"What humiliation, in fact, not only for a beginner in the career but for the most accomplished poet, to be obliged to submit his work to be judged ... and then to await, trembling ... to be resigned to having no other recourse, if it is refused, but an appeal to the public by means of print."  

On October 11, 1772, the actors of the Comédie Française received a letter from an author proposing a new tragedy for their repertory. The author complained that the troupe had not responded to his two earlier missives requesting an audience to read his play. He explained that he had come to Paris to pursue the "career of playwright," but the company’s indifference had "blocked his entry," and he was now "on the verge of returning home." Acknowledging himself to be indeed "a miserable author" whose play was "not worthy of being heard," he nevertheless pleaded for a last chance; if it were not granted, he faced certain humiliation "in the eyes of those to whom [he had] already announced the most brilliant success" in the capital. According to the Comédie Française registers, the troupe did not reply to this pathetic request, leaving the author to pick up the pieces of his shattered self-conception as a "man of letters."

On the surface, this letter suggests to us a figure familiar in Enlightenment historiography for at least a generation—the frustrated writer, drawn to Paris to pursue glory but unable to gain entry into the official institutions of literary life. Furthermore, given the heavy volume of printed attacks on the royal theater for mistreating prospective playwrights that appeared in the 1770s, this aspiring author seems exemplary of the marginal writer whose frustration might have radicalized him against both Old Regime institutions and Enlightenment liberalism.

Yet the letter begins to appear too perfect an example when we look at the signature: Momeron, suspiciously close to Momus, the classical muse of satire. Could this letter have been something other than the document of a man’s lived experience as a pathetic failure? Could it be instead a fiction? Even if Momeron (a not uncommon surname) were indeed a man who had written a tragedy and wanted to present it to the troupe, should we still read his letter as an accurate narration of his emotional trajectory, or did he embellish the story for dramatic effect? And what might he have told his neighbors upon returning home?
Let us consider another example, in a different medium, of a seemingly similar case. The first edition of a play entitled *Les Evénements nocturnes* appeared in 1776, anonymously and without censorial approbation. The edition does, however, feature an extraordinary "Dedication to Myself, Very Small Non-Seigneur," in which the author explains that he had intended to dedicate his play to a "person elevated in dignity" but none had been willing to receive it. Nevertheless, he still wanted "to decorate" the play with the appropriate "praise" for its protector, so he expressed "consideration for ... myself," and signed it, "your true servant, the author." A three-page preface then recounts a common story of an author who had submitted his play to a member of the royal troupe and then waited patiently several months. Eventually, the royal actors returned the very manuscript he now presented in print, as the preface explains, for "the impartial public" to judge.

This edition raises several questions about its author. Who was he? A contemporary source, the *Correspondence dramatique*, identifies him as "Bardinet de Bintar," probably an exotic rendering of the name of Thomas Bardinet, an author who wrote a series of short plays in the 1770s. But which of the three different authorial personae—the one who presumably wrote the play, sought to have it performed, and then had it printed; the confident author of the dedication; or the "myself," to whom it is dedicated—did Bardinet intend the reader to identify with himself? Moreover, why did he present himself so ambiguously? Why, for instance, did he methodically parody a genre—the dedication—usually associated with Renaissance rather than Enlightenment authors? Why did he remain so equivocal about having to resort to print to speak directly to the public, since this gesture has been interpreted frequently as a sign of greater status and personal autonomy for eighteenth-century writers?

The title page of this edition also raises questions about the publication of this work. It carries a Paris imprint and states that the play had been "... for the first time ... by the royal actors on Saturday, September 9, 1775," implying it had been staged on that date (ellipses in original). However, the title page to another 1776 edition of the same work, printed in The Hague, indicates that on this date the troupe members had merely heard it read for the first time. The archives of the Comédie Française confirm that the play was read to the troupe on September 9, 1775, but was never added to the theater’s active repertory, let alone staged—ordinarily a prerequisite for an author to print his play. Was the author engaging in a deliberate act of duplicity, to trick readers—and censors—into thinking the play had been performed? Or was the Paris edition instead intended to be a humorous and ironic, yet accurate, description of an eighteenth-century writer’s frustrating encounter with the established institutions and norms of literary life?

To answer these questions, we can neither dismiss Momeron and Bardinet as fictive, nor can we read such texts as Momeron’s letter and Bardinet’s edition
as documents of lived social realities. We do not know if they were deliberately misrepresenting themselves or if they were documenting their emotional experience as aspiring writers at the margins of legitimacy. These documents thus seem to offer little reliable evidence that would be of use in biographical or critical studies of their authors (the traditional approach of French literary and intellectual historians). Nor do these cases suggest much to the social historian of writers, seeking to document the emergence of the autonomous intellectual in the age of the Enlightenment. However, these documents of self-presentation open up a new, intriguing possibility for the cultural historian: to read them as exercises in the strategic creation of authorial identities, as acts of "self-fashioning." Such is the goal of this book, which is neither a series of biographical case studies of playwrights nor a history of the status of all gens de lettres. It is instead a study of the rhetorical modes of self-presentation deployed by established outsiders in eighteenth-century French literary life.

Working with highly ambiguous sources, such as Momeron's letter and Bardinet's edition, this book interprets strategies of self-presentation deployed by individuals at a crucial point of encounter in the transition from the early modern to the modern world. In representing themselves in such texts as these, aspiring gens de lettres, and more specifically playwrights, negotiated the tension between cultural expectations of self-restraint and social, economic, and even psychological imperatives for self-assertion. This book, then, is a study of how eighteenth-century French playwrights negotiated their way between institutions of the royal court and the commercial market for literature; between established practices of literary clientelism and opportunities for personal autonomy; between literary property and censorship; between seemingly private venues, such as face-to-face encounters or manuscript correspondence, and the seemingly public, even anonymous, medium of print; and, above all, between adherence to and transgression of expected norms of personal comportment. This book thereby addresses two problems: the relationship among Enlightenment culture, Old Regime institutions, and Revolutionary politics; and, more broadly, the relationship among writers, civil society, and the state in modern European history.

1. Gens de lettres, the Old Regime, and the Enlightenment

The role of gens de lettres and literary institutions in French politics during the age of the Enlightenment and their subsequent influence on the Revolution emerged as a central historiographical preoccupation with the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, who devoted a crucial chapter in his The Old Regime and the Revolution to "How towards the middle of the eighteenth century, men of letters became the principal political men of the country and the consequences that resulted." This question inspired such early twentieth-century literary historians as Gustave Lanson and Daniel Mornet, whose biographical research on and progressive, liberal interpretations of the eighteenth century’s leading writers laid the foundation for all subsequent study of the Enlightenment. Yet, this work never asked what was meant, at
the time, by "men of letters" and "politics," and how these concepts related to one another. These questions of intellectual history became, in the 1970s and 1980s, the concern of social historians, who brought new methods to bear on this problem and achieved particularly fruitful results.

