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ALLEN, JESSICA

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Abstract

This thesis begins with a brief account of recent developments in scholarship pertaining to early modern friendship and gender, before shifting in focus to intellectual kinship, an area of friendship studies about which there is relatively little material in comparison to other areas of the field. I then introduce the authors on which my argument focuses, Madeleine (1520 – 1587) and Catherine des Roches (1542 – 1587) and Marie de Gournay (1565 – 1645).

My overarching argument reveals how these three figures adapted aspects of the male-dominated friendship tradition in their writing in order to forge a place for themselves in learned culture and to form relationships with other writers and intellectuals.

The first chapter considers the des Roches's use and publication of correspondence in order to interact with a wide range of figures, including, notably, their publisher, Abel l'Angelier. Their position as a mother-daughter pair is a contrast to that of Gournay, a single woman, who uses correspondence to form familial alliances with Michel de Montaigne, Justus Lipsius, and Anna Maria van Schurman. This is the subject of the second chapter.

In the third chapter, I examine all three authors together, looking at their poetry in the context of the love poetry of Louise Labé. In doing so, I emphasize that modern ideas about poetry have resulted in Labé's work becoming much more well known than the occasional poetry of the des Roches and Gournay. Their poems contain interesting references to their intellectual kin, which provide further insight into their relationships which might be classified under this umbrella term.

My conclusion uses the examples I analyse in order to attempt to provide a clearer definition of the idea of early modern intellectual kinship and to indicate the direction that future scholarship in this area might take.

Family Ties: Women, their Friendships, and Intellectual Kinship in Early Modern France

Jess Allen

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School of Modern Languages and Cultures (MLAC), Durham University

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
From mother and daughter: the correspondence of the des Roches.....	22
Extending networks: Gournay's epistolary family.....	39
Poetic voices: looking at kinship in the poetry of the des Roches and Gournay.....	61
Conclusion.....	91
Bibliography.....	98

Introduction

At first glance, forming friendships and talking about them in our globalised, twenty-first century society seems to be easier than it ever was before. Without even getting out of bed, it is possible to make any number of ‘Friends’ on Facebook simply by clicking a button marked ‘Add’ and waiting for the user you have added to accept your ‘Friend Request’. Is it possible or even ethical to request someone’s friendship? Or is the act of doing so merely a contribution to one’s digital portrait, the assertion that one is popular? This raises the question of what friendship actually means: is this online friendship equivalent to the real-life friendships that existed before the digital age? There is certainly a discrepancy between friending on Facebook and befriending people in person:

Can a case be made that friending detracts from friendship? Or should we thank these platforms for helping us to peer into each other’s lives more frequently and more intimately? Is friending actually creating and supporting more true friendships? Or rather are we addicted to something that approximates real connection but is actually very mediated and done only alone?¹

The immediacy and accessibility of this digital space geared towards friendship is paradoxical: on the one hand, it allows us to stay in touch quickly and cheaply with a wide range of people and to message them instantly wherever we are. Conversely, Facebook and other social networking websites rely on the creation of a public profile which is in essence a public version of the self shaped by the user; this online presence forms the basis of digital friendships. My use of ‘digital friendships’ encompasses friends we know in person whom we then happen to friend online as well as those whom we only know digitally. The methods at our disposal shape our relationships in part: being tagged in multiple photographs with one friend might suggest a close bond with frequent contact between the participants and tagging a friend as a BFF (Best Friend Forever) suggests a particular exclusive kind of friendship, placed in someone’s own corner of the internet for their personal community to see. The media and the internet are outlets in which individuals can express a curated, stylised form of their personal relationships: a notable example of this is Paris Hilton’s *My New BFF*, of

¹ Allen Freeman, ‘Friends in the Age of Facebook’, *The American Scholar*, Vol 80, No. 2 (Spring 2011), 14

which two series aired in 2008 and 2009.² Pitting a number of contestants against one another in competition for her friendship, Hilton created a series of challenges which would allow her to identify who had the qualities she desired in a friend. It may seem that these spaces are an entirely modern invention, designed primarily for our entertainment.

Whilst the media may be different from those used by early modern writers to record their friendships, the action and purpose is not: Montaigne's presentation of his perfect friendship with Etienne de la Boëtie in *De l'amitié* is the most well-known evocation of friendship in early modern French literature and in creating this representation, he underwent a similar process to that of Hilton and every Facebook user. He used a medium that was available to him, the personal essay, which he himself may even have created, and drew on the linguistic, social, intellectual, historical, and political context of his time as he wrote about his friendship. In creating digital friendships, we too use the tools we have at our disposal and our experiences of the society in which we are living to create a footprint of our relationships with other people. Naturally, there are differences between our situation and that of Montaigne. When he immortalised his relationship with La Boëtie, he did so after the latter's death. Whilst users are able to continue posting about the dead on Facebook, it is impossible to befriend a dead person, whereas it is perfectly possible to continue developing a relationship with a dead person in literature. I begin by linking our reality to that of Montaigne to make the point that friendships have always been talked about and that we can learn a lot from examining the conditions under which these relationships are created and represented.

Without a tangible representation of a friendship, it is impossible for us to talk about it. In fact, these two aspects are inseparable: talking about a friendship legitimizes it but without talking about it, writing about it, or creating another material representation of it, there is nothing to talk about. If we never tell someone that they are our friend or there is no paper trail of our communication, does the friendship really exist? The only historical friendships we are able to study are those which have been documented and of which the records have survived, therefore the study of friendship is partly shaped by the friendships we are able to study.

In the pre-internet ages, it was impossible to make new friends or record and develop existing friendships online simply because this outlet did not exist, yet people still managed

² Multiple authors, 'Paris Hilton's My New BFF', 2008, <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1292967/>> [accessed 2 July 2017]

to form connections with others that would be described as friendships and underwent the same processes as we go through today, albeit with different modes of presentation. I have chosen the examples above not only because they are our current reality and some of the sources of networking with which we are most immediately familiar but also because they allow us to relate to the perennial challenges facing those who wish to make friends and present these friendships to others. What actually is friendship? How could or should it be presented? How great is the influence of the dominant modes of presenting friendship on the relationships themselves?

The definition of friendship is fluid and shaped by the historical, social, political, and geographical context in which its participants are living and individual friendships are in turn affected by factors such as the gender, personality, and sexuality of their participants. It is, however, not a new idea that we lack sufficient vocabulary to express properly what is understood by friendship at any given point in time. Modern dictionary definitions of the term appear incapable of giving a precise definition of what is meant by friendship, instead relying on polyptoton and the fact that friendship is not a romantic relationship. I include these not because they are helpful for my discussion of friendship in an early modern context but because they support this lack of precision which characterises how we talk about friendship. For example, the OED defines friendship as ‘The state or relation of being a friend; association of persons as friends’, ‘A friendly relation or intimacy’, ‘Friendly feeling or disposition felt or shown by one person for or towards another; friendliness’, ‘A friendly act; a favour; friendly aid’, and ‘Conformity, affinity, correspondence, aptness to unite.’³ Definitions of the word ‘friend’ are similarly unspecific and focus on what a friend is not: ‘One joined to another in mutual benevolence or intimacy’ (J.). Not ordinarily applied to lovers or relatives’.⁴ However, other definitions of ‘friend’ listed in the same dictionary reveal its multiple uses: ‘Used loosely in various ways: e.g. applied to a mere acquaintance, or to a stranger, as a mark of goodwill or kindly condescension on the part of the speaker; by members of the ‘Society of Friends’ adopted as the ordinary mode of address (cf. 7). Also often *ironically*’, ‘A kinsman or near relation. Now only in *pl.* (one’s) relatives, kinsfolk, ‘people’’, and ‘A lover or paramour, of either sex.’⁵ It is clear that the terms ‘friendship’ and ‘friend’ do not have a clear identity of their own. They encompass an unspecified range of acts which we have come to recognise collectively as friendship, yet the sole determining

³ *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 194

⁴ *ibid*, 192

⁵ *Ibid*, 192

feature of this relation seems to be that it is different from a romantic or familial relationship but that such relationships are able to share the qualities associated with friendship. As Alan Bray puts it, the lack of appropriate vocabulary to distinguish friendship from other kinds of relationship and between types of friends as well as to describe the nature of these friendships is a symptom of our focus on romantic love:

The inability to conceive of relationships in other than sexual terms says something of contemporary poverty; or, to put the point more precisely, the effect of a shaping concern with sexuality is precisely to obscure the wider frame.⁶

Bray's position is extreme and whilst literature and society does tend to privilege romantic and sexual relationships over friendship, this statement does suggest that there is no space at all which is dedicated to the discussion of friendship, which is far from the truth. However, friendship was in the past a much more privileged, central mode of constructing intimate relationships, which has now been largely overshadowed by marriage and other forms of romantic relationships. This has led to relationships between men and women being accorded more importance as well as friendships between men becoming relatively insignificant. These changes, which are the result of various societal shifts, support Bray's frustration.

The lack of specific information provided in these definitions of friendship seems to be at odds with descriptions such as that of C. S. Lewis. In *The Four Loves*, he provocatively dismisses the idea of having friends for the sake of having friends, suggesting that the term friendship should not be applied loosely to all acquaintances and that friendship must be based on more than simply mutual affection:

That is why those pathetic people who simply 'want friends' can never make any. The very condition of having Friends is that we should want something else besides Friends. Where the truthful answer to the question *Do you see the same truth?* would be 'I see nothing and I don't care about the truth; I only want a Friend', no Friendship can arise – though Affection of course may. There would be nothing for the friendship to be *about*; and friendship must be about something, even if it were only an

⁶ Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 6

enthusiasm for dominoes or white mice. Those who have nothing can share nothing; those who are going nowhere can have no fellow-travellers.⁷

Lewis considers friendship to be one of the four types of love at the centre of his text. This attack on flippant use of the term is resonant of the dominant discourse which has shaped the history of friendship, that of the idea of perfect friendship, which dates back to antiquity.

By insisting that true friendship must be founded on a basis of both participants recognising a common truth, or virtue in one another in the way that Aristotle does, Lewis situates himself in the friendship tradition. He clearly echoes Aristotle's belief that there are three types of friendship: useful friendship between family members or acquaintances who both benefit from the relationship in a practical sense, friendship based on pleasure between those who are merely friendly acquaintances who enjoy each other's company but draw no deeper meaning from these interactions, and perfect friendship which takes place between two individuals whose love for each other is rooted in appreciating their virtue and is thus above any other kind of friendship. Indeed, the notion of perfect friendship in the early modern period is founded on a mixture of theories purported by classical authors including those who are most commonly cited in scholarship about the friendship tradition: Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero.⁸ It is usually impossible to relate an instance of perfect friendship in an early modern text back to one single theory from antiquity due to the overlap between ideas expressed by each of the authors. In this thesis, the relation of ideas expressed in the texts used as case studies to specific classical theories is not therefore intended to be the discussion of an absolute link between the two texts but a way to show how the early modern authors may have engaged with and challenged classical theory. The most important point to note is that the friendship tradition and thus the history of friendship have always been pervaded by such masculine models, which has had an effect on the friendships which we study: in Derrida's *Politiques de l'amitié*, for example, women are only conspicuous because of their absolute absence from the set of thinkers chosen to support the analysis.⁹

Ullrich Langer examines the use of classical friendship in early modern literature. He argues that:

⁷ C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Collins, 2012), 80

⁸ See Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 1-42, for a full summary of the ideas from antiquity which inform friendship discourse.

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié, suivie de L'oreille de Heidegger* (Paris: Galilée, 1994)

the literary work does not just intervene on the scene of moral philosophy by providing an elaborate representation of human relationships. Rather, certain moments in the literary work become crucial precisely because they are so charged with ethical resonance. In other words, the literary work does not just augment, criticize or subvert an ethical tradition by strategies inherent to its art. The salience of certain moves within the literary world is *already* determined independently of the intentional thrust and design of that world.¹⁰

By drawing on the classical tradition, writers automatically make a statement. They situate their own friendships in another world which determines to varying extents the type of friendship they are able to express. The introduction of the book later suggests that there are actually surprisingly few examples of theoretical ideas about friendship being applied to concrete examples in early modern texts,¹¹ suggesting that Langer's case studies are actually a relatively uncommon occurrence in early modern literature. One of the aims of this thesis is to counter this argument, for the writers I examine engage with and adapt theoretical ideas at various points, applying them to their own situation. My work suggests that if you look for subversion and adaptation, there are many more examples than if you seek models which aim to reproduce the framework of their classical counterparts in its entirety.

The introduction to Lewis Seifert and Rebecca Wilkin's recent collection of essays about friendship in early modern France outlines the processes that underpin the creation of literary friendships. First, 'making friends entails creative engagement with a tradition comprising a diversity of ideals pertaining to gender and sexuality.'¹² This highlights that texts about friendship are in dialogue with the intellectual and social context in which they were written. Secondly, friendship is 'a relation that is essentially creative of the self';¹³ in writing about friendship and their own participation therein, writers are fashioning a public, literary self which plays a key role in determining their success as a writer and the opportunities available to them in the future. Thirdly, the approach considers the role played by collaboration: 'to say that friendship is a creative process means that making friends is a

¹⁰ Ullrich Langer, *Perfect Friendship: Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Corneille* (Geneva: Droz, 1994), 11

¹¹ *ibid*, 20

¹² eds. Lewis Seifert and Rebecca Wilkin, *Men and Women Making Friends in Early Modern France* (Basingstoke; Burlington: Ashgate publishing Company, 2015), 6

¹³ *ibid*, 7

collaborative endeavour.¹⁴ The act of creating a literary representation of friendship is therefore one of self-consciousness, focused not only on the friendship itself but also on the way in which it is depicted. Literary friendships provide us with insight into challenges that friends face in both the public and the literary world.

It appears, then, that friends did at least have some control over the literary presentation of their friendships in some instances and that a certain degree of creativity was possible in shaping this. This description of the process of forming a friendship is corroborated by the argument that underpins Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. He highlights that 'there is in the early modern period a change in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities.'¹⁵ This is coupled with:

an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process. Such self-consciousness had been widespread among the elite in the classical world, but Christianity brought a growing suspicion of man's power to shape identity.¹⁶

There is a clear sense of not only an awareness of the ability to shape one's own identity but also that the artistry involved in this process meant that it was not necessarily a true reflection of reality and that writers were able to present themselves in ways which suited their textual aims. Indeed, as Greenblatt points out, the links between literary and social life are complicated and their meanings are closely intertwined.¹⁷ Literary texts are therefore an opportunity for us to learn not only about the idea of friendship but also an indication of how friendship could be represented and whether representation was shaped by a set of expectations or contextual factors.

One of the most important emphases of Seifert and Wilkin's volume is the calling into question of the traditional notion of perfect friendship; the case studies reveal a society in which friendship was actually far more varied and multifaceted than previous accounts of the period may suggest. My thesis will take a similar approach, considering intellectual kinship in early modern France from the point of view of some of its female participants. Gender as a

¹⁴ ibid, 8

¹⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1

¹⁶ ibid, 2

¹⁷ Ibid, 3

category of analysis is therefore one of the determining factors in my work, for the writers on which I shall focus experienced the world as women which shaped their literary production. In her seminal article about gender as a category of analysis, Joan Scott emphasizes the need to focus not on the binary opposition between men and women but on the inseparability of gender, power, and the organisation of social relationships:

The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. Changes in the organization of social relationships always correspond to changes in the representations of power, but the direction of change is not necessarily one way.¹⁸

I shall therefore analyse the texts of my chosen authors whilst keeping not just their gender but also the way in which this shaped their place in society in mind. This will enable me to explore female friendship in relation to the gender of the participants as well as the social context in which they were working, allowing me to view gender as one of a number of categories that influences a writer's life and work and to evaluate their success in a more balanced way than if I were to focus solely on gender as an absolute binary.

In order to achieve this, we must first take a brief look at the circumstances under which women were writing. In sixteenth century France, women were responsible for less than 1% of total printed editions and less than 1% of authors were women.¹⁹ Literacy rates were low in the sixteenth century:

Fewer women than men comprised the small minority who could even sign their name in sixteenth-century France. Research has been produced for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France from which the low levels of literacy for the sixteenth century can be surmised. From signatures of marriage registers between 1686 and 1690, it seems that 29% of men and 14% of women were able to sign their names.²⁰

¹⁸ Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5, (December 1986), 1067

¹⁹ Susan Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France* (Hampshire; Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 1

²⁰ *ibid*, 15

Education was therefore reserved for a certain subset of the population. In middle and upper class families, fathers were responsible for their daughters' education, with most educating their daughter until she was able to read, write, and run the household. If a woman were to receive a higher standard of education, it was very much the exception rather than the rule and also largely determined by her individual circumstances.²¹

The lack of education for women meant that very few were equipped to become writers, which explains in part the statistics above. Another decisive factor in this was the general attitude towards women in early modern France. The influence of Aristotelian biology was still pervasive: based on theories which suggest that females are inferior to males due to biological differences, it argues that women were controlled by their dominant organ the womb, the *hystera* in Greek, and were affected by the passions generated by it. This led to them displaying a number of characteristics that were seen as negative including being sinful, lustful, and talkative, all of which could render women hysterical if they were present in great quantities.²² In line with early modern beliefs about the four humours, males contained the principles of earth and fire so were dry and hot, whereas women were dominated by air and water and were therefore cold and damp; the connotations of this resulted in men being seen as strong and women being seen as weak. This and rules which restricted women's ownership of property were underpinned further by unwritten social codes. A Renaissance commonplace is the belief that women must display modesty and humility and that having a voice in any kind of public sphere directly contradicts this belief. Renaissance conduct manuals are full of references to this mindset. Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* informs us that a woman 'must clothe herself in such a way as not to appear vain and frivolous'²³ and that the best approach to displaying one's knowledge is as follows:

Let her not show ineptitude in pretending to know what she does not know, but let her seek modestly to do herself credit in what she does know – in all things avoiding affection, as has been said.²⁴

²¹ Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 24

²² Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *From Mother and Daughter*, ed. and trans. Anne R. Larsen (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), xiii-x

²³ Castiglione Baldassarre, *The Book of the Courtier: the Singleton Translation: an authoritative text, criticism*, ed. by Daniel Javitch, trans. by Charles S. Singleton (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 2002), 154

²⁴ ibid, 153

Women in the court, a public, intellectual space, must draw no unnecessary attention to themselves. Any statement of knowledge must be presented modestly and should not lead to any lustful or extramarital sexual contact. Women displaying their knowledge was therefore equated with sinful behaviour and severely damaging for one's reputation.

If a woman chose to write, then, she was making a conscious decision to lead her life in a way that ran counter to what was expected of women, a choice which was incredibly difficult to pursue. The court, publishing, language, and education were all designed for and populated by men; women had to therefore find ways which legitimized their participation in such spaces. This was often determined by their social class, for this had a direct impact on the educational and social opportunities which were available to them. Some, such as Veronica Franco, became female courtiers. Others, including Marguerite de Navarre and Pernette du Guillet, were able to rely on the literary support or patronage of established male figures. Another option was intellectual kinship, which involved designating an older intellectual figure as your parent or sibling and relying on their reputation to provide you with a window into an intellectual community. This was, however, merely the first hurdle; once women had found a way to access the male-dominated literary world, they had to find a way to function within, which included writing in a way that might be accepted. They had to justify their own presence in their work in order to be published and read.

Our own relationships and friendships, termed the 'personal community', tend to be based on mutual affection and choice. These are considered to be a private network over which we have autonomy and can be shaped according to our needs and wants,²⁵ which is different to what was understood by the concept of friendship in early modern France. My thesis will focus on intellectual kinship during this period. It is almost unheard of for such relationships to be theorised and talked about in this way in modern society; we simply do not tend to use familial vocabulary when referring to our older colleagues who serve as mentors and teachers or to our peers with whom we form close bonds.²⁶ Conversely, the idea of adopting people into a chosen, intellectual, familial community, the *famille d'alliance* appears to have been much more common in Renaissance France: 'The use of these terms

²⁵ Liz Spencer and Ray Pahl, *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 45

²⁶ With the exception of the German language, in which the word for PhD supervisor is Doktormutter or Doktorvater; this is, however, merely linguistic convention and does not imply a relationship equivalent to those present in the Republic of Letters.

was specific, explicit, and repeated: thus, the intent of intellectual kinship is quite clear. However, the conventions of the intellectual family were quite singular.²⁷

In spite of the frequency with which the act of referring to non-related people as brothers, fathers, mothers, or sisters occurs, modern scholarship as well as contemporaneous accounts offer little in the way of clear definitions of this concept. Cotgrave's definition of the term 'Alliance', 'Alliance, confederation, fellowship, combination, agreement, consent, a league of friendship'²⁸ acknowledges the multiple definitions of the term *alliance*, including its origins as a legal term, yet there is no explicit link to the idea of applying this to familial relationships; the closest we can find in his definition is the idea of friendship, suggesting that the *famille d'alliance* is an elective relationship based on friendship as opposed to familial ties. The term *famille d'alliance* brings up no search results in French dictionaries from 1606 to the present,²⁹ which is further evidence that the term does not have a fixed definition or indeed an identity after the early modern period.

In modern scholarship about friendship, it is assumed that readers understand the implications of the *famille d'alliance* and do not require a detailed definition of the concept. Even though it is the basis of an entire chapter, Carol Pal's description is characterized by its brevity: 'a specific collaborative strategy employed by these women [Marie de Gournay, Anna Maria van Schurman, and Marie du Moulin] in constructing their counterintuitive careers in the Republic of Letters. This was the creation of the abstract intellectual family, or *famille d'alliance*.'³⁰ She goes on to point out that one of the earliest documented uses of the term was in 1588 when Gournay became Montaigne's *fille d'alliance*³¹ and expands her definition of the term *famille d'alliance*:

The *famille d'alliance* was identified and sustained by a profound and multivalent level of mentorship. It was characterized on the one hand by its complexity, warmth, and longevity, and on the other hand by a surprising level of disagreement and advice not taken. The construction of the intellectual family was simultaneously a form of

²⁷ eds. Campbell and Larsen, 255

²⁸ Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611), [n.p.]

