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Translating the Enlightenment: Women Translators in Eighteenth-Century France

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TRANSLATING THE ENLIGHTENMENT:

WOMEN TRANSLATORS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines women translators in Enlightenment France for their strategies to achieve publication. Elite, French Enlightenment women appropriated oppressive structures and norms, redeploying them to expand their own roles. This paper examines Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, Louise d'Epinay, and Anne LeFevre Dacier as exemplars of elite women translators who exploited gendered assumptions to gain access to print. Each of these women came from differing backgrounds, received differing levels of support from their patriarchal relations and expressed differing societal concerns through their writing. Despite such differences, Riccoboni, Dacier and d'Epinay all utilized similar strategies alongside translation to disseminate their concerns. Operating within the existent systems of patronage and networks of *privlège*, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all exploited their elite reputations and connections to prominent men, sometimes their own fathers or husbands. Each of these women was dependent on male favor and sympathy to gain a higher education or access print, as legally they were dependent on male consent for their contracts and legal activities. Each woman corresponded with established male intellectuals to widen their network of connections, and received support and legitimacy for their work through introductions written by male editors. Both in creating these networks and in presenting themselves and their work, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all employed self-deprecating rhetoric and language to appropriate existing traditional

gender assumptions. The combination of these strategies allowed each of these women to gain access to print and exert their literary and gendered critiques.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ackowledgements……vi

Introduction: Operating Within a Restrictive Sphere……1

Chapter One: Networks of *Privlilège*: Collaborating with Men……11
Favor Bestowed upon Anne LeFevre……15
Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni and Male Legitimacy……20
Louise d'Epinay and Intentional Networking……24

Chapter Two: Rhetorical Strategies for Publication……31
Riccoboni and Authorial Self-Distancing……35
LeFevre Dacier's Self-Deprecation……40
Louise d'Epinay and as Sentimental Savante……43

Chapter Three: Asserting Authority and Opening Space……49
LeFevre Dacier on the terrain of the Ancients……53
Riccoboni and Non-Normative Character Function……57
D'Epinay……60

Conclusion: Expanding Our Understanding……69

Bibliography……74

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Introduction

Operating within a Restrictive Sphere

J. H. Freese translated Louise D'Epinay's memoirs and correspondences in 1899, stating in his preface that she would never have been known if it were not for her relationships with certain prominent male intellectuals, most notably, Rousseau. By contemporary standards, an audience might balk at the idea of a woman not recognized in her own rights, but in Enlightenment France, women intellectuals were not viewed with favor. Instead, these learned elite women faced criticism and damage to their and their family's reputations due to transgressing their gendered societal positions. Enlightenment France featured restrictive patriarchal norms, policies, and politics, excluding women from citizenship, *l'Academie,* and the famed Republic of Letters. The political and intellectual spheres in France thus denied all women entry to or inclusion in these activities. With their exclusion from the formal intellectual sphere, women did have to create, utilize, and exploit relationships with elite males to gain access to these types of activities. I focus on Louise d'Epinay, Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, and Anne LeFevre Dacier as exemplary women translators who all utilized certain strategies to gain access to publication. Each of these women wrote in different genres and had differing experiences in their early lives and careers, however, they all used their published translations to assert their societal critiques. Though Freese published almost a century after d'Epinay's death, his opinion on this woman's reputation still heavily draws upon those earlier gendered ideologies and norms. Male philosophes were not alone, however, in creating and propagating traditional patriarchal gender roles. Elite, French Enlightenment women appropriated oppressive structures and norms, redeploying them to expand their own roles.

The French Enlightenment's Republic of Letters was a developed community of philosophes connected through a network of intellectual exchanges based in the Parisian salons, and *l'Académie* was the formalized institution of elite male intellectuals who regulated French grammar, spelling, and literature.[1] Dena Goodman explains that "for the philosophes of the French Enlightenment, both the political and the literary dimensions of their citizenship in this republic were crucial to their self-conception."[2] Though Goodman particularizes this trait to the philosophes in this article, her book, co-edited with Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Ealy Modern* France, demonstrates how the wider 'public' actively participated in the intellectual and political debates during the Enlightenment period, and through collaborative forms of reading and learning, came to define themselves, and define their places within society. Scholarship on the intellectual culture of the French Enlightenment has recognized the problematic separation of the private and public spheres, acknowledging women's significant influence and participation in the *salons*.[3] Scholars have long recognized that women were highly active within the informal knowledge networks, in practicing letter writing, and in running, organizing, and managing salons, which hosted the men of the formal *l'Académie* and Republic of Letters. Goodman explains how, "by the 1760s, the Parisian salons, already at the center of Parisian social and intellectual life, had become centers of Enlightenment. Seventeenth-century women had created the salon as an undifferentiated social

[1] For detailed background on the institutions of the Enlightenment and their gendered divisions, see: Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1994)

[2] Dena Goodman. "Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions." *Eighteenth-century studies* 22, no. 3 (1989): 329.

[3] See: Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1991; Elizabeth Bond, *The Writing Public: Participatory Knowledge Production in Enlightenment and Revolutionary France*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2021; Goldsmith and Goodman, *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

space that valued ideas and fostered discussion of them."[4] Goodman is not the only scholar to note women's intentionality in structuring a space which would foster intellectual debate without social hierarchies or rankings, and the attribution of the salon's success to these women who created, ran, and participated in them.[5] Thus, women of the French Enlightenment were clearly present in the socio-cultural public sphere, and as such, the spheres cannot be explicitly divided into public/private, with women entirely excluded from the public sphere. For the purposes of this research, I follow Anne Duggan's division of the public sphere into a socio-cultural public sphere and politico-economic public sphere.[6] Duggan differentiates between these public spheres, by defining the politico-economic sphere as the homogenous, male, formal intellectual sphere from which women were excluded, and the sociocultural public sphere and the space which women created for themselves to participate intellectually, including the salons and informal knowledge networks.[7] Specifically, the informal knowledge networks within which women are known to have been active participants did not include formal publication.

Where scholars, most notably Carla Hesse, have analyzed women's authorship in early modern and modern France, the Enlightenment period is rarely acknowledged as one in which women authored. This is not to say Enlightenment women's authorship has not been studied, but because the eighteenth-century saw fewer published women writers than the century preceding and following. Despite this research, few scholars have looked beyond traditional authorship to

[4] Goodman. "Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions." 331.
[5] For further scholarship on salon women, see: Elizabeth Susan Wahl, *Invisible Relations: Representations of Female Intimacy in the Age of Enlightenment.* Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1999; Goodman, *The Republic of Letters*; Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988; Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographers: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*; and Samia Spencer's collection, *French Women and the Age of Enlightenment.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
[6] Anne E. Duggan. *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: the Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France.* Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005, 41.
[7] Duggan. *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: the Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France,* 43.

that of anonymous or pseudonymous publications and translations. Marie Pascale-Pieretti argued in 2002 that female participation in translation has specifically been overlooked in scholarship.[8] Since her publication of "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France," scholars have continued to leave out this genre and domain of female participation. I argue that translation itself constitutes authorship, as prefaces, introductions, footnotes, and alterations to the text allow for a translator's authorial intervention. This concept of the translator's intervention is not new, nor is the concept of women's intervention and use of prefaces and introductions in their translations to assert their authorial voice. Lidia Taillefer de Haya and Rosa Munoz-Luna explain of Middle English history, "translation allowed women to write their own ideas and theories; women translators wrote prefaces and took part in religious debates, during which they could position themselves regarding a specific opinion or premise."[9] This excerpt not only demonstrates women's history of translation in the English context, but also their history in utilizing translation to publicly assert their opinions. There remains a significant lack of research into the history of women in translation in the French context. However, women do have a long history of finding strategies to make space for themselves within a predominantly male sphere, and translation, with its history of intervention, has often provided women an acceptable opportunity for publication and disbursement of their ideas. Despite societal permission of female translators, women also have a long history of necessary exploitation of social relations, particularly with prominent males, to gain entry and respect in the intellectual sphere. Taillefer de Haya and Munoz-Luna additionally explicate of this practice, how early female English translators Lady Margaret Beaufort and Dame Eleanor Hull utilized social connections for

[8] Marie-Pascale Pieretti. "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France." *The French Review* (2002), 474

[9] Lidia Taillefer de Haya and Rosa Munoz-Luna. "Middle English translation: Discursive fields according to social class and gender." In *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 42, Pergamon, 2014.

"access and acceptance to a selected academic atmosphere."[10] Enlightenment France culture and society was no different in requiring women to be sponsored or legitimized by a prominent, elite male intellectual for access to the erudite, politico-economic sphere. In this way, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay may all be seen as participating within this larger historical trend of women utilizing translation as a means of accessing a male-dominated academic society, as well as a means of publicly expressing their concerns and opinions.

Hesse's *The Other Enlightenment* clearly captures women's exclusion from the politico-economic sphere, encompassing authorship and publication. Her table listing the quantity of women in print during differing periods, shows the number of women authors hovering around 50-70 per decade through the Enlightenment and an exponential increase to over 300 women in print in the decade following the French Revolution. "Two things become immediately clear from the figures in Table 2.1: (1) Despite the prominence of a few great women writers, in numerical terms women were relatively marginal to the literary culture of the Old Regime, and (2) women's writing flourished once that regime fell."[11] For Hesse's purpose, she examines the explosion of women in print during and following the revolutionary period. However, for my purposes, I particularly analyze the era in which women were severely underrepresented in publishing to understand how these women successfully entered this sphere of printing. Before women authors became more common, how did these few women successfully publish, and how did they do so while imbuing their writing with legitimacy? I specifically look at translation as a strategy for these elite women intellectuals. Unlike Hesse, who discounts anonymous women authors or lesser-known women, strategies like translation may render the author less visible

[10] Taillefer de Haya and Munoz-Luna. "Middle English translation." 65.
[11] Carla Alison Hesse. *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 37.

while offering protection and legitimacy to women stepping into a male-dominated domain. Furthermore, I see anonymous publication as an important and intentional strategy women may have deployed for numerous reasons, including protecting their reputations and widening their audience, and thus, I do not discount anonymous and pseudonymous publication as a strategy which women often utilized to create and express their authorial self-identity.

Rather than a marked shift in translation theory allowing for greater authorial intervention, women's turn to translation as a specific strategy for entering into the male dominated intellectual sphere can be attributed to the socio-cultural changes taking place in the production and distribution of knowledge. Through the seventeenth into the eighteenth centuries, the literary public sphere included salon sociability and print production, with male and female participants. By the nineteenth century, this cultural literary public sphere shifted to a political one from which women were excluded.[12] This consolidation of literature as a field of intellectual activity gradually marginalized women from producers of culture to the role of consumer.[13] Scholars Elizabeth Goldsmith and Dena Goodman explain this intellectual cultural shift, "By the end of the reign of Louis XIV, however, an apparently paradoxical situation was developing: as elite women participated in the world of publishing in growing numbers, the 'official' view of women's place in the Republic of Letters was increasingly limited and marginalized. Assuming the role of a published author was a complicated business for women, and often involved strategic maneuvering to provide the writer with a veil of anonymity, even though, in the court society that constituted the primary audience for these texts, anonymity was always relative."[14] Thus, rather than a shift in the predominant translation theories, women's increased turn to

[12] Goldsmith and Goodman. *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France*, 2.
[13] Goldsmith and Goodman. *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France,* 5.
[14] Goldsmith and Goodman. *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France,* 6.

translation as a strategy for inclusion during the Enlightenment period likely stemmed from this comparatively sudden exclusion from the official and politico-economic modes of knowledge production and participation.

While this thesis utilizes the gender binary in my analysis of elite women's reaffirmation of societal gendered conceptualizations, this does not encompass the multitude of expressions which existed outside of this binary. Du Châtelet is one famous example of a French Enlightenment woman who does not fit into this framework. Du Châtelet took on a contradictory gendered stance herself, often denying her femininity, including adopting masculine clothing or behavior, and she, as argued by Mary Terrall, adopted idiosyncratic strategies to appear serious rather than ridiculous to her peers.[15] Where du Châtelet sometimes denied her femininity while taking measures for her audience to perceive her as serious, many other women intentionally emphasized their femininity and lack of intelligence or seriousness in their writings. While on the surface they strengthened oppressive gendered roles and ideologies, these elite women utilized such rhetorical strategies to intentionally expand and enter the male-dominated intellectual space. Due to this strategic presence, my analysis necessarily focusses on those women who reaffirmed and appropriated a traditional gender binary and its assumptions.

Where women were accepted and participated as authors of *Nouvelles,* or short fiction, they were largely excluded from other literary genres.[16] Thus, translation offered women an opportunity to experiment with the other genres traditionally dominated by men. Due to the lack of women translators present in France during the Enlightenment, an examination of the variety

[15] Mary Terrall. "Emilie du Châtelet and the Gendering of Science." *History of science* 33, no. 3 (1995): 284-5.
[16] Goldsmith and Goodman, *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France,* 2; For a discussion on the history of women writers and their domination of the genre of the novel, see: DeJean's *Tender Geographies*; and Goodman's *The Republic of Letters*

of strategies they appropriated to access print and publicly exert their opinions while creating their own public authorial self-identity is necessary.

The first chapter of this thesis, Networks of *Privilège:* Collaborating with Men, covers women's strategies for navigating the patriarchal and hierarchal networks of *privilège* and systems of patronage of the Enlightenment period. I challenge the binary analysis of women in a position of agency versus oppression in such collaborations with male colleagues through an examination of the hierarchical system of privilege even male intellectuals operated within, and how women appropriated gendered assumptions to overcome their particular challenges to gaining access and patronage.[17]. While women often were dependent on established men's recognition and support of their work to lend legitimacy and expand their audience, rather than oppressing themselves in their intellectual relationships, some instead creatively deployed strategies to navigate the existing networks and systems by creating their own patronage maps. In this light, the intentional formation of relationships with prominent male intellectuals, the exploitation of their and their patriarchal relational reputations, and the legitimacy extracted from the introductions of male editors were all *strategies* to access this official erudite society and publicly express their concerns. These women furthermore *strategically* and intentionally appropriated oppressive structures and assumptions in creating and maintaining such networks and support.