Thirty years ago, Robert Darnton published a now-classic article suggesting that the canonical authors of the Enlightenment, the self-described Philosophes, were far from dissident social critics attacking in words what the Revolution would destroy on the ground, but instead actually shared the values of Old Regime social and political elites. The dissidents who became the Revolution’s radicals, Darnton argued, were in fact outsiders to the Enlightenment, aspiring writers frustrated by declining possibilities for advancement into elite institutions and hierarchies. Darnton encouraged a reconsideration of the relationship between men of letters and politics by exploring such mediating structures as the book trade, the periodical and pamphlet press, and literary institutions such as academies, salons, and theaters. Contemporaries of Darnton, such as Roger Chartier and Daniel Roche, and two subsequent generations of cultural historians have studied eighteenth-century intellectual life not only as a war of ideas between tradition and progress but also as the history of the production, diffusion, and appropriation of knowledge, in which form is not distinguished from content and institutions are not considered to provide mere context to the texts. This historiography centers on struggles over self-image and over the authority to determine status and identity.

So, while great scholarly attention has been paid to the social conflicts inherent in cultural life during the age of the Enlightenment, Darnton’s original hypothesis has remained more frequently invoked than explored; terms such as "High-Enlightenment Philosophes" and "Grub Street hacks" have been reified into categories with fixed and stable meanings, rather than being used as heuristics for understanding the fluid social experience of late eighteenth-century writers. Moreover, much of the work on gens de lettres in the age of the Enlightenment before and since Darnton’s initial intervention has sought to discover in the "cultural politics" of late Old Regime France the "cultural origins" of the French Revolution, presuming that changes in political institutions, social relations, language, and practices in the decades after 1750 signaled a break from the past and pointed towards the Revolution and what came after.

Building on this rich and sophisticated historiography, this book considers writers’ descriptions of themselves and their world not as objective descriptions of social reality but rather as strategic representations. To address the status and identity of writers, it looks beyond the fixed social categories employed by external observers in order to address the social experience within which those categories were constituted, asking: Why would someone want to identify him or herself as a writer? How and to whom...
should self-declared writers represent themselves as such? To what extent were those who identified themselves as writers recognized as such by others, especially those with the authority to designate who would or would not be considered a writer?

While many previous studies have addressed this problem largely through writers' representations of themselves in their belles-lettres texts, and presume the category of **gens de lettres** to have been fixed and stable, this book approaches **gens de lettres** as a contested construct, the result of individual, strategic self-representations by individual writers in response to the experience of having status and identity ascribed to them by more prominent social elites. This work thus explores the agenda proposed by Chartier: to study **gens de lettres** as embodiments not of the modern, autonomous intellectual but of the tensions of the age of the Enlightenment. Eighteenth-century writers negotiated "between privilege and equality, protection and independence, isolation and sociability"; their trajectories make clear how "submission" to elite protectors "constituted the very condition of independence" in the early modern period; direct relations with elite protectors, "far from limiting creative activity, to the contrary, rendered it possible." 11

To make its case, this book argues that status and identity in Enlightenment literary life arose from the language, institutions, and practices inherited from the seventeenth century more than it anticipated new forms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The historical scholarship on literature, writers, literary institutions, and political culture in the seventeenth century has been less voluminous than that on the Enlightenment, but is every bit as empirically rich and theoretically sophisticated, as is evident in the work of Alain Viala, Hélène Merlin, Christian Jouhaud, and the "Groupe de la recherche interdisciplinaire en histoire littéraire" (GRIHL). 12

These historians and literary scholars have drawn creatively and eclectically on such concepts as Pierre Bourdieu's theory of a "literary field," Norbert Elias's "civilizing process," and New Historicist concern with authorship to study early modern literary production as a historical conjuncture of state power and social mores. Posing the question of individual writers' "autonomy" in terms of their need to achieve "legitimacy" in institutions (rather than in the anachronistic terms of individual liberty), of "literature" in its broad, original sense of erudite, moralistic writing (rather than its more restrictive, later sense of merely aesthetic writing), and of "publication" in its manifold early modern forms (rather than the banal twentieth-century sense of printing), this work demonstrates the centrality of writers and literary institutions to society, politics, and culture in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. In this approach, writers, literary institutions, and publication are neither merely context for the study of Classic Age literature and ideas
nor superficial cultural foam atop the social and economic sea of commercial capitalism and state-building.

This historiography reframes the period from 1630 to 1789 by showing how complex, ambiguous, and equivocal were relations between constituted authority ("power") and cultural production ("literature"). Rather than a linear narrative of absolutist state-building driving social and cultural change, or the triumph of an ever-rising bourgeoisie, this work locates the dynamic for change in encounters between social and political elites and the producers of collective representations, between state power and the marketplace for symbolic goods. It brings greater nuance to our understanding of how political institutions, cultural forms, and elite social relations in early modern France mutually constituted one another. Social and political elites, through their protection and patronage of such literary institutions as the Académie Française, enabled writers to create new identities as autonomous gens de lettres, even as these institutions brought them into closer contact with the forces of early modern politics.

At the same time, the establishment of such literary institutions gave gens de lettres greater power to create and ascribe identities to social and political elites through their literary, moralistic, and historiographical writings. The paradoxical consequence was an interdependence between royal state power and gens de letters; the emerging modern state power and autonomous literary field reinforced each other. While constituted authority in this period established its monopoly over legitimate violence, writers themselves took control over the authority to determine what constituted legitimate public speech, and began to inflict symbolic legitimate violence on those who transgressed. While the state became more powerful through representations of it generated by politically marginal writers, these same writers gained in stature and influence while becoming more dependent on state power.

This book introduces a new institution, the Comédie Française, into this politico-literary historiography, and extends it into the eighteenth century. In so doing, it rethinks the age of the Enlightenment both chronologically, as a continuation of rather than a break from the seventeenth century, and conceptually, by using writers to rethink the problems of relations between the state and civil society, of social encounters, and of self-image. This approach challenges a recurrent motif of Enlightenment historiography—the notion that the writers of this era were forward-looking precursors of modern intellectuals, whose political, moral, and aesthetic agendas coincided with their personal instincts and behavior, and that they thus both reflected and informed deeper, modernizing tendencies in eighteenth-century society, culture, and politics. In this way, eighteenth-century writers have been approached, oddly, not as people of their own time but as men and women ahead of their time, precocious.
incarnations of the modern world they called forth in their writings. Consequently, Enlightenment-era writers have been treated, in scholarly and popular presentations, as if they had achieved, even before entering public life, a fixed sense of themselves as autonomous individuals, as modern subjects making conscious and rational choices to participate or not in social and political institutions.

