**Abstracts**

**Fin de Siècle Theories of Invention: Originality and Chance**

*Susan Ashley*

Physiologist Théodule Armand Ribot and philosopher Frédéric Paulhan addressed a little-studied problem: how humans create. They entered a lively contemporary debate over what made a genius and, more broadly, what explained originality. While most investigators attributed genius to flukes of nature, nervous disorders, or unique individual gifts, Ribot and Paulhan made invention a normal activity of the brain. They normalized originality.

No one reasoned their way to new ideas, they argued. Nor did a creative instinct deliver novel insights. Rather, invention originated when the psyche created new syntheses to manage disruptive stimuli. By a largely unconscious and unpredictable process, these initial seeds developed into new ideas, objects, and actions.

Ribot and Paulhan based their theories on research about the structure and the operation of the brain. Their arguments also registered contemporary anxieties about the pace and direction of change. As they explained it, invention resulted from the psyche’s drive to produce balance and harmony. By managing disruption, creativity promoted individual mental health and society’s progress.

**Robert Michels and French Socialism and Syndicalism**

*Andrew Bonnell*

Robert Michels (1876-1936) is best known for his 1911 study of Political Parties, in which he propounded the thesis of the “iron law of oligarchy”, the argument that even democratic political parties eventually succumb to rule by an oligarchy of professional functionaries. Robert Michels’ involvement with French socialism has been less thoroughly researched than his activity in Germany and Italy. This article suggests, however, that his involvement in French socialism and syndicalism was significant for two reasons. First, it is relevant to debates on how to understand Michels’ own political and intellectual trajectory, from radical-left socialist in the early 1900s to a fascist under Mussolini. Second, Michels figures prominently in the debate around the work of Zeev Sternhell on the “left-wing origins of fascism”, in which Sternhell controversially interpreted the origins of fascist thought in heretical versions of Marxism in the early 1900s. A closer analysis of Michels’ involvement with the French left shows that his engagement with revolutionary syndicalism was largely vicarious, despite his sympathy for many syndicalist views. Michels’ correspondence with syndicalist Hubert Lagardelle also serves to highlight the lack of a working-class mass base for the revolutionary syndicalism represented by the journal *Le Mouvement Socialiste (The Socialist Movement)*.

**The Modern Classical Guitar and the French Revolution**

*Kirsty Carpenter*

The modern classical guitar developed its twentieth-century form during the years of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. This chapter reveals the link between émigrés as carriers of the French guitar culture as they dispersed across Europe, and the instrument’s growing appeal as an accessible and portable accompaniment to the voice. The role of émigrés in this development is an aspect of the instrument’s rise to popularity that is often neglected by musicologists. Royalist soldiers exported French guitar-playing methods and techniques with the armies of the counter-revolution, and civilian refugees secured a living from teaching. The collective result was not only to establish the guitar, but to make host societies familiar with an instrument that was enjoyed in private homes and concert venues in London, Paris, Vienna and Moscow long after 1815.

**Foreign Protestant Artisans in Eighteenth-Century Paris**

*David Garrioch*

After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the emigration of Protestants from France is well known. Much less recognized, despite some studies of foreigners in Paris, is Protestant migration in the other direction. Thousands of artisans from the Swiss cantons, the German states, England, the Low Countries and even Scandinavia, went to live and work in Paris, largely replacing the earlier flow of Italian artisans. This paper looks briefly at who these migrants were and at some of the reasons they were able to flourish in Paris. It concludes by placing this migration in the context of wider movements of artisans, pointing out that the relatively well-known *compagnonnages* were only part of the story. Borders were very porous in this period, and France in fact belonged to a variety of regional migration zones. But the attraction of Paris extended far further, even across religious boundaries. This enabled a cultural encounter, both through the presence of artisans of diverse origins and through the objects they made.

