

STAEL, TRANSLATION, AND RACE

Françoise Massardier-Kenney

Germaine de Staël (1766-1817) is the only major woman author of the nineteenth century, with the exception of George Sand, who has managed to break through the silence in literary history surrounding women's writing during that time. Still, until recently her reputation has rested mostly on having introduced German Romanticism in France in *De l'Allemagne* (1810), on her opposition to Napoleon, and on her affair with Benjamin Constant, which he fictionalized in *Adolphe*. Her works have been hard to find and her major pieces had not been available in current re-editions. The last two decades have seen a flurry of revisionist studies, of critical editions and translations,[1] which bear witness to the considerable interest that Staël's oeuvre holds for anyone interested in nineteenth-century intellectual movements and literature. Yet, her important connection to race and to translation has been ignored, except for Avriel Goldberger's pioneering article on the translation of *Corinne*. [2] The 1934 description of Staël's lifelong interest in the question of slavery by her descendant Comtesse Jean de Pange--"Mme de Staël et les nègres"--gives useful facts but does not analyze either her particular sensitivity as a woman author to the plight of slaves or her idea of culture based on differences and cross-influences. Staël's connection to race, gender, and translation needs to be examined.

Germaine de Staël is the quintessential figure of the translator; she embodies the ideal of translation. She is that "voice from the other side" who throughout her life and works forced her audience to become aware of their own culture through an appeal to the culture of others, be they German, English, or African. Her subtle but unrelenting questioning of the values of French culture through a discourse describing different discourses present in other cultures makes her an "exemplary intellectual," as Pierre Barbéris has called her.[3] She provides us with the point of view of one who is on the margin of mainstream culture and public life.

Staël and her family were, in a subtle way, outsiders. She was born in 1766 to Suzanne Curchod Necker, a Swiss-born, highly educated woman who had visited Rousseau and Voltaire during her years as governess to the children of the Swiss pastor Moulton. Suzanne Curchod married the Protestant Swiss banker Jacques Necker who became famous as finance minister under Louis XVI and as a financial innovator who used massive borrowings to restore French finances. Mme Necker's Parisian salon was one of the most famous of the times. Germaine Necker thus entered the world in a prominent family, and from her earliest years benefitted from the company of the most famous men; but the Neckers were Swiss and Protestant in a French Catholic society, and of course they were commoners.

The primacy of the spoken voice was to be a prominent feature of Staël's fiction. Suzanne Necker, a Rousseau disciple, devoted much time to her daughter's education and kept her with her in her salon. She was apparently unable to show her affection or approval, and her relations with her daughter were strained, both women focusing their love on Jacques Necker, the "patriarchal God of the household." [4] However, through her mother, Germaine Necker first encountered the life of the intellect in conversations, and she herself became a conversationalist well before she became a writer. The importance of the oral is obvious in the poetic improvisations of her famous heroine *Corinne*, but also, among the readings in this volume, in

the early hymns of her Jolof character Mirza. Very early in her life and in her writing career, Staël abstains from valorizing the values of Western Europe, of "civilization." Her emphasis on the oral rather than on the written made her particularly suited to accept cultures from Africa and to appreciate their oral traditions. Her partial exclusion from written discourse because of her gender allowed her to be inclusive racially, and her early concern about the question of slavery would last throughout her life.

This privileging of the spoken voice also came as a transformation of an all too real denial of access to the written word. Germaine Necker's mother Suzanne had started a non-fictional work that she had to abandon at her husband's request. Jacques Necker disapproved of women writing. Later, when the Neckers' daughter began to write, both parents made light of her efforts, and the father reiterated that writing was to be the sole province of men. Between a father whom she adored but who disapproved of her writing, and a mother whom she disliked and who had suppressed her own writing, Staël would have little space in which to maneuver, and her literary strategies would tend to be indirect.