In this way, it has become common to presume that Enlightenment writers naturally desired and actively sought individual liberty, personal interest, and intellectual autonomy. The participation of writers in such official literary institutions as the Académie Française, the Comédie Française, and the corps of royal censors, and the interaction of writers with their aristocratic protectors at court and in Parisian elite society have been disregarded as either instrumental acts of self-advancement, evidence of the commercial nature of eighteenth-century literature, or as justifiable acts of duplicity, necessary to effect change from within. The rich and complex language of writers’ social encounters with elites and official institutions, especially in correspondence and face-to-face encounters, has been little studied, as historians have privileged the medium of print over other forms of communication and, moreover, have taken at face value the rhetorical claims of writers to use that medium to achieve autonomy and speak sincerely to the public. 15

To avoid this tendency, this book uses a variety of manuscript and printed sources to study those writers who sought to associate themselves with the Comédie Française—an institution at once royal and public, courtly and commercial. From its creation in 1680, it differed from other literary institutions in its relative accessibility to literary newcomers and, early in the reign of Louis XV, it became the most attractive venue for writers seeking to establish and enhance their legitimacy in literary life. However, this book is not a history of upward mobility; rather, it is a story of paradox and unfulfilled expectations. For in the late 1750s, the theater’s aristocratic administrators enacted a series of reforms to make it more commercially viable, and thus less accessible to new writers who continued to conceive of it, and their work for it, as a service to crown and kingdom. Consequently, from the 1760s to the Revolution, many of those who aspired to become playwrights for the royal theater—and legitimate gens de lettres before both court and public—achieved neither glory nor autonomy, but instead frustration, rejection, and public humiliation by the troupe, theater audiences, elites at court, other writers, and the press.

Rather than a chronicle of the triumph of reason and personal autonomy, this book presents writers in the age of the Enlightenment as case studies of cognitive dissonance. It seeks to understand how, in the face of emotionally (and in some cases physically) painful experience of symbolic (and in some cases physical) violence, these writers sought to preserve their emotional
equilibrium and their senses of themselves as civil, dignified, and respected elites whose comportment adhered to both royal regulations over literary life—authorial remuneration, literary property, censorship, etc—and to accepted norms of comportment, the implicit rules of the game. The writers’ lives to be discussed are not intended as biographies, but as case studies of how aspirants to honor themselves sought to produce coherent narratives of their own experience that would preserve an appearance of personal autonomy, self-control, and dignity to present to their peers and their potential benefactors. It is the story of how they coped with change in the institution in which they had invested their status and identity, how they sought to understand the consequences of that change, and how, when their responses to change unexpectedly gave others the impression that they had transgressed established norms of comportment, they sought to explain their behavior in ways that would retain for them a degree of personal viability and legitimacy in that institution and the series of social relations, or field, around it.

2. The Republic of Letters and Early Modern Institutions in Cultural Historiography

Through the history of a literary institution and its self-selected writers, this book takes a fresh look at the relationships among social, political, and intellectual history in Old Regime France by suggesting how the dynamic for change occurred primarily at the level of representation, particularly with respect to how urban elites represented themselves. In the late eighteenth century, traditional determinants of social status and identity, such as wealth, title, and office, were giving way to more informal determinants, such as sociability patterns and personal comportment. As a consequence, culturally similar groups of nobles and non-nobles alike came to constitute an established group of elites, competing internally for social status even as they gained control over the collective representations that determined power and status in Old Regime society. Remaining outsiders, but not excluded from these established elite networks, those defining themselves as gens de lettres sought to be accepted based on their comportment and self-presentation rather than title or wealth. As a result, they had both the greatest need and the greatest opportunity to fashion new identities for themselves individually, and to create a new status for themselves collectively.

In the context of a long-term breakdown of the feudal social order and a near-term dissolution of early modern courts, non-clerical and non-noble writers lost their special social status apart from the rest of French society and thus lost their claim on the social prominence and remuneration to which they aspired. Therefore, beginning in the late seventeenth century, they adopted new ways to justify their social prominence. To do so, they had to negotiate the very conflicts that divided better-established elites in their own competition for status; indeed, as they incorporated momentous events from
the national past into their writing, writers internalized an early modern noble ethos of "glory" into their own sense of self and personal aspirations. By the eighteenth century, gens de lettres had become inextricably part of the political structure of the French state and the social structure of urban nobles and middle classes. This book seeks to recapture the nuances of writers’ experiences as "established outsiders" in eighteenth-century France, at the precise point where classically-inspired ideals about self and society came into contact with a series of transformations in state power and in social institutions usually associated with the advent of modernity.

This point of conjuncture is frequently described as the "Republic of Letters," and it is necessary to review the interpretive debates over this rubric. From its appearance in the Renaissance, the idea of a republic of letters suggested first and foremost a group distinguished from the rest of European society, not only by its shared commitment to classical learning but also by its physical location at princely courts. Those who identified with the literary republic attributed their presence at courts, and the compensation they received from patrons, as recognition of their personal virtue rather than as payment for any written work they produced.

The establishment in the seventeenth century of literary institutions, such as academies, salons, and theaters, under the patronage of provincial nobles, reinforced this sense of social distinction and, moreover, increased the number of writers who could claim such status. In response, those who had already established themselves as court writers sought to distinguish themselves not only from the savants of the universities, but now also from the nouveaux doctes of the academies.

This view of the republic of letters as a series of institutionalized practices of cultural differentiation suggests that the terms hommes de lettres and gens de lettres also carried very specific meanings in early modern society, different from the senses given them in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the seventeenth century, "gens de lettres" was an epithet used by self-styled gentlemen, or honnêtes hommes, at court to disparage those who sought to make a status of writing. At the end of the reign of Louis XIV, as the court culture of Versailles spread to the networks of urban elite sociability known as le monde, the nuance of this vocabulary fell out of use, and "man of letters" came to refer to those included in the monde based not on title or wealth, but on acculturation, as displayed through comportment and self-presentation. Writers’ modes of address to their elite sponsors evolved as well, as writers began to describe themselves using some of the same terms of "glory" and "honor" that they had previously used to praise princes. In some recent historiography on the Enlightenment, this change in language has been interpreted as evidence of a social change, by which literary life became more egalitarian. In this view, those seeking to be recognized as writers could now declare themselves gens de lettres without needing to have that status and identity ascribed to them by elite protectors—and thus became the first modern "intellectuals."
Other more socially and politically oriented historiography, however, suggests that Renaissance courtly practices continued to inform eighteenth-century Parisian literary life, so that Enlightenment-era writers still needed validation from elite protectors, rather than merely the recognition of a generalized public, to legitimate themselves as men of letters. The modern concern with highlighting changes in systems of patronage distribution in the eighteenth century has led many historians and critics to overlook the significant continuation of a Renaissance concern for otium, which implied a disdain for the material and commercial world in favor of personal, spiritual elevation.