**“Fearful of Being Pursued”: Environmental Problems and Opportunities in Policing the Forests of Pre-Revolutionary France**

*Hamish Graham*

The forest guards and other officials who monitored and regulated the exploitation of trees and timber faced a range of significant problems in eighteenth-century France, as illustrated in the first-hand reports they drew up in the course of their duties. This article highlights some of those issues by introducing the notion of “environments of policing”. This obviously encompassed the legal and organizational environment in which forest guards operated, and also these men’s social environment. Such themes were clearly significant in shaping the effectiveness of woodland policing, and have understandably attracted the attention of previous scholars. However this article aims to take a wider view by going on to consider the natural environment where forestry officials worked — the trees, clearings, coppices, fields, moors, and riverbanks of the French countryside. These settings provided forest guards with policing challenges of a kind that were unknown to the urban police who have been the focus of most historians’ attention. Yet these men’s knowledge of the natural world could also help them to detect and solve environmental “crimes”. This study of rural law enforcement in eighteenth-century France thus contributes to our broader understanding of policing history.

**Ayant-été et ‘petit détail’ dans cinq mises en texte du réel de l’après-Shoah: P. Modiano, Y. Haenel, L. Binet, O. Guez et I. Jablonka**

*France Grenaudier-Klijn*

Si l’Histoire « introduit de l’intelligibilité dans la vie des disparus »[[1]](#footnote-1), tel est aussi le cas de la littérature lorsqu’elle s’appuie sur le réel/factuel, et cela tout particulièrement dans le contexte de l’après-Shoah. Partant du principe qu’histoire et littérature travaillent de concert et s’enrichissent mutuellement pour le plus grand bénéfice des lecteurs, cette contribution examine la place dévolue aux petits détails - indicateurs onomastiques et topographiques ; descriptions physiques (voix, gestuelle, apparence) - dans la représentation des ‘ayant-été’, notion conçue par Paul Ricœur pour désigner les êtres référentiels du passé. L’argumentaire est illustré par des exemples puisés à des parutions récentes de Patrick Modiano, Yannick Haenel, Laurent Binet, Olivier Guez, et Yvan Jablonka, ces textes étant eux-mêmes situés dans le contexte de l’historiographie et de la littérature post-Shoah dans la France contemporaine.

**Confiscations révolutionnaires et histoire des bibliothèques françaises : un « moment fondateur » à revisiter**

*Jean-Dominique Mellot*

L’historiographie française a le plus souvent présenté la Révolution comme un « moment fondateur » pour l’histoire des bibliothèques du pays. Dans cette optique, la création des bibliothèques municipales a été vue comme la conséquence directe et assumée des confiscations de collections communautaires et privées (émigrés) opérées dans les premières années de la Révolution. La Bibliothèque royale devenue nationale a été la principale bénéficiaire de ce gigantesque processus d’appropriation, qui a privilégié la centralisation des « trésors » bibliographiques, manuscrits notamment. Mais qu’en a-t-il été en province ? L’image retenue a été celle d’un « patrimoine libéré » et mis au service d’un plus large public, mais en oubliant le plus souvent que maintes bibliothèques confisquées (celles par exemple des chapitres cathédraux et des académies provinciales) avaient déjà un caractère explicitement public. La disparition des bibliothèques et institutions existantes au profit d’une seule institution embryonnaire par ville, l’absence de réel projet, la priorité donnée à la gestion improvisée de « dépôts » concentrant des dizaines de milliers de volumes ont généralement abouti, en pratique, à priver pour longtemps le public des départements de l’accès aux collections de livres « mis sous la main de la Nation ».

Le recul historique permet aujourd’hui de revisiter le mythe fondateur des bibliothèques françaises. Et ce à la lumière de travaux des dernières décennies, dont une histoire, en cours de publication, des bibliothèques de la ville de Rouen des origines à nos jours (*Histoire des bibliothèques de Rouen*, sous la direction de Marie-Françoise Rose, Rouen, 2019).

**The Six 68s of Daniel Cohn-Bendit**

*Ben Mercer*

Daniel Cohn-Bendit was a key figure in the student revolts of May-June 1968 in France. This article traces how Cohn-Bendit represents the meaning and experience of 1968 in the fifty years since the events. At least six different “68s” can be distinguished: a revolutionary 1968, a 1968 of individual emancipation, a democratic 1968, a modernizing 1968, a global (primarily cultural) 1968, and a negative (violent and misogynist) 1968. This article traces how Cohn-Bendit derives each these 68s from the events, often at the expense of the precise historical context. The subjective experience in 1968 of making history, and of an event that prefigured the future, accounts for the way in which the “68 moment” can be almost endlessly reinvented.