²⁹ Multiple Authors, 'The ARTFL Project: Dictionnaires d'autrefois', <<https://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/content/dictionnaires-dautrefois>> [30/06/2017]

³⁰ eds. Julie D Campbell and Anne R. Larsen, *Transnational Communities of Letters*, 251

³¹ *ibid*, 254

networking, a type of mentorship, and an alternative institution for the formation of the early modern female scholar.³²

Adopting people into a *famille d'alliance* is therefore a way of expanding one's intellectual network. It is a positive relationship which focuses on the intellectual development of the younger party and allows scholars to further both their knowledge and their careers in intellectual culture. Whilst this is a good definition of the term which highlights the function of the *famille d'alliance*, I would argue that more work needs to be done on such relationships in order to expand the definition to take into account the various possibilities offered by the relationship and to give it a more clearly defined and more often used category of its own alongside the relationships which traditionally dominate friendship discourse. The term is often used in scholarship without much acknowledgement of the multiple possible implications and the cultural significance of the term. For example, the “fille d'alliance” plays a very small role in Regosin’s analysis of Montaigne and Gournay’s relationship: ‘[Gournay] displaces Montaigne’s family and becomes a “fille d'alliance”, who takes the place of wife and natural daughter, linked to the father through a personal alliance that has both the legal weight of a pact and the sacredness of a covenant’,³³ before he goes on to offer an excellent analysis of the language employed to engender their textual relationship. I believe that in order to build on this kind of work, we must accord greater attention to the concept of the *famille d'alliance* as a way of talking about and categorising such relationships. Paying close attention to the context in which the women who form the centre of this thesis operated is therefore imperative as is the need to concern myself first and foremost with drawing a definition of intellectual kinship from their work which will be an important step in developing the way in which intellectual kinship is written about.

This thesis is centred around two case studies. The first is the mother-daughter pair Madeleine Neveu (c. 1520-87) and Catherine Fradonnet (1542-87), known together simply as the Dames des Roches, who ran a salon in Poitiers and published three volumes between 1578 and 1586 consisting of a mixture of poetry, prose, letters, and dialogues as well as a related, collaborative volume *La Puce de Madame des Roches* (1583), which provides a snapshot of life and conversation in their salon. The second is Marie de Gournay (1564-45) who, during her lifetime, published a novel, *Le Proumenoir de Michel de Montaigne*, of

³² ibid, 255

³³ Richard L. Regosin, *Montaigne’s Unruly Brood: Textual Engendering and the Challenge to Paternal Authority* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 53

which the first edition appeared in 1594, poetry; correspondence; treatises about education, language, and translation; autobiographical texts entitled *Copie de la vie de la Demoiselle de Gournay* and *Peincture des moeurs*; and feminist discourse which is expressed most explicitly in *Egalité des hommes et des femmes* (1622) and *Grief des Dames* (1626) as well as editing seven editions of Montaigne's *Essais* between 1595 and 1635. I shall compare the des Roches's presentation of their mother-daughter relationship with Gournay's depiction of her intellectual kinship with Montaigne (1533-92), Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), and Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-88) to ascertain the commonalities of these intellectual bonds as well as to consider the reasons for any differences.

The three women have several key things in common which makes for a fruitful comparison of their works. Romantic relationships with men play almost no role in the presentation of their literary personae. Madeleine married André Fradonnet, lawyer and procurer of Poitiers, around 1539; Catherine was the only surviving child from that marriage. She later married François Ebouissard around 1550, a lawyer who was also *Seigneur de la ville*. There are, however, only very brief mentions to these men in her texts.³⁴ Anne R. Larsen discusses the reasons for which Catherine refuses to marry, considering what her peers thought of her decision not to marry; whilst some of this evidence is concrete, for example documents which contain evidence of the esteem in which several of the salon guests held the pair, there is also some speculation, for example the following assertion:

It appears that any criticism of Catherine's refusal to marry (I have found only these two in contemporary documents) was muted, at least in her presence. But this does not mean that Catherine wasn't conscious of such criticism, and her work betrays her anxiety over this.³⁵

Catherine's decision not to marry was unusual for her time, where women typically had the choice between marriage or the convent. Likewise, Gournay never married, instead choosing to focus on her literary career.

³⁴ See, for example, Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *Les Missives*, ed. Anne R. Larsen (Geneva: Droz, 1999), 165-166, for an example of a brief reference to Catherine's father (Madeleine's second husband) and his illness. The only reason it appears to be mentioned is to justify Catherine's late reply to a letter.

³⁵ Anne R. Larsen, *Legitimizing the Daughter's Writing: Catherine des Roches' Proverbial Good Wife*, 'The Sixteenth Century Journal', Vol 21, No. 4 (Winter 1990), 559-574, 563

The women's lifestyle choices are evidence of them living by their belief in gender equality, which is expressed clearly in their writing. Catherine's *Dialogue de Placide, et de Severe* serves as a vessel for her ideas about gender equality and women's education. Pitting two fathers, Placide, who represents her viewpoint in favour of equality, and Severe, who represents the status quo, against each other, Catherine makes her views clear whilst also directly addressing the current situation in which women are not granted equal rights to men. She allows Placide to counter Severe's assertion of the accepted view that women should only be allowed to read the Bible because reading anything else would distract them from being a good wife. Placide argues that reading a wider range of material will actually help them to be better wives: 'Mais estant guidées par les bonnes lettres, elles ne voudront rien faire qui ne soit raisonnable'³⁶ and that women are as equally as capable as men at mastering all forms of knowledge:

Les hommes font professions de trois sortes de sciences, avec lesquelles ilz pratiquent, de la Theologie, la Jurisprudence, et la Medicine. Je suis d'avis que vous apreniez aux Femmes encore le moyen de guerir les maladies, afin que de tous ars elles soyent en commun avecque nous.³⁷

The des Roches certainly believe that men and women are equal, although notably Catherine frames part of her argument in terms of the benefits for men, emphasizing not only that she is building on progressive ideas about women's education which were beginning to circulate at the time, for example on those outlined by Vives in *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1524), in which he argues that women are intellectually equal to men and should be educated for the benefit of all of society,³⁸ but also that she is aware of the dominance of the patriarchy and the need for gradual change building on the accepted norm.

Gournay also argues in favour of equality. Distinguishing herself from those who believe that men are superior and those who counter this belief by insisting on women's superiority, she emphasizes her originality in insisting that the two sexes are equal, supporting her belief with evidence drawn from nature:

³⁶ Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *Les Secondes Œuvres*, ed. Anne R. Larsen (Geneva: Droz, 1998), 193

³⁷ ibid, p204

³⁸ See Jean Luis Vives, *The education of a Christian woman: a sixteenth-century manual*, ed. and trans. by Charles Fantazzi, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

La pluspart de ceux qui prennent la cause des femmes, contre cette orgueilleuse preference que les hommes s'attribuent, leur rendent le change entier: car ils renvoient la preference vers elles. Quant à moy qui fuis toutes extremitez, je me contente de les esgaler aux hommes: la Nature s'opposant ainsi pour ce regard, autant à la superiorité qu'à la inferiorité.³⁹

This point of view becomes even more salient in *Grief des Dames*, in which Gournay expresses her frustration that women are discriminated against in terms of freedom, property, and education: ‘Bien-heureuz es-tu, Lecteur, si tu n’es point de ce sexe, qu’on interdit de tous les biens, le privant de la liberté [...] Bien-heureux, derechef, qui peux estre sage sans crime’⁴⁰. This gestures towards the limitations placed on women due to their sex and the difficulties that ensue if a woman were to try and lead a life which deviated from the accepted norm. Gournay’s point of view must be seen in the light of the time in which she lived as opposed to in relation to our twenty-first century society; to us, her ideas pertaining to gender and equality are well-known and widely accepted, but for her time, they were certainly transgressive.

The fact that the des Roches and Gournay were literate and had knowledge of classical texts and languages meant that they were able to write, publish, and participate in salon communities. It is necessary to take the multiple contexts in which they were working into account in order to evaluate their successes relative to their individual situations, focusing not just on gender but also on intellectual, geographical, social, historical, and other relevant contexts. One of the most salient differences between the women is the educational opportunities available to them, which had a resulting effect on their careers and reputations. As Leah Chang points out, a snippet from one of Pasquier’s letters reveals the nature of the des Roches’s education and their salon:

Le matin, vous trouverez la mere & la fille, après avoir donné ordre à leur mesnage, se mettre sur les livres, puis tantost, faire un sage vers, tantost une epistre bien dictée. Les après-disnées & souppées, la porte est ouverte à tout honneste homme. Là l’on traite divers discours, ores de philosophie, ores d’histoire, ou du temps, ou bien

³⁹ Marie le Jars de Gournay, *Œuvres complètes* ed. by Jean-Claude Arnould and others (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), 965

⁴⁰ ibid, p1074

quelques propos gaillards. Et nul n'y entre qui n'en sorte, ou plus sçavant, ou mieux édifié.⁴¹

The father, who was traditionally responsible for educating his sons and daughters, is absent here and instead, Madeleine is in control of Catherine's education and the two study together. They are relieved of the responsibility of undertaking household tasks and are able to dedicate their time to learning. Pasquier's positive description of their salon suggests that he holds it in high esteem and that the des Roches succeeded in creating an environment conducive to intellectual exchange in spite of their genders. Salons were indeed a popular environment for women, who were excluded from universities and most learned professions, for they allowed them to partake in intellectual exchange. Importantly, he emphasizes their relationship, referring to them as 'la mere & la fille', which suggests that their approach is highly unusual for it emphasizes that it is a deviation from the norm of father and son. Madeleine and Catherine's approach to both gender equality and education certainly had a positive impact on the opportunities that were available to them.

Gournay's autobiographical texts inform us about her personal situation and level of education. Her account of her education emphasizes the fact that she was an autodidact. It is an antithesis to the education of Catherine des Roches which was directed attentively by her mother, for as Gournay states here, educating herself was completely at odds with what her mother envisioned she should be doing:

Le pere mourant jeune, laisse cette fille petite orpheline, mais sa mere luy dura jusques à près de vingt cinq ans: soubs laquelle, à des heures pour la pluspart desrobées, elle aprit les Lettres seule, et mesme le Latin sans Grammaire, et sans ayde, confrontant les Livres de cette Langue Traduicts en François, contre leurs originaux. Et fit son estude ainsi, tant par l'aversion que sa mere aportoit en telles choses, que parce que cette autorité maternelle l'emmena soudain après le trespass du père en Picardie à Gournay, lieu reculé des commoditez d'apprendre les Sciences par enseignement, ny par conference. Quelqu'un luy ayant monstré la Grammaire Grecque, elle en aprit en peu de temps la Langue à peu près, puis la negligea, trouvant le but de sa perfection plus esloigné qu'on ne luy figuroit d'arrivée: joint qu'en

⁴¹ Estienne Pasquier, *Choix de lettres sur la littérature, la langue et la traduction*, ed. D. Thickett (Geneva ; Droz, 1956), 20, in Chang, *Into Print*, 75

mesme saison sa fortune fut traversée de tres-penibles incommoditez et difficultez,
qui l'ont tousjours depuis fort divertie.⁴²

Like Pasquier's description of the des Roches, Gournay focuses on the two most important parts of her upbringing: the role played by her parents and the way in which she learnt. Here, we see that Gournay's father, like that of Catherine, did not play a role in her education. The difference lies in the actions of Gournay's mother, who is presented by Gournay as an obstacle to her education as opposed to a guiding light. Throughout, her rhetoric homes in on the struggles that she faced: her study of literature was undertaken alone, 'seule', when she learnt Latin, it was imperfect due to the lack of training in grammar, and indeed, she taught herself Latin with no help from anybody else by comparing Latin texts to their French translations. Her apprenticeship in Ancient Greek was sporadic and Gournay is sure to emphasize all the difficulties and inconveniences she faced. Gournay's education and situation are therefore in direct opposition to that of the des Roches: she does not have a natural, biological community to support her in her education. It is therefore unsurprising that Gournay assembled her own intellectual family whereas Madeleine and Catherine did not feel the need to adopt others into their network under the guise of the *famille d'alliance*. This is one of the key differences between the women and plays an important role in determining the opportunities they enjoyed during and after their lifetime.

Existing scholarship about the des Roches has ensured that the publication context and much of the textual detail in their works themselves are well-documented: an excellent starting point is Anne R. Larsen's three critical editions of their works⁴³ and her translation of some of their key texts as part of the *Other Voice* series.⁴⁴ Thanks to these well-sourced, easily available editions, there has been an increase in critical interest in the des Roches over recent years. Whilst they still remain absent from most key guides to French Literature,⁴⁵ they

⁴² Gournay, *Œuvres completes*, 1862-63

⁴³ See: Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *Les œuvres*, ed. by Anne R. Larsen (Geneva: Droz, 1993), Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *Les secondes œuvres*, ed. by Anne R. Larsen (Geneva: Droz, 1998), and Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *Les Missives*, ed. by Anne R. Larsen (Geneva: Droz, 1999)

⁴⁴ See: Des Roches, *From Mother and Daughter*

⁴⁵ The des Roches are not mentioned at all in Jennifer Birkett and James Kearns, *A Guide to French Literature: From Early Modern to Postmodern* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997); Sarah Kay, Terence Cave and Malcolm Bowie, *A Short History of French Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) nor in Alison Finch, *French Literature: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), showing that they do not yet feature in the modern French literary canon.

hold an important place in the history of French women's writing.⁴⁶ There are also a number of articles, chapters, and books dedicated solely to them and their work. Kendall B. Tarte's *Writing Places* provides detailed insight into the salon environment in which Catherine's *La Puce* was produced, emphasizing the collaboration with male attendees at the salon and the role played by Poitiers in the text prior to branching out and providing a broader overview of historical writing in Poitiers during the sixteenth century, moving away from the des Roches and focusing on other writers at various points. The final chapter of the book develops Tarte's analysis of community in the des Roches's salon and work, linking it to Christine de Pizan.⁴⁷ The book builds on her previous work on community⁴⁸ and on prefatory strategies in *La Puce*.⁴⁹ Ann Rosalind Jones examines the presentation of gender in *La Puce*⁵⁰ and Paula Sommers compares the way in which Gabrielle Coignard and Catherine des Roches present themselves and justify their presence in literary sapces.⁵¹ Leah Chang includes the des Roches in her study of women and their place in early modern print culture.⁵² All of these studies consider the des Roches's position as women and the context in which they were writing in order to ground their analysis of their texts and offer illuminating readings which provide us with insight into the meaning behind the des Roches's linguistic choices. There are, however, still substantial parts of their texts which have not been analysed in any real detail and due to the focus of existing work on gender, salon culture, and place, there are a number of key themes and formal features which have not yet been examined in any great depth if at all. Scholars will hopefully continue to approach their works in new ways in the future; this thesis aims to consider the mother-daughter pair with a more detailed focus on intellectual kinship in order to add to existing scholarship.

Like the des Roches, Gournay has seen increased interest in her work in recent years. The publication of Marjorie Henry Ilsley's biography *A Daughter of the Renaissance: Marie*

⁴⁶ See Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 181-184, for an example of a study that takes women and their concerns as its focus. The des Roches therefore feature in Jordan's account of the period, for her interests speak to theirs.

⁴⁷ Kendall B. Tarte, *Writing Places: Sixteenth-Century City Culture and the Des Roches Salon* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007)

⁴⁸ Kendall B. Tarte, 'Early Modern Literary Communities: Madeleine Des Roches's City of Women', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol 35, No. 3, Fall 2004, 751 - 769

⁴⁹ Kendall B. Tarte, 'Prefatory Strategies in La Puce de Madame des-Roches: From the Salon to the Page', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter 2004, 35-45

⁵⁰ Anne Rosalind Jones, Contentious Readings: Urban Humanism and Gender Difference in *La Puce de Madame Des-Roches* (1582)', *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 1, Spring 1995, 109-128

⁵¹ Paula Sommers, 'Spatial Dynamics and the Female Poet: Gabrielle de Coignard and Catherine des Roches', *Romance Notes*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Spring 2001, 363 – 373

⁵² See: Chang, *Into Print* 62-99

le Jars de Gournay, her Life and Works (1963) marks a turning point in Gournay studies, with previous accounts focusing almost exclusively on her role as Montaigne's editor and being peppered with derogatory comments about her age and marital status and physical appearance⁵³. Gournay is now being more fully recognised for her writings about gender and equality as opposed to featuring predominantly in studies focusing on her work as Montaigne's editor: she is included in multiple volumes dedicated to women's writing in which the editors tend to focus on her works which can be classed as protofeminist.⁵⁴ Indeed, the first posthumous edition of Gournay's works, Mario Schiff's *La Fille d'alliance de Montaigne, Marie de Gournay* (1910) contains a short biography and Gournay's *Egalité des Hommes et des Femmes* and *Grief des Dames*; initial interest in her as an author was predicated on her writings which can be seen under the umbrella of the *querelle des femmes* and her relationship with Montaigne, which is reflected in the choice of texts in Richard Hillman and Colette Quesnel's translation which forms part of the *Other Voice* series.⁵⁵

However, critics have begun to take notice of the variety of genres and themes present in Gournay's *œuvre* over recent years. The most prominent and useful example of this is Jean-Claude Arnould's edition of Gournay's *Oeuvres complètes* (2002) which contains all of her published material with introductions to each type of work written by specialists. This has done a great deal in stimulating further interest in all parts of Gournay's work: Jean-Philippe Beaulieu considers new ways to approach Gournay's work as a translator,⁵⁶ Maddalena Bertelà's edition of Gournay's poetry contains a comprehensive introduction considering these poems in detail for the very first time,⁵⁷ and Constant Venesoen analyses a selection of Gournay's texts which relate to slander in a single volume.⁵⁸ This proliferation in studies is representative of the current willingness to consider Gournay as a writer in her own right. I

⁵³ See: Maurice Riveline, *Montaigne et l'amitié* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1939), 110, and Pierre Villey, *Montaigne devant la Postérité* (Paris: Bovin et Compagnie, 1935), 51

⁵⁴ See: Elyane Dezon-Jones, *Les écritures féminines* (Paris: Editions Magnard, 1983); eds. Eva Martin Sartori, and Dorothy Wynne Zimmerman, *French Women Writers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991) and eds. William Burgwinkle, Nicholas Hammond and Emma Wilson, *The Cambridge History of French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), in which Gournay features in the chapters 'Women Writers in the Sixteenth Century', 'Sixteenth-century thought' under the subheading of 'Women and Thought', and 'Seventeenth-century women writers'

⁵⁵ Marie le Jars de Gournay, *Apology for the Woman Writing and Other Works*, eds. and trans. Richard Hillman, Colette Quesnel (Chicago Scholarship Online, 2002)

⁵⁶ Jean-Philippe Beaulieu, '« Moy Traductrice » : le façonnement de la figure auctoriale dans le paratexte des traductions de Marie de Gournay', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, Vol 35, No. 4, Special Issue: Women's Translation in Early Modern England and France, Fall 2012, 119-134

⁵⁷ Maddalena Bertelà, *Bouquet de Pinde composé de fleurs diverses* (Ravenna: Angelo Longo Editore, 1995)

⁵⁸ Venesoen, Constant, *Marie de Gournay: Textes relatifs à la calomnie* (Tübingen: Günther Narr Verlag, 1998)

aim to build on this by considering parts of her work which best allow us to examine the usage of the *famille d'alliance* in her work.

Whilst there are already studies which consider the work of both the des Roches and of Gournay under the same thematic umbrella,⁵⁹ there exists to my knowledge no direct, sustained comparison of their texts or of the familial relationships depicted therein. My thesis therefore aims to consider what the notion of intellectual kinship means in the light of the relationships portrayed in their texts, which is made particularly salient due to the fact that the des Roches's relationship is biological whereas the intellectual bonds that Gournay forms are *d'alliance*. I will not focus on analysing the usage of the term *famille d'alliance* and related vocabulary in the way that a Keywords study would⁶⁰, namely because the lack of frequency of usage of such words would make for a very short study and I am more concerned with analysing the relationships themselves in order to identify patterns and characteristics which might enable us to retrospectively come to a definition of early modern intellectual kinship and its functions which encompasses a variety of relationships. Although I am working with a limited corpus due to space and time constraints, this approach will begin to show whether the intellectual kinship relationship appears to have a set of essential characteristics with which we can categorise other relationships and from which we can start new discussions about this type of friendship in the early modern period.

I shall also consider how the women use these relationships to form and forge their place in intellectual communities and to further their careers. I pay particular attention to the role played by their gender in order to ascertain whether intellectual kinship was sufficient to allow women to overcome constraints placed upon them in society by their gender or if they would ultimately always have to acknowledge their gender and justify their presence in the public sphere. The differences between the des Roches and Gournay will enable me to decide whether gender is the defining factor in a writer's success in the intellectual circles of early modern France or whether other factors, including familial, geographical, social, historical, political, and intellectual context, play a more significant role in determining the course of a woman's life.

⁵⁹ See Chang, *Into Print*, for a consideration of the publication context of the texts of both authors and eds. Anne R Larsen and Julie D. Campbell, *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), for an examination of the similarities between the des Roches and Gournay's formation of communities and communications with other intellectuals.