Arguing against this trend, scholars such as Martin Warnke and Roche have shown how the Renaissance privileging of the "moral" aspect of writing as personal expression over the material aspect of writing as socially useful and economically remunerative work continued into the eighteenth century and beyond. Furthermore, Chartier has suggested that, despite significant increases in the potential for remuneration through printed editions and a significant decrease in the possibilities for direct financial sponsorship, eighteenth-century writers still stood to benefit in terms of personal status from direct and publicly visible associations with prominent protectors, whom they could claim to serve at the expense of their own material self-interests. Thus, the ideal eighteenth-century "republican of letters" combined the social and political acumen of an aristocratic courtier with the disinterested and self-restrained comportment of a magistrate; this ideal also ran counter to the idea that an acculturated man of letters should be judged by a public outside the institutions of the republic of letters. The best example of this encounter between literature and elite sociability, to the exclusion of the broader public, was found in literary academies, whose members were at once self-selected equals engaged in the common pursuit of literary glory and protected clients of aristocratic or royal courts.

If we understand, then, that "republic of letters," as used in later eighteenth-century Paris, described an exclusive milieu, we see that writers were not merely those who wrote or published. To be an author necessitated participation in processes of cultural production, diffusion, and reception, such as theater. In this respect, those identified as authors were marginal to the republic of letters, because their audience included those beyond the self-contained, face-to-face community of elites. By contrast, to be an homme de lettres meant to be accepted as belonging to a status group defined by its participation in the self-selecting and intensely hierarchical networks of social and cultural elites, whose patterns of association and comportment informed writers’ own behavior, self-conceptions, and social identities. Those seeking acceptance in this community had to demonstrate personal worthiness for inclusion, not by writing and publishing works that displayed creative talent, but instead by conforming to established norms of comportment in social encounters. In such interactions, these writers had to act in a fashion appropriate to their
subordinate position within this exclusive and elevated social milieu. By adhering to these norms, would-be men of letters could characterize themselves as civil, or honnêtes. Thus, a pattern of behavior characteristic of early modern aristocratic interactions—personal, primarily oral, and hierarchical, but designed to avoid direct conflict—provided a framework for relations between patrons and writers in eighteenth-century academies, literary circles, dinners, and salons. The participants in such interactions, of different orders and of different sources of income and levels of wealth, nevertheless saw their own adherence to such behavioral norms as demonstrating their cultural coherence as a group which combined quite naturally people of wealth, elevated social status, and literary talent.

We begin then with the premise that neither the leading institutions of the republic of letters nor its members were necessarily in opposition to the royal state or the dominant social hierarchies of the late Old Regime. Indeed, this book argues that participants in late-eighteenth-century literary life did not engage with court institutions and reproduce court norms out of duplicity, but rather out of instinct, or more precisely, habitus. Through their social encounters with others already established in those hierarchies, writers learned behavioral norms—how to ally themselves with better-positioned protectors and brokers who could mediate between them and the court and the crown. By showing how writers necessarily implicated themselves in hierarchial networks of elite sociability, in court institutions, and in the conflict-ridden fabric of early modern public life, this book demonstrates that however modern, liberal, and rational the Enlightenment was as an intellectual movement, its participants conceived of themselves as Old Regime elites operating in, and reproducing, early modern hierarchies of power and prestige.

3. Court Culture and Elite Self-Image: Honneur and Honnêteté

Court culture has generally been associated, since the eighteenth century, with subservience, servility and inauthenticity and, thus has been seen as antithetical to the autonomy of self-expression and orientation towards the larger civil society, or public, for which Enlightenment writers are thought to have fought. However, this conception emerged primarily from retrospective denunciations of the court during the Revolution and throughout the twentieth-century; recent cultural historiography of the early modern period has revisited the court and found it a space of relative autonomy for creative work. This book extends that rethinking by situating Enlightenment writers not against but within court culture, meaning not only royal institutions—notably the Comédie Française—but also the norms, language, hierarchies, and practices of elite sociability. Historians of early modern court culture have defined it as a sublimation of early modern noble warrior culture, based on the imperative to defend personal honor, into a system of civility, or honnêteté. By valorizing self-control and deference to others over courageous acts of violence in battles or duels, court culture enabled early modern elites to conceive of themselves and others as at once autonomous and subservient or, in the language of the time, as both
"honorable" and "honnête."  

To sixteenth-century nobles, "honor" had implied the privilege of using violence to defend one’s personal autonomy, of acting forcefully to defend one’s position or advance in status. Yet even before the devastating wars of religion, this idea of personal autonomy had become tempered by the expectation that action would be taken only with authorization from and based on allegiance to a hierarchy of protection culminating in the King. In no case was it acceptable for a man of honor to act in his own interest; using power and autonomy untempered by virtue and magnanimity would threaten the honor, the status, and the existence of the entire community. Propagating this Renaissance ideal of the nobleman as man of honor were humanists who used similar terms to describe their actions as writers. Drawing on Seneca and the Stoics, they deployed the classical ideal of honestus to describe their protectors and themselves as men autonomous from all control by a superior power, due to their indomitable personal wills and capacities for self-mastery. At the same time, they emphasized that, as men of honor, they preferred the exclusive companionship of each other and would act forcefully in a public forum only to defend their autonomy and capacity for self-mastery, never to advance personal interests.

During Louis XIV's reign, the ideal of both noble warriors and orators being men of forceful action in service was transformed at court into a different but related elite idea, that of honnêtété, which implied a different kind of prominence and autonomy. Drawn primarily from Quintilian, this ideal also emphasized personal autonomy and disinterest; yet, unlike honor, it was not a quality to be made evident through valor in conflict. Rather, it called on individuals to prevent direct conflict by avoiding in their encounters with others all language or behavior that could be considered coarse, unpolished, or uncivilized. The ideal honnête homme was described not merely as being capable of aesthetically pleasing performance in social interactions but also, and perhaps most importantly, as being willing to disregard his own interests to better serve at his King’s court. Like the sixteenth-century ideal of honor, this ideal of honnêtété emphasized personal virtue as made manifest in diligent service both as a justification for one’s prominence and as a restraint on the forceful action one might take from that prominent position. In this way, it became possible for those not noble, but who could demonstrate personal virtue, to be both honorable (autonomous) and honnête (sociable), provided that they used their status and virtue to serve a cause larger than themselves, rather than for self-interest of any sort, which would have destabilized the entire court society and the kingdom over which the court ruled.

