la sexualité III: Le souci de soi*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1994a). *Dits et écrits I: 1954-1969*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1994b). *Dits et écrits II: 1970-1975*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1994d). *Dits et écrits IV: 1980-1988*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1994c). *Dits et écrits III: 1976-1979*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (2001). *L'herméneutique du sujet: Cours au Collège de France, 1981-1982*. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Foucault, M. (2004). *Naissance de la biopolitique: Cours au Collège de France (1978-1979)* (Édition établie sous la direction de F. Ewald et A. Fontana, par M. Senellart). Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Foucault, M. (2004). *Sécurité, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France (1977-1978)*. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Foucault, M. (2005). *Introduction à l'anthropologie de Kant*. Exlibris.
- Foucault, M. (2007). *Naissance de la clinique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France (PUF).
- Foucault, M. (2008). *Le gouvernement de soi et des autres: Cours au Collège de France (1982-1983)* (Édition établie sous la direction de F. Ewald et A. Fontana, par F. Gros). Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Foucault, M. (2009). *Le courage de la vérité: Le gouvernement de soi et des autres II*. (Édition établie sous la direction de F. Ewald et A. Fontana, par F. Gros). Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Foucault, M. (2011). *Leçons sur la volonté de savoir: Cours au Collège de France (1970-1971) suivi de Le savoir d'Œdipe*. Édition établie sous la direction de François Ewald et Alessandro Fontana, par Daniel Defert. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Foucault, M. (2012). *Il faut défendre la société: Cours au Collège de France (1975-1976)* (Édition établie sous la direction de F. Ewald et A. Fontana, par M. Bertani et A. Fontana). Paris: Éditions numériques.
- Foucault, M. (2012). *Les anormaux (1974-1975): Cours année 1974-1975*. Édition numérique réalisée en août 2012 à partir de l'édition CD-ROM *Le Foucault Électronique* (ed. 2001). Paris: [Self-published].
- Foucault, M. (2013). *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir*. Paris: Gallimard-Jeunesse.
- Foucault, M. (2013). *Histoire de la sexualité II: L'usage des plaisirs*. Paris: Gallimard-Jeunesse.
- Foucault, M. (2013). *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (2015). *Qu'est-ce que la critique? Suivi de La culture de soi* (H.-P. Fruchaud & D. Lorenzini, Éd.). Paris: Vrin.

- Foucault, M. (2018). *Histoire de la sexualité IV: Les aveux de la chair* (Édition établie par Frédéric Gros). Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (2018). *La sexualité: Cours donné à l'université de Clermont-Ferrand (1964) suivi de Le discours de la sexualité: Cours donné à l'université de Vincennes (1969)* (Édition établie sous la responsabilité de F. Ewald, par C.-O. Doron). Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Foucault, M. (2019). *Folie, langage, littérature*. Paris: Vrin.

#### In English

- Foucault, M. (2006). *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973–74* (J. Lagrange, Ed.; General Editors: F. Ewald & A. Fontana; English Series Editor: A. I. Davidson; G. Burchell, Trans.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2014). *On the government of the living: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979–1980* (M. Senellart, Ed.; G. Burchell, Trans.). General Editors: F. Ewald & A. Fontana. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2015). *The Punitive Society: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1972–1973* (B. E. Harcourt, Ed.; General Editors: F. Ewald & A. Fontana; English Series Editor: A. I. Davidson; G. Burchell, Trans.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2016). *About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self: Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980* (H.-P. Fruchaud & D. Lorenzini, Eds.; G. Burchell, Trans.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (2017). *Subjectivity and Truth: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1980–1981* (F. Gros, Ed.; General Editors: F. Ewald & A. Fontana; English Series Editor: A. I. Davidson; G. Burchell, Trans.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2019). *Discourse & truth and Parrêsia* (H.-P. Fruchaud & D. Lorenzini, Eds.; English edition established by N. Luxon; Introduction by F. Gros). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (2019). *Penal Theories and Institutions: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1971–1972* (B. E. Harcourt, Ed.; Transcription by E. Basso; Notes and critical apparatus by C.-O. Doron, with the assistance of D. Defert; General Editors: F. Ewald & A. Fontana; English Series Editor: A. I. Davidson; G. Burchell, Trans.). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2021). *Speaking the Truth about Oneself: Lectures at Victoria University, Toronto, 1982* (H.-P. Fruchaud & D. Lorenzini, Eds.; English edition established by D. L. Wyche). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M., & The Prisons Information Group. (2021). *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970–1980)* (K. Thompson & P. Zurn, Eds.; P. Zurn & E. Beranek, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