[17] For additional discussion on systems of patronage and privilege, and on official publication in the Old Regime see: Carla Hesse's *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern*; Joan DeJean's "Classical Reeducation: Decanonizing the Feminine." *Yale French Studies* no. 75 Special issue: *The Politics of Tradition;* Marie-Joseph Chénier's *Tableau historique de l'état et des progrès de la littérature francaise depuis 1789;* Augustin-Charles Renouard's *Traité des droits d'auteurs, dans la littérature, les sciences et les beaux-arts.* Renouard, 1839*;* and Raymond Birn's "The Profits of Ideas: '*Privilèges En Librairie*' in Eighteenth-Century France." *Eighteenth-century studies* 4, no. 2 (1971).

The second chapter, Rhetorical Strategies for Publication, analyzes how these women translators purposefully utilized self-deprecating rhetoric and language appropriating existent gendered assumptions to both build their patronage networks, and to increase readership by presenting themselves non-threateningly in eighteenth-century 'normative' gender functions and characterizations. Instead of representing their genuine opinions on their work or themselves, the presentation of their productions as lacking seriousness and stemming from an overwhelming emotionality or desire to impart knowledge on their children, functions to deflect their assertions of authority, conceal their strong opinions and criticisms, and ultimately protect their reputations and maintain an audience for their work. Without such concealing and gender-normative rhetoric, these women faced the threat of receiving such criticism for their work that their arguments would not be heard. Despite, such language, these female intellectuals used their presence in print and traditionally male-dominated fields to critique society as a whole and exert gendered opinions.

The third chapter, Asserting Authority and Opening Space, focuses on the arguments these women expressed through their prefaces, choices of text, and interventions within the texts themselves. Anne LeFevre Dacier exploited her father's and later her husband's reputation to access print and gain royal privilege or favor. This woman, while depicting her translations of Homer as an amusement, makes a strong critique of literature and its frivolity, and deplores previous attempts to translate epic poetry. LeFevre Dacier not only asserts herself in the high genre of epic poetry and on equal footing with the great Ancient men, but she also demonstrates women's linguistic ability and critiques the simple and sentimental literature of her period. Riccoboni similarly uses her public voice to critique the frivolity of literature but does so through her challenging of conventional literary norms, characters, and tropes, and through her refusal to

be confined to the genre of the novel. Riccoboni uses translation as a strategy to experiment with playwriting, but through her extreme interventions within the text, creates original pieces of work more than mere copies or imitations. Through participation and presence in the male-dominated fields, both Riccoboni and LeFevre Dacier challenge gender delineations amongst literary genres while demonstrating women's capability within such fields of literature. Louise d'Epinay created a wide network with notorious male intellectuals to enter their society and argue for women's place within their erudite sphere. D'Epinay used her prefaces and interventions within the text to boldly lay out a new plan for children's education, one which would include a higher education for girls.

Elite French Enlightenment women reaffirmed societal gender norms and preconceptions to expand and step into the predominantly male politico-economic public sphere, specifically using translation as a strategy for both cementing themselves within gendered assumptions and stepping out of their traditional gendered roles.

Chapter 1
Networks of *Privilège*: Collaborating with Men

Scholars have argued that women in collaborations with prominent male intellectuals or *philosophes* operated within an oppressive relationship. While true that women's work often went unrecognized in their productions with male counterparts, such as the famous case of Emilie du Chatelet, these relationships were not simply oppressive. Patronage systems and networks of *privilège* complicate a binary narrative of women as either oppressed or agential in their relationships and collaborations with prominent male intellectuals. Entry into the erudite sphere of Enlightenment France included a complex system in which even male academics required patronage from an active member of *l'Académie* or the Republic of Letters. Thus, understanding how women intentionally sought, formed, and maintained relationships with prominent intellectual men goes beyond the binary narrative of agency versus oppression to instead demonstrate one element of these elite women's strategy for inclusion in the politico-economic sphere and official publication.

Eighteenth-century France was particular for its unconventional networks of knowledge production and dissemination. The previous century witnessed women creating their own salons as centers of leisure and discussion, with prominent female novelists and women deeply involved in cultural production. The following century witnessed an explosion of women in print, with the deregulation of publishing houses and a breakdown of formal systems of patronage. The eighteenth-century is unique in that salons, previously a place of leisure, gained seriousness and became the home of *philosophes* and the Republic of Letters, and in *l'Académie*'s formalization and regulation of rules of grammar, language, and spelling, particularly rules which emphasized rationality – a characterization almost only attributed to men. Beyond the formal networks, the Enlightenment also included an explosion of a transnational exchange of ideas through letter

writing. Though letter writing may not be considered intellectual activity in contemporary standards, in the eighteenth-century, these informal exchanges constituted a large part of the erudite and philosophical productions, with either published correspondences or the responses inspiring editing processes. Carla Hesse explains that before the French Revolution in 1789, "ideas and their forms of expression were not legally considered property. Ideas were a gift from God, revealed through the writer – God's chosen messenger. The power to determine what constituted God's knowledge and to designate who would enjoy the *privilège* of its *jouissance* (enjoyment) belonged to God's first representative in the kingdom, the King, and his administration. It was by the King's 'grace' and 'pleasure' that authors or publishers might materially exploit the dissemination of ideas."[18] Hesse's quote reveals a great deal regarding this period.

Prior to the French Revolution, ideas and productions were not subject to copyright or ownership, and thus, translation did not require any original authorial permissions. This also meant that women in correspondence with other intellectuals could have their ideas used in that other person's work without attribution, and vice versa. With such an informal recognition of ownership for intellectual productions, ideas circulated widely, and a large amount of work was collaborative, officially and unofficially. In contrast to the free circulation of work and ideas without attribution of original ownership, formal publication was heavily regulated by the Crown. As Hesse notes, the King had to 'allow' any publication. The majority of the eighteenth-century, prior to the French Revolution, was a part of the Old Regime. The aristocratic and monarchical institutions, such as the guilds, salons, and systems of patronage and privilege, were largely exclusive of women. Beyond a few popular and aristocratic *salonnières*, the Old Regime

[18] Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment,* 56-7.

large consisted of networks of princes, courtiers, censors, and wealthy patrons who controlled official print, and the formalized intellectual institutions, and deemed women unqualified to write. Women's reliance on men's patronage to gain entry to the literary and intellectual sphere was not a specifically oppressive obstacle due to their gender, and instead was a common feature of this closed network of elite philosophes. Despite this system requiring men to gain patronage from those already established within the formal institutions, women did face male and female prejudice regarding their abilities, and increased difficulty in obtaining such patronage or *privilège*, as dominant gendered assumptions excluded females from the official Enlightenment institutions, including publication. The elite women writers and translators who did successfully create and maintain such networks, then, demonstrated a great deal of alternative creativity in appropriating strategies and intentionally forming and exploiting relationships with sympathetic men willing to provide support and legitimacy to their work.

Through the Enlightenment period, married women held no legal status as individuals, while never-married women over the age of twenty-five and widows held rights to manage their own financial affairs. Married women's husbands managed and controlled their property and finances, divorce was illegal, and the law required a husband's consent to sign any contracts, which would have included publication.[19] Despite the debasement of women's legal status when married, unmarried women faced fewer options and financial insecurity. Women's education in the eighteenth-century was limited to the convent or domestic tasks, and with very few options for acceptable work, or an acceptable place in society for unmarried women, girls were required to seek husbands to ensure their own futures and security.[20] Enlightenment women, including

[19] Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 60.

[20] For further discussion on women's legal status in eighteenth-century France see: Adrienne Rogers's "Women and the Law" in *French Women in the Age of Enlightenment* ed. Samia Spencer, and Elisabeth Guibert-Sleziewski's "*Naissance de la femme civile. La Révolution, la femme, le droit*." *Pensée*, no. 238 (Mars-Avril 1984).

those of the elite or aristocratic class, were continually dependent on their fathers or husbands to consent to their activities or contractual agreements, and those wanting to enter the intellectual sphere were additionally dependent upon networks of patronage for inclusion in the Republic of Letters and print.[21] Beyond their dependency on men for access to the politico-economic public sphere, elite women intellectuals were often, early-on, dependent upon their fathers to provide them a substantive education. I argue, following Goldsmith and Goodman's concept of patronage matric mapping, which views women's 'name-dropping' as a part of their delineation of their patronage systems, that these women's creation and description of their relations with prominent male intellectuals constitutes an intentional patronage mapping which would support their intellectual pursuits.[22]

I examine Anne LeFevre Dacier, Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, and Louise d'Epinay to demonstrate how they intentionally formulated patronage systems and networks with prominent male intellectuals who would lend their reputational support. LeFevre Dacier's father provided her with an extensive education, and both her father and husband had distinguished reputations in the erudite sphere which LeFevre Dacier would exploit to gain her own entry. While already enjoying the opportunity of high status through her patriarchal relations, LeFevre Dacier still converted to Catholicism to gain the favor and privilege of Prince and heir-apparent, and received support from the editor, Mr. Pope's introductions to her work. Riccoboni contrastingly did not have reputational support from either her father or husband, and with her translations published following her separation from her husband, it is unclear whether he supported her

[21] See Goldsmith and Goodman's *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France,* 25-7, and Sharon Kettering's "The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen," *Historical Journal* 32, no. 4(1989): 817-41 for a full discussion on women's dependency on their fathers, husbands, and son's clientage choices for them and the lack of opportunities to create a social identity apart from the patriarchal relations.
[22] Goldsmith and Goodman, *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France*, 25.

literary career. Despite this, Laurdet's, the editor to her *oeuvres*, introduction also legitimizes Riccoboni's work, and she chose to use her husband's last name as her authorial signature, in addition to the suffix indicating that she is married. D'Epinay provides the most striking example of intentionality in creating an intellectual network through her letters. D'Epinay also did not come from a family of high status or wealth, but she strategically exploited her existent network to gain connections to prominent male philosophes, including Rousseau, Diderot, and Grimm, and therefore entry into their erudite society.

Favor bestowed upon Anne Le Fevre

Anne Le Fevre, born 1645 in Preuilly-sur-Claise and died 1720 in Paris, where she lived most of her life, married André Dacier, one of her father's students, in 1683. She provides a prime example of the necessity of King's privilege in pursuing intellectual activities. Born into a favorable societal and intellectual position, Le Fevre's father instructed her, as he desired to teach his daughter alongside his son after recognizing her literary potential.[23] Mr. Pope, the editor to LeFevre Dacier's translation of Homer's works explains, "During the Dacier's stay at Castres, they applied themselves only to study, reading holy scripture, the Fathers, and controversial materials. They made their public abjuration (of the Protestant religion) in September of 1685. M. l'Eveque de Meaux, & M. de Montausier, who had taken aid from Anne le Fevre Dacier's fortune, even while she remained Protestant, told this to King Louis XIV. The Prince, Louis, who was only waiting for them to convert to Catholicism to share his blessings with them, awarded M. Dacier a pension of fifteen hundred livres, and another five hundred to

[23] Dacier, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* ij.

his spouse."[24] While the Daciers completed intellectual work prior to receiving the King's official privilege and blessings, once they converted to the monarchy's religion, they received formal compensation as writers and were allowed to officially publish and circulate their work. This exerpt provides strong evidence for the importance of royal *privilège* in entering the politico-economic public sphere and publication. Furthermore, this quote reveals the extent to which elite Enlightenment women's reputations were relational to their fathers or husbands. Here, Anne LeFevre Dacier is dependent upon her husband's changing religion and grace with the Prince. Because she is referred to as M. Dacier's spouse, it is more than likely that if her husband had not converted and held a prominent preceding reputation, LeFevre Dacier would not have been extended the Prince's favor and royal compensation.

The instruction LeFevre Dacier received from her father provided her with the literary foundations to pursue her translation career later. Mr. Pope explains that "her father…never thought to raise her with knowledge of literature; he only intended to teach his son…but chance, providence or the happy disposition of his daughter determined him to give lessons to both of his children."[25] The editor continued to explain that her father taught her brother lessons, but was disappointed with his answers and progress. When his daughter responded, he listened and was charmed, resolving to teach his daughter more and apply more to her study.[26] Anne Le Fevre Dacier's exceptional education and abilities with ancient languages was largely due to her father's sympathies to female learning and his devotion to instructing his daughter. Most Enlightenment girls did not receive such an education, and thus, M. Le Fevre's notice of his

[24] All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. Homer. *Les oeuvres D'Homere.* Translated into French by Anne Dacier [A Leide: Chez J. de Wetstein & fils] 1712, vj.
[25] Dacier, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* ij.
[26] Dacier, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* Ij-iij.

daughter's talents and instruction on high literature largely inspired her exceptional abilities and provided her with the foundation to assert herself in male-dominated terrain later in her life.

The editor's introduction describing LeFevre Dacier and her life clearly shows the dichotomy between this woman's intellectual ability and her confrontation against the male ego, yet her continued dependency on her father's favor. Mr. Pope explains of her early life, "Anne le Fevre often took the liberty to debate with her father on Vaugelas's *Quinte-Curse*; she found several faults with the translation, some stylistic negligence, errors even in the language, and places badly translated or rendered."[27] The editor continues to explain that her father was first annoyed that his daughter noticed such faults before he did, but he was joyful that his daughter had such fine discernment and exquisite taste.[28] While Anne Le Fevre enjoyed the intellectual privilege of her father and he, seeing her potential, ensured her consistent instruction, her father's initial feelings of annoyance, and likely resentment, regarding his daughter's intelligence exceeding his own reflects both her unique home situation and the majority of the population's views on providing an education for young women beyond the convent or limited opportunities that were available to them. Le Fevre's exceptional education was dependent on her father's unusual intellect and abilities as a teacher and on his willingness to provide his daughter with instruction uncommon to that which families typically provided for girls.

