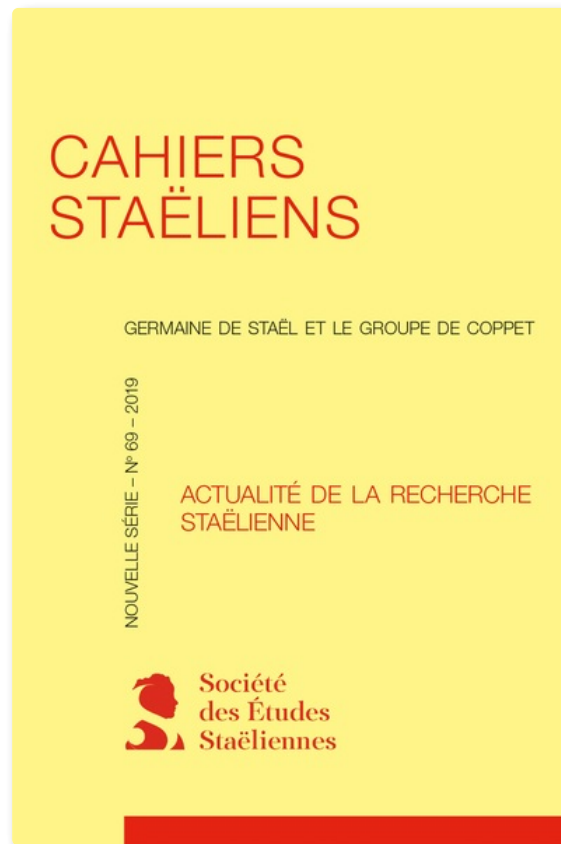




Germaine de Staël and “the terrible weapon of the ridiculous”

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Abstract: The “ridiculous” occupies an important place in de Staël’s work and thought. However, it has a different meaning than it did in the Classical era, and no longer sanctions character violations: it is now closer to a sense of perspicacity, and an interpretation of the social game. De Staël approaches it from a sociological and political perspective: Why is the ridiculous associated with monarchy? What becomes of the ridiculous under the Empire, and what is its relation to women and opponents of the Empire?

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