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REVIEW ESSAY: TRANSLATING STENDHAL'S *LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR*

Stendhal, *Red and Black: A Chronicle of 1830*, translated by Raymond N. MacKenzie, University of Minnesota Press, 2022. 554 pp. $24.95.

— *The Red and the Black: A Chronicle of 1830*, Translated by Burton Raffel, Introduction by Diane Johnson, Notes by James Madden, Penguin/Random House, Modern Library Classics, 2003. 524 pp. Plus unnumbered Reading Group Guide. $15.

— *The Red and The Black*, translated by Roger Gard, Penguin Classics, 2002, 575 pp. $11.

— *The Red and the Black: Chronicle of 1830*, Translated by Robert M. Adams, Edited by Susanna Lee, A Norton Critical Edition, 1969. Second Edition, 2008, 631 pp. $19.37.

Le Rouge et le noir has long been considered one of the classic novels of the 19th century. It is always good to see new translations of a classic appear in print, for older translations tend to age. And now Raymond N. MacKenzie, who has an impressive list of translations from the French, most recently his fine versions of Balzac,[1] has just published a translation of Stendhal's great novel, again handsomely produced by the University of Minnesota Press. Still, anyone who cares about world literature will regret that in the paltry 2% of books published in America devoted to translations of foreign works, so little of it is devoted to contemporary prose and poetry from other languages, compared to well-recognized classics. Since Dorothy Sayers' 1962 version, there have been over fifty translations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* published in English, whether whole or of one of the three canticles; I'm sure there were far fewer collections of contemporary Italian poetry—not to mention French, or Japanese, or Turkish—published in America over those years.

Be that as it may, MacKenzie's new translation of Stendhal is a welcome contribution to French literature in English. A look at F. Scott Moncrieff's 1926 *The Red and the Black*, for example, shows us why

[1] See *Metamorphoses*, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021.

new translations are so necessary. Moncrieff's version can serve as a model for what translators should *not* do when they try to render Stendhal into English. His expansive, free, poetic style of translation has some value for Proust. The well-known title *The Remembrance of Things Past* is simply Moncrieff's invention, as is *The Sweet Cheat Gone* for one book of Proust's novel, but they are fine inventions. This does not work for Stendhal. As V.S. Pritchett says, Stendhal has "the sting of a dry, clear, plain, and caustic prose style and a personal manner."[2] The translator needs to keep both the style and the manner. MacKenzie, Raffel and Gard write economical prose that does this as well as one could ask. Here is a short, random passage in Moncrieff: "Such was the effect of the force, and, if I may use the word, of the magnitude of the waves of passion on which the heart of this ambitious youth was being tossed. In this strange creature every day was one of storm."[3] Compare to MacKenzie (69):

"Such was the strength, or, if I may use the term, the grandeur of the tides of passion seething within this ambitious young man. For this extraordinary creature, every day was a tempest." Forty-three words in Moncrieff, thirty-three in MacKenzie. Moncrieff's "magnitude" makes no sense in light of Stendhal's interjection, unusual for him, "if I may say so"; MacKenzie's "grandeur" (*grandeur* in the original) is exactly right. Instead of Moncrieff's stuffy, clumsy "on which the heart of. . . was being tossed" we have two expressive words: "seething within." The simpler "young man" replaces "youth"—and so on, throughout the novel.

There are a number of available modern translations of this surprisingly quirky "classic" by notable scholar-translators. Burton Raffel (1928-2015) won acclaim for his translations of classics from various languages and also wrote about them; Robert Martin Adams (1915-1996), who wrote illuminating, lively studies of French literature, produced a serviceable, well-annotated translation of *Candide* and a much admired version of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Roger Gard (d. 2000), who published books on Henry James and Jane Austen and edited books of criticism, translated Alfred de Vigny's *Servitude et Grandeur Militaire* as "The Servitude and Grandeur of Arms." It is interesting to see how all these qualified translators attempted to bring Stendhal's novel into English, in addition to the distinguished Professor MacKenzie, for *Le Rouge et le noir* poses a variety of problems for the translator. It is playful and tricky in many ways. Most of the "quotations" in epigraph at the head

[2] *New York Review of Books*, November 6, 1969.