Staël's entry into the world of letters coincided with her gaining some distance from her father. In 1786 Germaine Necker married the Swedish ambassador to France, Eric-Magnus de Staël, and opened a Parisian salon that would soon become famous. Her first work titled *Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1788) was published anonymously, but everyone knew she was the author. This first act of writing already bore the marks of Staël's strategy: seeming to obey the paternal injunction not to write (she published the work anonymously, she was no longer Mademoiselle Necker, and the work is a praise to another male role model), while nonetheless engaging in the act of writing (she did write and publish, and her authorship was known). This work was to attract a great deal of attention and be re-edited a number of times. Composed of five letters (a borderline genre between the oral and the written), it is a defense of Rousseau and approves of his views on women (i.e., that they should not play a role in public life.)^[5] Thus in her first publication of non-fiction Staël took a firm position as a liberal^[6] (her subject is a philosopher who questions the most basic institutions of the monarchy), but she also endorsed the paternalistic views of her male model, an endorsement which prefigured the Revolution's relegating women to the private sphere. A radical activist like Olympe de Gouges could publish a *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (1791), and women formed clubs of their own (*Les Amies de la Vérité*, and *Citoyennes révolutionnaires*), but the Convention abolished them in October 1793 and Gouges's efforts on women's behalf were to end on the guillotine. What we can learn from comparing Staël to Gouges is that Gouges's efforts on behalf of women and of people of color were more direct and urgent, and immediately thwarted. Her play *L'esclavage des noirs* was immediately brought down by the powerful colonists' club Massiac while Staël's more timorous, but perhaps more timely efforts (more specifically her intervention on behalf of the Guadeloupean Pelasge in 1803,^[7] her preface to Wilberforce's essay against slavery in 1814), would go unimpeded.

Staël's paradox was to be that having accepted the paternal male denial of women's involvement in writing and in public life, she would, perhaps indirectly but steadily, write and make for herself a place in public life by using her writing differently from more radical figures like Gouges. A major strategy of Staël's (a major one, but by no means a conscious one), was the timing of the publication of her works so that she would avoid being silenced the way women

like Gouges had been. It is perhaps not by chance that a work like *Lettres* (a work not concerned with gender or race) was the first piece she published. It gave her a public voice which she would later use to disseminate her more unsettling works, those sensitive to women, slaves, and cultural differences. Throughout her career she would interspace essays and works of fiction from which a dialogue of different voices would be heard. At the time she published *Lettres*, she had already written three short stories, the publication of which was delayed until 1895 with the *Essai sur les fictions* in a book titled *Recueil de morceaux détachés*. (It is noticeable that it is her short stories that Staël chose to have "détaché" [removed, cut off] while Gouges had her head "détachée.") The short stories not published earlier include *Mirza, ou lettre d'un voyageur*, *Adélaïde et Théodore*, and *Histoire de Pauline*. In her preface to *Mirza*, Staël indicated that the stories were written before the Revolution and when "she was not twenty yet."^[8] Although these stories have not been dated with certainty, if we take Staël's word, we are led to conclude that they were written before she married, and before she published the *Lettres*. They can be read as a counterpoint to *Lettres*, or at least as another point of view, one Staël seemingly did not choose to make public when she was still Mademoiselle Necker.

During the revolution, Staël became active politically in a perhaps limited but real way. At the beginning of the revolution, she returned to Paris with her parents, her father having been recalled to the ministry of Finance by public acclaim. She stayed in Paris until 1792 when the Terror forced her to take refuge in Switzerland. She spent the rest of the revolution in exile in England and in Coppet, the family estate in Switzerland Necker had bought previously. In 1795 the Convention freed slaves in the colonies, and that same year Staël returned to Paris where she became active politically. She publicly espoused republicanism, and in 1797 founded the Club Constitutionnel with Benjamin Constant among others. She soon became disenchanted with the government of Napoleon, who banned several of her works and exiled her from Paris. It is only in 1815 after the fall of Napoleon that she would be free to come back to Paris.