⁶⁰ See: ed. Ita Mac Carthy, *Renaissance Keywords* (London: Legenda, 2003), 1-11 for an explanation of the mechanisms of keyword studies

The des Roches and Gournay both have a large corpus which consists of texts in many forms. For this reason, I have limited myself to discussing three types of text. The first part of my analysis compares the presentation of intellectual kinship in the correspondence of the des Roches and that of Gournay; the letter genre provides us with insight into how these authors address their contemporaries directly in a dialogic exchange and into how they present their relationships with intellectual kin in order to support their conversations with their contemporaries. The second part focuses on a selection of dedications and poetry because this is another form of addressing an individual or group of people directly in print and therefore analysing both the content of the text and how it is presented to the addressee. This approach will enable me to best examine the creative process of forming intellectual kinship and how this is influenced by its place in public documents with various readers.

From mother and daughter: the correspondence of the des Roches

In the sixteenth century, private correspondence was not automatically published.⁶¹ By publishing a letter, it became a public document and its owner was therefore making a conscious decision to place its contents into the public arena. The des Roches were the first women in French literary history to elect to publish a private correspondence.⁶² The *Missives*, published in 1586 by Abel L'Angelier, follow the same format as the des Roches's other two collections, the *Œuvres* and *Les Seconde Œuvres*, in that the volume is divided into two sections with the first part containing Madeleine's work and the second Catherine's. Their correspondence is a significant part of the *Missives*. In total, there are 96 letters of which 26 are attributed to Madeleine and integrated as a continuous series in a collection of poetry. The 70 letters authored by Catherine, which begin with a dedicatory letter to her mother, mark the opening of her section of the volume, the remainder of which consists of a collection of poetry and short prose texts, of which the main attraction is her translation of Claudian's *Le Ravissement de Proserpine*.

However, this was not the first time that a French woman had published a collection of what purported to be letters. Hélisenne de Crenne's *Les epistres familières et invectives* (1539), a literary exchange of which the first part deals with a female author who corresponds with her critics in order to shape her literary persona and the second part with love and virtue,⁶³ could be considered a model for the des Roches's work, although there is now a clear consensus that de Crenne's letters are fictional⁶⁴ and we have no proof that the des Roches ever engaged with her work. It is therefore reasonable to state that their *Missives* represent the first private female correspondence to be published in France. A parallel to this French model can be found in Italian culture where several women including, for example, the courtesan Veronica Franco (1546-91) published collections of letters. Franco's *Lettere familiari a diversi* (1580) is focused on her challenging male authors' depiction of courtesans by providing an account of her private self.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, *Les Missives*, ed. Anne R. Larsen (Geneva: Droz, 1999), 10

⁶² ed and trans. Anne R. Larsen, *Madeleine and Catherine des Roches: From Mother and Daughter* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 2006), 243

⁶³ Diane S. Wood, *Hélisenne de Crenne: At the Crossroads of Renaissance Humanism and Feminism* (Madison [N.J.]: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), 77-96, for a full discussion of the content and purpose of the collection of letters.

⁶⁴ Chang, *Into Print*, 64

⁶⁵ Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 116 – 152 for a full discussion of the content of and concerns expressed in Franco's correspondence.

The des Roches were therefore writing in a transnational genre but they were not responsible for bringing this genre to France. Private correspondence was already an established, respected model; as Jean Balsamo and Michel Simonin note, Abel L'Angelier agreed to publish Catherine's poem *Proserpine* because it was joined to her and her mother's correspondence, suggesting that the poem deserved to enter his collection. He published it alongside Estienne du Tronchet's *Lettres missives et familières* (1577) and Estienne Pasquier's *Les Lettres* (1586), which may have encouraged him to consider the des Roches's letters.⁶⁶

There exist, therefore, several examples of correspondence in Renaissance Europe which consist of letters which express private concerns, are written in the vernacular, and follow the conventions of the familiar letter genre. The term 'familiar' as it is used here can be misleading to readers who have not yet encountered the early modern letter. The letters exchanged by early modern friends are a contrast to the ways in which we communicate with our friends today. First and foremost, the letter was a rhetorical exercise, an opportunity for the writer to demonstrate his or her skill and to participate publicly in intellectual networks, which could lead to benefits such as a greater readership for one's work, new contacts, and new intellectual mentors. Topics that we would likely class as private and which would remain private in the twenty first century, such as health, relationships, and people's character traits were considered to be public matters, often placed in 'private' letters which went on to be published.

A crucial difference is that such topics were written about in accordance with a specific set of rules and conventions, for which there exists several instructional manuals and treatises which reveal not only the codes for letter writing but also the ancient philosophy and traditions that underpin them. Vives's *De conscribendis epistolis* (1534) provides readers with guidance on how to appeal to a wide range of recipients when writing letters and on how to construct letters in accordance with various Renaissance genres. Vives explains that when writing a letter, you must follow a number of conventions. First, *inventio* is important; the writer must demonstrate their skill and that it is a product of judgement and experience.⁶⁷ The style of the letter must be adapted according to the recipient⁶⁸ and you must focus on the addressee's virtue as opposed to revealing that you might be attracted to them because of

⁶⁶ Jean Balsamo and Michel Simonin, *Abel L'Angelier et Françoise de Louvain* (Geneva: Droz, 2002), 78

⁶⁷ Jean Luis Vives, *De conscribendis epistolis*, ed. and trans. C. Fantazzi (Leiden : Brill, 1989), 5, 27

⁶⁸ *ibid*, 6, 29

their money or status.⁶⁹ You must not be arrogant when speaking about your own life⁷⁰ and whilst you can write to people you consider to be friends more freely,⁷¹ you must make sure that you direct requests towards the appropriate person, for example soliciting legal advice from a lawyer and educational advice from a teacher.⁷² Personal questions should be kept to a minimum⁷³ and when responding to a letter you should pay close attention to the contents of the original and to the state of the writer when it was composed.⁷⁴ The writer should be modest and praise him or herself as little as possible.⁷⁵ Vives also considers certain commonplace expressions of friendship, emphasizing that the use of these expressions is rarely a mark of great honour,⁷⁶ and that adding markers such as ‘good wishes’ are a courteous gesture and a sign of simple humanity.⁷⁷ It is customary to add such greetings at the end of a letter.⁷⁸ The most natural structure is to follow the order of the letter to which you are responding⁷⁹ and the function of the letter is mainly to reproduce the tone of conversation and familiar speech as closely as possible, with ornate speech being seen as a sign of arrogance or childishness.⁸⁰ The letter should be brief; Vives cites Seneca’s belief that the letter should not be long enough to fill the reader’s left hand⁸¹ and that new correspondents and friends should be sent short letters at first in order to test them out.⁸² The text closes with a brief history of letters from antiquity to the Vives’s contemporaries including Erasmus. The familiar letter was therefore a question of writing a description about everyday matters which resembled natural speech as closely as possible without prying too far into your correspondent’s business whilst still being sure to display as much rhetorical skill as possible.

If writers of letters during the sixteenth century followed such strict conventions, is it really possible to infer a large amount of meaning from their correspondence? Indeed, the very fact that the writing of letters took place in a sphere potentially governed by such strict

⁶⁹ ibid, 8, 33

⁷⁰ ibid, 17, 39

⁷¹ ibid, 20, 43

⁷² Ibid, 21, 43

⁷³ ibid, 22, 45

⁷⁴ Ibid, 42, 65

⁷⁵ Ibid, 43, 67

⁷⁶ Ibid, 49, 75

⁷⁷ Ibid, 49, 75

⁷⁸ Ibid, 62, 87

⁷⁹ Ibid, 59, 85

⁸⁰ Ibid, 71, 97

⁸¹ Ibid, 101, 126

⁸² Ibid, 102, 127

rhetorical and social codes means that the letters are interesting precisely for the fact that they provide us with a replica of the world in which these writers worked, or rather were expected to work. Amanda Eurich's analysis considers the ways in which published letters represent contemporaneous models of gender and patriarchal authority, emphasizing how conventions are used not only to present these beliefs in public but also to contest them.⁸³ John D. Lyons explains that 'An example cannot exist without (a) a general statement and (b) an indication of its subordinate status. Moreover, examples are most frequently used to (c) provide clarification of the general statement and (d) demonstrate the truth of the general statement'.⁸⁴ An example is therefore a representation of a general idea which is applied in or to a specific situation in order to show how it can function in context, that is to say outside of its existence as a general statement. It is therefore possible to read early modern letter texts as examples, each of which provides the conventions of the letter form with new specificities. They are an application of societal codes pertaining to gender and behaviour, literary evidence that these exist and are applied in the everyday life of the writer. Even if a set of letters attempts to call these into question, the act of doing so still engages with and reinforces the truth represented by the letter, that is to say that by questioning the status quo in a letter, the writer must acknowledge that what they are attempting to challenge is present in their reality. Madeleine herself corroborates this in letter seven. Addressing a widow, she begins by underlining the power of knowledge which leads into a more general statement about women's speech and the representation of ideas:

Puisque l'ignorance doit clore la bouche, ainsi que vous dites (Madame), le sçavoir la peut justement ouvrir : aussi est-ce luy qui ouvre maintenant la vostre. Je dy cecy pource que la parole est image de la pensée, et l'escriture image de la parole. (*M*, 97)

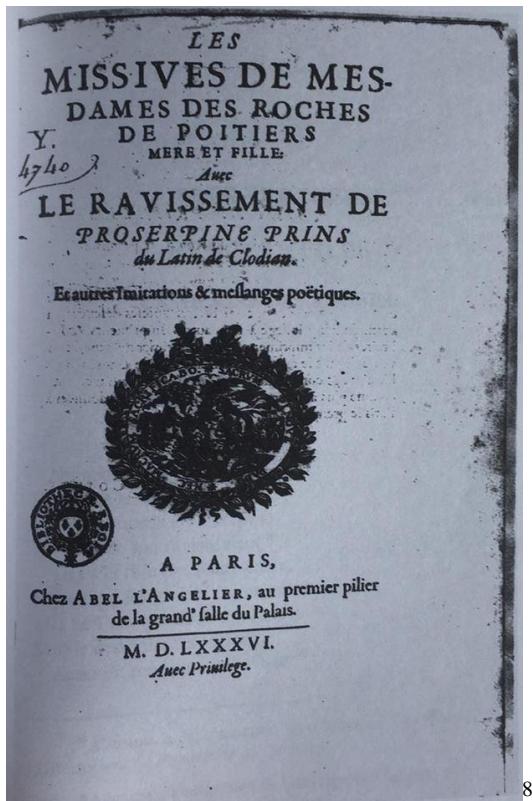
Madeleine asserts that knowledge is the antidote to the ignorance with which women are usually left by society. Knowledge enables women to challenge and attempt to overcome this convention and to refrain from remaining silent in public spaces in line with what is normally expected of them; the act of exchanging letters with women and publishing them allows her to challenge this notion both explicitly and implicitly. Exchanging letters means that

⁸³ Amanda Eurich, 'Prescribing Gender: The Letter Book in Early Modern France', *Journal of the Western Society for French History*, Vol 39, 2011, 2

⁸⁴ John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: the Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1989), x

Madeleine is not remaining silent but writing letters is not outright speech either, demonstrating that the letters serve as a kind of middle ground. As Anne R. Larsen highlights, Madeleine supports this statement by referring to the classical *topos* of *ut pictura poesis* when she justifies her assertion about knowledge: ‘la parole est image de la pensée, et l’écriture image de la parole.’⁸⁵ Engaging with this particular classical concept reveals her awareness of the fact that her letters are a reflection of the world around her, which strengthens her belief in the importance of speech and writing to allow women to voice their opinions and challenge the status quo. This remark reflects the overall tone of the *Missives*, in which the des Roches consistently engage with and criticise the expectations of their reading public.

A brief discussion of the publication context of this text leads us into the discussion of the kinship relationship as it is expressed in the letters, for the des Roches formed a bond with L’Angelier which is described in these terms as well as displaying typical characteristics of an early modern intellectual friendship. The frontispiece of the text is initially striking due to the emphasis that it places on the letters:



86

⁸⁵ des Roches, *Les Missives*, 97. Larsen situates this concept in its classical roots, citing Aristotle, Horace, and Plutarch, as well as in contemporaneous references in Peletier Du Mans and François des Rues.

⁸⁶ *ibid*, 77

The frontispiece emphasizes the prominence of the letters, yet these are actually a relatively small part of the compilation in terms of length. The name ‘Dames des Roches’ appears in a much larger typeface than the subtitle, ‘Mere et fille’ which explains the nature of their relationship, suggesting that they are indeed well known for their salon in Poitiers and that L’Angelier is presenting them first as a pair of erudite women and then as a mother-daughter pair by placing their title, which suggests they are equal, before their relationship. The presence of Catherine’s *Le Ravissement de Proserpine* is acknowledged, alongside the letters, to be the main attraction. Leah Chang’s analysis of the *Missives* focuses on foregrounding the text in the print culture of sixteenth-century France and Madeleine and Catherine’s letters to L’Angelier about the production of this volume and the inclusion of *Proserpine*, emphasizing the instrumental role that Catherine’s letters could have played in encouraging L’Angelier to publish this text.⁸⁷ I do not wish to revisit discussion of the publication context of *Proserpine* and the role that the des Roches’s correspondence with L’Angelier plays in this in any great detail for the existing work relating to this subject is already comprehensive; instead, I shall highlight those aspects of the letters to L’Angelier that I believe are important to this discussion. The idea of a hierarchy based on gender and influence in the intellectual world, but not on intellect itself, is epitomized in letter 70 of Catherine’s section, where Catherine invites L’Angelier to name the book:

Ma mere n’a point voulu nommer ce petit livre, desirant que vous en soiez parrain. Nommez-le donc ainsi que bon vous semblera, du tiltre de Missives ou de Lettres, ou d’Epistres, pource que la curiosité des hommes en rendra peut-estre la despeschre plus prompte. Vous en ferez (s’il vous plaist) comme du vostre. Et ceux de mes escrits que vous trouverez plus indignes de lire, jettez-les au feu. Mais je vous supplie, ne jetez jamais en l’eau d’oubly l’honneste souvenance que vous monstrez avoir de ma Mere et de moy, qui saluë vos graces en toute humilité. (*M*, 211)

Catherine’s place in her friendship with her mother is clear here: Madeleine, as the older member of the pair, was responsible for naming the book and it is her authority that Catherine is able to transfer to L’Angelier, although she emphasizes that she is acting on her mother’s

⁸⁷ See Chang, *Into Print*, 62-99 for discussion of the significance of the letters addressed to L’Angelier in relation to ‘Le Ravissement de Proserpine’.

wishes and not of her own accord. The act of likening the book to a child who is being transferred from Madeleine, who is Catherine's mother and implicitly the mother of the book, to a godfather, 'parrain', draws on the idea of the childbirth metaphor, which takes the female body as a metaphor for literary creation.⁸⁸ Often used by male authors to depict the creation of their texts, Madeleine is here presented as the mother of the text who is transferring it to a godfather. Catherine's use of 'parrain' reveals that there are two levels of authority at work here. L'Angelier was not involved in the original production of the text, therefore he cannot be considered a 'pere', a biological parent; Catherine does not consider him to be on the same level as her mother with regards to the book, in spite of encouraging him to treat the book as his own, 'comme du vostre'. By limiting herself to a godfather, she emphasizes that both the book, who has no named biological paternal influence, and the des Roches as a pair do not require someone to fulfil the role of father, which represents a rejection of the need for a male parental figure in Catherine's life.

This letter does, however, reveal the need for a male figure in order for the des Roches to achieve commercial success as authors. Catherine invites L'Angelier to make a decision about the title of the text, suggesting three possibilities: 'Missives', 'Lettres', or 'Epistres'. Interestingly, there appears to be little difference between these three terms. Cotgrave defines a 'Letter' as 'a Letter, Epistle, or Missive',⁸⁹ a 'Missive' as 'A letter missive, a letter sent',⁹⁰ and an 'Epistre' as 'An Epistle, a letter missive'.⁹¹ The terms appear to be almost synonymous, with the only significant difference lying in the definition of 'Missive' which emphasizes the act of sending the letter. The differences between the terms are thus minimal and Catherine willingly passes this decision about which one to use onto L'Angelier. In one way, this emphasizes that she is actually trusting him with a major decision, that is to say the name of her book, but on the other hand, the difference between the three terms she suggests is relatively minor, therefore in terms of semantic difference, Angelier's choice does not have the greatest impact on the des Roches's text. Balsamo and Simonin suggest that Catherine's priority was getting her translation of *Proserpine* published and was not therefore concerned about the title of the poem: 'Catherine cédait le titre du nouveau recueil, l'essentiel pour elle était de voir publier la traduction du poème de

⁸⁸ See Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor', 73-100 in ed. Elaine Showalter, *Speaking of Gender* (New York; London: Routledge, 1989) for discussion of the childbirth metaphor in literature.

⁸⁹ Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*, [n.p.]

⁹⁰ ibid, [n.p.]

⁹¹ ibid, [n.p.]

Claudien.⁹² One reason for this can be found in the letter itself, where Catherine instructs him to choose whichever one will make the reading public more curious and indeed sell more books.

L'Angelier publishing the *Missives* was a mutually beneficial relationship: the des Roches's career and his publishing house would both benefit if it were to be successful. This letter and the des Roches's publication history demonstrate their ability and willingness to negotiate. L'Angelier published the *Œuvres* and the *Missives* yet he did not publish *Les Secondes Œuvres* which were instead granted to the comparatively provincial Poitiers-based publisher Nicolas Courtoys. Choosing to publish the *Œuvres* in Paris had been a commercially-motivated decision: Chang suggests that the des Roches needed to publish with L'Angelier in order to break into the Parisian market, which was much larger than that of Poitiers,⁹³ whilst, as Chang goes on to point out,⁹⁴ Balsamo and Simonin purport the following theory:

En 1578, le libraire avait publié, parmi ses toutes premières nouveautés, les *Œuvres* des dames des Roches, dont la réputation dépassait le cadre du seul Poitou. Les Dames n'avaient pas choisi le libraire, dont la réputation était à faire; tout permet d'affirmer qu'elles furent sollicitées par lui, et qu'il leur avait offert ses services.⁹⁵

This suggests that, in the first instance, L'Angelier sought out the des Roches in order to build his own reputation as opposed to them being reliant on him to launch their career. However, the des Roches needed to renegotiate the terms of their partnership with L'Angelier when it came to publish the *Missives*: Chang discusses this negotiation in more detail.⁹⁶ In any case, the decision was decidedly motivated by commercial gains and evidence of the des Roches's power in negotiating is apparent in this letter. This is reinforced by Catherine's instruction to L'Angelier to treat it as he would his own, which continues the parent-child rhetoric and emphasizes that even though Catherine is now shifting the parental authority to him, it originally belonged to her and her mother who are capable of being just as active in the process as L'Angelier.

⁹² Balsamo and Simonin, *Abel l'Angelier*, 79

⁹³ Chang, *Into Print*, 73

⁹⁴ ibid, 73

⁹⁵ Balsamo and Simonin, *Abel l'Angelier*, 78

⁹⁶ Chang, *Into Print*, 86

Catherine's instructions to L'Angelier with regards to how he might judge her work provide us with further insight into the des Roches's interactions with him as their publisher. She invites him to judge her work, instructing him to throw those of her writings which are not worthy into the fire, demonstrating her need for L'Angelier's approval in order to further her career. This is contrasted with an opposing image, that of water, 'l'eau d'oubly', a possible allusion to the ancient Greek river Lethe, which caused all of those who drank from it to become completely forgetful, which is paired with the begging request never to throw the good opinion he has of her and her mother into such waters. This is an echo of Madeleine's own request to L'Angelier in letter 19 in which she invites L'Angelier on behalf of her and her daughter to take control of the destiny of their work: 'elle [Catherine] vous exempte du soing de ses écrits, et des miens: ayant pourveu d'ailleurs pour les faire paroistre au Soleil, ou à l'ombre pour le peu de clarté qui est en eux' (109). The image of the sun reflects the early modern commonplace of equating publication with light and is juxtaposed with its opposite, the shade, therefore following the same pattern as Catherine by using two opposing images to invite their publisher to judge their work. This is an example of common, rhetorical devices being used in correspondence; by integrating them with their mother-daughter bond, the des Roches are able to manipulate a commonplace for their own purpose. This is just one example of their adaptation of conventions to suit their own situation.

Rewriting the old, or writing the new?

As I outlined in the introduction, the concepts which underpin the engagement with and presentation of friendship in early modern French literature stem from antiquity and are dominated by male-male models. In this section, I shall show that the des Roches engage with these concepts in their correspondence, adapting them in order to write their own friendship into this tradition and therefore to justify it in the eyes of both their correspondents and the reading public whilst challenging the traditional belief that only men are capable of perfect friendship and intellectual kinship.

Madeleine draws on both the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions to strengthen her presentation of her and Catherine's point of view when she feels it is necessary to legitimize her voice. A key example of this is letter 24, in which she provides a male correspondent with advice and introduces this by emphasizing her friendship with her daughter: 'Mais la Mere et la Fille n'estant jamais divisées (n'ayant qu'une volonté) n'ont besoin que d'une response pour se recommander à vos graces' (*M*, 114). This explanation is resonant of the idea of the

other half as outlined by Plato in the *Symposium*. Aristophanes states that human beings stem from the androgyne, which had a different shape which resembled two joined human beings, who could be male, female, or hermaphrodite instead of being male or female, the two sexes which were known at the time when the text was written.⁹⁷ These creatures did not display virtuous behaviour and were subsequently split in two by Zeus,⁹⁸ spending the rest of their life seeking the other body from which they were originally severed which would be their perfect match.⁹⁹ Men cut from other men were considered capable of finding the manliest and therefore the best partners¹⁰⁰ and as Hyatte reminds us, ‘in general ancient writers barred, either categorically or implicitly, women along with the low born as candidates for *vera amicitia* and the title of “sapien and virtuous”’.¹⁰¹ The Platonic tradition is therefore a masculine system which the des Roches subvert by way of appropriation; the use of the superlative ‘jamais divisées’ suggests that they are putting their intellectual friendship on an even higher level than that of Plato. For Plato, the ideal friendship occurred between a young boy and a much older man in the role of mentor. Here, the des Roches are casting themselves in these roles and emphasizing that they are so virtuous that they would have never been divided by Zeus in the first place; this constancy is emphasized by the present participles ‘estant’ and ‘ayant’.