Beyond her particular opportunities for a better education, Le Fevre also benefitted from her family's prominent reputation. "Her father died in 1672, the following year she came to Paris, where her reputation had already preceded her."[29] Her existant reputation stemmed largely from her father's work and name, where her referential relationship to him provided her with a

[27] Editor, Introduction to Dacier's, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* iij.
[28] Editor, Introduction to Dacier's, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* iij.
[29] Editor, Introduction to Dacier's, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* iv.

degree of protection and freedom to pursue her intellectual work. Severed from her father's reputation following his death, in 1683 Le Fevre married André Dacier, with whom she was raised.[30] The quote used at the beginning of this section, explaining the compensation the monarchy bestowed upon each Dacier following their conversion to Catholicism, emphasizes the importance of a woman's relation to her husband, father, or another prominent male. Importantly, however, is that her husband participated in intellectual work himself and was sympathetic to his wife's abilities and her participation in work alongside him.[31] The editor describes the prince as compensating LeFevre Dacier's husband more generously than her and describes the woman translator as M. Dacier's *épouse* (spouse). Despite Anne LeFevre Dacier's exceptional intellectual abilities, and the public and royal recognition of her own work, she is nearly always described by her patriarchal relation.

Enlightenment women were legally dependent upon their husbands in every aspect of life. Networks of patronage and relationships with prominent male intellectuals could, however, offer female intellectuals entry into a more formalized erudite sphere, official publication, and lend reputational support to completed work. The editor's introduction to Lefevre Dacier's *oeuvres* describes her raw talents as a child as exceeding those of her brother and remarks on her talents as exceeding even her father's from a young age.[32] It is particularly significant that a male editor compliments LeFevre Dacier's intellectual capability and talents as greater than the related men in her life, as this period persistently featured an ideology that woman's rational capacity was significantly less than men's. As Mr. Pope compares her young genius, he also uses the

[30] Editor, Introduction to Dacier's, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* v.
[31] In the editor's *avertissement* to Dacier's translations of Homer, he explains her work with her husband on Plutarch's Illustrious Man, but her departure from collaborative work when her husband could not devote enough singular attention to that text, Dacier, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* xij.
[32] Editor, Introduction to Dacier's, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* lj, iij.

qualifier 'woman' when explaining her positive attributes, "One has never seen in a woman more courage, firmness, kindness, equanimity, piety, wisdom or modesty."[33] The editor further highlights her characteristics as in line with the traditional gendered ideologies and roles:

> Her modesty was so great that she never spoke of science, nor anything she had done; and she never spoke in her conversations about the advantage she had over most of those she conversed with. Those who did not know her would discover in her an ordinary woman, who knew to guard the decorum of her sex; but those who did know her, admired her more and more for her lack of vanity with all her talents.[34]

The editor's specific description of LeFevre Dacier as modest and lacking any vanity follows the typical or traditional characterizations of proper women in Enlightenment France. The leading philosophes consistently portrayed vain women in a negative light, so the editor's depiction of her piety, wisdom, and modesty all support her reputation as a non-threatening woman exhibiting all the qualities expected of her sex. As this writer cements and reaffirms LeFevre Dacier within traditionally feminine traits, he also describes her courage and firmness, both qualities typically associated with men. Rather than this reaffirmation of her gender as a negative, the editor actually lends legitimacy and credibility to this translator's work and therefore affords a level of protection against potential ridicule. Furthermore, as I will discuss in the following chapter, Anne LeFevre Dacier herself appropriated such assumptions and intentionally presented herself within such characterizations.

LeFevre Dacier successfully exploited the greater number of opportunities afforded her through her birth and association with her future husband, while also gaining legitimacy and credibility through her relationships to prominent men. Clearly, one cannot argue that LeFevre Dacier exerted agency in the context of the patronage systems and networks, but one also cannot argue that she was oppressed in requiring such reputational relations to lend support and

[33] Editor, Introduction to Dacier's, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* viij.
[34] Editor, Introduction to Dacier's, *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* ix.

legitimacy to her work. In the socio-cultural environment of the Enlightenment, greater and more prominent networks of relations significantly contributed to one's success. Elite women writers and translators simply operated within this already existent hierarchal space; however, they faced greater difficulty in finding and obtaining mentors and patronage than men did. While one cannot apply a narrative of agency versus oppression in examining LeFevre Dacier's reliance on patriarchal relations, the substantially small number of women who successfully published and obtained notoriety, and the pervasive ideology that the female sex was incapable of rational thought cannot be discounted in understanding elite women translator's particular barriers to completing their work.

LeFevre Dacier, received support, sympathy, and consent from her husband as they worked together on certain pieces of literature, and at the same time ventured into their own intellectual pursuits. LeFevre Dacier was unusual in her learned upbringing and marriage to an especially understanding and supportive husband, where many other elite women did not experience the same favorable circumstances. Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, in contrast, is one Enlightenment woman translator who published following her physical separation from her husband and authored first under pseudonyms without any reputational support from her husband or father.

Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni and Male Legitimacy

Marie-Jeanne Laboras de Mézières was born in 1713, and published her texts much later than LeFevre Dacier, shortly before the French Revolution. Laboras de Mézières still published her texts, however, before the explosion of women in print during and following the Revolution. This elite woman married into the name Riccoboni in 1735, but she separated from her husband

shortly after their marriage. Unlike LeFevre Dacier, who collaborated intellectually with her husband, Riccoboni published her texts anonymously following her separation from her husband. While women required the consent of their husband's to sign a contractual agreement, including publication, it is unclear whether Riccoboni's husband would not allow her to publish using her own name, thus requiring her to publish pseudonymously and after their separation, or if her choice to publish in this way was simply because her earlier career as an actress prevented her from seriously writing until later in life. Regardless, both LeFevre Dacier and Riccoboni received legitimacy through editor's forewords or introductions to their texts.

While Riccoboni did not have a prominent reputation through her father and husband to precede her work, male editors still lent support and authority to her complete works. Mr. Humblot's, the editor, '*avertissement*' in the second volume of Riccoboni's *Oeuvres Complètes* explains, "Mme Riccoboni's first essays, published under the title of English translations, persuaded many people that her works were translated. This letter, addressed to Amélie, confirmed this opinion. However, she never translated nor imitated any author. Even Amélie, the content of which she owes to Mr. Fielding, does not offer twenty lines of the original."[35] This sentimental novel was originally authored by Henry Fielding under the title 'Amelia' and first published in 1751. The editor's notice to Riccoboni's translation of Amélie serves multiple purposes for her text.

This editor first lends legitimacy and support to Riccoboni's authorial productions. Mr. Humblot placed Riccoboni in the status of an author herself, arguing against any opinions of her lessened authorial status on the basis of her translation activities. In stating that Riccoboni authored this text herself rather than translating someone else's original work, the editor places

[35] Marie Jeanne Riccoboni. *Oeuvres Complètes*. In six volumes, Nouv. éd., Paris: Foucault, 1818, Volume 2, 5.

Riccoboni in a raised status by arguing for her authorship of the text and in stating this in a positive light. Furthermore, the editor argues for translation as an authorial status in its own right. He argued for the justification of intervention within the text. Explaining that Riccoboni did not keep twenty lines of the original, the editor does not portray this intervention negatively, but instead described Riccoboni as a legitimate author. For this same volume, the editor continued to deplore the content of the original text while applauding Riccoboni's substantial intervention:

> At the request of a friend, Mme Riccoboni, consenting finally to treat this subject, reduced the four English volumes into three small parts, told a story of heroes, which rendered her misery worthwhile. In place of Mrs. Bernet, she created the naïve, charming dazed girl, whom she gave as wife to the young Atkinson, while also destroying her original character. The lord became an ordinary seducer, the colonial James, a light-weight man, but honest.[36]

The editor earlier described the original text as boring, with Mrs. Bernet as an extremely unlikable character, while contrasting it with the delightful version Riccoboni authored. Similar to how the editor of LeFevre Dacier's *ouvres* argued for her remarkable talents and admirable qualities, the editor of Riccoboni's argued for her talents and authorial intervention as benefitting the original text.

Furthermore, Jean-Francois de La Harpe described, in his Notice to Marie Jean Riccoboni's *oeuvres,* one of Riccoboni's merits as having never left a trace of licentiousness.[37] His descriptions echoes the well-recognized importance of a woman's modesty in Enlightenment France in defining her reputation and respectability. Riccoboni's care in maintaining her perceived sexual reputation supported her writing endeavors and helped to mitigate any negative responses to her publications. La Harpe's introduction to the published collection of Riccoboni's *oeuvres* dually exemplified the preconceptions women needed to overcome to be taken seriously

[36] Riccoboni, *Oeuvres Complètes,* volume 2, 6.
[37] Marie Jeanne de Heurles Laboras de Mezières Riccoboni, 1713-1792, and Jean-François de La Harpe. *Oeuvres De Madame Riccoboni.* Paris: Brissot-Thivars, 1826, xxiv.

by their male peers, but also how male support and reputation may have provided legitimacy to women stepping out of their traditional gendered roles.

Though male editors and commentators could lend great support to Enlightenment women writers and translators, they could also publicly criticize them and their work. Riccoboni's editor personally disliked her text '*Lettres de Fanny Butlerd*' and specifically criticized both the text, and the translator's choice to working on this story. This editor, in the *extrait de Lettres de Fanny Butlerd*, emphasizes criticisms of Riccoboni's work and highlights his own agreement with them, "The author of *L'Année littéraire*, Freron, judged these works severely: some of these critiques are founded: one does not like to see a novel's heroine who speaks in advance of her defeat as an incident which must necessarily happen."[38] In this excerpt and throughout the extract, the editor disapproves in Riccoboni's choice in text, but continues to explain later that the text lacks variety, with a series of monotonous scenes that lose the readers' interest.[39] Thus, he not only degraded the original text, but also critiqued Riccoboni's translation. This comes in stark contrast to the editor's introduction to *Amélie*, in which he remarked positively on Riccoboni's ability to improve the original story and characters.

These elite women entering the politico-economic public sphere were largely dependent on maintaining relationships with prominent male intellectuals, who could damage these women's reputations should the relationships sour. Du Châtelet, while differing in her gendered approach, also had to rely on prominent male academics for intellectual protection and increased legitimacy just as many other elite Enlightenment women.[40] Terrall explains that "ridicule was a frequently used weapon against all sorts of intellectual projects, and women who aspired to

[38] *Extrait de Lettres de Fanny Butlerd* in Riccoboni, *Oeuvres De Madame Riccoboni,* 1.
[39] *Extrait de Lettres de Fanny Butlerd* in Riccoboni, *Oeuvres De Madame Riccoboni*, 1.
[40] Terrall, "Emilie du Châtelet and the Gendering of Science." 287-8.

wisdom and rationality were especially vulnerable to dismissal by ridicule."[41] Thus, the formation of patronage networks was particularly vital for female intellectuals who would depend on the protection of elite male reputations as they stepped out of their traditional gendered roles. Women were specifically susceptible to such reputational attacks not only for societal conceptualizations linking femininity with frivolity, but also and especially for those associating a lack of femininity with promiscuity. Even du Châtelet, arguably one of the most famous women intellectuals of the Enlightenment period, faced criticism on the basis of her gender and sexuality. Both Voltaire and Mairan formulated their attacks and criticism of her work based on her gender, and her assumption of traditionally male gender roles.[42]

Where women were especially vulnerable to attack and criticism of their work on the basis of their gender, support from male intellectuals and their dependency on such relationships does not fit within a binary narrative of agency or oppression. Despite the variability in their gender, and male support often gender-specific, as in the editor's description of LeFevre Dacier as fitting within traditional female roles and characteristics, women were not alone in navigating the systems of patronage and networks of privilege to gain access to publication. It cannot be overstated that women faced particular challenges on account of societal conceptualization about gender and women's capacity for reason, but they operated within the same hierarchical and preferential sphere as men. Thus, these women's strategies of creating and exploiting relations or networks with prominent men demonstrates their keen recognition of their hostile environment and their ability to navigate this patriarchal system.

Louise d'Epinay and Intentional Networking

[41] Terrall, "Emilie du Châtelet and the Gendering of Science." 300.
[42] Terrall, "Emilie du Châtelet and the Gendering of Science." 296-7.

Louise d'Epinay is often remembered for her connections to notorious men such as Rousseau, Diderot, and Grimm, and Grimm published much of her work following her death. D'Epinay's contributions to *Correspondance littéraire* and the two other publications during her lifetime appeared anonymously, and therefore, she provides a unique example as a woman translator. Having received less support than LeFevre Dacier in her endeavors into print from male colleagues or her husband or father, d'Epinay intentionally forged her own connections and relationships to intellectual men to facilitate her entry into the realm of letters. D'Epinay's memoirs reveal her conscientious building of relationships, and her exploitation of those she already had. Unlike Riccoboni and LeFevre Dacier, when d'Epinay's work was published following her death, the male editor's introductions often gave her no favors. Freese's translation of her memoirs criticized d'Epinay specifically for her networking with prominent male intellectuals and claims these relationships as the reason for her fame.