During the years of the revolution, Staël experimented with a number of forms and developed a theory of literature grounded on the necessity of cross influences from foreign literatures. She first published several plays (*Sophie*, *Jane Gray*, both written in 1786) depicting women's sacrificial love, as well as several newspaper articles: "Réflexions sur le procès de la reine" (1793), "Réflexions sur la paix" (published in 1794 in Switzerland and in 1795 in France). At the same time she published *Zulma*, another short story probably written a few years earlier, and an essay on politics entitled *De l'influence des passions* (1796). She expressed her views of literature both in the *Essai sur les fictions* (1795) and in *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800), where she argues that the revolution has changed the conditions in which literature is produced. It is no longer a matter of entertaining, of writing according to the rules and taste of a privileged class, but of expressing "the situation of the individual in modern society."^[9] Her ideal is one of the republican novel, "the novel, in republican France, shall depict personalities, personal feelings, teaching man about himself and his relations with his fellow-men and with society [la collectivité]."^[10] This republican novel will benefit from "graftings" from other, foreign literatures. Such a program could not endear her to Napoleon whose ambition was to forge a unified France that would be inwardly turned and would shun enemy influences coming from the countries around it (or "surrounding" it, as Napoleonic ideology would have phrased it).

Staël practiced in her own works the kind of intralingual translation that she advocated in her theoretical works. In 1802 she published *Delphine*, a fictional reworking of the themes of *De la littérature*, and which rekindled the controversy created by that work, with the result that Bonaparte forbade her to stay in Paris. As Pierre Barbéris has insightfully noted, Staël constituted the "legitimization of another language."^[11] Her militant cosmopolitanism is but a way to question the unexamined values of French culture, what Barbéris calls "franco-centrism" and "voltaire-centrism."^[12] Thus the Germany she appeals to in *De la littérature* is used not as a historical reference, but as a utopian antidote to France, an open culture "which, because of its versatility, lends itself to antagonistic exchanges."^[13] This appeal to the foreign in order to acknowledge and question the limits of one's culture and language is original: Staël is not interested in describing the picturesque or the exotic. She focuses on the essential: how sentiments are expressed and how power is exercised. In order to do so, she moves between fiction and essays, between what is French and what is foreign in a movement that makes her an exemplary practitioner of intralingual translation. She is interested in the ways in which cultural hybridization can be apprehended as a gain for the culture that lets in influences from the outside. In fact, she seems to sense that culture is "cultural capital," to use Pierre Bourdieu's term,^[14] but that it should not be immobilized by trade barriers.

During the years 1803-1813, Staël traveled to Germany and Italy and would write her major works. The outcome of her travels to Italy was the publication of *Corinne* (1807), which became an immediate success. In 1810 she published *De l'Allemagne*, which was immediately banned by Napoleon (before it was even distributed) and caused her to be sent back to her Swiss retreat at Coppet. *De l'Allemagne* finally appeared in 1813 in London (still in French). During this same decade, she published two antislavery pieces: "Préface pour la traduction d'un ouvrage de M. Wilberforce" (1814), written in London and translated into English by her daughter Albertine; and "Appel aux Souverains" (1814), in which she went back in nonfictional form to the concerns expressed at the beginning of her career in *Mirza* and *Histoire de Pauline*. Her abolitionist pleas were already voiced in the opening of *Pauline* written some twenty years earlier: "These scorching climates where men, solely occupied with a barbaric trade and gain, seem, for the most part, to have lost the ideas and feelings which could make them recoil in horror from such a trade."^[15]

She spent her last years actively fighting Napoleon's regime, and during these years of political opposition, perhaps not accidentally, she published her last work *De l'esprit des traductions* (1816) in Milan where it was to create a major debate and influence the development of Italian Romanticism. In this essay Staël advocates translation as the necessary condition to keep national literatures alive. She conceives of translation not as an imitation of what is foreign, but as a way to move free from obsolete literary conventions. She argues that it is through the influence of translation that a national literature can learn and develop new forms.^[16] Staël's conception of translation is political, or rather, ideological in that she perceives that literature is a cultural product that functions like a commodity. She herself uses the term "circulation of ideas" and links translation to "other forms of commerce." In a very modern way, she perceives that translation is the agent of change which acknowledges that culture is determined by the society and the times in which it thrives, and that translation is a sort of ideological distancing from and criticism of existing national modes of writing. Her repeated use of the metaphor of gold to

represent literature emphasizes that literature is a form of capital, and like a good liberal, she wants that capital to circulate freely between countries.