In a slightly different context, Madeleine returns to this concept elsewhere in the *Missives*: in letter 16, she refers to her male recipient as ‘le plus proche parent que j’aye en ce monde, et que je tiens comme un autre moy-mesmes’ (106). Identifying him as a ‘parent’ suggests that there is no hint of a romantic relationship at all; in speaking to this male figure, she is establishing a familial relationship which may or may not have parental connotations. The direct reference to another self suggests that Madeleine values his friendship highly and that she believes she is capable of a perfect, equal friendship with a man. Notably, she refers to him as another self, ‘un autre moy-mesmes’ [my italics], as opposed to my other self, ‘mon autre moy-mesmes’. This demonstrates that she believes she can have multiple successful intellectual bonds as opposed to a single one with a lover, which runs counter to what was expected of women during the period. As Marc Schachter points out, Horace Rackham’s translation of the Greek term ‘as ‘another self’ in the Loeb edition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* obscures the fact that biological offspring are potentially plural – ‘other

⁹⁷ Plato, *The Symposium*, ed. and trans. Walter Hamilton (Reading: Cox and Whyman Ltd., 1985), 59

⁹⁸ ibid, 60

⁹⁹ ibid, 61

¹⁰⁰ ibid, 62

¹⁰¹ Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, 9

selves' – and not necessarily singular. Montaigne's reading 'autre nous mesmes' captures this important nuance.¹⁰² Here, Madeleine is not referring to a child but is nonetheless appropriating this use of rhetoric for her own purposes.

Additionally, the single will that they possess ('qu'une volonté') links the des Roches to Aristotle's belief, as quoted by Diogenes Laërtius, that a true friendship is akin to a single soul dwelling in two bodies;¹⁰³ the *Missives* are peppered with further references that reiterate their unity of mind, for example the closing statement of letter 26 which is also addressed to a male correspondent: 'vous soiez plus digne d'avoir receu vos conditions excellentes de la divinité à qui l'unité est sacrée, en faveur de laquelle ma Fille et moy salüons tres-humblement vos graces avec unité de pensée' (*M*, 118-19) and letter 9 which is addressed to a lawyer: 'Rendant une missive pour deux' (99). Catherine also represents their unity in Platonic and Aristotelian terms. She informs a male correspondent of her and her mother's complete unity in thoughts, speech, and writing:

Et pource que vous desirez d'entendre quelles sont les pensées, paroles et actions de ma Mere et de moy: sçachez que nos pensées sont tristes, nos paroles plaintives, et nostre œuvre continuelle. (165)

The emphasis here is not only on expressing the des Roches's collective sadness but also on the way in which this is expressed. Focusing on their thoughts, words, and work is a deviation from how a woman and her feelings would normally be spoken about, for women of most social classes would not have been expected to express themselves in speech and in writing nor was this particularly desirable. Catherine's use of repetition reveals that the male correspondent presumably enquired about these specific activities, demonstrating that the des Roches managed to establish themselves in intellectual circles and participate fully. The only word which is not repeated is 'action' which is substituted by 'œuvre'. This suggests that Catherine is aware that she uses her writing to shape her public persona and that this is the only action of which it is acceptable to speak in the letter. In any case, the des Roches's unity as a pair in action and mind is clear. They are therefore appropriating two classical theories which were conceived on an understanding that the participants would be male. The most

¹⁰² Marc D. Schachter, *Voluntary Servitude and the Erotics of Friendship: from Classical Antiquity to Modern France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 130

¹⁰³ Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, ed. and trans. Robert Drew Hicks (Adelaide: eBooks@Adelaide, 2014, book v, [n.p.])

well-known evocation of friendship in early modern French literature, in Montaigne's *De l'amitié*, reflects this accepted viewpoint, yet the des Roches both strengthen the presentation of their friendship and challenge this accepted notion of friendship by drawing on and adapting these traditions to suit their own model.

In complimenting others, the des Roches often draw on motifs from antiquity, adapting them so that they can be applied to women as well as to men and thus writing themselves into this tradition. Women were required to be virtuous in order to be good wives, but it was not usual for them to be complimented on their intellectual prowess. In letter 17, Madeleine compliments the widow to whom it is addressed:

Ainsi donc vostre missive representant (pour estre tant bien ornée) les rares
perfections de vostre divin esprit, attire mon ame par mes yeux, de sorte qu'elle qui
d'autrefois a eu l'honneur de vous ouyr, se trouvant enchaînée en vos sages discours
(M, 97-98)

We cannot see the letter on which Madeleine is commenting, but she uses it as a means of complimenting her correspondent. Referring to it as a 'missive', which relates to the title of the book as well as the fact that as we have already seen, the term *missive* places particular emphasis on the fact that the letter is a document that is sent. She summarizes the letter as being a document that represents the widow's virtue, although she appears to be exceptionally virtuous: the bracketed '(pour estre tant bien ornée)' relates to her acknowledgement that silence is seen as the 'ornement de la femme' in the dedicatory material and thus shows that a woman is able to challenge this notion by writing. Madeleine is therefore adapting the language used to describe the expected positive qualities of women to this situation, which enables her to compliment her recipient on both her excellent qualities and the way in which she has presented them in her letter. The idea of attracting her soul by her eyes is resonant of the distinction that Plato draws between Common Love and Heavenly Love, which are embodied by a common Aphrodite and a Heavenly Aphrodite.¹⁰⁴ Common love is possible between men and women and consists of physical connections and feelings as opposed to spiritual bonding. The sole purpose of this love is physical, therefore the subject does not need to be educated or intelligent.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, Heavenly Love, represented by the

¹⁰⁴ Plato, 46

¹⁰⁵ ibid, 46

older Aphrodite, is based on being attracted to the male sex, which is seen as naturally stronger and more important. The basis of this attraction lies in the intelligence and virtue of the man in question.¹⁰⁶ This is echoed by Aristotle's categorisation of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which a friendship is either a friendship of utility, a friendship of pleasure, or a perfect friendship, with perfect friendship being a true friendships between two 'men' who are equally virtuous and who have actively chosen to form such a relationship¹⁰⁷ and Cicero's *Laelius de Amicitia*, in which true friendship is rare, cannot exist without virtue, and requires mutual understanding and goodwill in all important matters.¹⁰⁸ Here, Madeleine writes herself and her female correspondent into this male-dominated tradition, demonstrating her belief that women are capable of such relationships; her use of the letter allows her to challenge this notion.

Overall, the des Roches are acutely aware of the male-dominated friendship tradition on which they are drawing in order to present their friendship in the same light. In appropriating a male tradition, they are able to suggest that their own female-female bond which had its origins in their biological relationship as mother and daughter, is just as worthy as the traditional perfect friendship between two males.

Using the recast hierarchy to climb up the ladder

Writing about friendship means that it is impossible to avoid writing about the way at least two people relate to each other. We have already seen how both an abstract discussion of the concept of friendship and concrete examples of friendship can be related to the friendship tradition in antiquity. This section adds a third layer of analysis to this discussion by examining the ways in which the des Roches relate their mother-daughter relationship to other pairs of people whose relationship or friendship is constellated differently, adding another facet to the way in which they define their same-sex bond in a world that tends to dismiss or even reject such relationships.

Let us return to letter 24. We have already established Madeleine's use of allusions to classical antiquity in order to write the des Roches into the friendship tradition. This strategy is immediately followed by a similar technique which allows her to speak to a pair of people,

¹⁰⁶ ibid, 47

¹⁰⁷ See: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. and trans. Roger Cripps (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Book VIII for a full explanation of the three types of friendship.

¹⁰⁸ Cicero, *Laelius: A Dialogue on Friendship*, ed. E. S. Schuckburgh (London: Macmillian, 1902), XX

in this case a mother and a son, and legitimize the act of doing so by evoking her relationship with her daughter:

Mais la Mere et la Fille n'estant jamais divisées (n'ayant qu'une volonté) n'ont besoin que d'une response pour se recommander à vos graces, et desirer que Mademoiselle vostre mere, ensuivant Penelope, ne veuille pour second mary que le saint regret du premier, ayant un amour entier envers vous, son premier Thelemaque. (*M*, 114)

The generality of the description distances the des Roches as people and enhances the advice that Madeleine imparts, which she supports further by evoking an example from mythology. Penelope, who showed outstanding fidelity by waiting twenty years for her husband, Odysseus, to return from war, is used as a model; the correspondent's mother should prioritise her love for her son over finding a new husband whilst focusing only on the memory of the first. To strengthen the argument, Madeleine names Penelope's son, referring to him as 'son premier Thelemaque'. By emphasizing that he is her absolute priority, Madeleine draws a direct parallel between her depiction of her relationship with Catherine, suggesting that it is just as strong and exemplary. Her choice of a mother-son pairing from antiquity to support an argument which also applies to her own situation highlights her belief in gender equality, for it suggests that a mother and daughter can be just as close and virtuous as a mother and son. It is also implied that Madeleine believes her and Catherine's relationship to be stronger than that of the mother and the son: in spite of the absence of a male participant in the des Roches's public relationship, they never refer to the need to find a husband or father figure, but here Telemachus's key role highlights the significance of this lack in the des Roches's world. Madeleine therefore uses the act of advising a male correspondent as an opportunity to relate her and Catherine's kinship to his own situation in order to demonstrate that the des Roches's relationship can be seen on the same level.

Parts of the des Roches's act of relating themselves to pairs of people in the correspondence reveals something of the societal constraints that restrict women's freedom. Letter seven in Madeleine's correspondence which is addressed to a widow reveals the differences between male and female agency. Whilst the unnamed male correspondent of letter 24 is able to change his situation, the advice she imparts to a fellow woman reveals that Madeleine and Catherine are rare in being able to define themselves independently of men:

Ainsi donc vostre missive representant (pour estre tant bien ornée) les rare perfections de vostre divin esprit, attire mon ame par mes yeux, de sorte qu'elle qui d'autrefois a eu l'honneur de vous ouyr, se trouvant enchaînée en vos sages discours, demeure entierement serve de vostre excellence, et ne peut faire jugement au differend dont vous parlez, fors celuy qu'elle entendra de vous, pource que fille, mariée, et veufve, tousjours vous avez monstré une vertu tres-parfaite: et la vertu est source du bonheur.
(*M*, 97-98)

Madeleine's praise of her correspondent is clearly gendered. She refers to her life as having three stages, 'fille, mariée, et veufve', in order to emphasize that her correspondent has been consistently virtuous throughout her life. These three stages betray a gendered rhetoric: a woman goes from being a 'fille', which in French has the double meaning of both daughter and girl, to a 'femme', a wife and a woman, and then a 'veufve', a widow. In each of the three cases this figure is defined not only by her gender but also in relation to a man, first her father and secondly her husband who continues to define her status as a widow even after his death. Madeleine does not refer to men as 'hommes' or 'maris' nor 'garçons' or 'fils' anywhere in her correspondence, instead focusing on their professional roles and related achievements. Whilst her correspondent's virtue is a source of happiness, this happiness and virtue is tied to her place in a system which requires her to perform one of these three female roles. In spite of her belief in and praise of other women, Madeleine is still bound by and must situate women's achievements within a patriarchal framework; ironically, the description of her correspondent's letter as 'ornée', which relates not only to the use of rhetoric but also to the way in which a woman must present herself in public, pervades Madeleine's letter also. Her precise use of language, for example the tricolon to refer to the stages of the widow's life and the logical links between each clause of the sentence, renders this letter another ornate object, reinforcing the idea that Madeleine is bound to work within the same system she is attempting to challenge.

The fact that this letter too concludes with a reference to 'les humbles recommendations de ma Fille et de moy avec mon affectionné service' (*M*, 98) is another instance of Madeleine defining herself in relation to her daughter, showing that she is moving away from the traditional way of defining women in relation to men whilst working in a male-dominated environment, namely the literary world, which is exemplified by the way in which she speaks to her correspondent here. The contrast between Madeleine who uses her relationship with her daughter to engage with various correspondents in public and this

correspondent whose only possible partner is a man highlights further that their relationship allows them to circumvent gender stereotypes which clearly hinder other women from doing the same. This technique occurs frequently in the correspondence. For example, in letter 12, in which Madeleine asks a lawyer for help, her relationship with Catherine plays a key role in justifying her ability to ask a man for favours. In her signature, another form of greeting, she wishes the lawyer and his wife well, emphasizing that it is not her husband but her daughter with whom she speaks and presents herself in the public sphere, placing the des Roches on the same level as a married couple: ‘Ainsi je prie Dieu qu’il vous maintienne en toute félicité (Monsieur), vous et Madame vostre compagne, que ma Fille et moy saluons de bon cuer’ (*M*, 103). The des Roches therefore use their intellectual kinship to replace the need to marry, in the case of Catherine, and to substitute the role that might be played by a husband, in the case of Madeleine.

Madeleine pushes this technique further when, in letter 22, she relates herself and Catherine to a married couple consisting of the woman to whom she is writing and her husband, emphasizing that it is her female correspondent’s virtue which renders her husband virtuous, as opposed to it being the other way round:

Il n’estoit pas besoin que par ce nouveau present, ma Fille en fist nouvelle preuve : elle a receu la lettre, le don et l’avertissement de son devoir pour l’epitaphe de feu Monsieur vostre mary ; lequel, outre plusieurs louables qualitez qui le faisoient estimer, l’heur de vous avoir espousée le rendoit honorable entre toutes les personnes d’honneur, vous que le nom, et la bonté font cognoistre premiere, et qui serez sans fin premiere en ma pensée. (*M*, 112)

Madeleine asserts that this judgement is the responsibility of both her and her daughter by emphasizing that it is Catherine, ‘ma Fille’, who received the information on which the judgement is based and that it is her own mind in which this judgement and her correspondent’s reputation has been cemented. Madeleine’s repetition of ‘premiere’ in the final sentence highlights the high esteem in which she holds her correspondent, for the superlative connotations suggest that she values her goodness above all others. This relates back to the way in which Madeleine phrases the compliment, stating that her correspondent’s virtue has made her husband honourable amongst all honourable people. She equates her correspondent with the other good qualities, emphasizing that it is she and her name which have rendered him worthy of participating in this new circle. According to Madeleine, then,

his success is mainly attributed to his wife, yet the letter appears to celebrate his success whilst praising her for her responsibility and virtue. Here, the des Roches as a female-female pair succeed in praising another woman whilst acknowledging her marital status. This, as well as the example from letter 24, are instances in which the des Roches use their correspondence to extend their female community of two by praising other women. Their relationship as mother and daughter allows them to add an extra layer of meaning to their letters by adapting long-established conventions for their own purposes as well as disseminating their views about gender roles, attempting to forge their place in an existing community, and potentially creating a new one.

Extending networks: Gournay's epistolary family

Ainsi (ma Fille) je t'espreuve sans fin comblée d'amour et de pieté, m'eslevant l'ame et le cœur à quelque louyable entreprise. Et voicy la troisieme fois que ta force m'encourage de parler en public, où je ne puis m'empescher d'estre saisie d'un peu de crainte par l'exemple de Mantuan. (*M*, 85)

Or, premier que leur voir esprouver ces divers changemens, je desire infiniment qu'elles vous soient agreeables (ma Mere) et vous supplie humblement les aymer plus que leur beauté ne merite: afin qu'elles ne demeurent du tout manques d'apuy. (*M*, 147)

A key difference between the des Roches and Gournay is that the des Roches, as a mother-daughter pair, were able to work collectively as two women writing together. Gournay, however, was a sole agent outside of her role as Montaigne's editor. Gournay's correspondence differs from that of the des Roches in two crucial ways. Firstly, she did not publish her private letters during her lifetime; not all of them have survived and we have access to the most significant of her extant letters today via the Appendices section of Arnould's edition of her complete works.¹⁰⁹ Here, we find three letters that she received from Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) and three that she sent him in return, one letter that she sent to Henri Dupuy and his reply, one letter from her to Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642), and one from her to Jérôme Bignon (1589-1656). These letters are dated between 1588 and 1634. A letter that she sent to Anna Maria van Schurman and van Schurman's response are included in a volume dedicated to van Schurman's correspondence,¹¹⁰ dated between 1639 and 1640. We do not have a complete record of Gournay's correspondence. Secondly, her correspondents are named individuals so we have a clear idea of the exact people with whom she is corresponding. Unlike in the case of the des Roches, we are thus able to draw conclusions about her relationships with specific people from her correspondence.

The two quotations above highlight a further salient difference between the two sets of letters. The first, taken from Madeleine's dedicatory epistle addressed to her daughter which prefaces the whole volume of the *Missives*, demonstrates the role Catherine plays in

¹⁰⁹Gournay, *Œuvres complètes*, 1932-44

¹¹⁰ Anna Maria van Schurman, *Correspondence [Electronic Resource]*, ed. by Constant Venesoen (Paris: Classiques Garnier Numérique, 2006), 156-61

helping her mother to overcome the taboo pertaining to women speaking in public. It is clear that Madeleine wants to write but that she relies on the presence of her daughter to help her legitimize this. The second quotation, which is to be found in the first letter of Catherine's section of the *Missives* and is addressed to Madeleine, reveals that she needs her mother to approve of her work whilst emphasizing that she is modest with regards to her own ability. I quote these here because they enable us to understand some of the differences between the *Missives* and Gournay's letters; the former is a collaborative, literary enterprise, curated by two united women who are able to support each other, whilst the latter is a selection of private letters which were not actively included in a volume by their owner. In order to compare their letters productively, this must be taken into account.

This section will take Gournay's brief correspondences with Lipsius and Anna Maria van Schurman as its case studies. It will examine whether the letter form allows Gournay to engage as fully as she would like in intellectual relationships, comparing the way in which she writes to a male recipient and a female recipient. Michèle Fogel explains that the relationships that Gournay established with learned men including Montaigne and Justus Lipsius as well as her service to the nobility enabled her to enter another realm in which she was free from the constraints placed upon her in her daily life: 'La voici projetée dans un autre univers: le temps, l'espace et les frontiers sont abolis, seule existe une communauté de penseurs.'¹¹¹ I do not entirely agree with this statement, for even in intellectual spaces, Gournay was still forced to justify her presence due to her sex and to defend the rights of women to write and be educated, which is borne out in her correspondence.

The question of how to write about the relationships expressed in these letters is a difficult issue that this thesis will begin to resolve. Her communication with both correspondents offers us insight into her relationship with Montaigne as her *père d'alliance*; As Richard L. Regosin points out, such behaviour was very common in the Renaissance as a way of overcoming the belief that women could not be perfect friends in the Aristotelian sense:

Marie de Gournay is a daughter who is not even a daughter, a daughter whose honorific status as 'daughter' is as much a Renaissance commonplace as it is a sacred

¹¹¹ Michèle Fogel, *Marie de Gournay* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), 10

covenant; she is a woman friend who cannot be a friend, a woman who aspires to a friendship that Montaigne himself admits cannot admit of women.¹¹²

Even though Regosin does not conceptualise the term *fille d'alliance* in his work, the fact that Montaigne and Gournay use this term as well as the term *père d'alliance* themselves means that it is accurate to refer to them in this way. Indeed, Regosin states: ‘These honorific titles maybe Renaissance commonplaces, but they acquire uncommon significance in this case where Marie de Gournay derives her identity, her being, her self from them’¹¹³, which suggests that in the case of Gournay, the term acquires a kind of specificity as a result of how she uses it and because it comes to play an integral part in the depiction of her relationship with Montaigne. This is naturally of interest to this study which aims to begin to define this term more clearly and to question its usefulness.

Whether we can talk about Gournay’s *famille d'alliance*, which has a wider membership than just the two of them, is a different matter. Gournay does not refer to Lipsius as her *frère d'alliance* nor to van Schurman as her *fille d'alliance*. Carol Pal’s work about Gournay’s *famille d'alliance* uses such terminology to describe these relationships. She explains the progression from correspondence to becoming a member of the *famille d'alliance*. Her section which deals with Gournay and van Schurman’s relationship is entitled ‘Marie de Gournay, ‘mère d’alliance’. She first explains that Lipsius invites Gournay to see him as a brother in response to her father, Montaigne’s, death in a letter dated 24th May 1593¹¹⁴ before talking about her role as van Schurman’s mentor. However, she does not reveal until the end that she draws the conclusion that Gournay performed the role of *mère d'alliance* in van Schurman’s life from a letter sent by van Schurman to another of her mentors, André Rivet, in which she requests his permission to accept Gournay as an intellectual mother.¹¹⁵ There are no extant letters between the two women that include the use of the term *mère* or the title of *mère d'alliance*, yet this evidence suggests that we are indeed able to look at their earlier correspondence to which we do have access with the knowledge that it documents the early stages of the formation of this relationship. Indeed, as Pal argues elsewhere, the collaborative strategies in the correspondence are the foundations for the

¹¹² Regosin, *Montaigne’s unruly brood*, 60-61

¹¹³ ibid, 62

¹¹⁴ Carol Pal, *Republic of Women: Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 91

¹¹⁵ ibid, 97

*famille d'alliance*¹¹⁶ and there is a clear link between one of the earliest uses of the qualifier *d'alliance* by Gournay and Montaigne and these later developments in Gournay's intellectual family.¹¹⁷ Perhaps, then, it was not necessary for such bonds to be labelled *d'alliance* and the case of Gournay and Montaigne is an anomaly rather than a rule? Searching for this kind of terminology could lead to missing out important relationships which do create intellectual kinship, even if they are not directly labelled as such.