In the eighteenth century, writers allied with anti-court elites resurrected the
ideal of personal autonomy by emphasizing that true men of honor served not centers of power but broader entities—not the Gallican ecclesiasty but the community of believers, not the court but the remaining institutions and norms of provincial aristocracy, not the King but his nation. In effect, they divided the classical ideal of *honestus*, to preserve "honor" as denoting personal devotion and responsibility to a higher cause, by rendering it incompatible with, rather than an extension of, the moderation and self-restraint in interaction with others suggested by "*honnêteté*." The tension between these two ideals was absent from the classical historiography of the Enlightenment, which emphasized a conflict between modernity and tradition.

This inattention to such language is due in part to the Philosophes’ propaganda on behalf of humanistic knowledge and experimental science, through the revival of the Platonic distinction between philosophers and poets. This distinction had been effaced in the courtly ideal of the *écrivain* or *poète*, who took pride in the spontaneity of his expression, as opposed to the pedantry, lethargic thinking, and inaccessible language of the *savant*. Philosophic representations of writers in the second half of the eighteenth century, especially debates about playwriting, revived and reversed this distinction, valorizing the public presentation of useful and moral knowledge—the very definition of *littérature* in early seventeenth-century French—over and against both aesthetic writing (*belles lettres*) and the aesthetics of writers’ personal comportment. Consequently, much of the scholarly attention devoted to *gens de lettres* has turned on whether writers should be defined by their utility to a general "public" or by their personal status, implying a distinction, even a contradiction, which most aspirants in eighteenth-century literary life did not share.

Concern for *honneur* and *honnêteté* thus has been largely absent from much of the recent intellectual historiography concerned with the appearance of a modern public sphere. While demonstrating with great acuity and erudition the development of the institutions and language of civil society, this historiography by and large has presumed, rather than demonstrated, that those participating in and describing public life—particularly men of letters—differed from earlier elites because they possessed relatively stable senses of themselves personally and of where they stood in relation to the rest of society. Yet, as we shall see, the reign of Louis XV brought significant changes to the structures governing literary life: the downsizing of the court, the diminution of strictly defined clientele networks, the rise of a broader commercial market for print, and a period of, if not greater social mobility, at least easier personal appropriation of the markers and language of elite identity.

As personal status became less fixed, those seeking to distinguish themselves as elites—especially those, such as men of letters, who lacked such visible
markers of prominence as title, office, or wealth, had to find new ways to understand, define, and represent themselves in relation to others. This study argues that, rather than looking forward to more modern ideas of social prominence based on law and property ownership, eighteenth-century men of letters looked backward in time, adopting Renaissance strategies of self-fashioning to define themselves as socially prominent and therefore as authorized to speak publicly. Some looked to court culture, from which they borrowed the honnête ideal of reciprocal sociability as the essence of personal distinction. Others, hostile to the servility they associated with court culture, borrowed from sixteenth-century warrior culture to emphasize personal autonomy and virtuous, magnanimous action on behalf of those less prominent. The tension between these two ideals will be resolved by examining how claims to the status of men of letters could imply one of two different visions of writers and their public—that of classical poets interacting sociably with an audience of court elites, or that of autonomous "patriots" addressing themselves didactically to a sociologically diverse nation—until eventually, this tension was resolved through a synthesis of both ideals during the Revolution.

4. Public Theater

The identity of the eighteenth-century man of letters was formed through the encounter of court institutions and culture with another world, that of "the public." In this latter context, cultural norms, social groupings, and status hierarchies were all less hermetic and more fluid than at court or among urban elites; moreover, within these broader groups, social status and identity was determined by reference not to direct interpersonal relations but to a series of third-party observers, collectively referred to as le public. In pursuing the role of the public in the society and culture of early modern France, many contemporary historians have taken great interest in the early work of Jürgen Habermas, who traced the historical development of the mass production and mass consumption of information, from antiquity to the twentieth century. For Habermas, the eighteenth century was the key turning point in this process, due to the expansion of the medium of print and the formation of a series of institutions in which information could be exchanged between free, rational individuals on a more or less egalitarian basis. Habermas argued that such institutions developed concomitantly with a bureaucratic state and a commercial, civil society and therefore emerged outside the court and the closed, hierarchical corporations characteristic of early modern society. 32 Crucial to this argument, but little explored in Structural Transformation or much of the work it has inspired, is the relation between the institutions, language, and practices of this "authentic public sphere" which, according to Habermas, emerged in the eighteenth century and the culture of Renaissance elites, characterized by what Habermas calls "representative publicness." This term refers to the way in which feudal lords did not represent the interests of others but rather enjoyed political power as a personal "status attribute," inseparable from their "concrete existence." With the advent of absolutist monarchies, Habermas argues, aristocrats no longer had to "represent [their] lordliness" in this way, and their public life became "an impersonal, ceremonialized role-
playing esthetic of self-presentation" by which elites "displayed themselves and their status"—in effect, what Elias would analyze as a "court society." Like Elias, Habermas sees this highly stylized and performative sociability, in which public persona was indistinct from the private person, as characterizing the seventeenth-century court and urban "good society." Habermas then asserts that "representative publicness ... crumbled in the eighteenth century," and that the public spaces of eighteenth-century Paris, such as salons, academies, and theaters, were instances of "bourgeois" rather than "representative" public life, because participants in these spaces had "inward, private" selves distinct from their juridically and economically determined public status and their rationally calculated public interests. 33

This assertion has largely remained unchallenged as Habermas's narrative of the public sphere has been incorporated into recent historiography on eighteenth-century France. Specifically, Habermas argues that, because civil society in France at this time remained underdeveloped (relative to England), the presence of what he refers to as "intellectuals" in these institutions, particularly salons, was essential to the articulation of public opinion and to the formation of a modern public sphere in France. In this respect, like Tocqueville, Habermas perceives eighteenth-century men of letters as private individuals in the public sphere, in that they did not speak for any specific individual, corporative, or political interest, and instead represented what they perceived to be the interests of society as a whole. Habermas assumes that the appearance of a commercial public at this time enabled writers to invoke that public and speak for it as equals to those in positions of social and political authority whom they encountered in the public sphere and from whom they no longer needed either material support or social validation. Much of the most influential recent scholarship on eighteenth-century French political culture has accepted this view of how men of letters, in claiming to speak for the public, made themselves autonomous representatives to the state of universal social interests. 34

The term public had become resonant in French literary and political life long before the eighteenth century, and some scholars of the seventeenth century have recently questioned Habermas's narrative, in which a "representative public" at court (in which public and private selves remained indistinct) gave way in the eighteenth century to a "public sphere in the world of letters," which then became politicized in the latter part of the century, undermining both the social hierarchies of the Old Regime and the absolutism of the royal state. 35 The polyvalence of the term public was especially evident in mid-eighteenth-century writings on the theater, wherein it referred usually to the audience; the term took on a broader social meaning only later in the eighteenth century.