Her survey of the situation of translation in different countries emphasizes that literatures, without or with little translation, are dead literatures, precisely because they are severed from the influence and the test of other literatures. For Staël, a literature can thrive only if it is part of the great chain of other signifying practices. In her conclusion she calls for the practitioners of Italian literature to turn outward and to let translation rejuvenate their writing.

When it has been mentioned at all, Mirza has been dismissed absent-mindedly as "an awkward work,"[17] or patronizingly as "strictly a curiosity, of merely marginal interest." [18] Yet Mirza's depiction of gender and race makes it an important text in the tradition of women's writing and antislavery. It may even be that it is this very conjunction of race and gender that has placed Mirza in the "margins," that space in established discourse which Staël was to use and appropriate to create a theory of cultural identity based on maintaining oppositions and differences, not on erasing them. As Pierre Macherey has observed, "it became possible for her to think about cultures, not from within, but from the gaps that, separating them from themselves, projected them outside of their own constitution." [19] From this perspective, Switzer's charges that "she is incapable of reacting to any kind of beauty that is not strictly within the scope of Western European standards," [20] that she "indulges in the same kind of stereotypes adopted by Hugo in *Bug Jargal*," [21] are unfounded. Whereas *Bug Jargal* presents stereotypical descriptions of people of color (i.e., childlike, violent, or overly physical figures), Mirza's black characters are intellectual, sensitive, and their sexuality is not emphasized. Moreover, the title character Mirza is endowed with qualities which historical accounts tell us characterize the author. This identification of the implied author with the black character is the opposite of what happens in a work like *Bug Jargal*. Last, these characters are not simply "African"; they belong to two different tribes, a distinction of importance.

Anyway, Staël does not depict "real" Africans any more than she would later depict "real" Germans. She is using the depiction of the other, of the foreigner, to bring out particularities and deficiencies in her own culture. In a perhaps extremely perceptive and honest move, she seems to know that the other point of view can be used to place in question her own culture; but that its representation is inevitably mediated by the gender, the class, the culture, in brief, the ideology of the author, that the recognition of the limits of such a representation is at the center of her refusal to endorse culturocentrism.

Mirza clearly links antislavery sentiments and women. First, the preface, written several years after Staël wrote the story but before it was published in 1895, reclaims the narrative and its authorship. The presence of the preface provides a frame for the narrative, made by a male European to an unknown woman, so that, although the narrator is male, both the author and the addressee are women. This story of women and slavery is thus doubly gendered. Secondly, the title character Mirza, the African heroine, is first presented as the eloquent voice of antislavery. The character Ximeo first hears her speak: "The love of freedom, the horror of slavery were the subjects of the noble hymns that filled me with a rapturous admiration." Moreover, it is made clear in the story that Mirza, an orphan member of the Jolof tribe, [22] opposes the male warriors' custom of selling their war prisoners as slaves. The female

character is thus the only one not ideologically implicated in the slave system. Revealingly, after offering herself as a substitute slave to save Ximeo[23] and after being saved by the French Governor, Mirza chooses to die. The superficial reason is her broken heart over Ximeo's faithlessness; but another motive, more indirect but still significant, is the impossibility for the independent woman to owe her life and her freedom to a European colonialist, generous as he may be. Thus Mirza dies while Ximeo heads a European-style plantation, answering the naive and patronizing questions of the European narrator about his superior ability to speak French and to run a smooth plantation. Ximeo only escapes the power structure master/slave, superior/inferior, European/African which links him to the European visitor through the retelling of Mirza's story (her story of abandonment and death, but also of rebellion): indeed, while the author carefully avoids using direct discourse between the European male narrator and Ximeo, thus sidestepping the question of using "tu" (the usual form for an intimate or an inferior) or "vous" (the form reserved for equality or formality), Ximeo finally addresses the narrator as "tu," an astonishing "tu" that acknowledges the significance of telling Mirza's story as a way to undermine confidence in the value, let alone superiority, of the European.