### Bachelard's Corpus

Concordances for the lexeme *reading* were generated from the French-language corpus (10 books; corpus size: 654,000 tokens). Due to the large number of concordances, further refinement was performed by generating concordances based on frequent collocations: *livre, pouvoir, page, vouloir, modern, auteur, ouvr* (work), *dire, esprit, développement, savoir, œuvre, écri* (writing), *philosoph*.

Similarly, concordances for *reading* were generated from the English-language corpus of works unavailable in French (6 books; corpus size: 362,000 tokens). To manage the large volume, concordances were narrowed down using frequent collocations: *dream, text, reader, image, reading, book, line, page, imagination, passage, flame, literar, tree, phrase, word, duration, story, philosopher, fire, unconscious, reverie*.

Given Bachelard's references to his extensive reading of historical books on scientific subjects, additional concordances were generated for the word *livre* (book), which is a hyponym of *reading*. Considering the relevance of his reflections on prescientific thought, concordances were generated for the term *prescie* (prescientific). Recognizing the importance of the unconscious in Bachelard's philosophy, concordances were also generated for the term *science* (*scien[tif,ce]*) with collocations such as *psychology* (*psych*) and *unconscious* (*inconsci*).

The summarized findings from these concordances are presented below.

#### In French

- Bachelard, G. (1933). *Les intuitions atomistiques: Essai de classification*. Paris: Boivin et Cie, Éditeurs.
- Bachelard, G. (1937). *L'expérience de l'espace dans la physique contemporaine*. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan.
- Bachelard, G. (1947). *La formation de l'esprit scientifique*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin.
- Bachelard, G. (1949). *La psychanalyse du feu*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Bachelard, G. (1961). *La poétique de l'espace* (3rd ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bachelard, G. (1963). *Le matérialisme rationnel*. Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bachelard, G. (1966). *Le rationalisme appliqué*. Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France.

- Bachelard, G. (1980). *Épistémologie* (3rd ed.). Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bachelard, G. (1988). *Fragments d'une poétique du feu* (Établissement du texte, avant-propos et notes par S. Bachelard). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bachelard, G. (2020). *Le nouvel esprit scientifique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

#### In English

- Bachelard, G. (1988). *The Flame of a Candle* (J. Caldwell, Trans.). Dattas: The Dattas Institute Publications, The Dattas Institute of Humanities and Culture.
- Bachelard, G. (2000). *The Dialectic of Duration* (M. McAllester Jones, Trans. & Annot.; Introduction by C. Chimisso). Manchester: Clinamen Press.
- Bachelard, G. (2002). *Earth and reveries of will* (K. Haltman, Trans.). Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.
- Bachelard, G. (2011). *Earth and reveries of repose* (M. McAllester Jones, Trans. & Annot.). Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications.
- Bachelard, G. (2013). *Intuition of the instant* (E. Rizo-Patron, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Bachelard, G. (2014). *On poetic imagination and reverie*. Spring Publications, Inc.

### Canguilhem's Corpus

Concordances for the lexeme *reading* were generated from the French-language books (4 books; corpus size: 198,000 tokens). No relevant fragments were identified, prompting the examination of hyponyms and hypernyms of *reading*.

Concordances for the word *text* were reviewed in the French-language corpus. Additionally, concordances for the frequent term *science* with the frequent collocation *history* were analyzed, as well as for the word *ideology* (semantically linked to the concept of science and the second most frequent collocation with *science*). Concordances were also generated for *object* (a frequent collocation of *science*) and *concept* with collocations such as *science*, *ideology*, and *term*.