D'Epinay's memoirs are a mixture of letters between her and her friends and family, alongside d'Epinays inner thoughts and musings. Through these writings, one begins to understand her personal life and desires. In one section of the text, d'Epinay expresses to M. de Francueil, "M. Rousseau has promised to come […] tomorrow. You cannot imagine what pleasure I find in his society. He is fond of you; he possesses your esteem and friendship; his presence will help me to endure my weariness."[43] D'Epinay displays romantic interest in M. de Francueil, so her discussion of M. Rousseau's presence as soothing her weariness must not be mistaken for romantic longing, as many scholars glean from similar women's sentiments. Instead, this quote demonstrates d'Epinay's love for the intellectual society and her passion and need for intellectual development and exercise. Thus, this excerpt illuminates this woman's

[43] Louise Florence Pétronille Tardieu d'Esclavelles Epinay, *The Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame d'Epinay.* Translated by J.H. Freese. London: H.S. Nichols, 1899, 180.

desire for learning and discussion, and her intentionality in both reaching out to Rousseau and developing a working relationship with him in order to access such opportunities. Furthermore, through this excerpt, d'Epinay is also requesting Francueil to aid in their introductions, as she explains Rousseau's fondness for him. Prior to Rousseau's great notoriety, he was acquainted with Francueil when he had given Rousseau some music to copy. At the point d'Epinay planned her introduction and meeting with Rousseau, he was already an established man of letters. Clearly, d'Epinay exploited her romantic affair with Francueil and his previous acquaintance with Rousseau to gain her own contact and eventual entry into their intellectual realm.

There are many other similar sections within this text which highlight d'Epinay's desire for the intellectual sphere, her intentionality in nurturing and developing relationships with prominent individuals, and her use of sentiment and religion in her descriptions. In the last two volumes, d'Epinay reveals the latter part of her life. M. de Francueil attempted to break off his relationship with d'Epinay and she determined to retire to a convent for her remaining life. Dissuaded by the Abbé Martin and encouraged to continue her relationship, d'Epinay struggled emotionally as her romantic interest got closer to an actress and distanced himself from her. Following this rupture, d'Epinay forms a close relationship with Grimm, faces accusations of treachery after being found burning her dead friend's papers, and finally, clears her name. After d'Epinay had claimed her independence and moved on from Francueil, he became offended and pulled her back into his life. Despite the drama present in d'Epinay's life, she enjoyed great privilege in status and relationships, which afforded her freedom and access to intellectual roles often not afforded to Enlightenment women. D'Epinay's relationship with Rousseau provided her intellectual fulfillment but was not consistent. She, however, formed relationships with many prominent figures, and her connection with Grimm provided her an introduction to Diderot, who

was her first visitor in Paris and stayed with her as a guest for weeks.[44] D'Epinay and Diderot developed an intimate relationship, causing another scandal, while her husband faced financial ruin and accumulating debts.

D'Epinay's memoirs and correspondence reveal her expertise in networking and navigating through the intellectual sphere. Instead of a dependency on the men in her life, d'Epinay intentionally sought certain relationships, sought reparations when relationships soured, and created new networks when her current ones turned inconsistent. J. H. Freese, the translator of d'Epinay's memoirs, correctly assessed that her relationships with such prominent men increased her notoriety and provided her with opportunities not available to most women. He further may have been correct in his argument that d'Epinay's lasting fame is largely due to her connections to these men. Most Enlightenment women remain unknown to history and were largely unknown in their own time. Scholars such as Carla Hesse argue for the extreme lack of women in print throughout the eighteenth century preceding the French Revolution, though she notes that she does not include statistics of women who may have published anonymously or pseudonymously. Even today, the most well-known Enlightenment women writers and intellectuals are known in connection to certain male individuals: Emilie du Chatelet with Voltaire; Louise d'Epinay with Rousseau, Diderot, and Grimm; Marie-Anne Pieretti Paule Lavoisier with her husband, Antoine Lavoisier; and many more. Often, Enlightenment salon women are most known for the famous men who occupied their salons, while those hosting the most prominent philosophes gained the most notoriety. Rather than oppressing women in relation to these men, I argue that these Enlightenment women writers and translators intentionally formed relationships as a strategy for publication. Women, again, were not alone in

[44] Epinay, *The Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame d'Epinay.* xxxiv.

this approach and men, too, operated within the hierarchal patronage networks of the intellectual spheres of the eighteenth-century in France.

D'Epinay not only sought out and formed relationships with such prominent intellectual men, but also, like Riccoboni and LeFevre Dacier, received legitimacy and support from male editors. Laurdet, in his *approbation* to her *Conversations d'Emilie* describes d'Epinay as an 'enlightened mother'[45] and the editor, in his *avertissement*, justifies the French Academy awarding the *Conversations* the most useful text of the year based on its 'total recasting of the original Conversations.'[46] Here, Laurdet confirms d'Epinay's status as an Enlightened individual, but more importantly in a maternal role, presenting her as non-threatening and within her traditional gender roles. The editor, then, in his confirmation and support of d'Epinay's work as justifiably deserving of the title 'most useful text of the year,' expands the text's readership and places a positive connotation of the work prior to the audience's consumption of the text itself. Thus, similarly to LeFevre Dacier and Riccoboni, male editors and colleagues, through introductions, lent legitimacy to d'Epinay's work and expanded its sphere of influence. When stepping out of their traditional gender roles into the male-dominated sphere of print, such reputational support was invaluable to their success.

D'Epinay presents an exceptional example of a woman writer and translator who navigated through such networks of patronage and privilege, widening her circle beyond most other women intellectuals. D'Epinay deserves her lasting fame, not for her relation to the notorious philosophes, but for her unique ability to create and maintain such a vast network of intellectuals in an atmosphere of gender assumptions assigning women to a sphere of irrationality and over-sentimentality.

[45] *Approbation*, Lourdet, Professeur Royal, in Epinay, *The Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame d'Epinay.*
[46] *Avertissement*, Epinay, *The Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame d'Epinay,* xxiij.

Conclusion

While relationships and collaborations with male intellectuals often oppressed women, the networks and systems of learning and debate in eighteenth-century France required patronage and lacked any definition or conceptualization of intellectual property. The Enlightenment in France saw ideas copied, changed, and transferred through formal and informal networks, with even male authors or contributors unacknowledged for some of their work. The Old Regime's patronage systems and *privlège* meant that any individuals seeking entry to the Republic of Letters or *l'Academie* needed sponsorship and mentorship from an already established member. In the Old Regime, reputations held paramount importance, and especially so for elite Enlightenment women. Thus, when taken in consideration to the period and environment in which they were operating, such a binary narrative of agency versus oppression breaks down.

Instead of this binary narrative, a complex understanding of the intellectual network of the Enlightenment reveals women's unique strategies for exploiting their existing reputations and status, exploiting the hierarchal systems of patronage, and exploiting existing gender assumptions to their own advantage. Still, their actions should not be argued as agency or resistance, as the women examined here specifically placed themselves within traditionally feminine roles and characteristics rather than arguing for a breakdown of the existent gender ideologies. This is not to say that in their actions and through some of their arguments they did not speak against gender roles and assumptions, but that this was not their main goal. Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay first needed to place themselves in non-threatening positions to gain access to learning, writing, and print. Once published, these women then could articulate their opinions and concerns about their society. LeFevre Dacier and d'Epinay both utilized their

existent reputations but sought networks and relationships with prominent and established intellectual men to support their entry to their erudite society. All of these women, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay, received legitimacy for their work through male editor's introductions to their translations, which would widen their readership and support the reception of their texts, protecting them from certain criticisms. Where women were dependent on men for entry to print, the Republic of Letters, and this politico-economic intellectual sphere, they created their own strategies to make their opinions heard.

Chapter 2
Rhetorical Strategies for Publication

Beyond intentionally attaching themselves to prominent male reputations to gain their own relational legitimacy, elite Enlightenment women strategically deflected the authority they asserted through their authorship and publication by appropriating oppressive structures and assumptions. Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all carefully placed themselves within traditional gender roles and assumptions to avoid threatening male authority and the patriarchal hierarchy. As I will discuss in the following chapter, these women often disrupted traditional gender ideologies through their arguments and writing, however, they first reaffirmed themselves within such gender ideologies to gain access to print.

Enlightenment women in France lived in a society which required them to carefully construct their words and thoughts in order to avoid offending the patriarchal norms and values. The Old Regime, through the majority of the Enlightenment, had strict censorship laws, and the monarchy considered any words and opinions which contradicted the Regime or its values a threat. Goodman explains of Enlightenment women in the salons, "one therefore cannot make a simple distinction between 'safe' salon activity and 'unsafe' publication."[47] Though the royal institutions censored and policed salon activity, including speech, leaving women with no truly safe space to express their opinions and concerns, the salon was an acceptable form of activity for the French women. Beyond the socio-cultural public space of the salon, official publication required both royal *privilège* and male status for entry. Thus, while the salon was monitored, and salon women famously created polite norms to govern speech and avoid transgressions, women's' entry into formal publication included greater obstacles from the start, but also

[47] Goodman, Dena. "Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions," 345.

inherently carried with it more risks to their reputations, legitimacy, and respectability as elite ladies.

Societal concerns regarding women's participation in in the public sphere were not new and they are not confined to French culture and history. French gendered assumptions aligned similarly with other regions in concerns over women's reproductive role in society In France, women's exclusion from citizenship and predominant gendered assumptions placed women's value within their reproductive capacities. By the end of the eighteenth century, anxieties regarding women's sexuality cannot be separated from anxieties about the collapse of a monarchical patriarchy.[48] While Elizabeth Wahl highlights the dangers to salon women's reputation as the feminocentric space suspect as a seat of resistance, and therefore sexually deviant, she also explains that "it was by no means necessary for women to be segregated from men for them to become suspects in a widening cultural perception of female intimacy as a potential sexual bond."[49] Though the term *précieuse* has been associated with the social space of the salon, it is rooted in narratives of women's relation to political power.[50] Wahl explains that these women, excluded from the political sphere, turned to the realm of letters, dominating the salon and the historical novel.[51] Within the acceptable space of the salon, Wahl continues:

> Nor were the women who organized these salons any less conscious of the dangers of an indiscreet remark, an awareness which underlay their efforts to keep overt discussion of politics at bay through their remaking of the rules for 'polite' conversation and aristocratic social intercourse. Even the attempt by *salonnières* to reform aristocratic language by creating new codes of circumlocution and allusion, represented more than a desire for linguistic 'purity'; it also marked a persistent awareness of the political dangers of speaking too explicitly.[52]

[48] Elizabeth Susan Wahl. *Invisible Relations: Representations of Female Intimacy in the Age of Enlightenment*, 206.
[49] Wahl, *Invisible Relations,* 207; 203.
[50] Wahl, *Invisible Relations,* 209.
[51] Wahl, *Invisible Relations,* 214.
[52] Wahl, *Invisible Relations,* 214.

Clearly, literary women faced a precarious societal position in carefully maintaining their reputations within the salon - a space predominantly acceptable for women. Hesse backs up Wahl's argument in explaining the dangers of women's speech, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau thought that women's extraordinary verbal skill could only be explained physiologically...But the excessive verbal skill could be politically dangerous, especially in the world of the royal court where the shaping of perceptions through word of mouth was critical in making and unmaking the credibility of courtiers."[53] In Old Regime France, words held political and reputational weight, and thus any speech or writing could threaten the monarchy and so could be subject to policing and public scrutiny.

Thus, elite Enlightenment women who sought to participate in the genres dominated by men and associated with rationality and politics needed to develop additional and alternative rhetorical strategies to carefully avoid accusations of political resistance or sexual deviancy. Translation was one such strategy which provided women with the opportunity of including their preface or introduction to their published work. This space allowed women to strengthen their characterizations within typical female gendered conceptualizations, while also justifying their intervention in the text and their publication. Goldsmith and Goodman reinforce this understanding of the obstacles elite women faced in stepping out of their traditional gendered roles, or presenting themselves outside of these roles, "Women's noncompliance with the rule of obedient silence not only threatened the essence of family stability but also tore at the very fabric of the state. Under these circumstances the move out of the silent private sphere was far from being a guarantee of innocence as Maza suggests; instead it was a very problematic (and risky) venture."[54]

[53] Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 11.
[54] Goldsmith and Goodman. *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France,* 63.

Despite scholars' arguments which have demonstrated women's agency and heightened role within the salons, they still functioned as a 'shadow institution,' secondary to the French Academy and the Parliament in cultural and political matters.[55] The acceptable space salons provided for women participating intellectually did not extend to the more formalized spheres in which they were secondary, including publishing. Hesse clearly details the gendered literacy rates in Early Modern France:

> "in the 1780s only about one in eight women in the Parisian popular classes could read…Illiteracy was a distinctly gendered phenomenon by the end of the Old Regime. Were we to draw a graph depicting the male and female paths to literacy beginning in roughly 1650, when all but a very small upper crust of society (say about 10 percent) could read, moving through the eighteenth century, we would see an increasing gap open up between the sexes, widening to the end of the eighteenth century and then slowly closing up toward 85 percent total literacy from the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth."[56]

Hesse demonstrates the particular dangers of women publishing. If a small fraction of women were literate, then any publications were inherently meant for a majority male audience. Thus, women writers were not only dangerous in their ability to affect reputations or threaten the politic, but also in their audacity to publish before a male audience. In a period in which pervading ideology believed women to be capable to teach their male sons only until the age of seven, at which point the male's intellectual capacity would exceed his mother's, men were critical of women deigning to impart knowledge through print.

Mary McAlpin creatively analyzes Marie-Anne de La Tour's correspondence with Rousseau for her intentions to publish, arguing that through these, this woman developed her own authorial consciousness. My argument follows McAlpin's unconventional methodology in examining women's strategies for their intentions to publish.[57] When analyzed in the context of

[55] Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 11.
[56] Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment*, 9.
[57] Mary McAlpin. *Gender, Authenticity, and the Missive Letter in Eighteenth-Century France: Marie-Anne de La Tour, Rousseau's Real-Life Julie.* Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2006, 12-13.

their hostile intellectual environment, one which often offered criticism to women stepping out of the traditional gendered roles, these women's rhetorical strategies of self-deprecation, deflecting authority, and depicting themselves within traditionally feminine characteristics, all constitute methods to access publication and subvert the danger their actions may pose.

