Jacques Roger, Historian of Science

Claude BLANCKAERT

This article is devoted to Jacques Roger's conception of the history of science and its methodological basis. It analyses his views about the scientific changes in internal research programs, personal innovations, « intellectual families », with reference to external social institutions and the common scientific context. Jacques Roger defended, before Michel Foucault, the principle of the « otherness » of the past. Nevertheless, he didn't agree with the structuralists' criticism of philosophical humanism and the so-called « death of the author » of the 1960's. He refuted the idea of some historical discontinuities in the development of science, the dichotomy between science and ideology as a research tool, and the closely related idea of a teleological history of science oriented toward the present. This article concluded with some remarks about his epistemological and personal humanism.

*The Western Revolution According
to Auguste Comte : Between History and Utopia*

Annie PETIT

For Auguste Comte, the French Revolution is the apogee of a process which has been upsetting the West since the end of the Middle Ages. He claims to be its heir and, at the same time, wishes to put an end to this « negative » state of anarchy so as to establish an « organic », positivistic and peaceful Republic.

We study here how Comte intends to prepare the future on the basis of an analysis of the past. We also examine several aspects of his historical method, his models of thought, and how he understands utopia as a scientific hypothesis.

*Positivism Between Revolution
and Counter-Revolution : Comte and J. de Maistre*

Pierre MACHEREY

Whenever Auguste Comte refers to the work of Joseph de Maistre, this fact has a basically critical meaning; it has nothing to do with the founder of « Philosophie positive » rallying the ideals of counter-revolution.

*Popular Astronomy :
A Philosophical Concern
and a Political Project*

Bernadette BENSAUDE-VINCENT

*The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, to reassess the significance of the *Traité philosophique d'astronomie populaire*, written in 1844, within the whole framework of Auguste Comte's career. Though Comte presented this didactic volume as a minor work, overshadowed by the preliminary discourse, the *Discours préliminaire sur l'esprit positif*, separately published, he nevertheless delivered popular and free lectures on astronomy once a week during seventeen years. Teaching popular astronomy to Parisian workers was in fact a major task for spreading the new philosophy and preparing new alliances for the *Société positiviste* while Comte more and more criticized the overspecialization and narrow empiricism of the professional scientists.*

The second purpose is to question, from a historical point of view, the possible relationships between Comte's sharp criticisms of academic science and the jacobin attitude towards science in general and especially the academies during the French Revolution.

Auguste Comte, the Cogito and Modernity

Frédéric DE BUZON

*A. Comte regarded Descartes as his main precursor. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the contradictory aspect of the cartesian revolution in the development of Comte's work, in relation to his interest in cartesian mathematics (from the point of view of subjectivity) and his criticism of the cogito in the « *Synthèse subjective* ».*

*Theory of Knowledge and Theory of the Sciences
in the Work of Auguste Comte.
Note on Comte's Originality*

Johan HEILBRON

Against the tendency to reduce the work of Comte to his « positivism », it is argued that a distinction should be made between his theory of knowledge and his theory of the sciences. Whereas this theory of knowledge does not seem particularly original, Comte's theory of the sciences is regarded as a major intellectual innovation. Being one of the very first historical and differential theories of science, it has played a major role in the shaping of French epistemology.