Lest this significant use of "tu" be interpreted as a sign of Ximeo's lack of mastery of the French language (the enduring stereotype was that Africans spoke "petit nègre," the French version of Pidgin English), the narrator had earlier emphasized Ximeo's native command of French. One sees here that, although superficially correct, the charge of Franco-centrism waged against Staël or other women writers for making their African characters speak perfect French needs to be reexamined. If a French author depicts foreign characters (be they Jolof like Mirza or Italian as in *Corinne*), their language will inevitably be a translation. The question is whether this translation will emphasize their lack of control of language through a stereotypical distortion of standard French or whether the translation will be transparent[24] (i.e., emphasize what they say rather than how inadequately they express themselves or how peculiar they sound). Thus Staël shifts the difference of her characters away from the grammatical forms of their language (from *langue*) to voice, a more individual, less collectively determined language (to *parole*); she is engaged in the representation of different modes of thinking and speaking. And speak is precisely what Mirza does, unlike Ximeo who is left speechless when Mirza improvises on the theme of freedom. Throughout the narrative, Staël emphasizes the power of Mirza's voice. When, at the end, she speaks up to the slave traders in favor of Ximeo, he is again speechless. Staël is here suggesting that Mirza's kind of voice, the voice of passion, of antislavery, of female difference, of the spoken, can silence and counterbalance--for a moment--the discourse of the male, patriarchal, European colonialism and deceit. When asked by Ximeo to speak about love, Mirza opposes herself to the other tribe. She tells Ximeo "do not expect me to speak with the artfulness of the women of your country." Mirza opposes the "naturalness" of her speech, which is the sincere outpouring of feelings, to a language which is deceitful. Through Mirza Staël criticizes the classical, regulated language of traditional French literature as well as the oppressive language of Ximeo. Mirza's language is a utopian language which is opposed to patriarchal language. At the same time, Staël refuses to create a mythical figure of an "African" who would speak a "pure" language; she distinguishes between Ximeo from Cayor and Mirza, the Jolof.

The link between patriarchy, political division, and deceit is made clear by Ximeo who, after writing a letter to Mirza about his departure and his alleged trip, attempts to justify himself; "my

father would never have called daughter a woman from the Jolof country." The inability of one culture to accept an exterior element is directly linked to the father's discourse. Mirza does present a series of oppositions--Mirza/Ximeo, Africa/Europe, woman/man, voice/written discourse, antislavery/patriarchy--but these oppositions are not static binary oppositions. Shifts occur, change is possible, the language from without can enter and rejuvenate the culture from within. The male Ximeo shifts from the weak listener and writer position to that of speaker: "But I have wished to speak of her." The male character redeems himself by telling the woman's story, by learning to understand and speak her language. The link between race and gender is made once again.

Ximeo the African prince is to the European colonialist as woman is to man. Ximeo's feminization is suggested early in the story. The European male narrator describes him in ways which emphasize, not so much his Europeaness, but his feminine aspect. His features are "ravissantes" (beautiful), he is "trop mince pour un homme" (too thin for a man), he has "beaux yeux" (beautiful eyes), he has more "délicatesse" (frailty) than "force" (strength)." Staël's description of Ximeo's physical appearance, which runs counter to the stereotype of the Black man as threatening because of his size and his physicality, is in fact one of her indirect ways of connecting race and gender. Ximeo is black and thus feminine in the eyes of the European (and it is the narrator who comments on Ximeo's lack of the "defects of the men of his race").[25] Revealingly, the female heroine Mirza is hardly described at all; rather, she is situated in a utopian elsewhere outside of the economy of static subject/object positions. The European male gaze of the narrator has not seen her and Ximeo has been subjugated by her voice.