[3] C.K. Scott-Moncrieff, The Modern Library, 1926, 1953, p. 86.

of each chapter attributed to various European authors were invented by Stendhal, for example. The novelist himself intervenes in various voices, once to inform us that his publisher told him to cut the chapter we are about to read. The novel is Romantic and anti-Romantic: it is full of Romantic tropes, but some are parodied, so that they verge on high comedy. It is also moving, and finally tragic. While solidly grounded in historical reality (the first work of European literature in which the hero's story is "fully integrated into the social and political context of his time"),[4] peppered with social and political satire, the novel's major characters display wildly changing passions. Despite its deceptively clear prose, it is an enigmatic work.

Take the title: the traditional title in English for *Le Rouge et le noir* is simply *The Red and the Black*, commonly understood to suggest the two careers open to Julien Sorel, the young lower-class, provincial protagonist who will try to make it in high society: the military (red) and the Church (black.) But this makes no sense: French military uniforms were blue; red was the color of the British. The older Penguin translation by Margaret Shaw has *Scarlet and Black*, which stresses the confusion still more and takes an unnecessary liberty: *rouge* = red, *écarlate* = scarlet. Some have argued that red and black refer to the colors of a roulette table, as success or failure is partly a matter of luck. Or a chessboard: it's a matter of strategy.[5] MacKenzie's *Red and Black* combines the usual title with Shaw's omission of the article. He justifies it by saying "Stendhal's title is deliberately a little opaque, a little enigmatic, and to my ear *Red and Black*, being less familiar, regains a bit of that strangeness."[6] True enough. But it's hard to get the well-known title out of one's head. For one thing, it is more sonorous. And MacKenzie's title doesn't feel quite right in English: a Clint Eastwood Western, for example, is called *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, after all, not *Good, Bad, and Ugly.*

Margaret Shaw's subtitle is *A Chronicle of the Nineteenth Century*, as one French edition has it. Most translations, and all those under review, use the subtitle from other editions: *A Chronicle of 1830.* (At any rate, since Penguin has replaced Shaw's 1953 translation with Roger Gard's, it is less easily available and will not be reviewed here.) The date is important: that's the year the regime whose society is described

[4] Roger Pearson, paraphrasing Auerbach (see below), in *Stendhal's Violin*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, p. 70.

[5] "That's the way of the world," a character Julien admires tells him, "It's a chess game." (*Ainsi va le monde, c'est une partie d'échecs*) Book II, Chapter 9.

[6] Private correspondence.

in this novel—the Bourbon Restoration—was overthrown. After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, the European monarchies intervened in France and restored to power the old line of French kings and their aristocracy that had been displaced by the Revolution and Napoleon. One of the problems for a modern reader might be that Julien does not see Napoleon as the emperor who ended the Revolution and led his country into wars that lost close to a million French lives. As some did at the time, he sees in him the continuation of the Revolution and a chance for a talented man to win glory—a chance now stifled by the Bourbon regime. He dreams of Napoleon's young generals, some of whom came from the lower classes. And he must, of course, keep this admiration absolutely secret if he wants to succeed in Restoration France.