Riccoboni and Authorial Self-Distancing

Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni's strategies to access publication and avoid threatening male authority included intentionally publishing anonymously or pseudonymously and attributing her productions at the suggestion of Mr. Humblot. This woman translator additionally utilized self-deprecating rhetoric to appropriate existing gender assumptions and widen her audience. Riccoboni's intentionality in not acknowledging herself as the author or translator of her work should not be understood as indicating her deference towards entering a public sphere nor should it be discounted as a form of intentional authorship. Bond explains in more detail how "some writers did not divulge their identity and social position and instead adopted strategies to conceal or suggest a public persona. The limitations on newspaper content specified in each paper's privilege, and regulated by the royal censors, shaped not only the topics discussed in the letters to the editor but also the willingness of some contributors to reveal their identities."[58] These newspapers received *privilège* by either the nobility, clergy, or King, who would determine the paper's content at their discretion. Extending well beyond newspapers, Old Regime France censored publishers, and those publishers often privileged those with strong patronage or reputational networks. Without such backing, authors may clearly have been motivated to

[58] Bond, *The Writing* Public, 52.

conceal their personal identity to protect personal reputation and potentially increase readership, but also to avoid criticism or consequences for politically dangerous writing.

Many scholars have examined Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni's exceptional status as a well-known Enlightenment woman who authored sentimental novels, but fewer focused on her translation activities, particularly.[59] Marijn Kaplan details Riccoboni's authorial self-attribution throughout her writing career, including that of her translation work:

> "Thus the title page to her first novel, the 1757 Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd, states that the fictitious "Adélaïde de Varançai" translated it from English. Her second novel, Histoire du marquis de Cressy published in 1758, indicates no fictitious author but merely that "Madame de ***" translated it from English. In 1759, in what appears to be her first collaboration with Humblot, a new edition of her first novel appeared, where the translator is now listed as "Marie de M***" with the "M" undoubtedly standing for "Mézières", a last name Riccoboni took and used as an actress. After the author's third novel Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby had appeared anonymously in Amsterdam in 1759 with different publishers, the pseudonym "Marie de M***" reappeared the following year in Humblot's edition of it—the third—which carries the privilège."[60]

Where Kaplan connects Riccoboni's authorial self-attribution to Carla Hesse's theory on French women writer's self-distancing from their patriarchal signifiers, she lacks an analysis of the significance of this timeline.[61] Riccoboni's first publications were translations published under a pseudonym to maintain her anonymity. As Riccoboni progressed through her career, she later wrote her own novels and claimed authorial status with Mme. Riccoboni cited as the *auteure* (author). This female translator and writer's original reluctance to publish under her own name was likely connected with her publication of translation work first before authoring her own novels. Riccoboni waited until she had gained greater recognition and social security prior to

[59] See: Marijn S. Kaplan, "Publication, Authorship, and Ownership in Marie Jeanne Riccoboni," *The French review* 88, no. 1 (2014); Ruth Thomas's "Marie Jeanne Riccoboni (1713-1792)" in *French Women Writers: a Bio-Bibliographical Source Book,* edited by Eva Sartori and Dorothy Zimmerman, New York: Greenwood Press, 1991; Joan Hinde Stewart, *Gynographs: French Novels by Women of the Late Eighteenth Century*, Lincoln: UP of Nebraska, 1993.

[60] Kaplan. "Publication, Authorship, and Ownership in Marie Jeanne Riccoboni," 180.

[61] Kaplan, "Publication, Authorship, and Ownership in Marie Jeanne Riccoboni," 180.

claiming her authorship status. Clearly, translation offered Riccoboni a safe strategy which would protect her reputation as she entered the male dominated intellectual sphere, before gaining positive recognition for her work and claiming it as her own.

Through Hesse's theory on women writers' self-distancing from their husbands in publishing anonymously or pseudonymously, Marijan Kaplan analyzes Riccoboni's self-attribution of authorship. Kaplan describes Riccoboni's early ownership of her texts as aligning within Hesse's theory as her pseudonyms indicated her gender but not her patriarchal familial relation.[62] Kaplan argues that Riccoboni's later publication under the name 'Mme Riccoboni' does not fit within Hesse's model, especially as she continued using this name for authorship even after she was widowed and legally allowed to publish without this reference to her late husband.[63] I argue that Hesse's model of women writers' self-distancing from patriarchal relational distinctions should not be used for Enlightenment women in print, but especially should not be applied to Riccoboni's work. Instead, I contend that Riccoboni's initial publication under a pseudonym was her strategy for authorship without damaging her reputation in case her entry into print was not well-received. This is not a specific methodology for Enlightenment women, however, and women's reluctance to publish under their own names would continue into the twentieth-century. After gaining recognition for her work and witnessing a relatively positive reception of her *oeuvres*, she no longer felt obligated to protect her reputational standing. Furthermore, following her husband's death, Riccoboni not only continued to use her huband's last name as an extension of her authorial identity, but also to stay connected and protected under a married status. The concern over *précieuses* as sexually deviant and non-normative or non-productive members of society, meant that women maintained a better societal position when

[62] Kaplan, "Publication, Authorship, and Ownership in Marie Jeanne Riccoboni," 180.
[63] Kaplan, "Publication, Authorship, and Ownership in Marie Jeanne Riccoboni," 180-181.

married. Though Riccoboni's status as a widow meant she had fulfilled her societal duty, her continued intellectual activities meant she could be subject to ridicule on her own standing without the additional reputational support of her husband and married status. Likely by this point in her career, Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni continued to use the authorial name 'Mme Riccoboni' both as an 'author function' and as an indication of her connection to a prominent man.

Riccoboni employed further strategies that intentionally aligned herself with traditional gender norms and roles, including self-deprecating remarks – typical of women writers before the twentieth century. In the second volume of Riccoboni's complete *oeuvres*, a letter from Riccoboni to M. Humblot is included before her work. Within this letter she states: "I believe I was wrong to undertake more than one volume: the extent of my mind is without doubt limited to one…"[64] Self-deprecating remarks such as this were not limited to women writers in France, nor to women writing in the Enlightenment period, however, Riccoboni's use of this strategy demonstrates how she appropriated existent gendered ideologies to access print.

This elite woman translator did more than continue the persistent pattern of women's self-deprecation in their introductions or prefaces. She also placed herself in a subservient position to men. Riccoboni stated in the same letter to M. Humblot, included in the second volume of her *oeuvre complete*, "you dare not call me lazy; but my slowness revolts you…However, as I have made you impatient for two years, I would like to find a way to satisfy you; and to succeed, I propose a folly."[65] Here, Riccoboni references that Mr. Humblot repeatedly came to her home while she was away, awaiting her completed her work. She calls her work a 'folly' following her explanation that she feels her work to be incomplete and not to

[64] Riccoboni, *Oeuvres complètes,* volume 2, *Lettre à M. Humblot*, 3.
[65] Riccoboni, *Oeuvres complètes,* volume 2, *Lettre à M. Humblot*, 3.

the best of her abilities, yet she will offer the translation as a way to appease Mr. Humblot's impatience.[66] Through this statement, Riccoboni actually attributes the motivations for her translation work to M. Humblot, claiming she produced such work at his encouragement. Riccoboni's rhetorical strategy of assigning M. Humblot as the motivator for her productions and placing herself in a subservient position to him deflects any authority she claimed as a woman publishing her own work. Despite such rhetorical strategies placing M. Humblot as the authorizer of her translation, Riccoboni did significantly intervene within the text and used her work to make strong societal assertions.

Riccoboni utilized multiple strategies to gain access to print, including publishing anonymously, depreciating her abilities, and attributing the motivations of her work to the request of a male editor. In doing so, Riccoboni successfully broke down many of the barriers preventing women from public authorship and publication to enter the male-dominated politico-economic public sphere. This woman translator's strategies legitimized her work to widen her sphere of influence and disseminate her societal concerns.

LeFevre Dacier's Self-Deprecation

Like Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier also downplays the seriousness of the work she completed while deflecting her authority. In response to pervading Enlightenment gendered ideology, elite women writers often characterized their literary activities as simple amusements or as stemming from their immense emotions which they needed to document. In letter writing, women often deployed this type of romantic and sentimental language, imploring the response of the recipient. This practice goes beyond letter-writing, or writing more generally, as Bond

[66] Riccoboni, *Oeuvres complètes,* volume 2, *Lettre à M. Humblot*, 3.

explains of lawyer's defense of women who deigned to go public, "so did the defendants have to be seen as nonthreatening; they had to display the private virtues that were the real guarantee of their innocence. This facet of the lawyers' strategy was more directly concerned with their clients' image."[67] Clearly, placing women in a domestic, maternal, and sentimental role was designed as a strategy for them to appear non-threatening. Rather than reading such statements purely at face-value, I argue that women's use of similar strategies also constituted their approach to access a sphere otherwise denied to them.

LeFevre Dacier, though translating Homer, considered within the high genre of epic poetry and well outside of the abilities of women, sometimes described her work with sentimentality. LeFevre Dacier's opening statement in the preface to her translation of Homer explained, "Since I amused myself by writing, and I dared to make my amusements public…"[68] This description of her work as an amusement prior to her critiques of previous translations of Homer softens the authority she asserts into traditionally male terrain. Such sentimental language functions to trivialize her work before making a statement of its great intellectual value. Her use of this rhetoric intentionally appropriated oppressive structures and assumptions to open space for herself in a hostile and patriarchal sphere.

LeFevre Dacier further avoids claiming too great of a capability for herself. She does often comment on her capacity to create a more accurate translation than those before her, however, she also limits her abilities, "and finally the fifth [challenge], of which I was most afraid, is the grandeur, nobility and harmony of the diction, which no person has approached, and which is not only beyond my strengths, but might also be beyond our language."[69] This

[67] Goldsmith and Goodman, *Going Public,* 64
[68] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* 1.
[69] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* 5-6.

deprecation of her abilities to capture the original grandeur of the diction should not be taken at face value, as LeFevre Dacier states in many other places her great ability as a translator. Rather, I analyze LeFevre Dacier's explanation of her challenges in translating Homer as a rhetorical strategy which avoided asserting too much authority.

Where LeFevre Dacier described her abilities to complete a better translation than previous translators of Homer she credited her abilities to male intellectuals before her. Referencing R.P. le Bossu's *Traité du poeme Epique* and *la Poétique même d'Aristote traduit en Francois*, "I believed that these two works had opened the path to my translation, and that after this beautiful explanation of the rules, I could hazard, in our language, the poems which are the examples on which these rules were based."[70] Through this excerpt, LeFevre Dacier credits these two works for her ability to successfully translate Homer and insinuates she would not have been able to do so without these texts. Such recognition of previous translator's work as paving the way would not have been an exclusive rhetorical practice to women; however, LeFevre Dacier's credit of Bossu's rules for translation of epic poetry for her own capacities deflects the authority of her critique of other translators of this genre. This strategy mirrors Riccoboni's attribution of her work to the request or motivation of M. Humblot. Where Riccoboni credited M. Humblot with authorizing her work, LeFevre Dacier concealed the extent of her scathing critique under polite and traditional rhetoric for translators.

Goldsmith and Goodman detail further exactly why women needed to adopt such strategies, and why their presence in the politico-economic public sphere posed such great danger. As quoted in the introduction, these scholars explain that women's presence in the politico-economic public sphere "tore at the very fabric of the state" and their move to this

[70] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere*, 6.

sphere was a problematic, risky venture.[71] Thus, women's assertion of authority specifically garnered criticism, and the institutional structures of the Enlightenment excluded them because of the dangers they posed to traditional family structures as well the structures of the state. LeFevre Dacier's acknowledgement of the work before hers and her attribution of her work as an amusement played into traditional gendered roles and characteristics while placing her in a non-threatening role.

LeFevre Dacier's early intellectual capacities surpassed even her father's, and she did critique previous translations of Homer, arguing that she presented the most authentic copy of her generation. Therefore, her remarks that Homer's diction is beyond her abilities and that she has simply made her amusements public – rather than a serious piece of work– are primarily rhetorical strategies. As Pieretti remarked, "although sincere in tone, these self-deprecating remarks should not be taken at face value and need to be understood as part of the rhetoric women writers of that period mastered in order to be heard."[72] Following then, beyond just their self-deprecating remarks, these elite women's attribution of their work to other male intellectuals and their depictions of their work as lacking seriousness also should be understood as a part of this rhetoric and appropriating strategy.

Louise d'Epinay as a sentimental *savante*

D'Epinay differs from Riccoboni and LeFevre Dacier in that she often did not actively seek publication for her work or acknowledgement for her work. Where Riccoboni intentionally corrected misattributions of her work, d'Epinay remains unacknowledged for her contributions to

[71] Goldsmith and Goodman, *Going Public*, 63; Sarah Maza, "Le Tribunal de la nation: Les Mémoires judiciaires et l'opinion publique à la fin de l'Ancien Régime," *Annales E.S.C.* 42, no. 1 (1987).
[72] Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France," 476.

Correspondance littéraire, with no evidence to suggest she fought for attribution of her work. Though she allowed her work to be published without attribution to her, she did often employ similar sentimental rhetoric in the credited publications which did appear during her lifetime. Specifically, in d'Epinay's translation work, *Conversations d'Émilie,* she presented the production as motivated by her love for her daughter. Despite this elite woman translator's continual deprecation of her work through sentimental rhetoric, as demonstrated in the first chapter, d'Epinay intentionally sought out and created patronage networks which would allow her to enter the intellectual sphere.