- Canguilhem, G. (1952). *La connaissance de la vie*. Paris: Librairie Hachette.
- Canguilhem, G. (1958). Qu'est-ce que la psychologie?. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 63(1), 12-25.
- Canguilhem, G. (1966). *Le normal et le pathologique* (2nd ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Canguilhem, G. (2000). *Idéologie et rationalité dans l'histoire des sciences de la vie* (2nd ed., rev. & corr.). Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin.

### Cavaillès' Corpus

This was the most challenging analysis. First, Cavaillès did not use the lexeme *reading*. Second, working with frequent words and their collocations yielded no significant results due to several factors: a) the corpus is relatively small (2 works; corpus size: 173,000 tokens), b) it is conceptually underdeveloped (frequent words lack specific conceptual terms), and c) it focuses on mathematics, complicating the interpretation of its content.

As a result, the analysis shifted to examining hyponyms of *reading*, such as *science*, *theory*, *concept*, *term*, and so forth. Ultimately, the term *concept* provided the necessary results. The search trajectory unfolded as follows: *concept* led to the identification of the term *expérience mathématique* (mathematical experience), which in turn pointed to the phrase *situation mathématique* (mathematical situation). Further analysis included the concept *objet* with the frequent collocation *mathématique* and terms such as *corrélâ* (correlation), *geste* (gesture), and *dialecti* (dialectic).

- Cavaillès, J. (1994). *Œuvres complètes de philosophie des sciences* (présenté par B. Huisman). Paris : Hermann, éditeurs des sciences et des arts.
- Cavaillès, J., & Terrien, J. (1936). Philosophie des sciences. *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, 127(1/2), 108-119.

### Gueroult's Corpus

The corpus of Gueroult was compiled from 40 works (2.4 million tokens). Concordances were generated and summarized for the lexeme *reading* and key concepts, including: the phrase *histoire de [e,a] philosophe\**, the word *philosophe\*\** with the collocations *expérience*, *system*, *doctrine*, and *principe*, the phrase *philosophical experience*, the word *réalité* with the collocation *philosophique*, the phrase *idéisme radical*, and the word *method*.

- Guérout, M. (1926). La méditation de l'ame sur l'ame dans le "phédon". *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 33(4), 469-491.
- Guérout, M. (1926). Le système fichtéen de morale concrète d'après M. Gurwitsch. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 33(1), 127-133.
- Guérout, M. (1929). La philosophie transcendentale de Salomon Maimon. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan.
- Guérout, M. (1931). Le jugement de Hegel sur l'antithétique de la raison pure. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 38(3), 413-439.
- Guérout, M. (1931). Review. *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, 38(1), 129-131.
- Guérout, M. (1935). L'Odyssée de la conscience dans la dernière philosophie de Schelling d'après M. Jankelevitch. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 42(1), 77-105.
- Guérout, M. (1936). Vers une renaissance de l'idéalisme allemand: la philosophie d'Arnold Gehlen. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 43(2), 301-326.
- Guérout, M. (1938). Le IX E congrès international de philosophie (Paris, 31 juillet-7 aout 1937). *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 45(1), 105-126.
- Guérout, M. (1939). Étendue et psychologie chez Malebranche. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Guérout, M. (1946). L'espace, le point et le vide chez Leibniz. *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger*, 136(10/12), 429-452.
- Guérout, M. (1947). À propos du 3e centenaire de Leibniz: La constitution de la substance chez Leibniz. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 52(1), 55-78.
- Guérout, M. (1952). Émile Bréhier (1876-1952). *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 57(1), 114-116.
- Guérout, M. (1953). *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons. I: L'âme et Dieu*. Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne.
- Guérout, M. (1953). *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons. II: L'âme et le Corps*. Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne.
- Guérout, M. (1953). Dieu et la grammaire de la nature selon George Berkeley. *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie*, 3(3), 161-171.
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