I'm fairly sure most American readers would know little or none of this without notes and a helpful introduction. Sometimes we absolutely need a note. For example, the absence of a note for "Monsieur de Maistre" in all these editions is truly regrettable. We learn that Julien knows his work by heart. Joseph de Maistre was the leading philosopher of the Counter-Enlightenment, an exponent of the divine right of kings, and how many readers will know that? This is important, for Julien, who admires lively writers and self-made men, not hereditary monarchs, finds him boring, but has studied him in order to play his hypocritical role in this society, like an actor playing Molière's Tartuffe who studies a religious tract to prepare.[7] Most such allusions—not all, as you can see—are duly noted in all the books under review, although they are sometimes less useful in Adams: we see only the dates for Ronsard, for example, the putative author of an epigraph of one chapter, whereas MacKenzie's endnote gives the dates and tells you, typically, he "was one of France's greatest poets, but this quotation is unlikely to be anything he ever wrote." (538.) Gard's is similar. No note in Raffel for this, but Ronsard has no importance for the novel, unlike de Maistre. All but Raffel have numbered notes after words on the page we're reading. Despite the lapse for de Maistre, MacKenzie's and Gard's editions fairly bristle with numbers that send you to their endnotes, all of them excellent. However, do we really want to see those numbers when we read a novel? This is not a scholarly monograph, but a work of fiction. The Modern Library edition (Raffel) does not number them in the body of the text—surely a better solution: if we're puzzled by something and want to learn about it, we can turn to the back of the book and easily find the note. MacKen-

[7] Julien is not a hypocrite, as some have said. He *acts* the hypocrite.

zie's and Gard's notes numbered in the body of the text oblige us to turn to the back of the book anyway. And Raffel occasionally adds helpful information in the text itself, but tactfully: when Stendhal says one of the aristocrats tells anecdotes about the court of Charles IX, for example, Raffel inserts "*the sixteenth century* court of Charles IX." (242). That's all we really need to know.

As for the introduction, first-time readers do not need a *literary* introduction, an essay that helps us better appreciate the novel. That, it seems to me, is useful once we have read the book. Three pages into his introduction, MacKenzie says just that: "I would urge readers new to the book to read this introduction after they've finished the novel itself" (ix). Why, then, does he place his essay at the beginning of the book instead of using it as an afterword? This said, sections three and four of his introduction are quite pertinent—"France in the Restoration Era" and "Religion, Politics, Revolution"—and extremely useful, although perhaps a bit too detailed for the average reader. "Writing and Revolution" is also placed at the end of the introduction to the Adams translation,[8] but does not provide a short, systematic summary of the period in which the novel is set. Gard's introduction is literary and biographical, but gives us, in passing, a quick, casual summary of the Restoration and the revolution that ended it. Diane Johnson's fine literary introduction to the Raffel translation would make an excellent afterword, but if readers want a sketch of the historical background, they must find it in fragmented form in the notes.

What readers need is a short *historical* introduction. The social and political conditions of the time, essential in order to understand why the characters act as they do, will not be evident to most Americans. For example, the boredom which afflicts Julien in the Hôtel de la Mole, the great aristocratic house to which the brilliant young man is admitted as secretary in Book II, is a historically determined boredom.[9] The Bourbon regime made an inadequate attempt to restore conditions that had long been obsolete. *Le Rouge et le noir* shows the atmosphere of pure convention, of constraint and lack of freedom, that this produced in the ruling classes. In these salons the things which interest everyone—the political and religious problems of the present, and consequently most of the sub-

[8] Regrettably, it is not entirely clear if it is the translator's introduction. Martin M. Adams has written well about French literary history, but is listed only as translator. Susanna Lee is listed as editor, but the introduction is not signed.

[9] Erich Auerbach first pointed this out in *Mimesis* (1953). The following is based on his analysis, reproduced in The Norton Critical Edition, pp. 472-75.

jects of its literature—cannot be discussed; life is governed by the fear that the catastrophe of 1793, when aristocrats were routinely guillotined, might be repeated. (This fear constantly affects Julien's lover, the haughty Mathilde de la Mole, though in unusual ways. If we are unaware of this, the character, who is already quite eccentric, will seem totally mad.) "As these people no longer themselves believe in the thing they represent, they choose to talk of nothing but the weather, court gossip and music."[10] As Stendhal puts it in Gard's elegant translation, "The slightest vital idea would seem glaringly vulgar." (267). And, just afterward, in Raffel's excellent version of the sentence, "Young people who came because it was their duty, terrified at the prospect of saying anything that might dimly resemble an idea, or that might disclose their knowledge of a banned book, said a few elegant words about the weather, and then said nothing at all." (241.) It is worth examining in some detail how the chapter in which Julien is introduced to this world is handled by the translations under review, both because it offers a sampling of the strengths and weaknesses of each and because it is a world he will inhabit for most of the second part of the novel.