In *Les Conversations d'Émilie,* Louise d'Epinay explains that her publication was conceived by a 'tender mother' who wanted to provide a story for her daughter who had an aversion to the books commonly put into the hands of children.[73] By presenting her translation work and activities as motivated by a maternal desire to impart knowledge to her children, d'Epinay specifically appropriates existing gendered assumptions and roles. In the author's letter to the editor, d'Epinay acknowledged criticisms against her creating a new educational plan and argued against these. She stated in this letter:

> It is that I did not have the pretension to propose a new plan of education nor the boldness to deviate from that which wise men commonly follow in the education of girls. I only wanted to write a filler treatise, if you allow me to speak thus, and show how the lost hours, the moments of recreation can be employed by a vigilant mother, to form the mind of a child and to inspire him with virtuous and honest sentiments. It is not a question of either a plan or a system[74]

Through this excerpt, d'Epinay explicitly acknowledged criticisms of her potentially displaying too much authority regarding the existent institutions. D'Epinay, however, clearly argued against any assertion of authority, in stating that her text is mere filler for the current systems of

[73] Gillian Dow, "Women Readers in Europe: Readers, Writers, *Salonnières*, 1750-1900." *Women's Writing* 18, no. 1 (2011), 1.
[74] Louise Florence Pétronille Tardieu d'Esclavelles, marquise d'Epinay, 1726-1783. *Les Conversations D'Émilie.* 4. éd. Paris: Maestricht, 1784, *Lettre de l'Auteur a l'éditeur*, xxi.

education. She intentionally acknowledged the importance of parental instruction to avoid making a broad societal critique. Therefore, d'Epinay carefully constructed her authorial presentation as a maternal figure who sought only to teach her own daughter but will present her work as filler for instruction and raising of children. As I will discuss in the following chapter, d'Epinay did lay out an exact plan for the different stages of parental instruction, and thus, her statements here which downplay such assertions are purely rhetorical strategy.

D'Epinay, like Riccoboni and LeFevre Dacier, also downplayed and depreciated her own abilities as a writer. D'Epinay specifically placed herself within the dominant gendered ideologies on women's intellectual capacity in relation to men's. She explained:

> According to this plan, I would still have tried to work only for the first period, where it is a question of presenting simple ideas to the mind, of teaching it & helping it to develop them, & of often benefiting from a word said at random, even nonsense, to lead him to solid & sensible reflections. The work for the other two periods would be infinitely more serious & I don't know if I will have the strength to attempt it, when my daughter's age may require it.[75]

This introductory excerpt serves multiple purposes. First, this explanation follows the typical rhetorical strategy for women writers in Europe prior to the twentieth century for self-deprecation as a way to expand readership. Second, d'Epinay aligned herself within the dominant gendered ideologies regarding women's intellectual capacity. Traditional gendered conceptions throughout Enlightenment France placed women's intellectual capacity in line with that of a young boy's, and thus, mothers were qualified to teach their sons and children in their early age before a male teacher would assume tutoring responsibilities. Clearly, through this acknowledgement of the limited extent of her abilities, d'Epinay specifically and intentionally appropriated oppressive ideologies and norms.

[75] d'Epinay, *Les Conversations D'Émilie, Lettre de l'Auteur a l'éditeur*, xxij

In the same quote seen in the first chapter in which d'Epinay expressed to M. de Francueil, "M. Rousseau has promised to come […] tomorrow. You cannot imagine what pleasure I find in his society. He is fond of you; he possesses your esteem and friendship; his presence will help me to endure my weariness."[76] While this quote does demonstrate d'Epinay's intentionality in creating a patronage and intellectual network, it also demonstrates her use of sentimental and emotional rhetoric to appropriate existent gendered assumptions. Her presentation of her desire to participate in Rousseau's society as motivated by her weariness follows the typical affectionate language used throughout this period. Despite presenting herself and her entry into Rousseau's erudite sphere sentimentally, LeFevre Dacier did, in fact, use her writing to make significant arguments regarding society and education. Thus, in her letters she used to create and maintain her patronage networks and connections with prominent male intellectuals, LeFevre Dacier's rhetorical strategy appropriated existent gendered preconceptions to appear non-threatening with the purpose of gaining entry to a male-dominated sphere or 'society.'

Though there is a lack of evidence that d'Epinay ever actively fought to obtain attribution for all of her work, she did publish her translations during her lifetime and participated in the politico-economic public sphere through this publication. D'Epinay strategically appropriated existing and oppressive gendered assumptions to create and expand her own intellectual network, while presenting her work in a non-threatening fashion to expand her audience and influence. Her non-threatening appearance and appropriation of gender roles and characteristics helped d'Epinay maintain her patronage network, protect her reputation from criticism, and allowed her work and opinions to be heard. Without the deployment of such rhetorical strategies, each of

[76] Epinay, *The Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame d'Epinay.* 180.

these women faced the danger of criticism of their work based on their gender and challenge of existent gender roles and assumptions rather than their audience understanding the arguments and concerns they express through their writing.

Conclusion

Elite Enlightenment women writers and translators were first reliant on connections with prominent and established male intellectuals, and sympathetic husbands, fathers, and sons, to navigate the systems of patronage and privilege present in the academic institutions. Beyond intentionally creating and exploiting such relationships, these women utilized rhetorical strategies to make their opinions heard.

Riccoboni strategically published her translations pseudonymously first before gaining recognition, and she attributed her work to the suggestion of Mr. Humblot. LeFevre Dacier, on the other hand, utilized the reputational support from her father and husband, and described her work as lacking seriousness. Both LeFevre Dacier and Riccoboni, though, expressed self-deprecating remarks to deflect authority and appeal to existent gendered ideologies. D'Epinay, reliant on the extensive intellectual network of male philosophes she created for herself, appropriated her maternal role in her preface to *Conversations d'Emilie,* while also presenting her work as mere 'filler.'

Successful women writers engaged in the wider trend of self-deprecation to avoid asserting too much authority within a hostile environment which threatened censorship and reputational damage. This rhetorical strategy more than deflected authority, it also provided the appearance of humility, a positive quality in women. Thus, depreciation of one's work aligned

women within traditional gender roles and assumptions while broadening their audience by placing themselves in a subservient position to the reader.

LeFevre Dacier and d'Epinay furthermore used sentimental and emotional language to both present their work without seriousness and to depict themselves within typical existent gendered characterizations. Such language was common amongst women writers and does not indicate any lack of seriousness of their work, but instead plays into the gendered preconceptions. Especially in Enlightenment France, men occupied the rational and intellectual realm while women were subjected to the sentimental and emotional realm with their primary role as reproducing and raising the children.

Riccoboni, on the other hand, strategically avoided authorial attribution for her earlier work until she had gained a literary reputation. Despite staying anonymous for her early work, this intentional pseudonymous publication also constituted a strategy for gaining access to print.

Alongside the strong opinions these women asserted, discussed next, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all needed to appear non-threatening, within traditional gender roles and characteristics, and have a strong patronage network backing their work and entry into the politico-economic public sphere. These first two chapters have discussed the intentional strategies women utilized, created, and exploited to gain access to print, where they could make their opinions more widely heard by the public. Thus, more than simply allowing them to enter into a realm traditionally dominated by men, these women translators methodologically created space for them to make societal, often gendered, arguments.

Chapter 3
Asserting Authority and Opening Space

Women necessarily employed rhetorical strategies to deflect and disguise the authority they asserted through publication while reaffirming themselves within traditionally feminine gendered roles and assumptions; however, their intellectual productions and publications inherently crossed into the male dominated politico-economic sphere where they asserted their opinions and authority. The formalized *Académie* and the Republic of Letters, in excluding women from any role beyond a socio-cultural one, required women to maintain a measure of *bienséance*, or polite respectability, in presenting themselves in a non-threatening, traditionally feminine, sentimental, and reproductive role to disguise the assertions they made into 'male territory.' Despite women's typical self-deprecating remarks and presentation of themselves as lacking seriousness, their work was anything but trivial. LeFevre Dacier, Riccoboni and d'Epinay all made strong assertions and arguments throughout their work, alongside their commentary depreciating their work. Their strategies for inclusion and access to print with their opinions and societal arguments were remarkable demonstrations of women's exploitation of their circumstances to assert themselves in a realm which typically excluded them. I argue that translation constituted a specific strategy for authorship. Throughout the Enlightenment period, intellectuals considered translation activity a form of legitimate authorship rather than a subordinated form of authorship as some have argued.[77] Translation not only allowed sometimes extreme authorial intervention which could entirely alter the original text, but also provided women with opportunities to utilize prefaces, introductions, and notes to assert their own opinions and arguments.

[77] Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France."

My analysis of translation as a strategy for access to publication largely follows Julie Candler Hayes's argument of translation as a feminist act. I agree with Hayes in that translation provided women "a range of strategies for being – or not being – in the text, through prefaces, dedicatory letters, or in the choice of texts themselves."[78] Hayes identifies a trend of 'gynocentric translation,' those made by women from other women's original work, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and throughout Europe, not just in France.[79] Thus the women examined in this thesis did not create strategies, but instead participated in a broader gendered literary trend, and appropriated it within their hostile and exclusionary environment of Enlightenment France.

Gillian Dow argues that while women were seemingly excluded from the active intellectual exchanges with their counterparts across Europe, "it is possible that this very marginalization may have made women writers even more eager to look beyond the boundaries of their own nation."[80] Following, then, if women may have been more inclined to look intellectually and literarily beyond the boundaries of their own nation because of their relative exclusion within their own countries, this may explain why some elite French Enlightenment women turned to translation. While LeFevre Dacier used translation to gain access to high, epic poetry, such as Homer, a genre she would have otherwise been excluded from participation, both Riccoboni and d'Epinay translated English works into French.

Translation was a strategy for women to participate in the politico-economic public sphere traditionally dominated by men, but the process of translating allowed women to create a

[78] Julie Candler Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity and Culture in France and England, 1600-1800* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009), 156.
[79] Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity and Culture in France and England,* 16. For an analysis on the application of Hayes theory, see: Dow, "Women Readers in Europe: Readers, Writers, *Salonnières*, 1750-1900," 4.
[80] Dow, "Women Readers in Europe: Readers, Writers, *Salonnières*, 1750-1900," 3.

social, public self-identity through their authorial identity creation. Natasha Lee, through a specified analysis of Antoine Léonard Thomas's "*Essai Sur Les Femmes*" and its translations (and retranslations), argues that "throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, translation moved from a tradition of reinterpretation and 'domestication' – the translator taking on an authorial role – to a more faithful adherence to the original text. This latter approach was one heralded by women by the end of the century, who nevertheless saw this craft as an entry into authorship."[81] Despite Lee's attribution of the push towards a more faithful translation by women in the latter part of the eighteenth century, these dates similarly correspond to Carla Hesse's table, which shows the exponential increase of women in print during and following the French Revolution.[82] With publishers opening their doors to more women writers towards the end of the eighteenth-century, women may have had more opportunities for authorship in other genres beyond translation and *Nouvelles*.

I examine translation specifically as a strategy and a form of authorship. Translators and philosophers throughout the nineteenth-century participated in strong debates regarding the translator's intervention in the text, rules that should be followed regarding translation activities, and the level of 'faith' a translator should adhere to regarding the original text.[83] Although such debate occurred in the century following Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay's translation activities, the leading figures in these discourses specifically responded to preceding translator's work. Such conversations centered around the number of liberties allowed to the translator as an

[81] Natasha Lee, "Sex in Translation: Antoine Léonard Thomas's 'Essai Sur Les Femmes' and the Enlightenment Debate on Women." *Eighteenth-century studies* 47, no. 4 (2014), 390.
[82] See Table 2.1 in Carla Hesse's, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern*, 37.
[83] For example, see: August Wilhelm von Schlegel, "Projecting Oneself into Foreign Mentalities." *History of Classical Literature. Western Translation Theory From Herodotus to Nietzsche* (2002) for his argument on the translator's ability to take liberties as an author; Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the different methods of translating." In *The translation studies reader*, Routledge, 2021 for his argument on 'nationalizing' a text by removing the foreign; Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's arguments against translator 'imperialism' through nationalizing a text.

author, the amount of translator intervention versus producing an 'unfaithful' text, rules of linguistics in poetic translation, often specifically referencing translations of Homer as the basis of these theories, and more. Without women's strong intervention in the text, there would not have been any need for debate on translation rules and intervention versus interference with the original source document.

Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all used translation to publicly exert their societal critiques and participate publicly in the official intellectual sphere. Each of these women creatively utilized prefaces, interventions in the text, and their choices in text to disseminate their original writing and ideas. LeFevre Dacier asserted herself in the realm of epic poetry while critiquing the frivolity of literature and women's confinement to such genres of novels. Riccoboni, also distasteful of the sentimentality and simplicity of novels and women's confinement to this genre, expressed her critique through her choice of texts to translate. D'Epinay deplored women's lack of access to intellectual society and higher education, and beyond providing her own daughters with serious study, used her preface and translation to make a broader argument for reforming the children's education system as a whole. Each of these women desired more than mere access to print – they were motivated by their societal concerns and desire to affect change.

LeFevre Dacier on the terrain of the Ancients

Anne LeFevre Dacier successfully inserted herself into the male-dominated domain of poetic authorship. LeFevre Dacier effectively created productions of this genre through the method of translation. LeFevre Dacier was born in 1645 and published her translations of Homer at the turn of the eighteenth century. She used translation as a means to access and publish within

a genre which almost entirely excluded women – epic poetry. This elite woman did more than simply participate or produce poetry, however. LeFevre Dacier used her translations to make a wider critique regarding previous writers' attempts at Homer and their lack of ability, and critiqued her contemporary society's lack of literary taste. These Enlightenment women translators' strategies to access print, thus, are more significant than purely allowing their entry to a male-dominated realm, but further allowed them to make opinionated statements on their society.

Women translators' ability and presence within the male-dominated politico-economic sphere, including print, was not insignificant. Pieretti expertly speaks on Lefevre Dacier's use of translation "to assert herself on the terrain of the Ancients. She thereby made the role of women more visible within the male-dominated discourse on knowledge rather than within the confines of novel writing, regarded as a more feminine literary endeavor at that time."[84] Each of these women translators' presence in the public domain participating in literary genres beyond the traditional 'feminine' space works to make their roles more visible and challenge the patriarchal systems of hierarchy.