Moreover, throughout the early modern period, "public theater" meant a performance space to which access was restricted only by the price of
admission and not by social standing, as opposed to private venues, such as the court or an aristocratic home. In this respect, public theater would seem an example of the bourgeois public sphere, except that the most important commercial theater in Paris after 1680—the Comédie Française—also remained an auxiliary of the Royal Household, supervised at Versailles. It therefore incarnated both a commercial public space and the private, "representative" domain of the royal court. 36

The Comédie Française served at once as the royal theater, lying at the heart of the restricted, status-conscious social networks of urban elites, and as a commercial Parisian theater, playing to a socially heterogeneous audience. Moreover, the Comédie possessed no formal barrier to entry and no corporation or academy to regulate playwrights in either their literary or economic activities, so that playwrights were more directly implicated in the politics and culture of the court than other writers. Their encounters with those politics took place on several levels, the most immediate being interactions with the royal actors and actresses who, although lacking civil status, occupied much more stable and prominent positions and therefore did not have to compete for legitimacy in the same way writers did.

At the same time, the Comédie served as a gatekeeper for playwrights to the developing network of provincial theaters and the growing national market for dramatic works. As a result, those seeking to define themselves as men of letters through dramatic authorship were also more sensitive to the vicissitudes of the commercial marketplace than other writers. But at the same time, the participation of writers in that literary marketplace remained highly mediated, through their relations with printers, sponsors, censors, and eventually provincial theater directors. In their relations with both the court and the market, writers encountered not abstract concepts but actual social hierarchies, and these encounters generated documents, previously unexploited, that reveal more concretely than abstract statements of theory the processes of patronage, literary property, censorship, and publication in the age of Enlightenment.

This book, then, by focusing on men who wrote plays for the Comédie Française, brings new sources and a new approach to several longstanding questions in the scholarship of eighteenth-century French public life: How autonomous were men of letters from courtly and urban elites? What were they trying to do, rhetorically, when they appealed to "the public"? Should such appeals be taken as evidence for the replacement of the court and its "representative publicness" in which identity, status, and power were based on personal relations with patrons and demonstrations of status and civility—by an autonomous, commercial, rational public sphere as the predominant context of public life in eighteenth-century France? What, if any, role did these writers play in the end of the Enlightenment, the demise of the Old
Regime, and the course of the Revolution?

5. Analytic Concepts for Enlightenment Literary Life

Especially in France, intellectual, cultural, and literary historians have long used the category of *author* to group works. In the 1990s, scholars took a renewed interest in literary history as a link between social and cultural history; in this newer scholarship, authorship became a critical and historical problem in and of itself. Among American scholars, much recent interest has been in literary studies, where the emergence of a "modern regime of authorship" in later eighteenth-century Western Europe has become central to the scholarly agenda of those seeking to demonstrate how contestation, negotiation, and exchange lie at the heart of all cultural production. Such work is concerned primarily with the cultural construction of authorship, studied generally through a writer’s own texts or through intellectual property legislation; rarely is it concerned with the interaction of authors and social institutions. As a consequence, the important questions about eighteenth-century patronage, authorial remuneration, literary property, copyright, and censorship tend to be answered with insufficient attention to institutions, through interpretations of literary texts alone.

This study brings to light the institutions and social relationships within which writers represented themselves as men of letters; the motivations which led them to create such specific representations; the intended audience for such representations; and the stakes—in terms of status, wealth, and power—won or lost through the deployment of such representations. To do so, this book takes a different approach to the problem of authorship, focusing on the interaction between writers and the institutions of literary life. Influenced though not restricted by Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of a literary field, this book approaches literary life as the series of social encounters in which a writer or a group of writers engages at a given moment (the "field") and in response to which that writer acts based on expectations (formed through prior experience, or *habitus*) of how they might change their position in those encounters. The literary field, as an ensemble of institutions and social relationships, mediates between an individual writer and larger fields, notably those of constituted authority, or power, and of the commercial marketplace; thus a writer might gain status in relation to power or the market but lose position within literary life, or vice versa, a logic Bourdieu describes as "winner loses."

This book is not, strictly speaking, an application of Bourdieu’s approach to the eighteenth century; it does not reconstruct the field as a series of objective social relationships in which individuals take objective positions. Rather, this book describes literary life through a series of individual, strategic acts of representation, the consequences of which were unpredictable or even unknown to the individual actors. Nevertheless, several
concepts introduced by Bourdieu for the study of intellectuals have generated particular interest among historians of early modern gens de lettres, particularly the terms "strategy," "legitimacy," "autonomy," and "duplicity." To speak of an individual’s action as "strategic" is to suggest that it is indeed a willful and intentional attempt to achieve an end. It should not be taken to imply, however, that the individual is acting instrumentally, or is even fully conscious of the context for or consequences of their action. Rather, it is to suggest an instinctive attempt to produce an effect based on an always imperfect understanding of the situation; rather than "a conscious, rational action, [i]t is the product of the practical sense ... for a particular, historically determined game...." In taking strategic action, an author’s objective cannot be reduced merely to material gain, such as patronage, to power over others, or to simple self-promotion, such as the performance or publication of his or her plays. Rather, these writers’ goal is best described as "legitimacy," meaning authority, credibility, and respect from others who control the institution or institutions in question. For Bourdieu, those who can control entry into the institutions of a field have the "authority" to confer on or withhold from aspirants—that is, new entrants into that field—the legitimacy necessary to achieve credibility within and beyond those institutions. Through encounters with institutions, new writers learn implicitly the "rules of the game," and come to understand that they must conform to the norms set by the dominants of the field. Transgressors of these norms, even if entirely legal in their actions, will be denied legitimacy and will be subject to domination within or even exclusion from the field through such exercises of symbolic power as censorship.

As Jouhaud and others have shown for the seventeenth century, an author without legitimacy took great risk when speaking publicly (by printing a work, having a play performed or, even in some cases, writing a letter); such a writer could be easily dominated or simply ignored by other participants in literary life, such as potential protectors, other writers, royal officials and censors, the press, and the commercial public. An author who had established personal legitimacy could expect that the civility and respect due an homme de lettres would be shown him by others. But legitimacy should not be thought of as a fixed quantity or a stable quality; the uncertainty over how to attain legitimacy, what it meant, and who had it is the essential dynamic in the conflicts studied in this book. Achieving such legitimacy depended on an author’s personal comportment towards and within literary institutions, and it informed how other constituencies in literary life read his or any other writer’s work. Moreover, it determined whether a work’s publication would be considered appropriate or not. To elites at court, to office-holders in royal cultural institutions, and to established writers, new writers remained uncivil and dangerous—and should be denied publication—until they achieved legitimacy by demonstrating their adherence to established norms and deference to established hierarchies in literary institutions.
The issue of autonomy is even more crucial for the study of the literary field, since Bourdieu’s primary sociological interest in writing about literature was to demonstrate that "autonomy" is not what is usually defined as liberty, a natural quality of individual writers that is limited only by state censorship. Instead, autonomy must be understood as describing the relationship of literary institutions to constituted political authority; for Bourdieu, the "autonomy of the literary field" occurred only with the rise of a commercial, even industrial, market for literature, so that in the long term, writers escaped domination at the hands of patrons and the state only to fall under the thrall of the market. Viala introduced a more subtle historical narrative into this discussion by demonstrating that the institutions of French literary life had taken their essential form in the late seventeenth century, creating what he calls the "first literary field," still closely tied to the state, as opposed to Bourdieu’s "autonomous literary field." Jouhaud then pushed this argument further, by demonstrating that the proximity of the literary field to power in the late seventeenth century did not imply that the institutions and writers of this period saw themselves as dominated and subservient; rather, he argued that the concept of autonomy should not be used with respect to individuals in this period, because it was only through institutional affiliations that one could become a writer. 44