It is called "The Hôtel de la Mole" in all these translations but one, and *L'Hôtel de la Mole* in French. Raffel calls it "The de la Mole Mansion", which shows how alert he is. The 17th and 18th century *hôtels* in Paris are not hotels, as an uninformed reader might think, but large aristocratic town houses. And the Hôtel de la Mole has grounds, a garden, and many rooms. It is a mansion. With few exceptions, the tone of the chapter is one of scornful irony from beginning to end, a tone shared by the young aristocrats who gather around Mademoiselle de la Mole to mock the bores and hypocrites who frequent the salon. Boredom is only relieved by venom, directed by one guest, for example, at "the greatest poet of the age." (Adams, 215.) All the translations convey this tone; it is almost impossible not to. Adams, however, has a slightly stiff style, unlike Stendhal. Part of the stiffness comes from its "Frenchness." True, we're in nineteenth-century France and we need to be aware of it (Monsieur de la Mole should not be called "Mr. Mole")[11] but French

[10] Auerbach (edited for conciseness).

[11] Of course. But titles often pose the problem of leaving things in the French or anglicizing them. Should *l'abbé Pirard*, an important minor character, be called Abbé Pirard or Father Pirard? Adams keeps the French, Raffel has "Father Pirard" throughout. I like MacKenzie's solution: Julien learns something "from Father Pirard" (260), but when he asks to be relieved of his attendance at those boring dinners, we see "The abbé, a true man of upward mobility himself, was only too aware of the honor of dining with

punctuation and syntax in English diminish our sense of Stendhal's directness and natural manner. Adams writes dialogue as the French do: no quotation marks, but dashes preceding each spoken paragraph. (So does Gard, but he is rarely stiff.) He speaks of barons M. de la Mole had known "during the emigration" (209), which sounds mysterious, translating the French *pendant l'émigration* word for word. MacKenzie and Gard do slightly better by capitalizing "the Emigration" (259, 268), so we can guess it's an important historical event. Raffel explains in the text, as he often does: "during their exile, during the Revolution" (242) Perhaps the repetition of "during" could have been avoided, but it sounds like English and we understand what's going on. Of the four translations of this chapter, Raffel's and Gard's are the ones that sound most natural to me and best convey Stendhal's tone, with MacKenzie's a close second. Other readers may prefer one or the other; they are all quite good.

The devil is in the details, as we know. Raffel often takes small liberties in his translation which help communicate the idea of the text more naturally—the mark of a skilled translator. Adams usually renders the text quite acceptably. In the sentence that lists the many forbidden subjects of criticism in the drawing room of the Hôtel de la Mole, his "the establishment" is probably the best translation of *tout ce qui est établi* (264) along with Gard's "any established institution". MacKenzie's "anything of long standing" (258) would normally be fine, but the Restoration has only been around for less than fifteen years, and that's (mostly) what is *établi*. There is, however, a tendency in Adams to take liberties that are simply wrong or at best correct, but inelegant. One example of the latter: when Stendhal tells us no high income or noble decoration could *lutter contre une telle charte de salon*, Raffel writes "had the power to oppose the de La Mole's house rules" (241)—a clever translation, exactly right, in natural English. MacKenzie has "can stand up to a salon charter like this one" (258). Now, Stendhal's *charte* would be on everyone's mind in France, as the *Charte* with a capital C had established the institutions of the Restoration, but I think "charter" here is less immediately clear to an American reader than MacKenzie usually is. Adams' "that can prevail against a salon so constituted" (208) gets the idea, but is stiff and clunky, a fault that mars his translation again

a great lord." (*Ibid*.) On the other hand, a "man of upward mobility" is a bad translation of *véritable parvenu*: like "abbé," "parvenu" is actually an English word and it means someone who "has risen" (Merriam Webster) to his new position, not someone who is moving upward. Gard's "self-made man" (269) does not give us the right idea, either. Adams' simple "a real parvenu" (210) seems best.