Staël's strong liberal position and the indirect strategies she used to link gender and race, and to present the oppression of Africans and women by the French male patriarchy, seem to be the salient features which would direct the "siting" of the translation of Mirza. While Staël could not transcend the limits placed on her by her times and place, her opposition to Francocentrism, to slavery, and to patriarchy should not be minimized and decontextualized. In the same way as Staël used transparency yet allowed for the voice of difference, the translator translating Mirza for a modern American audience has to both work with a tone and a vocabulary that seem at home in English, and give an indication that the text comes from a culture which is different from ours but which can be apprehended without "cannibalizing" the source text, without erasing its difference. Avriel Goldberger has similarly stated about her translation of Corinne, "[t]he translator has sought as 'timeless' a language as possible, avoiding both an imitation of nineteenth-century English which can so easily sound like a parody, and the obviously twentieth-century which would give a false modernity to the text." [26] This transparency, which nonetheless admits to the existence of a distance between the French and the English text, is a working in translation of the circulation of a specific cultural capital, a capital whose value determines how the translation is sited. This notion of transparency is quite different from the "bad" transparency described by Tejaswini Niranjana.[27] It does not aim at fixing a colonized discourse but at showing the modernity of Staël's notion of culture as something that should not be fixed by national boundaries.

In specific terms, the passionate, Romantic voice of Mirza could have been toned down to adapt to our contemporary mode of writing and to avoid skirting the ridiculous, but its dissident force would have been lost or trivialized. To keep the distance, yet to "familiarize" the text in English

(to reuse the well-known Russian formalist notion of "defamiliarization"), I turned to the English Romantics for texts of a similar sensibility but also remote in time. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, the most useful parallel text turned out to be Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

For that same "familiarization" effect, Staël's careful feminization of Ximeo, her use of the passive voice to render his lack of agency, had to be kept without pushing her text in the direction of parody. Similarly, the terms used to describe Africans (nègre, nègresse) had to be carefully thought out since they now have a negative connotation which was not necessarily present in the original French text.[28] However, since the term Negro was endorsed by African Americans until recently, and since the translated text is obviously sited as an older text, not as a modernization, the term was kept.[29] A more ideologically loaded issue was Staël's reference to the African share of responsibilities in the slave trade (in the same way as Aphra Behn had done previously in English). The choice was either to tone down the statement so as to fit our expected audience's ideological expectations (i.e., to focus on the responsibility of the colonizer not on the complicity of the victims), or to keep it in as an integral part of the liberal antiabolitionist argument of the time. Since Staël also refers again to the African custom of slavery in her later piece on slavery, "Appel aux souverains," the statement was kept as is.

Other syntactic issues such as Ximeo's sudden use of "tu" have been handled in the "margin" of the translation, i.e., the introduction, which, like Staël's preface, is a necessary part of the text since it contextualizes the translated text and brings attention to its status as translation. I have noted earlier Staël's valorization of the oral over the written, and I would argue that her whole oeuvre is a valorization of the process of translation over original "pure," "uncontaminated" texts, that she optimistically emphasizes that it is in the retelling of the story in another language or from another point of view that cultures can be revitalized.[30]

NOTES

[1]. See in particular Simone Balayé, *Corinne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985) and *Madame de Staël: lumières et liberté* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1979); Madelyn Gutwirth, *Madame de Staël, Novelist* (Urbana, Il.: University of Illinois Press, 1978) and "Madame de Staël, Rousseau and the Woman Question," *PMLA* 86 (January 1971): 100-109; Charlotte Hogsett, *The Literary Existence of Germaine de Staël* (Carbondale, Il.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987); Avriel Goldberger, ed. and trans., *Corinne* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

[2]. Avriel Goldberger, "Germaine De Staël's *Corinne*: Challenges to the Translator in the 1980s," *French Review* 63 (April 1990): 800-809. In this article, Goldberger analyzes previous translations of *Corinne* and describes the strategies she used for her own translation. Although she does not assess Staël's own connection to translation, her own self-consciousness about translating Staël provides useful insights.