Building a family: Gournay's use of familial terms

In terms of developing her intellectual kinship, the function of Gournay's correspondence with Justus Lipsius is twofold. It provides her with the opportunity to cement these relationships both by writing about them and by writing to the other participants. Lipsius (1547-1606) was a Dutch humanist best known for his work on Stoicism, in which he aimed to make the ancient concept work with Christianity, and a great admirer of Montaigne. He became aware of Gournay's existence when she wrote to him expressing her enthusiasm for the *Essais* and for learning, a letter which is not available to us today. Lipsius's response to this letter is, however, extant and is the first letter in their correspondence. This section considers the role played by vocabulary drawn from the semantic field of family in Gournay and Lipsius's letters and how, like the relationships depicted in the correspondence of the des Roches, they are peppered with references to antiquity.¹¹⁸ Their correspondence contains several references to her relationship with Montaigne as her father. In the first extant letter addressed by Lipsius, which is dated 25th April 1593, uses Montaigne as a rhetorical device in order to explain her current state:

Monsieur, je viens d'estre avisée toute à ceste heure que nous n'estions qu'à deux journées l'un de l'autre, au lieu que je vous estimois esloigné de plus de cent lieues. J'en ay remercié la fortune, et si ay pensé qu'elle balançoit encore à donner

¹¹⁶ Carol Pal, 'Forming *familles d'alliance*: Intellectual Kinship in the Republic of Letters' in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters*, ed. by Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 251

¹¹⁷ ibid, 254

¹¹⁸ See Warren Boucher, *The School of Montaigne in Early Modern Europe: The Patron Author* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 219-223 for a brief account of Montaigne, Lipsius, and Gournay's correspondence in terms of the history of the *Essais* and Jeanine G. De Landtscheer, 'Michel de Montaigne, Marie de Gournay and Justus Lipsius. Some overlooked particulars preserved at Leiden University Library' in eds. Paulus Johannes Smith and Karl A. E. Enckel, *Montaigne and the Low Countries (1580-1700)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 63-77 for a fuller accounts of the particulars of the circumstances of Gournay, Montaigne, and Lipsius's correspondence

absolument à donner la balotte noire contre moy, puisqu'elle me maintenoit en si bon et si heureux voisinage: jaçoit que j'eusse ci devant cru qu'elle l'eust desjà donnée du tout par deux ou trois articles de ses defaveurs. Vous inferez combien les trois ensemble peuvent peser, puisque l'absence de mon pere n'est compté que pour un (OC, 1933).

Gournay explains how she is feeling in the most general of terms and emphasizes the extent of these feelings by evoking one that Lipsius is able to understand: her longing to be with Montaigne. This characterizes the description without requiring her to provide personal or specific detail, demonstrating its use as a rhetorical device. Speaking of Montaigne allows her to impress Lipsius by associating herself closely and in a close, familiar way with someone whom he holds in high regard. Later in the letter, Gournay refers to Montaigne and her grief at being apart from him once again with a similar aim. She cites her desperate unhappiness as a result of his death as a reason for her lack of progress:

Certes le desesperé malheur de ces temps s'oppose trop à la progression de mon ame novice s'oppinastrant à la priver de la très heureuse et salutaire presence de mon père, dont je ne fus jamais en possession que deux ou trois mois seulement. Miserable orphelinage ! (OC, 1934)

Gournay's comment about the state of her intellectual development is buttressed by her acknowledgement of the effect that Montaigne's death has had on her. She contrasts her own lack of experience, expressed by the metonymic reference to 'mon ame novice', with Montaigne's place in her life, 'la très heureuse et salutaire presence de mon père', demonstrating his place as her intellectual mentor. A further contrast is introduced by the idea of Gournay being able to count Montaigne's presence amongst her possessions, which suggests that she is attempting to insist that they are in fact equal; whilst Montaigne has a powerful effect on her, she is able to possess him and thus have some control over the situation when they are together. The combination of her referring to Montaigne simply as 'mon père' with the exclamative 'Miserable orphelinage!' to summarise her current state refrains from mentioning that Montaigne is not her biological father and that she was already lacking a living father when their relationship began. For intellectual purposes, Gournay is able to refer to Montaigne simply as her father, with the fact that he is not her real father being implicit to her recipient. The importance of this relationship in Gournay's life is clear,

for even after Montaigne's death, he still has a great influence on her emotional state; this is compounded by the use of 'orphelinage'.

Gournay's next letter to Lipsius, dated 2nd May 1596, was written after she had learned of Montaigne's death and differs in tone from the previous letter. The opening of the letter is characteristic of the content that follows and provides considerable insight into how Gournay views her relationship with Montaigne following his death:

Monsieur, comme les autres mesconnoisent à ceste heure mon visage, je crains que vous mesconnoisiez mon style, tant ce malheur de la perte de mon père m'a transformée entierement ! J'estoys sa fille, je suis son sepulcre, j'estoys son second estre, je suis ses cendres. (*OC*, 1937)

Gournay first emphasizes the power of the letter and that she knows Lipsius solely through this medium, drawing a parallel between the way in which her facial expression communicates her sadness and the way in which it is reflected in her writing style. Her letters are therefore able to control the way in which he perceives her and her life and consequently how their relationship develops. Gournay emphasizes the extent to which losing Montaigne has affected her, which is resonant of Montaigne's own lamentations in 'De l'amitié'. Take, for example, the following passage in which he emphasizes the uniqueness of the kind of perfect friendship he enjoyed with La Boëtie and the impossibility of reproducing such a relationship:

Car cette parfaite amitié, dequoy je parle, est indivisible: chacun se donne si entier à son amy, qu'il ne luy reste rien à departir ailleurs [...] Les amitiez communes on les peut départir, on peut aymer en cestuy-cy la la beauté, en cet autre la facilité de ses mœurs, en l'autre la liberalité, en celuy-là la paternité, en cet autre la fraternité, ainsi du reste: mais cette amitié, qui possede l'ame, et la regente en toute souveraineté, il est impossible qu'elle soit double.¹¹⁹

The following sentence, 'J'estoys sa fille, je suis son sepulchre, j'estoys son second estre, je suis ses cendres', reinforces this state with the tense sequence emphasizing the total change. Gournay explains that she has gone from being his daughter to his sepulchre, which suggests

¹¹⁹ Montaigne, *Essais*, 198

that she believes that she is now the vessel in which Montaigne lives on. The use of this vocabulary is extraordinary, which reinforces the unusualness of Gournay's presentation of her relationship with Montaigne, drawing our attention to the fact that she is continuing her relationship with him even after his death.

It is clear that Gournay values this kind of relationship highly; this is revealed not only by her commitment to her role as editor of the *Essais* but also by the note at the end of her own works, in which she forbids anyone from becoming her sepulchre after her death:

Si ce livre me survit, je deffends à toute personne, telle qu'elle soit, d'y adjouster, diminuer, ny changer jamais aucune chose, soit aux mots ou en la substance, soubs peine à ceux qui l'entreprendroient d'estre tenus aux yeux des gens d'honneur, pour violateurs d'un sepulchre innocent. Et je suprime mesmes tout ce que je puis avoir escrit hors ce Livre, reservé la Preface des Essais en l'estat que je la fis r'imprimer l'an mil six cens trente cinq. (OC, 1864)

Gournay's forceful request, which covers not only her own work but also her preface to the 1635 edition of the *Essais*, highlights the responsibility involved in altering somebody else's texts for posthumous publication. This reinforces the fact that even though Montaigne is now dead, their relationship is still significant and continues, for Gournay is in a position of great trust. Evoking the idea of being his 'second estre' is linked to the idea of Plato's other half, with which Montaigne famously engages in 'De l'amitié': 'Si on me presse de dire pourquoy je l'aymoys, je sens que cela ne se peut exprimer qu'en respondant: Par ce que c'estoit luy, par ce que c'estoit moy'.¹²⁰ In order to represent the perfect friendship he enjoyed with La Boëtie, Montaigne states that their perfect friendship only functioned because of who he and La Boëtie were, using the masculine pronoun 'luy' to refer to him. Gournay's words here differ in that she describes herself as his 'second estre'; she does not try to reproduce Montaigne's rhetoric exactly. If we return to Montaigne's comment about children being other selves and the way in which his use of terminology suggests the possibility of having multiple other selves, it can be argued that Gournay is in fact creating a hierarchy of other selves by characterising herself as the 'second estre':

¹²⁰ Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais*, ed. by Jean Balsamo, Michel Magnien and Catherine Magnien Simonin (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2007), 195

Or à considerer cette simple occasion d'aymer noz enfants, pour les avoir engendrez, pour laquelle nous les appellons autres nous mesmes: il semble qu'il y ait bien une autre production venant de nous, qui ne soit pas de moindre recommendation.¹²¹

Montaigne believes that children are another self, for in them we reproduce not only our physical features but also those of our mind, which has the potential to render one's offspring virtuous. His use of the plural 'autres nous mesmes' implies that all children are equally other selves, yet Gournay's insistence that she is his 'second estre' can be read as her trying to assert herself as more than just one of his children. Doing so in a letter to another scholar is a public challenge to Montaigne's authority and also an attempt to enhance her own reputation via association.

The fact that they are inseparable is reinforced by the idea of Gournay being his ashes, another image that does not appear in 'De l'amitié' yet nonetheless contributes to the fact that their relationship is continuing even after Montaigne's death. She clearly believes that Montaigne has been left behind in her, which is resonant of Aristotle's idea of two souls being in one body. Montaigne's dismissal of women as being incapable of true friendship reveals an opposing point of view: 'mais ce sexe par nul exemple n'y est encore peu arriver, et par les escholes anciennes en est rejetté'.¹²² Based on this evidence, Montaigne clearly agrees with the ancient philosophers and does not believe that women are capable of true friendship,¹²³ which explains Gournay's adaptation of the rhetoric of 'De l'amitié' in order to differentiate it enough so that she can justify writing about herself as Montaigne's true friend. Gournay's assertions are therefore bound by the fact that they must be grounded in her adaptation of masculine models and their application to her model of intellectual kinship in order to suit her own purposes.

Further evidence of this can be found when, for instance, Gournay engages directly with the idea of friendship:

outre cet inconvenient, je ne dis point à un Lipsius ni au protecteur des *Essais*
combien il est grief d'estre privée depuis tantost cinq ans d'un tel ami, et encore pour

¹²¹ ibid, 421

¹²² ibid, 193

¹²³ See later in this chapter for a discussion of the passage at the end of 'De la presumption', in which Montaigne takes exception to this rule when talking about his relationship with Gournay. There is no consensus as to whether Montaigne or Gournay wrote this passage therefore it is impossible to know whether Montaigne did modify his view of women over his lifetime.

une ame si tendre et si pathetique que la mienne ! [...] Enfin celuy qui peut porter en patience l'absence d'un parfait amy, je trouve qu'il est ou une beste ou un dieu. (*OC*, 1934)

Here, Gournay alludes to the Platonic and Aristotelian ideas of friendship once again, applying a general comment about the nature of perfect friendship to her current friendship with Montaigne. She begins by placing herself in the same category as Lipsius and as someone who has committed her life to defending the *Essais* in order to legitimize her place in the situation she is describing; only Lipsius and others who have read the *Essais* are able to understand her feelings. It is clear that she is writing about Montaigne from the reference to five years, for their last meeting had taken place in 1588. This is then tied into her general comments about the friendship tradition. Stating that only animals and gods are able to tolerate the loss of a perfect friend challenges the classical tradition, which puts women on the same level as beasts: Gournay states that she considers women to be capable of perfect friendship and therefore of feeling the same sense of loss as a man would in such a situation. This is surrounded by references to Montaigne as her father, which supports the case she is making.

The fact that the *famille d'alliance* functioned and was constructed and controlled within specific intellectual spaces is exemplified by this correspondence. This is evident when Gournay expands her explanation of the grief she feels towards Montaigne by providing an account of her journey to his tower, which includes references to his widow and daughter:

Je n'ay pu me garder de faire un long voyage pour voir le desolé tombeau de mon très bon père, et puis pour cette heure entre les bras de sa femme et d'une fille que ses mœurs ne rendent point indigne de luy, ny son esprit aussy qui eust pris la peine de l'instruire. Ces dames et toute la maison de Montaigne me cherissent à merveille.
(*OC*, 1938)

This extract reveals that whilst Gournay has written Montaigne into her family, ‘mon très bon père’, she retains a clear distance from his wife, ‘sa femme’, and his daughter, referring to her as merely ‘une fille’. Gournay does not mention their names, they are simply ‘Ces dames’ in conjunction with ‘toute la maison de Montaigne’. Gournay formally acknowledges the family status of Montaigne’s biological family members, emphasizing that she views them in a

positive light, although their presence is incidental and to Gournay, they are defined solely in relation to Montaigne. Whilst Gournay was able to adopt Montaigne as her father, his wife and biological daughter had no say in this matter and did not need to be consulted because they were not playing an active role in the public world of intellectual exchange; they do not automatically become her mother and sister.

Gournay's correspondence with Lipsius takes on a new purpose when it becomes the space in which the pair form their relationship. Lipsius offers to be Gournay's brother, her *frère d'alliance*, after Montaigne's death: 'et quoniam pater tuus ille obit, cense me fratrem' (*OC*, 1937). We must note, however, that Lipsius's letter as well as Gournay's responses do not contain the precise term *frère d'alliance* nor a Latin equivalent; the offer was simply to be her brother. Gournay adopts the same lexical field as Lipsius in order to cement their relationship as brother and sister, although as Fogel points out, Gournay never publicly claimed the title of Lipsius's sister,¹²⁴ which suggests that their relationship remained only useful within the confines of the exchanges seen in their correspondence and that a *frère d'alliance* was not as valuable as a *père d'alliance* both in terms of Gournay's own, specific situation and of intellectual currency in general. She switches his use of the noun brother, 'frater', to the adverb 'fraternellement' to convey the affection she feels towards him:

Vous que vostre precellence oblige, ce me semble, à me cherir fraternellement,
comme fraternellement je vous cheris, souffrez que je vous fasse pitié de mon desastre
et pitié de ce qu'alors qu'il m'accabla, la fortune s'opinastra pour me refuser vostre
assistance et consolation, s'opposant à l'effort que certes je fis de m'acheminer vers
vous exprès, afin de le aller chercher. (*OC*, 1937-38)

The equilibrium created by the chiasmus of the second and third clause and the repetition of 'fraternellement' demonstrates that their relationship is reciprocal and equal. Significantly, Gournay repeats the same adverb as she applies to Lipsius in spite of its masculine connotations. She therefore further forges her place in a world traditionally reserved for men; a female equivalent to 'fraternellement' does not exist, therefore she must adopt this very term herself. This is reinforced further by Gournay's use of metonymy: referring to Lipsius's excellence ('vostre precellence') as the reason for which he is obliged to feel this way about her, which relates to the idea of perfect love and virtue, allows her to write herself further into

¹²⁴ Fogel, *Marie de Gournay*, 134

the friendship tradition. A clear parallel can be drawn between this passage and that which occurs towards the end of ‘De la presumption’, in which Montaigne may have included a passage in praise of Gournay. I write ‘may’ because there is no critical consensus as to whether Montaigne or Gournay is the author of this passage.¹²⁵ Regardless of whether Gournay is the author, she was undeniably aware of the passage’s existence, therefore it is of interest to us here when evaluating her writing to Lipsius:

J’ay pris plaisir à publier en plusieurs lieux, l’esperance que j’ay de Marie de Gournay le Jars ma fille d’alliance: et certes aymée de moy beaucoup plus que paternellement et enveloppée en ma retraitte et solitude, comme l’une des meilleures parties de mon propre estre. Je ne regarde plus qu’elle au monde. Si l’adolescence peut donner presage, cette ame sera quelque jour capable des plus belles choses, et entre autres de la perfection de cette tressaincte amitié, où nous ne lisons point que soin sexe ait peu monter encores: la sincerité et la solitude de ses mœurs, y sont desjà bastantes, son affection vers moy plus que sur-abondante: et telle en somme qu’il n’y a rien à souhaiter, sinon que l’apprehension qu’elle a de ma fin, par les cinquante et cinq ans ausquels elle m’a rencontré, la travaillast moins cruellement. Le jugement qu’elle fit des premiers Essays, et femme, et en ce siecle, et si jeune, et seule en son quartier, et la vehemence fameuse dont elle m’ayma et me desira long temps sur la seule estime qu’elle en print de moy, avant m’avoir veu, c’est un accident de très-digne consideration.¹²⁶

There are several similarities between this passage and that which features in Gournay’s letter to Lipsius. Gournay is defined clearly by her familial relationship to an older, male intellectual figure and both passages suggest that Gournay is able to offer the men more than one would have expected women to be able to offer men intellectually during the early modern period. A key difference lies in the fact that in the first passage, Gournay appears to be persuading Lipsius that he feels the same way that she does, whereas in the second, the

¹²⁵ See Floyd Gray, *Gender, Rhetoric and Print Culture in French Renaissance Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 122-127. Gray synthesizes the debate around the authorship of this passage, explaining that we will probably never know who wrote this passage due to the fact that the style and syntax resembles that of Montaigne but that its authenticity has been challenged for a number of reasons. He states that the authorship of the passage is not the most important factor; what is truly of interest is that it records Gournay’s title as *fille d’alliance* and clearly situates her in relation to Montaigne.

¹²⁶ Montaigne, *Essais*, 701

writer presents the relationship as a certain entity predicated on concrete evidence of Gournay being able to appreciate the *Essais* and be capable of great intellectual achievements in spite of her sex. Gournay's worth must be justified in the same way to allow her to participate in these relationships; these two passages highlight that her relationship with Lipsius is a living relationship that she is still in the process of forming, whereas the relationship with Montaigne is solidified and a historical relic now that he has died and they can no longer develop their friendship as two living beings. Correspondence therefore permits Gournay to fashion new relationships with her recipients as well as offering her the chance to build on the literary representation of her bonds with people who are already dead.

Books as children and books as bonds

Like the des Roches, the act of collaborative publishing and exchanging books plays a key role in Gournay's intellectual kinship. Gournay's role as the editor of the *Essais*, an act of friendship in itself, is already well-documented and debated; here I will analyse the presence of books, writing, and intellectual collaboration in her correspondence with Lipsius and how this contributes to their relationship. In her first letter, Gournay interrupts her carefully constructed display of feelings in order to focus on matters directly related to intellectual exchange. She dismisses her feelings as simply boring before turning to more pressing matters, that is to say Lipsius's opinion about the final *Essais*:

Pardonnez-moy donc ces ennuyeux discours; je les dois laisser pour vous prier de me dire ce que vous avez jugé des derniers *Essais* [...] Ce livre n'est pas l'entretien des apprentis: il s'appelle la leçon des maîtres. 7(OC, 1934-35)

Gournay is able to ask him for his opinion, demonstrating that corresponding with Lipsius offers her the opportunity to take part in an intellectual exchange with him in spite of the fact that he is older, male, and has a much greater formal education. She attempts to shape the way that he perceives the *Essais*, juxtaposing her description of what the book is and what it is not alongside a series of superlatives in order to reinforce her point. This forceful description highlights that she is not only engaging intellectually with Lipsius but also acting on behalf of her *père d'alliance*; by describing Montaigne's text in such favourable terms, she hopes to secure even more success for it. Here, her gender appears to be irrelevant: she is able to praise the book to Lipsius without having to justify her right to do so. Indeed, there is

further evidence of Gournay developing this intellectual relationship at the end of the letter where she states that she is sending him some poetry in the hope of garnering feedback. In the same way as she treats Montaigne's work, she tries to influence Lipsius's opinion of the text: 'Vous y verrez des inventions toutes miennes, car je n'aime guere l'emprunt' (*OC*, 1936). Gournay is characterizing her own style and explicitly stating that she is moving away from the dominant intellectual current of *imitation*, demonstrating that she is aware of her ability to shape others' views of her work through her correspondence. Whilst she is also able to do this through her numerous prefaces, the correspondence differs in that she is addressing it to one specific person and it was not intended to be read by a wider audience; it is therefore a much more personal, specific exchange. Her depiction of her own work is, like that of the *Essais* as discussed previously, not characterized by modesty in the way that the des Roches speak of their writing, demonstrating that Gournay does not feel bound by the need to appear modest in intellectual spaces in the way that her female contemporaries might.

Gournay's second letter to Lipsius follows a similar pattern in that the final part turns to a practical discussion about publication, which shows that advice is a large part of the basis of their relationship. Gournay asks Lipsius to ensure that a preface that she regrets writing is not included with the new edition of the *Essais* should they be published in the Netherlands and informs him that she mentions him 'en un autre petit livret que j'ay fait imprimer depuis un an à l'honneur du trespassé: si ce n'est si dignement que vous meritez, c'est mon malheur plus que ma faute' (*OC*, 1938-39). The editors of the *Œuvres complètes* suggest that the 'petit livret' refers to either Gournay's mention of Lipsius in her preface to the *Essais*,¹²⁷ in *Proumenoir*, or in *Bouquet de Pinde*,¹²⁸ demonstrating that Gournay considers herself capable of providing him with a service; Gournay believes that mentioning him in her work is an honour that will benefit him and his career. It is clear that she sees herself on the same level as Lipsius intellectually and believes that she is able to engage with him in a way that reflects this. Additionally, she informs him that she will be sending him the second edition of the *Proumenoir* with letters added by her father due to the inferior quality of the first edition; she is using him as an intellectual resource by asking him to help her shape future editions of the *Essais* and her own work. This exchange is, however, mutual, for she is sure to inform him that she has mentioned him in her own work, which could help him to improve his reputation.