and again. (Here, Gard's "a salon constituted like this" [267] is only slightly better.) Another example: in Book I, when Julien relies on what his friend Fouqué has told him about love, Adams writes "Relying on confidences made him by Fouqué," (70), where MacKenzie has simply "After Fouqué's confidences," (85). Sometimes Adams is a bit less clear than the other translations, too. Julien takes notes on the people he finds in the de la Mole drawing rooms and puts a half dozen frequent guests "at the top of his page" (MacKenzie, 257) or "on the first line" (Raffel, 240); "First on his list," (Gard, 266). Adams' "in the first rank" (207) is ambiguous and just after that, he fails to render the full irony of Stendhal's *à la louange de cette classe d'hommes* (in praise of) these people, and writes "on behalf of". Further on, we have *cinq ou six complaisants*: we see "five or six trucklers" in Adams (208), which is awful; "house dependants" in Gard (268), which is true, but seems oddly put; and "flatterers" in Raffel (241), which is acceptable. MacKenzie's "hangers-on" (258) is better still, for that's what they are here. And so on. Adams is not only stiffer than the other translations, he is often less exact. On the other hand, when Julien wants to escape the boredom of these dinners by dining in some obscure inn for *quarante sous*, I think anyone likely to read this will understand Adams' and MacKenzie's' "forty-sou dinner" (210, 260). One wonders why Raffel rendered it by "forty pence" (243): we're not in England! (Even Gard, who was English, writes "dine for forty sous" (269).) No translation is perfect.

One interesting detail shows MacKenzie and Gard at their best. As the Marquise de La Mole can't stand solitude, the emblem of *disgrace* for a lady of her caste, *le marquis était parfait pour sa femme*, for "he saw to it that her salon was well stocked" (MacKenzie, 258). He renders *était parfait pour sa femme* as "The Marquis behaved perfectly toward his wife." And Gard: "The Marquis' behaviour toward his wife was exemplary." (267) Note the precision. Contrast Adams' "The marquis was exactly suited to his wife" (208) and Raffel's "was exactly right for his wife" (241). Both seems to me hasty readings: the marquis is intelligent, which is why he is attracted to Julien, as we discover later, and his wife is not. He is hardly "well suited" to her, or "exactly right for" her. She bores him, but he *behaves* perfectly toward her. This is typical of his character: he is always scrupulously polite.[12] In the context of the novel, Stendhal's *parfait* has a subtle ironic undertone and only MacKenzie and Gard have sensed it.

[12] Later, he will show his newfound respect for Julien by being *extremely* polite to him—when Julien wears blue, at the Marquis' request, not his clerical black.