For Viala, like Bourdieu, intellectuals are defined not by their personal liberty to speak truth to power but by their collective positions within literary institutions and, through those institutions, their collective relations to both political authority and the commercial marketplace. Viala argued that seventeenth-century writers, to gain advantageous positions within those institutions from which to speak to political authority and to enter the marketplace, necessarily had to conform to the institutional culture, the norms of speech and behavior set by those who control the institutions. This conformity he described as "duplicity," implying that it was a conscious, instrumental choice made by writers who would have otherwise preferred, naturally, to achieve a greater degree of individual autonomy. By contrast, this book draws on Jouhaud’s slightly different approach to this problem, which holds that early modern writers did not engage in duplicity when they wrote dedications, became clients to protectors, joined official literary institutions, or served as royal officials, including censors. Moreover, this problem remains at the heart of much contemporary literary criticism, particularly feminist scholarship, in which eighteenth-century female writers are often argued to have developed distinct voices and tropes because they, as it were, had to, implying that these voices and tropes were duplicitous and that the writers in question would have preferred to write more sincerely or authentically. 45

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Another set of analytic concepts used in this book come from the work of Norbert Elias, particularly his concept of "established outsiders" facing a "double bind." These concepts are used to account for the propensity of these
writers to fashion multiple identities through different and often competing narratives of their social experience. An "established outsider" is Elias’s description of a person in a community who cannot control the collective norms of accepted behavior (that would be to be firmly "established") but who is not entirely free from those norms (that would be to be an "outsider"), and is in fact reliant on the ability, to a certain extent, to live up to those norms. Indeed, Elias developed this concept to describe an eighteenth century court artist, Mozart. Mozart’s public identity, he argued, depended upon his access to otherwise closed elite circles, yet he lacked legitimacy within those circles. He therefore necessarily "suffered the humiliations inflicted on him" by established elites to retain his prominence. To refuse to do so, either by withdrawing from elite circles or by challenging the norms of deference that prevailed within them, would reveal his marginality, both to outside observers, including commercial consumers of his work, and to himself. 46

This book posits aspiring eighteenth-century playwrights as established outsiders in literary life. As newcomers, they sought to demonstrate their suitability for inclusion in literary life by adhering to the rules and norms of comportment set by others better established; yet they found that those very rules prevented their advance by demanding deference towards their betters and punishing any self-assertive behavior of their own. This tension is described, again drawing from Elias, as a "double bind," a situation that the individual could neither master nor escape; he or she could only tack back and forth in his or her self presentation, like a boat caught in a storm, hoping to find a safe haven, to restore an emotional equilibrium. When no further options are available, the double bind becomes unsustainable; established outsiders effectively lose control of the situation and of their self-presentation; at such moments, the individual’s self control is compromised and becomes more prone to violence. 47 Aspiring authors invested heavily in their identities as men and women of both status and civility, yet in their encounters with the royal theater many faced the social reality of domination by the troupe, its supervisors at court, other writers (including censors), or critics in the press. Writers could neither withdraw from nor control these encounters, and as a result altered their "structure of personality" by tempering aggressive outbursts with gestures of self-effacement. By contrast, the troupe, its lawyers, the First Gentlemen of the Royal Bedchamber, its censors, and in some cases its favored writers, held established positions. In this history of encounters between aspiring writers and the established hierarchies of literary life, we will see many instances of moments when authors, as established outsiders, engage strategically, but unintentionally, in acts of symbolic or physical violence—strategic because the individual has chosen to act, but unintentional because the individual did not intend to violate established norms of conduct in the community to such an extent as to risk exclusion from it. Such outbursts, although not infrequent in aspiring writers’ encounters with the troupe, may be interpreted as what Elias described as acts of symbolic violence, committed in response to an untenable double bind of contradictory imperatives.

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http://www.gutenberg-e.org/brg01/print/brg01.html
At the same time as it draws on sociological concepts drawn from Bourdieu and Elias, this book takes seriously the problem of studying personal narratives in correspondence and print not as documents of objective, lived experience but as rhetorically performative statements, expressions of instinct and attempts to control emotions—that is, as cultural artifacts rather than autobiography. To do so, it borrows and modifies a concept used by Renaissance literary critics and intellectual historians, "self-fashioning." Studies of self-fashioning explore the tension that developed in the early modern period between what individuals felt about themselves in relation to society as a whole (rather than a specific order or corporation) and the status ascribed to them by others, especially by social and political elites. Moreover, it proposes to read an individual’s self-representations as strategic responses to that tension, as attempts to create and preserve the image of an autonomous individual.

More generally, a great deal of recent scholarship on the problems of interpreting life narratives, especially in the early modern period, has argued that autobiographical texts should be read not as expressions of a previously held self-conception but as actively constructing a self-conception through the creation of life narratives; that is, not only can the self not be distinguished from the representation of it, but the autonomous self does not exist prior to or outside the representation of it. Self-fashioning, then, is the performance of the role of the autonomous individual, not merely to deceive others but above all to preserve a coherent conception of oneself as the willful, active cause of one’s own destiny.