**The French Elaboration of Ideas about Menopause, Sexuality, and Ageing 1805-1920**

*Alison M. Downham Moore*

This article examines a range of moral views about sexuality and menopause espoused both by doctoral candidates and mature clinicians in France throughout the long nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century French doctors rarely considered that ageing resulted in a loss of libido, and instead worried about the nefarious effects of sexual stimulation on ageing bodies. But they also commonly considered that post-menopausal women were likely to be nymphomaniacs, and that they - and indeed men in the ‘critical age’ too - tended more than ever toward sexual perversions. This article considers to what extent the new symptomatology of menopause should be attributed purely to these new discursive trends. It considers whether the changes in bodily lifeways associated with industrialisation may also have played a role in greater patient reportage of menopause symptoms among urban French women of the 1800s.

**Frigidity, Curses, and Imagination: Thinking the Absence of Male Desire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries**

*Marion Philip*

In comparison with the contemporary injunction of sexuality and the association between low desire and womanhood, normative discourses of the two last centuries of Old Regime France insisted more on the malfunctioning of desire in men than in women. Within a Christian emphasis on the procreative purpose of sexuality, husbands were shaped to fulfil their marital duty, and to be sexually active. Marital status gave them power inside and outside their household, which was desired by young or single men. Not every man could reach the virile ideal of marital manhood. Not every man could be a patriarch. An exceptional case of marriage annulment, from the archives of the Parisian Church Court forms the basis of this article’s reflection on early modern sexual expectations of a husband. The presumed impotent man clearly expressed his will to the ecclesiastic judges to have a chaste marriage, and adopted a very rare position. Queer Theory can help to understand better the subtleties of dominant norms of the time. Canon law, legal and medical discourses, together with Church Court cases can reveal how expressions of low masculine desire were seen. This article shows how normative justifications of male lack of desire changed and followed a process of rationalisation and naturalisation between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These evolutions show how important it is to consider desire as a legitimate subject for research.

**Construire les ponts en Savoie au XVIIe siècle: les voyages techniques d’un ingénieur du duché de Savoie dans la France de Louis XIV (1670-1672)**

*Patricia Subirade*

L’étude de la construction de ponts dans le duché de Savoie par l’architecte et ingénieur ducal François Cuenot dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle s’inscrit dans le renouvellement récent de l’histoire des savoirs qui promeut une approche anthropologique attentive notamment à la matérialité des savoirs, à leur inscription et leur circulation dans l’espace à différentes échelles. Cuenot appartient à la dernière génération d’ingénieurs avant la professionnalisation du XVIIIe siècle qui s’amorce à la fin du XVIIe siècle. L’ingénieur savoyard est envoyé en mission d’étude technique sur les chantiers français de construction de ponts à Paris et à Lyon, au service d’un Etat qui articule une politique économique mercantiliste avec le patronage technique. Ses écrits permettent de construire une topo-géographie du savoir technique de la construction des ponts à l’époque de Colbert : chantiers des entrepreneurs architectes parisiens sur la Seine et lieux institutionnels du savoir comme les Académies des sciences et d’Architecture en constituent les pôles. En outre les voyages de Cuenot montrent remettent en question la séparation entre savoirs pratiques du chantier de construction et savoirs savants. L’ingénieur est à l’origine de transferts techniques en Savoie, qui sont une adaptation des savoirs français aux conditions locales et aux torrents savoyards.

**France and New Zealand: A Post-World War I Trade-Based Relationship?**

*Alistair Watts*

As World War I drew to a close it was obvious that the relationship between Great Britain and her former colonies had altered. Independent status was recognised through the independent adoption by the New Zealand Parliament of the Treaty of Versailles. The French diplomatic and trade mission of 1918-19 attempted to work within the newly evolving constitutional arrangements through direct engagement on the not unreasonable premise that a direct relationship would now be needed to retain and develop commercial, cultural and consular links.

The mission’s visit exposed an awkward overlap between New Zealand’s wartime British dependent foreign policy and full independence. This conflicted status extended to trade policy as the French offer of an alternative market for New Zealand wool was spurned in favour of supplying the British market with dairy produce. This paper explores the (inadvertent) French participation in this debate.

1. Jablonka *L’Histoire est une,* 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)