LeFevre Dacier, while proving herself on the terrain of the Ancients, also deplored the abilities of those before her in creating an accurate translation following the rules of epic poetry. Continuing after the quote used in the previous chapter, in which she describes her work as an amusement, LeFevre Dacier explained, "I always had the ambition to be able to give to our century a translation of Homer, which, by conserving the principal traits of this great poet, will correct the prejudice from the deformed copies that had been made."[85] While the beginning of her preface described her translation activity as amusement, she clearly made a strong assertion

[84] Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France," 478.
[85] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere*, 1.

that previous French translations of Homer had deformed the original work. LeFevre Dacier continued to critique other poets before Homer for their lack of artistry in their poetry. She explained that since Homer and antiquity, the art has suffered, and the poems produced have failed to follow its rules.[86]

LeFevre Dacier blamed the corruption and ignorance of men for the perpetual production of counterfeits, fake art and poems that bear the name of epic poems, but abandon the true constitution of epic poetry entirely.[87] She clearly and boldly undermined all men's ability to create epic poetry while placing her own capacities above theirs. LeFevre Dacier explicitly argued that Antiquity only provided two poets who knew the art of the Epic well.[88] Here, LeFevre Dacier made a strong assertion of men's lack of ability to produce epic poetry throughout history. Her specificity and claim that only two men in Antiquity truly created epic poetry would have deeply threatened male intellectuals and the legitimacy of their work. The successful reception of such dangerous critiques rested upon LeFevre Dacier's patronage network and elite reputation, alongside her rhetorical strategies which concealed the authority she asserted. Beyond simply deploring previous translations of Homer, LeFevre Dacier criticized Enlightenment intellectual and literary society.

This woman translator showed disdain for the literary productions of her time and society's inability to recognize what she deemed to be true art. LeFevre Dacier argued that "there is nothing more difficult than to bring men into the true taste of the epic poem and to make them know its essence. The art of the poem has been ignored at all times, only two poets from antiquity knew this art well."[89] Most of the difficulties LeFevre Dacier cited in creating the

[86] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere*, 2.
[87] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* 2-3.
[88] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere*, 1-2.
[89] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere*, 1-2.

translations of Homer stem from her criticism of society's lack of taste for true art and poetry. This excerpt, in particular, heavily criticized societal taste. LeFevre Dacier feared for the success of her translation because of this, "Most people are spoiled today from reading a number of frivolous and vain books, and cannot suffer any that are not in the same taste."[90] LeFevre Dacier cited a societal breakdown in the production of high literature as the source of people's ignorance and lack of appreciation for works of Antiquity.

LeFevre Dacier critiqued more than a societal lack of appreciation for epic poetry, but also criticized literature and rationality's influence on literature. She explained that "The third challenge of translating Homer is from the customs and characters of the heroic times, which seem too simple and even contemptable in our century. The heroes of epic poetry occupied functions that we call servile; will they be tolerated today by people accustomed to our heroes of romance, the bourgeois heroes, always so polite, sweet and clean?"[91] Here, further than critiquing men's lack of ability to recreate epic poetry, she made a broader criticism of literature and society's simple taste in literature. LeFevre Dacier's criticism may also be directed towards women, and their taste and productions of polite literature, as women writers traditionally participated the genre of *Nouvelles*. LeFevre Dacier presented her translations as a method to remedy women's lack of access to Greek antiquity, and through her own participation as the translator, suggested that readers, specifically women readers, have much to contribute to difficult texts, if equipped with an understanding of history and "a strong critical sense to assess prior readings of the original texts."[92]

[90] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere*, 3.
[91] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere,* 5.
[92] Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France," 477.

While LeFevre Dacier did offer her opinions on traditional gender roles and assumptions through her choice in text and prefaces, her disdain for her period's literature was not purely due to women. She compares her society to Homer's, "In the time of Homer, it was the custom to propose to people the greatest truths under fables and parables…our century despises these veils and shadows, and esteems what is simple and clear."[93] In this way, LeFevre Dacier's choice to translate and publish the works of Homer demonstrated more than her bold step into the male-dominated genre, it emphasized her challenge to societal literary norms as a whole, norms which were determined and regulated by the official institutions of the Enlightenment.

LeFevre Dacier made many strong assertions through her choice in genre to translate, and through her opinionated prefaces to her translations of Homer. She critiqued previous men's ability to produce an accurate translation of Homer and expressed disdain towards societal taste as a whole which lacked an appreciation for epic poetry, literature from Antiquity, and anything that was not simple, clear, and frivolous. This woman authoritatively offered her translations of Homer as the first copy in French which is not what she termed deformed and presented her work as a way to remedy her society's lack of access and taste in the art of poetry. LeFevre Dacier thus exerted her influence on the terrain of the Ancients and made her presence known in male-dominated genres.

Riccoboni and Non-Normative Character Function

Riccoboni asserted her societal opinions through her choice to translate alternative genres not typically associated with women, including plays. Previously an actress, Riccoboni first published anonymously, likely to avoid damaging her reputation and protect herself from any

[93] Dacier, "Preface de l'Iliad," in *Les oeuvres D'Homere*, 7.

negative reactions to her work. This protection of her reputation is especially striking, considering her unusual career in acting, one which typically would have damaged her reputation. Once established, however, Riccoboni actively ensured her work was correctly attributed to her and often criticized other counterfeits of her productions. Less through prefaces and more so through her choice of genre or alternative leading characters, Riccoboni exerted her opinions regarding women's literary and intellectual capacity beyond those roles traditionally and societally associated with them.

Riccoboni tackled a variety of literary fields, extending well beyond the those traditionally associated with women, and in doing so, she blurred the line between translation and original authorship.[94] The advertisement provided by the editor confirms that "she never translated nor imitated any author. Even Amélie, the content of which she owes to Mr. Fielding, does not offer twenty lines of the original."[95] M. Humblot went as far as to say the attribution of Riccoboni as the translator is misleading, arguing instead that her translations amount to an original work. In the introduction to Riccoboni's first translated novel, *Lettres de Fanny Butlerd*, the editor explained that the idea to retouch and publish came from her correspondence with her first love, an Englishman.[96] The significance here is the editor's acknowledgement that her translation work would include 'retouching' of the original text. Furthermore, the lack of use of the specific vocabulary to denote translation specifically – *traduire, traductrice* (to translate, translator) – throughout this introduction to Riccoboni's work reveals certain cultural connotations with the practice, along with the editor's explicit desire to distance Riccoboni from associations of translation work as copying an original. The editor's lack of explanation of

[94] Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France," 480.
[95] Riccoboni, *Oeuvres complètes,* volume 2, 5.
[96] *Extrait de Lettres de Fanny Butlerd* in Riccoboni, *Oeuvres De Madame Riccoboni.*

translation as inviting interventions within the text signifies the commonality of this practice, and the commonality of the attribution of the translator as author.

Clearly, through the examples of these women translators, this type of activity specifically was used to gain access to print while making their opinions heard. D'Arconville, another French Enlightenment woman translator, like Riccoboni, also blurred the line between original writing and translation by taking a diverse field of texts.[97] LeFevre Dacier, in translating and justifying her correction of Homer's mistakes, steps into traditionally male terrain and places herself on similar footing with the prominent Ancient writers. While such strategies were common amongst Early Modern women, a complex understanding of how they exploited gendered preconceptions and strategies is overdue.

Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni only started translating English plays at the height of her career as a novelist in the 1760s, but this translation work allowed her to experiment with the male-dominated genre of playwriting.[98] In reference to Riccoboni's correspondence with David Hume, David Garrick and Sir Robert Liston, Marie-Pascale Pieretti explains that "all these letters suggest that Riccoboni refused to be confined to novel-writing even if her works were successful. Her stance provides justification for other female writers to look for new genres to express their ideas and participate more broadly in the literary production of their time."[99] One can see how these women's presence in print and in genres outside of those typically associated with women could challenge the traditional societal structures simply by refusing to operate

[97] For more background on d'Arconville's translation activities, interventions within the text, and arguments, see: Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France."
[98] Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France," 480; Joan Hinde Stewart, "*Vers un 'Nouveau théâtre anglais,' ou la liberté dans la diction*." *French forum* 9, no. 2 (1984); Michèle Bissière, "Dramaturge par procuration: Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni et le theatre de son temps." Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century 314 (1993).
[99] Pieretti, "Women writers and translation in eighteenth-century France," 483.

within them. The strategies Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay employed to appear non-threatening and within constructed gendered roles and characteristics permitted them to gain access to publication and recognition, allowing their opinions to be widely read.

The editor of Riccoboni's collected works described her literary talents highly, and offered very few negative remarks about her work. The criticisms he did offer, however, were largely based on her choice of text, "one does not like to see a novel's heroine speak of her own defeat as if it is an incident which must necessarily happen."[100] The editor continues to explain that this text will not be considered one of Riccoboni's best works, however, it does demonstrate a quick, easy, and lively style and conveys passion without exaggeration.[101] His reasoning for *Lettres de Fanny Butlerd* not qualifying as one of Riccoboni's best works is based off the characters, her adaptations of the characters, and the overall story line. Through Hesse's analysis that "translation [offered] to women a range of strategies for being—or not being—in the text, through prefaces, dedicatory letters, or in the choice of texts themselves,"[102] Riccoboni's choice of text constitutes an important strategy and mode of agency in asserting her opinion and challenging the traditional literary norms. Her choice of text as one which present a heroine in a non-normative narrative function and style, one which clearly was not always well received, shows how she entered an alternative literary space and genre from the traditional *Nouvelle* women were expected to operate within.

Riccoboni, in a letter to David Garrick, expressed her disappointment with the English translation of her book, *Lettres de Miss Jenny*, and exerted her strong opinion on translation. She argued that "Jenny is pitiable; a loose, cold translation, full of misinterpretations, repetitions, flat

[100] *Extrait de Lettres de Fanny Butlerd* in Riccoboni, *Oeuvres De Madame Riccoboni*, 1.
[101] *Extrait de Lettres de Fanny Butlerd* in Riccoboni, *Oeuvres De Madame Riccoboni,* 2.
[102] Hayes, *Translation, Subjectivity, and Culture in France and England, 1600-1800,* 142.

epithets... Nothing could be longer, more brooding. It's not my style, nor my ideas."[103] Though Riccoboni herself utilized translation as a strategy to experiment with alternative genres, especially play-writing, she deplored other translators' unfaithful renditions of her own work. Not only did she critique this translation of her work, but she also actively propagated the information that the translation does not reflect her authorial voice. It is significant here that Riccoboni was already participating in debates on translation theory and practice prior to the leading theorists who dominate contemporary translation studies. I propose that these women did more than successfully navigate and exploit existent gendered norms, roles, and assumptions to access print and publicly exert their opinions. I argue that early Enlightenment women translators, through their activities in translation itself, and their correspondences, were participating in debates on translation theory earlier than the prominent leaders of translation studies and should be included in the discussion and studies of early translation theory.

Similar to LeFevre Dacier's critique on the genre of the novel, Riccoboni deplored the work of novel writing. She stated in her letter to Garrick, "Everything I know can't help me. This work amused me, I leave it with regret. Still writing novels, always talking about love, sentiment, passion!"[104] Here Riccoboni expressed her distaste for novel writing as an activity lacking creativity and intellectual stimulation. More broadly, however, Riccoboni offered a wide-ranging societal and literary reflection, and in her refusal to be confined to novel-writing, pushed the acceptable boundaries for women. Riccoboni's rhetoric here, is strikingly similar to LeFevre Dacier's rhetoric in her preface to the Iliad, on the frivolity and simpleness of novels and the literature of her time. Although these two women translated different genres, LeFevre Dacier

[103] "Mme Riccoboni's Letters to David Hume, David Garrick and Sir Robert Liston: 1764-1783," Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (1976), 54.
[104] "Mme Riccoboni's Letters to David Hume, David Garrick and Sir Robert Liston: 1764-1783," 150.

tackling epic poetry and Riccoboni play-writing, they each used their presence and practice in fields typically dominated by men to advance their societal critique and promote women's place in the publishing sphere.

Riccoboni was both an author of *Nouvelles,* a genre typically associated with women, and a translator of plays, a genre typically associated with men. This elite woman was established in her career as an actress prior to pursuing writing and established herself as an author and translator of novels before turning to translate plays. Thus, she likely did not pursue writing or translation as a necessary income source, but instead she pursued such literary activity motivated by her societal concerns and her strong desire to publicly share such opinions. Riccoboni's mere presence in genres dominated by men was more than her desire to participate in a variety of genres, and challenged the gender boundaries of literary fields and the dominant assumptions of one's ability based on gender. Riccoboni set a precedent of possibilities for women by demonstrating their capabilities beyond their traditional genres and asserting herself on men's terrain. This elite woman translator further made a broader critique regarding society and literature along the lines of LeFevre Dacier, though used different methodologies to express her opinions. Her disdain for the sentimental and frivolous genre of novel writing comes through her decision to translate novels with in alternative or non-traditional main-character roles, and her activities in translation outside of the *Nouvelle* genre.

D'Epinay

Louise d'Epinay followed Riccoboni and LeFevre Dacier in utilizing self-deprecating language and arguing for the lack of seriousness of her work in order to make strong societal statements. LeFevre Dacier's translations of and prefaces to Homer, critique contemporary

literature, societal taste, and women's lack of participation in and exclusion from high literary genres like poetry. In contrast, Riccoboni did not utilize prefaces to make strong assertions or critiques, but instead utilized a variety of genres and challenged the gender divisions in literature production. D'Epinay's choice of texts, specifically *Conversations d'Emilie,* provided a space for her to make a strong statement on children's education, including alterations which should be made.