¹²⁷ See Montaigne, *Essais*, 5. Gournay praises Lipsius in the following way, incorporating him into the textual fabric of the preface. His reputation means that referring to him in the *Essais* is just as beneficial for the text as it is for him: 'C'est parler cela Lipsius, et les *Essais* estouent esgallement capables, que d'impartir, qui de meriter l'extreme honneur. C'est de telles ames qu'il faut souhaitter la ressemblance, et la bonne opinion.'

¹²⁸ Gournay, *Œuvres complètes*, 1938

Gournay treats Lipsius as both a friend with whom she wants to share Montaigne's work and a useful contact who is able to help her transmit the *Essais* to a wider audience. In her letter dated 15th November 1596, she states that she is sending him three exemplars of the *Essais*, one for his own use and two which are to be sent to Basel and Strasbourg. She is therefore transferring some of the responsibility she feels towards the book to Lipsius, demonstrating her trust in him. In her instructions, she personifies the idea of protecting the *Essais*:

Aimez ce livre comme il vous aime, et me faites esperer que, si je meurs, sa protection soit ressuscitée en vous, que son merite doit rendre jaloux de tomber en d'autres mains. (*OC*, 1940)

This quotation functions on two levels: Gournay invites Lipsius directly to reciprocate the love the book feels for him, which suggests that she views her relationship with Montaigne as continuing after his death via the *Essais* and her exchanges with Lipsius himself.

Additionally, she instructs Lipsius to ensure that the book lives on in him after her death and to protect the book from others who may be jealous of it. She gives protection a life of its own through the use of the verb 'ressusciter', which strengthens the suggestion that the *Essais* are a living text and that she has authority over them. The idea of possessing the protection is reinforced further by the mention of being jealous, demonstrating that for Gournay, the act of taking care of the book, which could be a purely intellectual act, is also an act of love and friendship in return for the emotions that the book itself feels towards its guardian. This is not the only time that Gournay refers to the *Essais* as though they were human: 'In her description of the 1635 edition of the *Essais* to Cardinal Richelieu, Gournay evokes similar language in referring to the *Essais* as an orphan as she asks that he look after the book since she no longer can.'¹²⁹ This is also resonant of Catherine's letter to Angelier in which she asks him to become godfather of the book, replacing her mother as its proprietor; it is clear that paternal and maternal, or indeed familial, authority is a common motif when talking about the ownership of and responsibility towards books, suggesting that intellectual kinship functions not only between people but also between people and objects. As we have seen, objects, namely books and letters, can represent and even constitute relationships between people,

¹²⁹ Marc D. Schachter, *Voluntary Servitude and the Erotics of Friendship* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 137

demonstrating that the book is viewed as having agency in the construction of textual relationships.

This idea is echoed by the way in which Gournay signs the letter:

‘S’il vous plaist de m’escrire, ce sera par la voie d’Anvers, ou par Lyon, adressant vos lettres au Sieur Vaire, banquier en cette ville-là pour estre données au Sieur du Tausin, banquier à Bordeaux, qui les recvra commodement aussi venant par Anvers. Il me les fera tenir à Montaigne, où je suis venue voir, comme je vous ay mandé, les cendres, la femme et la fille de ce père qui revivroit en moy si je n’estois mort en luy’ (OC, 1940).

This evocation of the idea of her father being alive again as though he had died in her relates again to the platonic idea of the other half and Gournay’s act of seeing herself as equal in her friendship with Montaigne, highlighting her desire to be seen as his equal and to function fully in the intellectual world. Once again, Gournay refers to Montaigne’s wife and daughter as ‘femme’ and ‘fille’ whilst referring to him as ‘pere’, reiterating the separation between his life with his biological family and her relationship with him as well as her belief that her perfect friendship with him, the highest form of friendship, is enough to supersede his biological ties. Gournay’s correspondence with Lipsius therefore allows her to not only develop her relationship with him but also to enhance the literary representation of her friendship with Montaigne even after his death, which is a technique employed by Montaigne himself in order to record his feelings for La Boëtie in ‘De l’amitié’. In contrast to Montaigne who uses the discourse form, Gournay uses the letter form to engage with the classical tradition as well as with Montaigne’s own ideas in order to strengthen her representation of their ties. Whilst she is clearly able to write about these relationships with men, Gournay must employ a number of tactics, most notably that of the *famille d’alliance*, in order to legitimize her exchanges with these men. These letters serve as a reminder that she constantly needed to justify her presence both as a scholar and as a woman in order to progress in her relationships and, more broadly, in her career.

A third generation? Gournay and van Schurman’s letter exchange

The limited extant evidence of Gournay’s correspondence with van Schurman reveals that writing letters provided them with a space in which they were able to function as learned

women without being interrupted directly by male voices. Van Schuman (1607-78) was a German-born Dutch scholar, who enjoyed considerably greater opportunities for formal education than Gournay. She briefly attended a French school after her family moved to Utrecht, but was subsequently tutored at home, where she was included in her older brothers' lessons and gained an advanced knowledge of Latin and Greek. We do not know much about her father's, Frederik van Schurman's, professional life, it was the fact that he was made a member of the nobility in the Netherlands that lead the family to move there.¹³⁰ Her father's position therefore granted her access to the literary and scholarly world. She notably became the first ever woman to attend a Dutch university, hidden from the male students by a wooden box, which was facilitated by the theologian Gisbertus Voetius.¹³¹ Van Schurman had knowledge of fourteen languages including Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French Dutch, Arabic, Ethiopian, and Syrian, and her published works focused on religion and women's education. Her desire for learning and to work as a writer resembled those of Gournay, but the educational opportunities she enjoyed were far superior. Reading their letters reveals that whilst they are able to openly display their erudition and engage in networking and mentorship via correspondence, these freedoms are still limited by a set of codes imposed on them as a result of their gender. There is no evidence in their available letters that they did refer to each other as mother and daughter, but there is clear proof that their bond was predicated on mentorship and exchange. In this section, I will argue that whilst their relationship could easily be and has indeed been interpreted as a bond between a *mère* and a *fille d'alliance*, there are actually many factors in play relating to their differences in class, education, and social situation which shape their relationship and render it far more complex than a simple mother-daughter bond, with Gournay being the more influential part of the pair due to her superior age.

Reading Gournay's letter to van Schurman dated 20th October 1639 and van Schurman's response dated 26th January 1640¹³² reveals that their relationship is built on the usual topoi of modesty, honour, and hierarchy and presented within a rhetorical framework that displays many of the features we have already encountered. The opening of Gournay's

¹³⁰ Anna Maria van Schurman, *Whether a Christian woman should be educated and other writings from her intellectual circle*, ed. and trans. by Joyce L. Irwin (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 4

¹³¹ ibid, 5

¹³² See: van Schurman, *Correspondence*, 158. The editorial note states that the original date on the letter, 26th January 1647, is presumably false and corrects the date to 26th January 1640 because the letter is clearly a reply to Gournay's letter dated 20th October 1639. In view of the fact that Gournay died in 1645, it is unlikely that the reply letter was dated 1947.

letter betrays a clear consciousness of her active role in structuring the letter and her insistence on her modesty:

Je ferois injustice au legitime desseign de ma lettre, si j'y mestois d'autres manieres avec mon tres-humble remerciement, que vos genereuses faveurs ont si dignement merité ; sans cela quel champ ne me seroit ouvert à vos louanges ! (AS, 157)

Opening the letter by engaging with the ‘legitime desseign’ suggests that she has a clear plan of how the letter will be structured and that she is aware that she must comply with certain rules. The fact that she must abide by a certain social code whilst writing to van Schurman is clear: she focuses solely on thanking her correspondent humbly, emphasizing van Schurman’s positive qualities and assuring her that she deserves this praise. This is part of a reciprocal transmission of positive comments; there is a clear causal link between Gournay thanking van Schurman and any hypothetical praise that Gournay may receive from her in response to this in the future. The details of van Schurman’s favours and the reason that she deserves praise are not revealed. Instead, we focus on the general description of their exchange; the purpose of the letter is for Gournay to fix her positive relationship with van Schurman. Van Schurman’s reply opens in a similar way, emphasizing that their letters are not a place for intimate, personal exchanges but a rhetorical exercise in which the use of certain conventions enable writers to establish their place in relation to others. She presents herself as modest whilst complimenting Gournay on her intellectual achievements:

Si j'ay tesmoigné le ressentiment que j'ay des avantages, que vos heroiques vertus ont procuré à nostre sexe, ce n'a esté que pour me decharger d'un devoir que la justice m'avoit rendu necessaire. Or la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'escrire, nous monstre assez, que vostre civilité ne se mesure point à ses objets ; et qu'elle ne reçoit pas des bornes d'ailleurs que d'elle mesme. (AS, 160)

Van Schurman is aware of the societal limitations placed on her due to her sex and compliments Gournay on her role in beginning to overcome these. Her use of the phrase ‘vos heroiques vertus’ is particularly interesting because it allows her to appropriate the idea of what was traditionally considered virtuous for a woman to apply to Gournay’s writings about gender and equality, which call this status quo into question. Both sentences are structured in such a way that she is able to praise Gournay whilst highlighting her own humility, increasing

the impact of her compliments due to the imbalance between the participants in the statements she is making. Her comment about Gournay's letter reveals that she too is conscious of the function of correspondence. She emphasizes that she, 'me', was greatly honoured to receive a letter from Gournay, 'vous', demonstrating that Gournay instigated the exchange and the beginning of their friendship. The role of the letter as a written record of their friendship is reflected upon further through the comment 'nous monstre assez'; the letter establishes a community between the two women but could also potentially be read as a documentation of their friendship by a wider audience, demonstrating that the letter cements their friendship as both a relationship and a written entity.

In the same way as she develops her epistolary relationship with Lipsius, Gournay's and van Schurman's friendship is shaped by the exchange of intellectual services, with books and writing playing a key role. Van Schurman praises Gournay's ability as a writer which is followed by comments pertaining to being praised by Gournay. This is again characteristically framed by van Schurman's display of modesty:

Certes je voudrois estre aussi digne de cette felicite, que vous estes prompte et liberale à me la promettre ; et que vous puissiez trouver de la consonance et symmetrie entre le haut charactere de vostre style, et entre la bassesse de la matiere. Mais, quoy qu'il en arrive, je m'imagine par une douce reverie, que les marques de vostre affection qui s'y liront sans doute, ne me seront pas moins glorieuses que l'honneur d'une loüange que j'aurois meritée. (AS, 160)

Their relationship is built on mutual support: van Schurman's juxtaposition of Gournay's high style and lowly subject matter is a powerful way of praising her mentor. This praise is in return for Gournay congratulating her; the use of the conditional in the opening clause highlights that van Schurman sees Gournay as a model who will help her to improve her own intellectual standing. The importance of Gournay's praise is emphasized and compared with praise that she has actually earnt, highlighting the power that Gournay's praise has over her and the constant need to assert her own modesty. This discussion of affection is tied to a discussion of their intellectual pursuits, demonstrating that their friendship is discussed in general terms as a result of the letter being essentially a public document.

This is corroborated further by Gournay's offer to van Schrman. She declares that she will include van Schurman's name in the next edition of her *Adviz*: 'Si je vis encore un couple d'années je vous enverray mes adviz de nouvelle impression, où vostre nom se lira,

demeurant cependant de tout mon cœur' (AS, 158). Dedicating a book to someone was a public way of acknowledging their importance and the existence of an intellectual friendship, which enables both the writer and the dedicatee to improve their reputation. Anne R. Larsen briefly mentions this offer in her discussion of Catherine des Roches's *Dialogue de Placide, et de Severe*, drawing a distinction between Catherine's decision to evoke a community of learned women and Gournay's choice to specify one individual female dedicatee¹³³. Indeed, Gournay's work does not feature a catalogue of learned women in the way that Catherine's does and Catherine does not construct her own *famille d'alliance*. This is a key difference between the two women and the communities with which they engage; both seek to promote other learned women, with Gournay achieving this by offering an individual dedication and Catherine constructing a literary community. This suggests that Gournay, who started her writing career as an individual and always wrote as a single author or as Montaigne's editor, had a greater need to invest in relationships with other individual scholars, whereas Catherine already had a small intimate familial community, her bond with her mother, and did not, therefore need to create an intellectual family. Symptomatic of the differences in their social and educational backgrounds, this explains the key differences in their correspondences.

Gournay's correspondence with van Schurman reinforces not only these differences but also the differences between her and van Schurman. Whilst Gournay, as van Schurman's mentor, provides advice about learning languages, this exchange can also be read as a comment on their educational and social differences:

Oseray je en passant vous dire Philosophiquement un mot de petit avis : Les langues emploient trop, et longtemps un esprit capable des choses, et des meilleures que le vostre, ni ne vous sert de dire, comme vous faictes, que vous voulez lire les Originaux par tout, pour ce que les versions ne les valent pas ; car tout ce que les lettres peuvent contenir vraiment, digne de l'employ d'une ame comme la vostre, se trouve dans le Latin, et au plus loing dans le Grec encore, à quoy vous pouvez adouster l'Italien, l'Espagnol et sur tout le François que les essais entre-autres ont rendu nécessaires à l'univers. (AS, 157-58)

The advice is still prefaced by Gournay's self-proclaimed modesty, 'Oseray-je en passant'. Even though on one level, she is relatively more powerful than van Schurman due to her

¹³³ Pal, 'Forming *familles d'alliance*', 233

superior age and greater life experience, convention still requires her to preface any advice with modesty due to her gender. Her advice is shaped by her own educational experiences and echoes her theory about language, which is borne out, for example, by her decision to write in the vernacular and her translation of the Latin and the small number of Greek quotations in Montaigne's *Essais* into French. Her intellectual kinship with Montaigne also plays a role, whereby she cites his work specifically, 'les essais entre-autres', in order to support the point she is making and to highlight that the *Essais* played a fundamental role in raising the French vernacular to the same level as Latin, Greek, and other classical languages. This does, however, reveal the limitations of her education in comparison to that of van Schurman and the presence of these limitations in her writing. Van Schurman engages closely with Gournay's argument in her reply, addressing each of the points she makes individually and conveying her own, divergent opinion whilst still showing that she is subservient to Gournay, her mentor:

Quant à ce que vous avez opinion, je m'amuse trop à l'estude des langues, je vous puis asseurer que je n'y contribue que les heures de mon loisir, et quelquefois après d'assez longs intervalles ; si seulement vous me permettez d'excepter la langue Saincte. Car outre qu'elle a pour sujet la parole de Dieu, qui doit estre le premier objet de nos pensées, et qu'il n'y a point de version qui nous exprime si bien la naïveté et l'emphase de ces S. Mystères, elle a des proprietez et des ornemens, qui ne peuvent estre égalez par toutes les élégances ni de la Grecque ni de la Latine. Ce que dit S. Hierome, Apprenons ces choses en terre, dont la science preserverera avecque nous jusques aux cieux, se peut fort bien appliquer à l'Hebreu, dont l'usage (selon le sentiment des plus sçavans) durera jusques dans l'autre vie. Or ce m'est une preuve infaillible de vos bonnes graces, que vous croyez que mon esprit soit né pour des meilleures choses : Pour moy, si je ne puis satisfaire aux grands projects que vous avez fait(s) de ma capacité, au moins, je tascheray de me conformer à vos bons avis (AS, 160)

Van Schurman justifies the hours spent on learning languages as a hobby. In the process of doing so, she is seen to be respecting Gournay's advice that learning languages other than Latin, Greek, and French is not particularly useful. She feels compelled to justify herself in learning other languages in order to not offend her mentor; this suggests that she is aware that her level of education is far superior to that of Gournay but that she knows that she must

present herself as modest and obedient in line with convention. Van Schurman does, however, defend her decision to focus on Hebrew. Devoutly Christian, she privileges this language, ‘la parole de Dieu’ above all others and justifies this by citing the opinion of the most knowledgeable people, ‘(selon le sentiment des plus savants)’, and calling specifically on the authority of Saint Jerome to support her point. She quotes his belief that God’s Word is what leads us to eternal life, as it is expressed in Epistles 53. 10, highlighting that Hebrew is the most important language. The argument she constructs is convincing, which demonstrates that she is using the letter as a rhetorical exercise, and that any relationship she has with Gournay is conducted within this strict framework out of necessity. The concluding sentence of the letter is a microcosmic representation of their exchange: van Schurman’s voice and role as speaker is clear and the actions of which she speaks are those which Gournay has told her to complete, yet the juxtaposition of her potential incapability to satisfy Gournay’s great aims for her and her promise to at least try to follow her advice demonstrate that van Schurman is obligated to present herself as following her advice yet she is nonetheless able to challenge this to a certain extent.

Coming to the end of my analysis of Gournay and van Schurman’s letters brings me back to the question of address. Both begin their letters ‘Mademoyselle’ and the bodies of the letters do not contain a single reference to being a mother or a daughter. Gournay signs her letter by referring to herself as ‘Vostre servante, tres-humble et tres-fidelle. Gournay’ (AS, 158), whereas van Schurman adds an extra element: ‘Vostre tres-humble, tres-obéissante et tres-fidele servante’ (AS, 161). Both women refer to themselves as ‘servante’, emphasizes that their friendship is based on exchange of services as opposed to on pleasure; it is very much a useful friendship in the Aristotelian sense.¹³⁴ Both emphasize their humility, which relates back to the modesty *topos*, and their loyalty. Van Schurman adds a third characteristic, obedience, emphasizing her subordinate role in relation to Gournay in this exchange. The use of these terms is a matter of convention, yet the frequency with which they are used can reveal further detail about the relationship in question. The fact that van Schurman also mentions her obedience suggests that she is bound to do so because she is currently taking advice from Gournay and sees her as a mentor, which must be expressed by differentiating herself slightly from the way in which Gournay addresses her. Importantly, we have seen that the evidence of their relationship as described by them does not include the vocabulary

¹³⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. by Roger Cripps (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Book VIII, [n.p.]

relating to the family nor explicit declarations of such bonds. This raises the question of whether or not it is appropriate for scholars to label such relationships retrospectively if the participants themselves did not use these terms.

We have seen that the des Roches and Gournay are working within a framework that forces them to justify their presence as women and to write in a way that respects social codes pertaining to gender and learning. Both sets of correspondence are pervaded by references to familial relationships. Whilst this reveals the similarities in the issues that the women faced and some of the steps they took to overcome them, my analysis also shows that the writers were working from very different starting points and that the way they conduct their relationships in correspondence reflects this. The des Roches's mother-daughter relationship, a relationship which is natural and biological yet never depicted in these terms in the correspondence, allows them to support their arguments, present a relationship that is on the same level as a true, virtuous friendship, and to legitimize their very presence in a male-dominated world. They are able to overcome the need for a male patron and to apply the knowledge they have acquired on their work. We see a similar pattern in Gournay's work, although its execution is very different due to the difference between her circumstances and those of the des Roches. Devoid of a biological parent whose interests align with hers, Gournay does not have an automatic, older figure with whom to write and collaborate. The des Roches do not need to and do not seek familial relationships in their correspondence whereas this is a clear aim of Gournay's letters. She employs similar literary techniques to the des Roches in order to promote her work, gain and offer mentorship, and correspond with other learned people, yet hers relies on her constructing a kind of *famille d'alliance* as opposed to merely communicating with others as part of a pre-existing family unit. This appears to be no more or less effective than a biological family; the salient differences lie in the way in which the women form their relationships, not in the possibilities offered by these relationships once they have been cemented.

Poetic voices: looking at kinship in the poetry of the des Roches and Gournay

Étant le temps venu, Mademoiselle, que les sévères lois des hommes n’empêchent plus les femmes de s’appliquer aux sciences et disciplines, il me semble que celles qui ont la commodité doivent employer cette honnête liberté, que notre sexe a autrefois tant désirée, à icelles apprendre, et montrer aux hommes le tort qu’ils nous faisaient en nous privant du bien et de l’honneur qui nous en pouvait venir¹³⁵

Et pource que les femmes ne se montrent volontiers en public seules, je vous ai choisie pour me servir de guide, vous dédiant ce petit œuvre, que ne vous envoie à autre fin que pour vous ascertener du bon vouloir, lequel de long temps je vous porte, et vous inciter et faire venir envie, en voyant ce mien œuvre rude et mal bâti, d’en mettre en lumière un autre qui soit mieux lime et de meilleure grâce.¹³⁶

I begin this section by citing excerpts from Louise Labé’s (1524-66) preface to her *Œuvres complètes*. Addressing Clémence de Bourges, a fellow learned female poet who frequented the Lyonnais poetic circle headed by Maurice Scève, Labé informs her that it is time for women to stop allowing men to deprive them of literature, learning, and intellectual achievements. She goes on to extend this plea to all women. I have chosen the second quotation because it shows Labé’s awareness of the difficulties faced by women; she acknowledges that lone women tend not to speak or present themselves or their work in public. She hopes that she will be able to serve as a guide for women and that one day they will be able to build on the work she has done, producing even better texts.