Chapter 16 of Book II gives us a memorable scene, Romantic and comic at once, and poses some interesting problems for the translator. The romantic young Mathilde de la Mole wants to see if Julien is as brave as the heroes of old and has asked him to climb up to her bedroom on a moonlit night by means of a ladder propped against her window. He is terrified (is this a plot to ridicule him? or could he be shot as an intruder?), but driven by the heroic image he has of himself, performs the act successfully. Once there, "Julien was deeply embarrassed" (MacKenzie, 346; Raffel, 324); ". . .extremely embarrassed" (Gard, 354); Adams has the stiffer "much embarrassed", 282) and thinks "he ought to do something daring, so he leaned over and tried to embrace Mathilde." (MacKenzie); fewer details in Raffel. "In his embarrassment he thought he must be bold, and tried to put his arms round Mathilde" (Gard, 354). *Fi donc!* she says, an archaic expression well rendered by Adams as "Come now!" but he adds "thrusting him away", better done by Raffel as "'For shame!' she said, pushing him away." (Gard is almost identical.) MacKenzie: "'Oh! No, Monsieur!' she said, pushing him away." Simpler, but "Monsieur" adds the older, aristocratic touch. A little later, in a burst of feeling, she suddenly addresses him spontaneously in the familiar form, *tu* in French. Adams explains it, rather stuffily: "she had used the grammatical form of intimacy and this singular pronoun made him lose his head" (283) and so does Raffel, but better: "suddenly, devastatingly, changing to a pronoun implying familiarity, even intimacy." (326). Adding the adverb "devastatingly" makes the explanation work. MacKenzie is simpler, and assumes we know some French: "She had called him *tu*, and that made him lose his head." (348.) Gard: "...addressing him as *tu*", (356) with an explanatory endnote. Different readers may judge these choices differently.

If you google *The Red and the Black*, you may well come upon this: "People ask What is the best translation of The Red and the Black?" It's a stupid question. There is no "best translation," as you can see from the above. Except for older translations like Moncrieff's or the occasional incompetent translator—there are some—all translations have their strengths and weaknesses. And personal preference plays a part in such judgments. The last time I looked, there was just one anonymous post that "answers" the question of "the best translation" (see how unreliable the Internet can be), in part by attacking Raffel for being too contemporary. But that actually raises an interesting question, and its corollary. How contemporary and how English or American should we make a

nineteenth-century French text? And how is it that we generally find older translations unsatisfactory? (Unless we feel nostalgia for them, like the Constance Garnett translations of Russian classics, the first ones older people have read.) There are no simple answers to these questions.

The posted quotation from Raffel prejudiced me against him before I read his translation. "'If you give me twenty francs,'" a visitor says to Julien, who is waiting to be guillotined, "'I'll tell you, in detail, the story of my life. It's a blast.'" When you hear "It's a blast," it is impossible to think of 1830 France: we're in contemporary America. True, Raffel more tactfully modernizes the rest of the passage, and he has reasons for his *blast*. The French word he's translating is nineteenth-century slang in the sense it is used here, not ordinary speech. Stendhal italicizes it and so does Raffel. To me, "blast" is still too contemporary. The middle way is best: the translation should sound natural in our English, but it should not place us squarely in today's New York or Noho. Let's look at these lines in detail, as they show some of the strengths and weaknesses of each translation.

> *Le geôlier lui amena deux galériens tombés en récidive et qui se préparaient à retourner au bagne. C'était des scélérats fort gais et réellement très remarquables par la finesse, le courage et le sang-froid. – Si vous me donnez vingt francs, dit l'un d'eux à Julien, je vous conterai ma vie en détail. C'est du* chenu*.*

> The jailer brought in two convicts, who had fallen back into their old ways and were getting ready to return to the penitentiary. They were the gayest of rascals, and really quite remarkable for their sharpness, their courage, and their calm collectedness. "If you give me twenty francs," one of them said to Julien, "I'll tell you, in detail, the story of my life. It's a *blast*." (Raffel, 475.)

> The jailer brought in two ex-convicts who had reoffended and were waiting to be returned to the penal colony. These two were a pair of cheerful good-for-nothings who were actually rather remarkable for their skills, their courage, their perfect cool-headed-

> ness. "If you give me twenty francs," one of them said to Julien, I'll tell you my life story in detail. It's a top-shelf tale! (MacKenzie, 507).

> The jailer brought him two galley slaves condemned as second offenders and preparing for another term in the hulks. They were a pair of merry scoundrels, really quite remarkable for their cunning, courage, and self-possession. – If you give me twenty francs, one of them told Julien, I'll tell you my whole life story. It's a real hairy tale. (Adams, 409.)