D'Epinay, after framing her suggestions as filler and deflecting claims that she was attempting to change the educational system as it stood, made a strong assertion as to her idea for the preferred stages of child education. She explained that "education must be divided, as in a well-conceived and well-linked system, into several epochs, and a different work should be done for each. Three main ones can be highlighted. The first ends at the age of ten; the second is fourteen or fifteen; the third must last until the establishment of the child."[105] Here, d'Epinay very specifically laid out a plan for education which is explicated in further detail throughout her translation of *Conversations* and her interventions within the text.

The publisher, in his *avertissement* to d'Epinay's translation of the *Conversations* supports the interventions she made within the text. He argued:

> In early 1783, the French Academy, awarded for the first time the prize for the most useful work of the year to these *Conversations*. The numerous editions that have been made before and after this decision, have justified the judgment of this illustrious body. The author ended her painful career three months later. Occupied until the last moment with her tenderness for her beloved daughter, she left in her papers considerable changes and an almost total revision of the first Conversations. They are presented to the public in this new edition, in accordance with the copy arranged and corrected by her hand in the last months of her life.[106]

[105] d'Epinay, *Les Conversations D'Émilie, Lettre de l'Auteur a l'éditeur,* xxij.
[106] *Avertissement de l'éditeur sur cette nouvelle édition*, in d'Epinay, *Les Conversations D'Émilie*, xxiij-xxiv

The publisher thus credited the considerable interventions and alterations d'Epinay made to the original text as justification for *l'Académie* giving this text such an award. D'Epinay made such critical changes specifically to publicize her agenda for children's education.

Lourdet, in his *Approbation* to d'Epinay's *Conversations*, depicted how her interventions within the text supported her goals of propagating a new educational system. He described, "in the wise conduct of an enlightened mother here, who has become the teacher of her daughter, sensible parents will be grateful for the outlined plan for their children's education"[107] This excerpt both demonstrates how Lourdet's reputation as a male professor and his positive commentary on d'Epinay's work lent legitimacy to her publication, and how d'Epinay utilized her translations as a strategy to make her opinions public. Where, as discussed earlier, d'Epinay carefully avoided asserting that she carved out a new plan for education, challenging the previous systems of education, and explicitly argued that she simply provides 'filler.' Despite such rhetoric, d'Epinay does lay out specific details of the ideal educational plan, and Lourdet, a male professor, recognized her strong assertion and carefully laid out map for children's education. While children's education, at least in their early years, did fall within the mother's role, this woman's assertion of a new system, encompassing three stages of learning until adulthood, boldly challenged the patriarchal hierarchy and took her well out of women's traditional role.

Scholar Natasha Lee explains of Louise d'Epinay's opinions, "d'Epinay argued that not only were social categories constructed, but also the very bodies upon which these categories were said to be founded were also the product of centuries of coercion."[108] This woman writer and translator aimed at reforming education as the root of such socially constructed gender

[107] *Approbation* by Lourdet, *Professeur Royal,* in d'Epinay, *Les Conversations D'Émilie.*
[108] Lee, "Sex in Translation," 395.

categories. Though dominant translation and philosophical theories agreed upon a certain level of authorial intervention in the text, historian Cécile Cavillac argues that d'Epinay's conception of the novel was particularly audacious, with a unique power and originality by eighteenth-century standards.[109]

Louise d'Epinay achieved success and publication during her lifetime, as well as after, in large part because of the strategies she employed. Though women's alignment with established and prominent male intellectuals, and their self-deprecation and presentation of their work as lacking seriousness was not new to the Enlightenment period and is not confined to France, these elite women translators' utilization of multiple strategies to gain access to print and publicly express their concerns is significant.[110] D'Epinay especially demonstrated a unique ability to find, create, and exploit relationships with prominent male intellectuals, as she created a network with notorious figures, such as Grimm, Diderot, and Rousseau. She carefully constructed a rhetoric to appear non-threatening, societally 'feminine,' and sentimental as she formed her connections with these men. D'Epinay's maternal and emotional rhetoric more than opened her pathways to publication and access to realm of Letters, but it also supported her agenda of creating a wide societal critique through an educational reform plan.

Conclusion

Each of these women, LeFevre Dacier, Riccoboni, and d'Epinay, used their presence in print to exert their societal opinions and concerns, often in relation to gender. Their mere presence participating in literary genres dominated by men and exclusionary of women opens

[109] Cécile Cavillac, "*Audaces et inhibitions d'une romancière au XVIIIe siècle: le cas de madame d'Epinay*." *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 104, no. 4 (2004), 890-1.
[110] For comparison, see Karen O'Brien's discussion of Enlightenment women translators in Britain in her book, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

space for more learned women to follow in their footsteps while challenging the existing gender divisions among literary fields. Each of these women's participation in the politico-economic public sphere explicitly confronted the patriarchal traditional gendered assumptions placing women in a role of domesticity or religion.

While these women exploited relationships and connections with prominent male intellectuals, often relying on the support and legitimacy provided by male editors to their collections, they did so to gain a public voice which could advance their ultimate agendas. LeFevre Dacier, Riccoboni, and d'Epinay all employed self-deprecating rhetoric and affirmed themselves within traditional gendered characterizations, they did so to widen their audience.

LeFevre Dacier used her audience and voice to assert herself amongst prominent male poets, demonstrating her abilities to be equal to, if not arguably greater, than theirs. She challenged assumptions that women were incapable of producing poetry by making interventions within the text, corrected Homers mistakes, and encouraged more women to participate in this genre. LeFevre Dacier made a sweeping critique of society as a whole, and of literature's frivolity, claiming her generation lost its taste and appreciation for true art and poetry. Thus, LeFevre Dacier's presence as a prominent translator cannot be overstated and her intentional exploitation of her reputation and opportunities had an explicit purpose. LeFevre Dacier took care to instruct her children, especially her daughters, and clearly promoted women's further education and opportunities for participation in the male-dominated Enlightenment institutions, including print.

Riccoboni, like LeFevre Dacier, deplored the frivolity of novels and women's confinement to this genre. While she explicitly stated this opinion in her correspondence with David Garrick, Riccoboni also challenged what she saw as a frivolity through her choice in texts.

This elite Enlightenment woman intentionally chose to translate a novel featuring a heroine in a non-normative character function, and experimented with the genre of playwriting. One can see Riccoboni's intentionality in displaying a non-normative heroine as her editor attested to her extreme authorial intervention in the text, arguing that her text represented an original piece of writing more than a translation. In presenting a heroine who challenged the literary norms of the time, Riccoboni made a broader statement on her opinion of the *Nouvelle* genre as a whole. Her activities in translating English plays allowed her to participate in a genre otherwise dominated by men, and her presence in this sphere upset the traditional genre distinctions amongst fields of literature. Despite her success as an actress and later an author, Riccoboni refused to be confined to the acceptable spheres for women, and thus her translation activity represents her desire to deconstruct the traditional literary fields of her time. This woman's strategies to gain access to the official intellectual societies of the Enlightenment served her purpose of publicly exerting her societal critique.

Louise d'Epinay utilized similar strategies to Riccoboni and LeFevre Dacier to gain access to Enlightenment society and print, yet her opinions differed from theirs in certain ways. D'Epinay, like the first two women, deplored women's lack of access to the politico-economic public sphere and higher education, but she believed a reformation of the child education system to be the solution. D'Epinay's presence in print also challenged the gendered boundaries and exclusions within this official Enlightenment sphere. This woman did, however, go further, in her assertions of a new, carefully laid out and detailed plan for a child's education through her preface and through her extreme interventions in *Conversations d'Emilie*.

Each of these women's desire to access print was motivated by more than their simple love for writing. These elite women each used their public presence to specifically exert their

opinions. While Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all concealed their authority under rhetoric of self-deprecation and traditional female gender characterizations, they clearly asserted their critiques of women's confinement to unserious roles – including literary genres – and through their presence, argued for women's ability to participate in serious, male-dominated fields. Strategies such as patronage networking or mapping, and traditional women writer's rhetoric should be seen as such – strategies to successfully create a public voice. In this way, these women translators appropriated oppressive structures and assumptions to open a space for themselves in male-dominated fields to express their concerns.

Conclusion
Expanding Our Understanding

As Hesse's *The Other Enlightenment* effectively demonstrates, during and following the French Revolution, there was an explosion of women in print compared to the preceding century. In an environment in which women were marginalized in the publication sphere and excluded from official institutions of the Enlightenment, confined to their social-cultural role in the salons, women who successfully published their writing necessarily adopted several strategies.

Operating within the existent systems of patronage and networks of *privlège*, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all exploited their elite reputations and connections to prominent men, sometimes their own fathers or husbands. Each of these women was dependent on male favor and sympathy to gain a higher education or access print, as legally they were dependent on male consent for their contracts and legal activities. Each woman corresponded with established male intellectuals to widen their network of connections, and received support and legitimacy for their work through introductions written by male editors. D'Epinay was exceptional in this area, as she most intentionally exploited her connections to gain introductions and access to Enlightenment society. In order to establish and maintain such networks of patronage with prominent intellectual men and gain support through introductory statements, though, these women strategically appropriated gendered assumptions and roles.

Both in creating these networks and in presenting themselves and their work, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all employed self-deprecating rhetoric and language to appropriate existing traditional gender assumptions. Women necessarily played into gendered stereotypes of women's work as lacking seriousness while filled with sentimentality, and presented themselves humbly as their gender was expected to do. While such rhetorical strategies were common

amongst Early Modern women writers, Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay all intentionally and strategically appropriated such methods to their own advantage and end.

Beyond merely oppressing themselves, these elite women translators effectively combined a number of strategies to create a public voice, gain access to print, and successfully disseminate their concerns and societal critiques. My analysis breaks down binary arguments of oppression versus resistance as one examines how women appropriated such strategies and gendered presumptions to successfully navigate the hostile and marginalizing environment they sought entry to. We see instead how these elite translators creatively formed their public authorial self-identity.

I highlight Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay as significant contributors to the literary productions of the Enlightenment and active participators in the intellectual debates of the time, strongly asserting women's place in this sphere. While these women's contributions, presence, and arguments encouraging more women's participation in traditionally male-dominated spheres would not have a great impact on the number of women in print prior to the French Revolution, their arguments should not be ignored. Instead, I argue that these women's presence and contentions within the politico-economic public sphere may be more significant *because* of the strategies they necessarily adopted and appropriated to enter an exclusionary environment.

Riccoboni, LeFevre Dacier, and d'Epinay certainly were not the only Enlightenment women in France to break into the male-dominated spheres or significantly contribute to Enlightenment productions, nor was Enlightenment France an exceptional region of women

challenging gendered delineations within intellectual and literary fields.[111] Much work has already been done on Caroline Herschel, a woman astronomer and mathematician in Great Britain, who, scholars have argued, was oppressed in her collaborations with her brother, in which her work often went unacknowledged.[112] Despite such analysis, I believe my early argument as to the breakdown of such binary analyses and my examination of women's strategies expands an understanding of Herschel's activities in Enlightenment Britain. In her *Philosophical Transactions* "An Account of a new Comet" Herschel wrote to Charles Blagden, a male colleague who was sympathetic to women intellectuals, to request that he distribute her work to her "brother's astronomical friends."[113] Based on my analysis, Herschel's intentional request for a male colleague to share her work demonstrates how she strategically utilized male reputational support while foregoing recognition of her discovery. She likely understood how the attribution of such work to her might diminish its importance, similarly to how some Enlightenment French women published anonymously to widen their readership, and thus sphere of influence. This is just one example how my argument and analysis here may deepen the complexity of our understanding of Enlightenment women's activities and the importance of their strategies *as strategies* to create a public authorial identity and exert their opinions and concerns.

After an understanding of women's strategies for publication, Hesse's table likely leaves out many women in print. Hesse acknowledges that her statistics of women in print intentionally exclude anonymous publications and women translators. While we do not know the true number,

[111] For a comparative example on Enlightenment British women writers using translation as a strategy to exert their opinions see: Karen O'Brien, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, especially pages 94-100.
[112] Patricia Fara, "Portraying Caroline Herschel." *Endeavour* 26, no. 4 (2002).
[113] Caroline Herschel, "I. An account of a new comet. In a letter from Miss Caroline Herschel to Charles Blagden, MD Sec. R. S." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 77 (1787), 3.

women translators and those who did not claim authorship of their own work still legitimately participated in the intellectual productions of the Enlightenment period and should not be left out. Scholarship has greatly expanded to include women in the narratives of Enlightenment France, though more work needs to be done to better understand how intrinsically involved the male *philosophes'* counterparts were to the literary and erudite explosion of the eighteenth-century. Up to this point, most researchers have focused on women in prominent socio-cultural positions as regulators, hosts, organizers, and participators within their salons, yet many scholars still acknowledge women's contributions to the Enlightenment as relatively marginal and confined to this socio-cultural public sphere.

Rather than a focus on the marginalization and exclusion of women from the politico-economic public sphere and the official Enlightenment institutions, an analysis of the women who did successfully cross these gendered barriers and divisions may expand our understanding of the extent to which elite women truly participated in the intellectual production of this period. In an era and environment in which copyright or intellectual property rights were non-existent and information was circulated, copied, and manipulated freely and across national boundaries, a gendered division of spheres and an analysis of women as marginal and in the shadows may conceal the extent of their influence.

I propose that further study into women translators and anonymous women writers throughout the French Enlightenment will reveal more women who carefully and intentionally appropriated oppressive structures and assumptions to open space for themselves within male-dominated spheres. My argument complicates our binary understanding of women's role and influence, and I expand the previously understood productions of the Enlightenment to include women as prominent and important contributors. Moving beyond a limited view of the

Enlightenment as an era in which renowned male *philosophes*, such as Voltaire or Rousseau, came up with new ideas and theories with women on the margins as *salonnières*, my research critically inserts women into the debates on translation theory and as serious producers of intellectual work throughout this period, as they commented on and critiqued the society in which they lived.

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