This approach holds much potential for the study of the Enlightenment, when philosophers consider modern self-consciousness to have emerged and which intellectual historians approach predominantly through the genre of biography. Moving from writing biographies to studying narratives that self-fashion offers a useful interpretive strategy for avoiding what Lisa Forman Cody has described as the twin pitfalls of anachronism when writing about the eighteenth-century: overemphasizing "the subject’s autonomy, sense of purpose and certain undeviating personality" or voiding all individual agency by presenting the subject as "permeated by [the] environment." As used here, "self-fashioning" describes the process by which writers used figurative language to create characters not only on the stage but, moreover, in their correspondence and prefaces. Its use in this book is intended to highlight how presentations of self must be read not as declarations of allegiance to a fixed political ideology, aesthetic program, or social group, but as a process of constant modification of the self.
Its use differs from the sense given to the term "self" by Stephen Greenblatt in two important senses. First, Greenblatt argued that writers self-fashioned in moments of social and political turbulence, and of course this book is directly interested in writers’ experiences in a time of great change, notably the French Revolution. However, it is more immediately interested in moments of turbulence and instability in individual lives, which it seeks to add up, as it were, to an explanation of social and cultural change. Secondly, the term "self-fashioning" as used here is not intended to suggest what Greenblatt called a "manipulable, artful process" of projecting a public identity different from that individual’s more authentic, personal self. 54

Rather, the process being described as self-fashioning here is an attempt by an individual to develop a new self-conception that would reconcile his or her previous understanding of self to social experiences that seem to contradict that conception. Writers self-fashioned, I argue, not to get ahead, but to understand their own behavior, including their own writing, as deserving of recognition and respect, or honor, as gens de lettres.

Peter Burke has written that the early modern period, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, is generally misunderstood when conceived as achieving "the consolidation of the self" into the modern individual, when Enlightenment writings are thought to be the first that can be read as "true ... self-expression[s ...of] sincerity," as opposed to duplicity and sophistry. By approaching what Burke calls "ego documents," or narratives that tell the story of their putative author, as acts of self-invention instead, this crucial category of modern consciousness can be broken down into its constituent parts; following Burke’s call, this book shows those parts to be, one on the one hand, honor or self respect, and on the other civility or self-control. 55

The consequences of this approach will become evident across the chapters of this book. Although each chapter offers a distinct case study of one or more aspects of literary life in the age of the Enlightenment, they collectively propose a broader argument: to reconsider not merely the status of playwrights or even gens de lettres, but ultimately the very status of the autonomous individual, what Elias calls homo clausus, as the basic category of modern society. 56

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Notes:

Note 1: Espion anglais 15 (1780), 237. "Quelle humiliation, en effet, non seulement pour un débutant dans la carrière, mais pour le poète le plus en somme, d’être obligé de soumettre son eouvre au jugement ... d’en attendre en tremblant ... & de n’avoir dans sa resignation d’autres ressources en cas de refus, qu’un appel au public par la voie de l'impression." Back.

Note 2: Bibliothèque de la Comédie Française (BCF) Register 52-24, folio 86; 137a, f. 88; 124a, f.4; 52-24, f. 15. Back.


Note 7: *Les événements nocturnes* (La Haye: 1776) [ARS Rf. 7817]: "...pour la première fois, par ... les Comédiens Français ordinaires du Roi, le samedi 9 septembre 1775" [ellipses in original].


**Note 15:** As Dinah Ribard has pointed out, the study of eighteenth-century gens de lettres has been strongly influenced by a presumption, never demonstrated, of a "process of professionalization of writers" throughout the century. Thus, literary and cultural historians have almost willfully ignored the way in which their most common sources, especially literary newsletters, work to represent writers to elites, rather than document literary life to a "public." "[T]hese texts, showing groups of cultivated and distinguished people debating ... construct the prestige of Parisian writers [in the image of] the readers for which these publications were intended exclusively," that is for courtly elites throughout Europe. ("Philosophe ou écrivain?: Problèmes de délimitation entre histoire littéraire et histoire de la philosophie en France, 1650 - 1850," Annales: Histoires et sciences sociales 55: 2 (2000): 355—388, quote at 369.) This evident point is lost, for instance, in the otherwise important and

Antoine Lilti also makes this point, arguing that the audience for and rhetorical context of representations of eighteenth-century salons has not been accounted for adequately in work on literary sociability in the Enlightenment; see his "Vertus de la conversation: l'abbé Morellet et la sociabilité mondaine," Littératures classiques 37 (1999): 213—228; and also his "La sociabilité mondaine et intellectuelle dans la deuxième moitié du XVIIIe siècle: Les salons parisiens," (Mémoire de D.E.A., Université Paris I, 1995), esp. 16—20, 115—124. Back.


Note 24: Roche notes that, "to become an author," a man of letters must "change register, set himself forth on the theater, where the public is the judge
of success or failure" (Républicains, 219). The term "auteur" evolved originally from the Latin auctoritas, which referred to one of the few ancient philosophers or their medieval interpreters who could be cited in scholastic argumentation. The standard seventeenth-century meaning of "auteur," however, was of common derivation with artisan, meaning creator. See the etymological discussion in Yves Delègue, Le Royaume d'exil: Le sujet de la littérature en quête d'auteur (Paris: Obsidiane, 1991), 16—36.

**Note 25:** Roche, "Salons, lumières, engagement politique," in Républicains, 242—253, and "République des lettres ou royaume des moeurs?." Back.

**Note 26:** The most important of these works is Biagioli, Galileo, Courtier, which demonstrates the necessity of court patronage for "the legitimation of a new socioprofessional identity for seventeenth-century natural philosophers" (quote at 87, emphasis in original). Similarly, Warnke, in The Court Artist (117—167), shows that for Renaissance artists, court service not only remained compatible with, but also was considered necessary for creative autonomy, since work for the commercial market meant participation in a restrictive guild workshop. Warnke concludes that while, for Renaissance artists, the court represented emancipation from such restraints and the possibility of a personal identity, in contrast to much twentieth-century art and cultural historiography that likens the court to a repressive totalitarian state, producing official propaganda. On this last point, with specific reference to theater at the court of Louis XIV, see Jean-Marie Apostolides, Le Roi-Machine: Spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1981).


Note 28: On the humanist revival of the "honneste ideal in the sixteenth century, see the essays in *La Catégorie de l'honneste' dans la culture du XVIE siècle* (Saint-Étienne: Institut d'études de la Renaissance, 1985). Back.


that those invoking "the public" do so as self-consciously rational and autonomous actors appealing to an anonymous, impersonal tribunal that is institutionalized in civil society.  Back.


**Note 38:** To historicize and critique this approach was the primary purpose of the famous though often misinterpreted essay by Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josué Harari, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 141—160, on which see Chartier, "Figures of the Author." Elsewhere, Chartier develops this point by arguing that to describe a text as a "work" is to give it the "unity, coherence, fixity" that makes interpretive commentary possible, while "The category of the author assigns the literary work a proper name." ("Text as Performance," in *Publishing Drama in Early Modern Europe* [London: British Museum, 1999], 9.)  Back.


**Note 40:** For a fully developed discussion, see Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29—144, 161—191; and *In Other

Note 41: Bourdieu, "From rules to strategies," in In Other Words, 59—75, quote at 64. Back.


Note 53: For a particularly interesting example of this approach to life narratives in modern historiography, see Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light*
Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashionings*, 3. In this respect, Greenblatt’s position appears closer to Erving Goffman’s understanding of a "fixed self operating behind a facade" than my approach.