Labé’s views about women as expressed in this dedication have attracted much critical attention, with most scholars coming to a general consensus that Labé is arguing in favour of women’s education and challenging the inferior position in relation to men that they currently hold in society. The nuances of Labé’s argument are captured by individual critics. Karine Berriot points out that Labé’s challenge of gender roles overturns the status quo and is generally directed towards women who resemble Clémence because it is they who are able to

¹³⁵ Louise Labé, *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Françoise Charpentier (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 93

¹³⁶ ibid, 95

study and write by virtue of the social class to which they belong and the educational opportunities available to them:

Louise Labé bousculait donc le schéma des rôles établis, allant même jusqu'à le remettre franchement en question dans son *Épître dédicatoire*; ainsi, s'adressant à Clémence de Bourges et, à travers elle, à toutes les femmes qui ont la « commodité » d'étudier, et d'écrire¹³⁷

Debora Lesko Baker concurs with Berriot's view and asserts that 'this letter has increasingly come to be read as a central Renaissance manifesto asserting the intellectual equality of women and men.'¹³⁸ She then focuses on how Labé constructs her personal identity in the epistle, examining how the female identity that she constructs is able to transcend class. Today, then, Labé is well-known for the feminist thrust of her writing.

However, this is not the only reason for which Labé has found herself in the French literary canon whilst other female authors have continued to be excluded, although even Labé's status has been called into question in recent years.¹³⁹ The Lyonnais *cénacle* plays a notable role in French literary history, which is made all the more remarkable by the gender of two of its most prominent members, as Keith Cameron points out:

These three poets, Scève, Labé and du Guillet, played an important role in French literary history. To cite two women poets among a group of three poets worthy of note is something which is uncommon in any age. It is certainly a reflection of the originality and the novelty of the school of poetry which had grown up in the city.¹⁴⁰

Cameron then quotes Ian McFarlane in order to situate the Lyonnais poets in the history of French poetry:

¹³⁷ Karine Berriot, *Louise Labé: La Belle Rebelle et le François Nouveau: Essai Suivi des Œuvres Complètes* (Paris: Seuil, 1985), 90

¹³⁸ Deborah Lesko Baker, 'The Subject of Desire: Petrarchan Poetics and the Female Voice in Louise Labé' (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1996), 11

¹³⁹ See Mireille Huchon, *Louise Labé: Une Créature de Papier* (Geneva: Droz, 2006) Huchon makes a case which argues that Labe did not in fact exist and is the literary creation of male poets.

¹⁴⁰ Keith Cameron, *Louise Labé: Renaissance Poet and Feminist* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 13

The Lyon poets fill the gap between the death of Marot and the advent of the Pléiade; and by their choice of style and idiom, they accelerate a process that had been only timidly foreseen by the later representatives of the so-called Marotic School. The Lyon poets raise French love-poetry to heights it had not known for a very long time, and they also make an important contribution to the development of new poetic structures and of a new language.¹⁴¹

Du Guillet, Labé, and Scève therefore make an important contribution to the development of French love poetry and are remembered for this in literary history. Accounts of French poetry during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries focus on these key, canonical poets alongside Marot, Ronsard, du Bellay, and other members of the Pléiade, for it is they who were the key players in the development of the romantic lyric.

The poetry of the des Roches and Gournay, which does not fall into this category, does not feature,¹⁴² although their participation in the contemporaneous salon culture and their literary studies mean that they were certainly aware of current poetic developments. They did not primarily compose love poetry, instead writing what we would classify as occasional poetry:

Verse written for a particular occasion, perhaps to celebrate some incident or event. It may be light or serious. The elegy and the ode have been used to produce some memorable occasional verse.¹⁴³

Occasional poetry does not focus on the expression of feeling towards a beloved in the way that the romantic lyric does. Instead, it involves documentation of events or occurrences in poetic form. This is clearly why it has been far less widely studied than romantic poetry: when we read the poetry of Ronsard or Labé, we are able to easily relate to the idea of a beloved expressing impossible, unrequited love, for this is a feeling which is universal and

¹⁴¹ Ian McFarlane, *A Literary History of France, Renaissance France, 1470-1589* (London; Tonbridge: E. Benn, 1974), 155-6 in *ibid*, 13

¹⁴² See: James Helgeson, 'Sixteenth-century poetry' and Alain Génetiot, 'Seventeenth-century poetry' in ed. by William Burgwinkle, Nicholas Hammond and Emma Wilson, *The Cambridge History of French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 196-203 and 284-294 and Sarah Kay, Terence Cave and Malcom Bowie, *A Short History of French Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 123-33 and 139-43 These are general guides to poetry during these periods which mention neither the des Roches nor Gournay.

¹⁴³ J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, rev. by C. E. Preston (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 606

resembles what we expect of lyric poetry today. As Virginia Jackson points out, we think of all poetry as being lyric, even that which was published before the early nineteenth century when the genre was conceptualised, ignoring all the genres that came before: ‘When the stipulative functions of particular genres are collapsed into one big idea of poems as lyrics, then the only function poems can perform in our culture is to become individual or communal ideals.’¹⁴⁴ This explains why we grant far less attention to occasional poetry: it does not resemble the modern idea of lyric, characterised by the experiences of a personal, first-person speaker, therefore it initially appears far less interesting to modern readers. In this section, I will argue that whilst the des Roches and Gournay use occasional poetry to express their affection for their intellectual kin, this does not mean that these poems are devoid of interest to modern readers and we actually still learn a lot about their relationships from reading them, not least due to the fact that several of the conventions used by poets who wrote love poetry and built directly on the Petrarchist tradition are present and adapted in their work.

The des Roches do not mention their poetic influences or views on poetry and there is no critical literature on this subject. As Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore points out, Labé is absent from Catherine’s list of famous women in the *Dialogue de Placide, et de Severe*¹⁴⁵ and she suggests that Catherine indeed diverges from the female figure presented by Labé, that is to say someone who embraces love and desire:

Ce silence étonnant de la part des héritières directes de Louise est, peut-être bien, le plus éloquent des messages. La poétesse lyonnaise présenterait un contre-exemple de la figure féminine que’une Catherine Fradonnet ou une Gabrielle de Coignard veulent dessiner dans leurs œuvres.¹⁴⁶

Berriot-Salvadore later briefly questions whether the des Roches read Labé’s work, but does not elaborate on this in the form of a response.¹⁴⁷ It is therefore difficult to know whether or not the des Roches were familiar with Labé’s work or if they modelled themselves on her in any way. Gournay’s role in the history of poetry, albeit a minor, supporting role, is summarised in the following way:

¹⁴⁴ Virginia Jackson, ‘Who Reads Poetry?’, *PMLA*, Vol. 123, No. 1 (Jan., 2007), pp181-187, 183

¹⁴⁵ Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, ‘Les Héritières de Louise Labé’ in Guy Demerson, *Louise Labé: Les Voix du Lyrisme* (Paris: Editions de CNRS, 1990), 94

¹⁴⁶ ibid, 95

¹⁴⁷ ibid, 96

Quand on parle des poétesses du XVI^e siècle on en parle comme de femmes aimantes qui ont su chanter leur amour. Cela ne va pas naturellement sans culture et c'est déjà une très belle entreprise quand on sait l'accomplir, comme c'est le cas de Pernette du Guillet ou de Louise Labé. Il faut se dire toutefois que Mlle de Gournay voulait faire autre chose. Ses modèles sont Ronsard, du Bellay et Desportes.¹⁴⁸

Gournay is not, therefore, engaging with the poetic tradition in the same way that her female predecessors did. She did not simply reverse the conventions of love poetry, which is, as Bertelà confirms, the only poetic trend carried out by women which tends to feature in our accounts of the period. She clearly separates Gournay from du Guillet and Labé. In order to best determine how Gournay viewed poetry and what informed her own poetic creations, we must turn to Gournay's own poetic theories. As Bertelà states, she models her poetry on that of Ronsard, du Bellay, and Desportes, who were beginning to be considered old-fashioned by the time Gournay came to write her poetry. The influence of Ronsard and du Bellay on Gournay's work, though, is limited to formal features, conventions and language; they are two great writers of love poetry, whereas Gournay's corpus does not include a single love poem, that is to say she does not write in the same tradition as them in spite of being greatly inspired by the linguistic features of their work. In her *Traité sur la poésie* (1619), Gournay emphasizes the need for brevity, especially in Epic Poetry: 'l'ame de la Poésie sur tout Heroïque, consiste en une brusque et genereuse viguer, qui ne va geuere ou point du tout sans breveté.' (*OC*, 239) In responding to the new poetic trends of her time, she rejects the attitude of the *modernes* towards poetry:

Et puis, qu'est-ce que de pretendre asservir la Poésie, je ne dis pas à la religion, mais à la superstition des rymes, ou menus scrupules de mots et phrases, suivant le style de ces modernes ; sinon mettre un gentil ou genereux cheval au bagage ? (*OC*, 247)

For Gournay, then, strict rhyme schemes and a limited range of words and phrases are not necessary for success as a poet and she is actively rejecting the theoretical trends of her time. In this chapter, I do not intend to see how far these ideas apply to her work, although that would be a useful and interesting exercise. I am citing this here in order to better contextualise her work, with my ultimate focus being a comparison of how she and the des

¹⁴⁸ Bertelà, *Bouquet*, 25

Roches present their intellectual kinship in their poetry. I am considering the des Roches and Gournay in the same chapter because unlike in the case of their sets of correspondence, they all actively chose to publish their poetry during their lifetimes and used poetry to both dedicate works to their intellectual kin and to write about these relationships. Both sets of poetry run counter to the focus on love poetry in modern scholarship and would come under the umbrella term of ‘occasional poetry’; they can therefore be analysed alongside each other due to their thematic similarities.

I shall compare a small selection of their poems, focusing on those which engage with the idea of intellectual kinship. In doing so, I shall argue that one of the ways in which they use poetry is to create further public representations of their familial bonds and that engaging with the poetic trends of the time reveals not only more aspects of their relationships but also how they manage to exploit this genre for their own purposes. The des Roches’s three main volumes each contain a large amount of poetry and most of Gournay’s poetry is found in her work entitled *Bouquet de Pinde* (1626, first published as part of *L’Ombre de la Damoiselle de Gournay*), which is an expanded version of her *Bouquet poétique* which originally accompanied her novel, *Le Proumenoir de Michel de Montaigne* (1594). In total, the *Bouquet* contains 156 poems, including sonnets, epigrams, epitaphs, and chansons, almost all of which are dedicated to various living people or abstract figures. This section is not intended to provide exhaustive analysis of all of their poetry. Maddalena Bertelà’s critical edition of *Bouquet de Pinde* already provides an excellent introduction to Gournay’s poetry, contextualising it and outlining the key themes of the collection.¹⁴⁹ There is nonetheless much more work to be done in this area and the des Roches lack any kind of study dedicated to their poetry, but here my focus is on the small number of poems which deal with intellectual kinship, which will allow me to compare the poetic execution of this with how it is presented in their correspondence.

Dedications: to the family that I have chosen?

Dedicating and addressing a poem to a specific recipient offers another medium via which Gournay and the des Roches are able to explore and develop their intellectual kinship as well as make general comments about the nature of family and writing which feed into

¹⁴⁹ Maddalena Bertelà, *Bouquet de Pinde: composé de fleurs diverses* (Ravenna: Angelo Longo Editore, 1995), 7-32

this. Like their correspondence and in line with the conventions and traditions outlined in the introduction to this chapter, their poems are not personal in the way that we might write a personal poem for somebody today. Of interest to us here is the way in which the des Roches and Gournay present their relationships with various family members, biological and adopted, within the framework of the poetry genre, which offers them the opportunity both to speak to individuals directly by addressing a poem to them as well as to display these relationships to their readers.

I begin by quoting the two dedications authored by Madeleine at the beginning of the *Oeuvres*, one of which is addressed to a community of women and another of which is addressed to Catherine. The first dedication is in prose; I am quoting it here because it shares several commonalities with that of Labé, for Madeleine uses it as an opportunity to address a general community of women and to encourage them to pursue intellectual activities, as well as illuminating the poetry that follows:

Pour ceste cause, j'ay voulu en ce petit tableau où je me suis depeinte, arrester ma parole, pour vous assurer de l'amitie entiere que j'ay tousjours portée à vous (Mesdames) si aucunes de vous daignez lire mes humbles vers. Et si, m'estant plus charitables, vous m'avisez que le silence, ornement de la femme, peut couvrir les fautes de la langue et de l'entendement, je respondray qu'il peut bien empescher la honte, mais non pas accroistre l'honneur, aussi que le parler nous separe des animaux sans raison. (*O*, 79-80)

Like Labé, Madeleine combines the presentation of her own, personal situation with a general address to all women. Her address to the women is a part of ‘ce petit tableau où je me suis depeinte’, which is resonant of the idea of self-portraiture as it is first expressed by Montaigne in his introductory *Au lecteur* of the *Essais*: ‘Je veux qu'on m'y voye en ma façon simple, naturelle et ordinaire, sans estude et artifice: car c'est moy que je peins.’¹⁵⁰ Like Montaigne, Madeleine is aware that she is able to control her literary self by manipulating her writing style. Montaigne’s self-portrait is interesting to us as modern readers because it provides us with insight into his introspective self to which we can relate, because it resembles what we might refer to as a personal self, whereas Madeleine uses this technique in order to relate her own work as a writer to the situation of other women, encouraging them to

¹⁵⁰ Montaigne, *Essais*, 27

engage with the literary world in the same way. She characterizes her relationship with the women as an unconditional friendship which exists even if none of them read her poetry. Characteristically, she describes her poetry in a modest way, ‘mes humbles vers’, which is enhanced further by the idea that the women she is addressing would only deign to read it. She emphasizes her awareness that by writing poetry, she is breaking the taboo of silence imposed upon women by society. Referring to being silent as ‘ornement de la femme’ is a reminder that this is widely applicable as well as giving it a visual element. This is then linked to visual faults in language: if a woman remains silent, she avoids potentially tarnishing her reputation by communicating imperfectly and thus embarrassing herself in public. Madeleine insists that speaking out is the only way in which women will progress and gain honour; silence can only prevent them from acquiring shame resulting from going against convention by speaking or from displaying poor quality writing in public. but will not help them to progress. She engages with one of the attitudes towards women that was prevalent during the Renaissance, that is to say the idea that women were not intellectually capable in the way that men were and that they were on the same level as animals in this respect, a belief which stems from Aristotle. Madeleine rejects this notion, asserting that it is speech which separates ‘nous’, namely women, from animals; humans, and therefore women, do indeed have the right to speak. Like Labé, she begins her collection with a conscious plea for solidarity underpinned by a conscious suggestion of dissatisfaction with women’s place in society, although unlike Labé, this dedication is not regularly talked about in scholarship or in French Literature courses in universities.

This is followed by a second dedication in the form of a poem, which is addressed to Catherine. Madeleine is therefore addressing both women in general and one particular woman in the same way that Labé’s dedication is addressed to both an individual and to a collective. Madeleine praises her in conventional terms, focusing on her virtue, which she then adapts to express her own point of view about what is important in her daughter’s development:

Mais envers toy, fille qui m’as si proche,
Ce me seroit un grand blasme et reproche
De te conduire au sentier plus battu,
Veu que ton cuer est né à la vertu.
Il ne suffit pourtant d’estre bien nées;
Le sens acquis nous rend morgnées,

Et le flambeau dans nostre ame allumé,
Sans le sçavoir est bientost consommé. (*O*, 81-82)

Madeleine's use of conventions, including the flame and their single soul, makes use of Petrarchan topoi¹⁵¹ and the Aristotelian belief about a single soul in two bodies. Madeleine emphasizes that whilst Catherine is of good birth, she needs knowledge and good sense in order to avoid the issues which being consumed by passion can cause. This is an application of conceits to her own situation and view, which enables her to present her belief in the importance of women's education. Madeleine states that Catherine's virtue, with which she was born, means that she would be failing to support her properly if she just allowed her to follow the same trajectory as most other women, 'au sentier plus battu'. She emphasizes her role as her mother and how close she is to her daughter, 'fille qui m'es si proche', using their relationship in order to make a statement about how women should lead their lives. The following four lines, beginning 'Il ne suffit pourtant d'estre bien nées', emphasize that whilst Catherine was born virtuous, this is not enough to allow her to succeed. Referring to women in general, Madeleine argues that they require acquired knowledge and learning in order to become 'morignées'. The connotations of *morigné* are interesting, for they introduce the idea of being well-formed or fashioned, which relates back to Greenblatt's development of the concept of self-fashioning. Women therefore need knowledge in order to know how to

¹⁵¹ Francesco Petrarch, *Canzoniere*, ed. and trans. J. G. Nichols (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd., 2000), 175-176

This is an example of one of Petrarch's many sonnets which clearly display his use of fire imagery in communicating with and presenting his relationship with his beloved.

203. Lasso, ch'l' ardo, et altri non me 'l crede

Alas, I burn, and no one will believe it,
or rather, many do, but not that one
who would suffice if she believed alone:
she does not seem to trust it, though she sees it.

Of such great beauty and of little faith,
can you not see my heart shine in my eyes?
Surely I should, but for malignant stars,
find a this fount of pity so much grace?

This, which is nothing much to you, my ardour,
and your praise sung in celebrated rhyme,
may still perhaps inflame many more souls:

for I can see, dear fire, far in the future,
with my tongue cold, your long-closed eyes remain,
when all the blaze has gone, like glowing coals.

present themselves in writing, a public space, and to further their education. Knowledge has an additional function: drawing on the Petrarchan *topos* of the flame, which here in conjunction with the soul means the brightness of intellect or spirit, Madeleine states that without knowledge, ‘savoir’, the flame becomes exhausted or consumed. Women therefore need knowledge in order to lead a successful intellectual life and avoid the negative aspects of romantic relationships and desire. Addressing this to her daughter emphasizes that Madeleine wishes the public presentation of their bond to be focused on their acquisition of knowledge, which gives the statement a twofold function: it informs both her daughter and her readers of this view.

The next point of interest in the dedication is how Madeleine situates herself in relation to her daughter. Drawing on the Petrarchan conceit of the beloved as well as reevoking the notion of portraiture, she explains how she sees herself in her daughter:

Ma fille unique, et de moy cher tenue,
Non pour autant que tu en es venue
Et que dans toy je me voy un pourtraict
Du poil, du teint, de la taille, et du traict,
Façon, maintien, parole, contenance
Et l'aage seul en faict la difference; (*O*, 82)

Commenting on the four individual physical features that she has in common with her daughter is resonant of the act of describing the female beloved in poems written by Madeleine’s male contemporaries. The following line which focuses on intellectual and mental characteristics diverges from this, for Madeleine is acknowledging that Catherine also has noteworthy features that are not related to her appearance. She is not addressing her as a lover but as a daughter who is more than a daughter to her; the only difference between them is their age difference. Madeleine is therefore placing her in the category of perfect friend as opposed to lover or child.

Madeleine continues to use rhetoric to build up her presentation of Catherine as a perfect friend. A tricolon of factors which draw on poetic and classical tradition are dismissed as not being the sole reason for their perfect friendship. Madeleine therefore dismisses these as not being enough to explain her relationship with her daughter:

Ny pour nous voir tant semblables de corps,

Ny des esprits les gracieux accords,
Ny ceste douce aymable sympathie
Qui faict aymer la semblable partie,
N'ont point du tout causé l'entier effect
De mon amour envers toy si parfaict; (*O*, 82)

This continues as the dedicatory epistle progresses. Madeleine dismisses her natural maternal instinct and the way in which she has nurtured Catherine,¹⁵² before revealing that it is Catherine's intellectual capabilities which have allowed her to develop into someone who is capable of participating in perfect friendship:

Ny les efforts mis en moy par nature,
Ny pour autant qu'és de ma nourriture.
Mais le penser, qu'entre tant de mal-heurs,
De maux, d'ennuis, de peines, de douleurs,
Sujection, tourment, travail, tristesse,
Qui depuis treze ans ne m'ont point donné cesse,
Tu as, enfant, apporte un cuer fort
Pour resister au violent effort
Qui m'accabloit, et m'offris dès enfance
Amour, conseil, support, obeissance. (*O*, 83)

The ability to think is the third part of the tricolon, which enables an effective dismissal of all other factors. This is characterised by a list of eight challenges which Catherine's intelligence has helped her to overcome, which emphasizes her positive presentation of this further. This clause does not have a verb; the thinking is simply a subject, with the relative clause emphasizing that Catherine's mind has helped Madeleine to overcome the relentlessness of the eight challenges for thirteen years. She continues to remind us that they are tied together naturally as mother and daughter, citing Catherine's childhood as an early sign that she was capable of being a perfect friend. Catherine as a child is the subject of the sentence, who was able to offer her mother both what you would expect of a child, love and obedience, and what

¹⁵² 'nourriture' in the Renaissance could also mean nurture or upbringing as well as having the modern meaning of food. See Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*, x: 'Nourriture: f. Nourishment, nutriment, sustenance, food, meat; finding, maintenance; also nurture, or bringing up'

you would not expect of a child, advice and support, in making her resist all the things that were overwhelming her and the violent blow of fortune, ‘au violent effort’. The fact that the two expected qualities enclose the two unusual qualities increases their prominence and supports Madeleine’s earlier assertion that the only factor that distinguishes her from her daughter is their age difference, which is really just a numerical value.