> The gaoler[13] led in two recidivists, just about to be sent back to the galleys. These were two sprightly villains, really remarkable for their cleverness, courage, and reserve. – If you slip me twenty francs, said one of them to Julien, I will tell you the story of my life in detail. It is delicious. (Gard, 521)

Adams' "galley slaves" is closer to the 1829 French[14] than Raffel and MacKenzie, although "slaves" is not quite right. The men have been condemned to the galleys as punishment; for their second offense, they may possibly have been condemned to the "hulks," (Adams) which sounds British rather than French (think Magwitch in *Great Expectations*) but they were clearly condemned to forced labor; the *bagne* was any prison where that was performed. MacKenzie's "penal colony," while quite possible, is a bit of a stretch and his "skills" is not equivalent to the French *finesse*. Raffel's "penitentiary" makes one think of a federal prison in America. Overall, however, I think Raffel captures the light tone of the passage quite well. So does Gard, and more concisely—a truly admirable rendering.

Generally, inserting contemporary slang into an older novel seems to me a bad idea. Fortunately, and contrary to Modern Library advertisements boasting that Raffel "blasts Stendhal into the twenty-

[13] Gard uses British usage and spelling throughout.

[14] This *chronique de 1830* was mostly written in 1829.

first century" (ouch!) there are few instances of that kind of thing in his translation. Stendhal writes clear, natural-sounding French. Raffel writes clear, natural-sounding English, rather "dry," to use Pritchett's word, than full of slangy juice. The same is true, of course, for MacKenzie, Gard, and although to a lesser extent, Adams.[15]

Of the translations under review, I would recommend Raffel's, Gard's and MacKenzie's. A final comment on Gard. It is obviously a British translation, and good British translations have some advantages when dealing with the nobility. The Marquis' manners are always "impeccably fine" in Gard (267), is surely better than Raffel's "perfectly polite" (240). On the other hand, I confess it took me a few seconds to understand his "blue riband" (269)—a "blue ribbon" in MacKenzie (258). Raffel clarifies, as usual, an excellent idea here: "the highest decoration awarded by the state" (241). One more example: the hangers-on in the Hôtel de la Mole "made up to [Julien] on the offchance" (Gard, 266); Mackenzie's they "were nice to him just in case" (257) is instantly clearer to any American and utterly natural.

The new Minnesota edition is on better paper than the Modern Library's and the well-spaced lines make it easy to read, but the latter has slightly larger and darker print, if that matters to you. It is also less expensive, lighter and smaller, easier to take on a trip. The Penguin Classics edition (Gard) is also on cheaper paper and the lines of print are set more closely together. The Adams translation, which I think is the worst of the four, is acceptable nonetheless and the book has its advantages, especially for professors: a Norton Critical Edition, it has an excellent collection of essays on Stendhal's classic at the back of the book, from Auerbach's "In the Hôtel de la Mole" to Shoshana Felman on madness in Stendhal, to Peter Brooks' "The Novel and the Guillotine," and so on.

Stendhal knew English. In *Le Rouge et le noir*, he quotes Shakespeare, and Byron's *Don Juan* in the original and famously ends *La Chartreuse de Parme*, his other masterpiece, by dedicating it "to the happy few"—*en anglais dans le texte*, as the French say. I imagine that if he were alive today, he would be pleased to see his work brought into English so well by such gifted, diligent and scholarly translators.

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[15] Adams and MacKenzie do go overboard at least once, in my view. When Julien asks Mathilde how he is to escape from her bedroom—playfully, to hide his unease—he says *Et comment moi m'en aller?* in "Creole" French. Adams: "And how me gwine *get* away?" (283.) MacKenzie; "But how me gwan get down?" (347). Gard is fine "And how me get away?" (355) and Raffel is perfect: "And how me go 'way?" (325.)