

**PJC BOOK REVIEW 17**

***HISTORY TODAY RECOMMENDED BOOK OF 2014***

**Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Paris, 2013)**

**transl. A. Goldhammer**

**(Belknap Press of Harvard University Press,**

**Cambridge, Mass, 2014), pp. 696**

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Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* is a major study with significant implications for historians. As the Marx-echoing title suggests, it is a work of political economy, with radical implications. Yet there's more. Piketty not only analyses the comparative distribution of wealth since the eighteenth century (with complex data for historians to debate) but, simultaneously, denounces the current state of economics. In his view, the discipline has atrophied into a sterile set of mathematical models. Instead, it should re-tool and re-integrate with economic and social history. Piketty's trumpet blast constitutes one notable sign, among many others across the humanities and social sciences, of a desired return to long-term perspectives. The diachronic is back! At last, an intellectual shift which historians can welcome wholeheartedly.