[3]. Pierre Barbéris, "Madame de Staël: du romantisme, de la littérature et de la France nouvelle," *Europe* 693 (1987): 11.

[4]. For an insightful account of the relations between Germaine Necker and her mother, see Madelyn Gutwirth, *Madame de Staël, Novelist*, Chapter 1.

[5]. For a discussion of *Lettres* in relation to Staël's position as a woman, see Gutwirth's "Madame de Staël, Rousseau and the Woman Question."

[6]. I am using the term liberal in its nineteenth-century context of one who follows the philosophical and political system based on individual liberties and equality. The liberalism of Staël is opposed to the despotism of Napoleon or the royalist Restoration which followed him.

[7]. For a description of her efforts to get Pelasge out of jail, see Comtesse Jean de Pange, "Madame de Staël et les nègres," *Revue de France* 5 (Oct. 1934): 425-434.

[8]. Germaine de Staël, "Mirza," in *Oeuvres complètes* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1967), 72.

[9]. Henri Coulet, "Révolution et roman selon Madame de Staël," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de France* 87 (1987): 646.

[10]. Coulet, "Révolution et roman," 65.

[11]. Barbéris, "Madame de Staël," 15.

[12]. Barbéris, "Madame de Staël," 12.

[13]. Pierre Macherey, "Un imaginaire cosmopolite: la pensée littéraire de Madame de Staël," in *A quoi pense la littérature* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990): 34.

[14]. For a discussion of this concept, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).

[15]. Staël, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1:88.

[16]. For a discussion of the ways in which translation can enrich a culture, see Albrecht Neubert and Gregory M. Shreve, *Translation as Text* (Kent, Oh.: Kent State University Press, 1992), 3.

[17]. Coulet, "Révolution," 647.

[18]. Richard Switzer, "Mme de Staël, Mme de Duras and the Question of Race," *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 20 (1973): 308.

[19]. Macherey, *A quoi pense la littérature*, 36.

[20]. Switzer, "Mme de Staël," 306.

[21]. Switzer, "Mme de Staël," 304.

[22]. Jolof refers to an authentic tribe, but it was a "kingdom," of which "Cayor" was a part. Staël has reversed the importance of the two groups.

[23]. Actually, the Jolofs have no reason not to trade Mirza since the distinction they make is not between friends and enemies, but between kin and non-kin. Since Mirza is an orphan of unclear origin, she may very well be considered non-kin. For a comprehensive study of slavery in Africa, see Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[24]. For a discussion of the notion of "transparency" in translation see Chapter 1 of this volume.

[25]. This is not to say that Mirza is completely free of Eurocentrism. After all Mirza gets her "culture" from a French exile, and the workers on Ximeo's plantation are represented as longing for their former games of bows and arrows, a rather patronizing view of what their culture may have entailed. On the other hand, Staël does not represent the topos of "the" African and is careful to distinguish between two West African tribes.

[26]. Goldberger, "Challenges to the Translator," 808-809.

[27]. Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 3.

[28]. For a discussion of the term "nègre," see Chapter 1.

[29]. For an interesting discussion of the use of the term "nègre" in another context, see A. James Arnold's article on the translation of Aimé Césaire. His discussion shows that a translation may go astray if it does not distance itself from its own ideology. James A. Arnold,

"Translating/Editing 'Race' and 'Culture' from Caribbean French," in *Translating Latin America*, ed. William Luis and Julio Rodriguez-Luis (Binghamton, N.Y.: SUNY University Press, 1991), 215-222.

[30]. Of course, this hope was in complete opposition to the building of the European colonial empire in the sense that what Europe did in the nineteenth century was to attempt to export its values to its colonies and to impose them on other cultures.