The dedication ends with Madeleine’s declaration that she wishes her daughter to attain posterity in the future. This is intertwined with the notion of virtue, which unlike physical, earthly features, is immortal:

Et le Doemon, qui l’œuvre a commencée,
Guide si bien l’effect de ta pensée,
Que tesmoignant à la posterité
Combien d’honneur tu auras merité,
Tu sois un jour par vertu immortelle.
Je t’ay tousjours souhaitée estre telle. (*O*, 83-84)

Referring to an unspecified ‘Doemon’ who started the work evokes the classical tradition, in which each person has their own daemon assigned at birth according to God’s will who follows them throughout their life as a spiritual guardian. This guidance shapes the way Catherine develops and expresses her thoughts and the effect it has, allowing her to achieve posterity through expression of her virtue, suggesting that Madeleine believes that this is the trajectory that God intended Catherine to follow. Madeleine believes that Catherine is capable of true virtue and this indeed what she wishes for her, as expressed in the sixth line. It is her intellectual achievements which will lead to obtaining this everlasting virtue, a contrast to the usual way in which a woman might be expected to achieve this. Dedicating the poem to Catherine is also a way of achieving this, for it is a written record of Madeleine’s belief in her daughter’s intellectual capabilities and, by extension, her belief in women’s ability to learn. This sets a precedent for the collection, associating both her and her daughter with a volume that challenges accepted gender norms and allows them to display their erudition. The dedication functions as a way of offering the collection to Catherine as a gift, adding another layer to their mother-daughter bond.

The *Missives* begin in a similar way. Madeleine again addresses a dedicatory poem to Catherine, which focuses on her scholarly achievements. Written in the sonnet form, the poem does not simply reverse the Petrarchan convention of addressing a female beloved by

addressing a male beloved in the same way as Labé and Du Guillet, which highlights that her poetry cannot be categorised in the same way as love poetry and that it is therefore possible to view it as occasional poetry, especially because this sonnet was indeed written to mark the opening of this volume. Instead, she defines her daughter in terms of her writing:

A TRES VERTUEUSE BELLE
ET DOCTE FILLE
CATHERINE DES ROCHES

SONNET

Quant un solide corps s'oppose à la lumiere
De l'astre porte-jour ayant son teint vermeil,
Ou bien quand il descent d'un mouvement pareil:
L'ombre alors nous paroist imparfaicte ou entiere.

Mais quand sur le zenith ou dessus l'onde clere
Du saint puis des sçavans rayonne le Soleil,
Les ombres ne sont plus voyables à nostre œil :
Tout est illuminé dès l'œillade premiere.

De Proserpine ainsi les divines vertus
Ont laissé de l'honneur les autels revestus
Par la lueur d'un feu, qui pres du Nil s'enflamme.

Mais si tost que C H A R I T E a monstré sa splendeur,
L'ombre devint clarté, tout ressent son ardeur,
Mesmes les deitez reluisent par sa flamme. (*M*, 82-83)

The focus of the sonnet is clear from the dedication: Catherine is not only virtuous, a usual way to describe the subject of a sonnet, but also erudite, ‘docte’. This description is borne out throughout the sonnet. The octet consists of a series of general statements built around the contrast between light and dark, which in this context is a metaphor for gaining knowledge. In the first stanza, Madeleine introduces a problem: the light is blocked by a solid body (line

1) or at least partially blocked when this body moves (lines 3-4). A solution is introduced in the second stanza, in which the sun becomes surrounded by scholars (line 6) which leads to the removal of the shadows, which makes the light visible (lines 7-8). Madeleine is clearly arguing in favour of knowledge in order to gain a more enlightened view of the world. The sestet turns to specific examples of Catherine's writing which features in the *Missives*, associating her work as a writer with the general statements of the octet. These are combined with images of fire and flames (lines 11 and 14), tying the poem to the Petrarchan tradition. The first sestet mentions Catherine's translation of *Le Ravissement de Proserpine*,¹⁵³ the reason for which the des Roches sought publication for the volume, and in the second Madeleine refers to her by her pseudonym, Charité, who features in a sonnet cycle elsewhere in their work.¹⁵⁴ Both texts are shown to have the power to help with the acquisition of knowledge, which is enhanced by their association with the fire imagery. Madeleine, drawing on Renaissance commonplaces, is able to exploit the sonnet form in order to dedicate the volume to Catherine, taking in her specific intellectual achievements in order to support her general argument.

This is followed by a short, dedicatory poem which is also authored by Madeleine and is addressed to the des Roches as a pair, which reinforces their relationship as well as defining them as a unit in terms of their virtue and writing:

A MES DAMES DES ROCHE
DE POTIERS MERE ET FILLE

Les Roches de Poitiers, que le ciel et la grace
Ornent uniquement des plus dignes faveurs,
Monstrent par leurs escrits et leur divine face,
Que Phoebus et Venus leur cedent leurs honneurs. (*M*, 83)

¹⁵³ See des Roches, *Missives*, 212-287, for this translation. The choice of text is significant, for it is Proserpine's mother, Ceres, who comes to save her by bargaining with Jupiter after Proserpine is raped by Dis and taken to his kingdom in the underworld. The fact that this book includes a story about a mother and daughter and that Catherine chooses to translate this piece shows that she is actively engaging with the idea of the mother-daughter bond and that it was of interest to her.

¹⁵⁴ See des Roches, *Oeuvres*, 258-288 for a series of 30 sonnets and chansons exchanged between two lovers, Charité and Sincero. Catherine constructs a dialogic exchange shifting between male and female perspectives.

This sets a precedent for the collection; the women are unified and equal, ‘MES DAMES’, whilst characterizing themselves via their mother-daughter relationship in order to legitimize their presence as women in intellectual spaces; like on the frontispieces, their title is placed before their relationship, emphasizing their parity in their presentation of themselves as a unit in spite of their age difference. Lines three and four highlight the role played by writing in the construction of their public, intellectual identity; this allows them to present themselves in public and to control how they are perceived by others. The placement of this poem at the beginning of the collection means that it can be read as a comment on the text as a whole: as this poem states, they do indeed use their writing to present their positive qualities and to define themselves and their relationship.

Dedicatory poems do not just mark the start of a whole volume but also feature as prefaces to individual texts, offering the des Roches the opportunity to reiterate their bond and esteem for each other and to fortify this with the text that follows. In prefacing her *La femme forte descripte par Salomon*, Catherine takes the opportunity to dedicate it to her mother and to praise her in the process of doing so. The fact that Catherine chooses to dedicate a poem about a *femme forte*¹⁵⁵ to her mother and therefore equates her mother with this concept is significant: the *femme forte* was an antithesis to the idea of woman presented in moralistic writing during the early modern period:

Modesty is seen by moralists as the most effective guardian of chastity; its most dangerous enemies are sensuality, ambition, and avarice. [...] In the figure of the *femme forte*, the counter-virtues of continence, stoic apathy, and liberality are stressed; again there is an opposition to be detected between the female sex as a whole, in which these vices are thought to be prevalent, and the *femme forte*.¹⁵⁶

The *femme forte* is a figure which runs counter to the traditional view of women and is able to overcome the vices which all women were thought to possess by displaying contrasting

¹⁵⁵ See Ian Maclean, *Woman Triumphant: Feminism in French Literature, 1610-1652* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 64-87. Maclean provides a synthesis of the *femme forte* as a new mode of feminist writing, using a number of sources from moralists and those who wrote in this tradition in order to draw out the key characteristics of this figure. Whilst the chapter considers literature published between 1630 and 1650 and Maclean states that it reached its peak during the reign of Anne of Austria (1643-52), the idea of the *femme forte* was clearly present during the des Roches's lifetime, as evidenced by this poem.

¹⁵⁶ ibid, 69

virtues. Equating Madeleine with a poetic figure who is part of this tradition allows Catherine to place her in this tradition:

A MA MERE

Je vous fays un present de la vertu supreme,
Depeinte proprement par un Roy tres-parfaict,
(Ma mere) et vous offrant cest excellent pourtraict,
C'est vous offrir aussi le pourtraict de vous-mesme. (*O*, 327)

Catherine refers to the act of dedicating the poem to her mother as a gift, ‘un present’, demonstrating that she is aware that dedicating a poem to her can enhance her intellectual portrait; the fact that the poem itself is the gift reiterates the value of books and writings as intellectual objects. Catherine compares her mother to the king she is praising in the related poem. This dedication allows her to make a comparison between a woman, her mother, and a highly respected male figure, highlighting the possibilities offered by poetry which allow her to write about her mother in a way that might not normally be possible. The possibilities offered by verse add to this: Catherine is able to rhyme ‘parfaict’ with ‘pourtraict’, tying her mother closely to the description of the king and the idea of perfection, and ‘supreme’ with ‘vous-mesme’, associating her mother with another positive quality in a way that would be structurally more difficult were she to be writing in prose. The idea of the portrait takes on even more significance if we consider Montaigne’s comments about portraiture in ‘De la presumption’:

Je vis un jour à Barleduc, qu'on presentoit au Roy François second, pour la recommandation de la mémoire de René Roy de Sicile, un pourtraict qu'il avoit luy'mesmes fait de soy. Pourquoy n'est-il loisible de mesme à chacun, de se peindre de la plume, comme il se peignoit d'un creon?¹⁵⁷

Kings habitually exchange portraits as a gift. Here, Montaigne likens the physical self-portrait by René King of Sicily to François II to the idea of creating the equivalent portrait in one’s writing, questioning why the former is acceptable whilst the latter is not. Montaigne is

¹⁵⁷ Montaigne, *Essais*, 692-693

therefore attempting to legitimize his own act of creating a self-portrait in book form. In terms of Catherine, this demonstrates that she is engaging with the same tradition of self-portraiture, equating her idea of what her mother's portrait would be with the portrait she has created of another woman in poetic form. Catherine is therefore using poetry to take part in the tradition of creating and exchanging portraits, which gives her another way of complimenting her mother and building their relationship.

Like the des Roches, Gournay dedicates her poetry to another woman. She dedicates it to Montaigne's daughter, Léonore, to whom she refers as her *sœur d'alliance*. The title of her collection of poetry is as follows: *BOUQUET DE PINDE/ Composé de fleurs diverses./ Dedié à Léonor Dame de Montaigne Vicomtesse de Gamaches : sa Sœur d'alliance (OC, 1754)*. Gournay emphasizes Léonore's social standing by characterizing her with both her familial and current association, her marriage to Charles Gamache (1608-1616), before emphasizing her link to her as her adopted sister. The collection of poetry is therefore an act of solidifying her relationship with Léonore, whom she only came to know through Montaigne; Léonore was not an active literary figure, therefore Gournay would not have encountered her in her literary career were it not for her *père d'alliance*. This is corroborated by the opening poem of the collection, which is dedicated to Léonore and explains Gournay's aim in writing the poetry and dedicating it to her:

A ELLE-MESME.

Mon Amitié, ma Sœur, en Pynde commencée,
T'offre un bouquet de Pynde unique en son dessein:
Un autre veut orner la beauté de ton sein;
Luy parler par ta bouche et vivre en ta pensée. (*OC, 1754 – 1755*)

Gournay emphasizes the singularity of the gift she is giving to Léonore, ‘unique en son dessein’, which is resonant of the language of Montaigne’s *Au lecteur* in which he insists that he is not capable of writing a book that is suitable for anyone other than his family and friends: ‘Il t’advertisit dès l’entrée, que je ne m’y suis proposé aucune fin, que domestique et privée: je n’y ay nulle considération de ton service, ny de ma gloire: mes forces ne sont pas capables d’un tel dessein.’¹⁵⁸ Like Gournay, Montaigne has a clear idea about the structure of

¹⁵⁸ Montaigne, *Essais*, 27

his text and whilst this initial sentence seems to dismiss the idea that he intends for the *Essais* to be a significant text, his later statements, for example, ‘je suis moy-mesme la matiere de mon livre’¹⁵⁹, betrays an awareness of the uniqueness of his text. Gournay’s reproduction of this idea reminds us of his influence on her work and her desire to acknowledge it. Instead of referring to herself as ‘Je’, Gournay makes ‘Mon amitié’ the subject of the poem, ensuring that the emphasis is on her relationship with Léonore. The fact that the friendship began on the Greek mountain of Pindos is significant, for the mountain is dedicated to Apollo, God of poetry. The mountain represents the poems in the title ‘Bouquet de Pinde’, tying Gournay’s text to the classical tradition and equating her poetry with Apollo himself, suggesting that the ‘fleurs diverses’ of the title, synonymous with the poems themselves, come from this very mountain. Gournay states that in dedicating the book to Léonore, she wants to give her something to think about (line 4). Somebody else is already concerned with her physical beauty, whereas Gournay wants her gift to live in Léonore’s thoughts and for her to read it out loud. In doing so, Gournay attempts to establish an intellectual relationship with Léonore and refrains from complimenting her in the way that a male poet would have traditionally complimented a female addressee.

The des Roches and Gournay use poetic dedications in order to mark the fact that they are publicly declaring their association with various family members and adding to these relationships by dedicating their works to them. In the case of the des Roches, their dedications allows them to reveal more details about their mother-daughter bond and to continue to place themselves on the same level as perfect, male friends. Gournay’s dedication to Léonore is similar in some ways: she is addressing another woman, promoting the importance of poetry and learning, and rejecting male tradition. This poem does, however, reveal the key differences between Gournay’s situation and that of the des Roches: Madeleine and Catherine have a lifelong, biological bond that they choose to present as an intellectual friendship without having to build this from scratch, whereas Gournay uses this dedication to do some of the groundwork involved in forming intellectual kinship. Whilst poetic commonplaces of the period are present in their work, these are not the most salient feature; this section has shown that writing poetry in this way offers them another opportunity to strengthen their familial bonds and although it is possible to map several of the features onto contemporaneous trends, the main purpose of these poems does not appear to be to engage with these. They appear to be incidental, with the expression of ideas pertaining to building

¹⁵⁹ ibid, 27

an intellectual family being more prominent. However, I do not wish to suggest that this analysis is symptomatic of all of the poetry of the des Roches and Gournay; here, I am focusing on the small number of poems which contain material relevant to the idea of intellectual kinship. For this reason, this discussion is limited in scope due to the amount of material we have at our disposal. It is certainly an interesting discussion and we have already seen several patterns emerging, but I am not suggesting that this is representative of their poetry as a whole.

Building a poetic family: levels of membership

It is clear that poetry can be used to preface a text, dedicating it to a specific person or group of people. A poem does not, however, need to be in this place to have this function. This section will consider how the des Roches and Gournay use poetry to define their familial relationships and how they use conventions to underpin other poems that they dedicate to various individuals.

In the *Missives*, Madeleine includes a series of four sonnets that are addressed to Catherine. Their focus on praising her good qualities and the cumulative effect of the series are resonant of the sonnet cycles which focus on praising the beloved, although Madeleine is using this model to laud Catherine as a daughter and a fellow intellectual as well as to subtly comment on the process of doing so. The final sestet of the first sonnet addressed to Catherine juxtaposes the praise and Madeleine's concern with how it is presented:

Je scay que tes vertus auront des ans victoire,
Et que mon vers ne peut esperer tant de gloire.
Tel subjet est chanté par moy trop bassement. (*M*, 121)

Madeleine uses metonymy to focus on Catherine's success by personifying her virtues and emphasizing how these will conquer time, suggesting that she believes that Catherine is strong enough to overcome the issues she faces as a woman writing and that her writing will achieve posterity. The final two lines reveal that Madeleine does not think that she is capable of writing poetry that expresses Catherine's virtue adequately. This functions on two levels; on the surface, Madeleine is displaying modesty with regards to her writing: the style she has chosen is too low to do justice to her choice of subject matter. Additionally, it implies that

Catherine is actually even better than this poem may suggest, for no matter what she writes, she is unable to express her praise fully.

In the second sonnet dedicated to Catherine, Madeleine employs a similar technique, showing that the four sonnets can be read as a small cycle within the larger series of sonnets, with their common theme distinguishing them from the surrounding sonnets. Here, Madeleine distinguishes learnt knowledge, ‘sciences acquises’, from men whose particular virtues, in this case their eloquence, are being honoured:

Aux hommes bien disans, dont les vertus exquises
S’honorent à l’envy des sciences acquises,
Laisse voir de tes vers la divine clarité. (*M*, 123)

Madeleine instructs Catherine to use her poetry to impart her knowledge to these men, demonstrating that she believes her daughter to be as equally intellectually capable as her male counterparts. The dichotomy between the knowledge that Catherine has gained and the men’s way of speaking which is automatically celebrated and acquired serves to elevate Catherine and her achievements in relation to what men in general have accomplished; she had to work harder to be in the position she is in. The imperative, ‘laisse’, indicates that she is calling on Catherine to change the status quo, an action to which Madeleine herself is contributing in constructing this sonnet.

Sonnet 4 in the *Missives*, the third poem that is addressed to Catherine in this series, shares several structural and thematic commonalities with the second sonnet in Labé’s *Œuvres complètes*.¹⁶⁰ Whilst there is no evidence that Madeleine definitely read Labé’s work,

¹⁶⁰ Labé, *Œuvres complètes*, 110

Ô beaux yeux bruns, ô regards détournés,
O chauds soupirs, ô larmes épandues,
O noires nuits vainement attendues,
O jours luisants vainement retournés !

O tristes plains, ô désirs obstinés,
O temps perdu, ô peines dépendues,
O mille morts en mille rets tendues,
O pires maux contre mou destinés !

O ris, ô front, cheveux, bras, mains et doigts !
O luth plaintif, viole, archet et voix !
Tant de flambeaux pour arde une femelle !

De toi me plains, que tant de feux portant,
En tant d’endroits d’iceux mon cœur tâtant,

the links between these two sonnets represent, if nothing else, that both women were united in their aim of engaging with a genre and adapting it for their own purposes. Like in Labé's sonnet, Madeleine exploits anaphora which gives the poem both a linguistic and visual pattern, emphasizing the extent to which she wishes to praise her daughter, which is structured in a similar way to how Labé praises her beloved:

J'ayme plus que jamais mon vivre solitaire.

J'ayme plus que jamais la douce liberté.

J'ayme plus que jamais ce que j'ay enfanté.

J'ayme plus que jamais ma jeune secretaire.

J'ayme plus que jamais n'avoir aucun contraire.

J'ayme plus que jamais l'honneur et la bonté.

J'ayme plus que jamais la grace et la beauté.

J'ayme plus que jamais un agreeable taire.

J'ayme plus que jamais un discours à loisir.

J'ayme plus que jamais un louiable plaisir.

J'ayme plus que jamais la dame bien aprise.

J'ayme plus que jamais le labeur des neuf sœurs,

Et de tes saints propos les mielleuses douceurs

Qui demonstrent l'effait de ta belle devise. (*M*, 123-124)

The repetition of the superlative 'J'ayme plus que jamais' gives the sonnet a decisively positive tone. Whilst Labé focuses on describing her beloved's physical features and expressing the relevant feelings, those of desire and love, Madeleine concentrates on praising Catherine's abilities as a scholar. The anaphora allows her to build up to a climactic statement relating to Catherine's knowledge. In the first two lines, Madeleine states that she is happy with her solitude and freedom; she is not defining herself in relation to a man. The following two lines relate to her relationship with Catherine, placing her as the subject of the poem: she is twice defined in relation to her mother as her child and then as her secretary. This accords

N'en est sur toi volé quelque étincelle.

Catherine a subordinate role which is reliant on her mother. The second stanza praises good qualities in an abstract way, all of which are commonplace for a woman during the period and would have been expected. In this stanza, the only quality which is not accompanied by the definite article is ‘taire’, which is accompanied by an indefinite article, highlighting that being silent is a choice that can be made with immediate effect, whereas the other qualities are all related to personality and must be developed over a longer period of time. Silence is what was expected of women in public places, therefore the indefinite article used in combination with the adjective ‘agreeable’ suggests that Madeleine only welcomes this when it is desirable or necessary; she does not agree that women should permanently remain silent. The first sestet introduces a series of objects, all three of which relate to literary production and learning. By the end of it, Madeleine is speaking of ‘la dame bien apprise’, having shifted the balance of the description to focus on a highly educated woman, emphasizing that women must work within the constraints of what is expected of them and adapt this so that they can achieve this state. The final object, which is evoked at the beginning of the second sestet, is the Nine Muses, who were the goddesses of the arts, literature, and science in antiquity. Madeleine presents these as a role model for Catherine, tying these exemplary learned figures to all the other qualities Catherine must possess. The sonnet concludes with an implicit instruction to Catherine: she must ensure that the way in which she is compelled to speak in public, or rather to write her poetry, ‘les mielleuses douceurs’, betray the true effect and reality¹⁶¹ of her conversational skills and her ability to write poetry¹⁶². This sonnet is therefore a comment on the contradiction between how Madeleine thinks women should behave and how they have to behave, addressed to Catherine in order to guide her.

In the fourth and final sonnet dedicated to Catherine, Madeleine emphasizes that their relationship is characterized by reciprocity and that she needs Catherine as much as Catherine needs her as her mother:

Si tu veux qu’envers toy je face mon devoire,
Preste-moy ton esprit, ta grace, et ton sçavoir :
Et lors je chanteray tes supresmes loüanges. (*M*, 125)

¹⁶¹ For further details about the sixteenth century meaning of ‘effet’, see Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*, x: ‘Effect: m. Ab effect, or worke; the issue, or successe of a thing; a working, bringing to passe, making to be.’

¹⁶² For ‘devis’ meaning conversation and writing, see Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*, x: ‘Devis: m. Speech, talke, discourse, a conference, or communication; devising, conferring, or talking together; also, a device, invention, disposition, or appointment of.’

Madeleine shifts the power and agency to Catherine in the same way that male poets tend to place the responsibility for upholding their virtue in the beloved. Madeleine's request is not underpinned by blame or a sense of guilt; instead, she offers Catherine praise in return for lending her three of her desirable qualities, two of which are related to her intellect.

Madeleine clearly uses all of these sonnets to praise Catherine as an educated writer, focusing on these and the way in which she may be able to help her via her writing. These sonnets are therefore not only about Catherine's ability as a writer but also a statement about the act of writing itself.

Gournay's *Bouquet* contains a number of poems which are dedicated to members of her *famille d'alliance*. Like the des Roches, she uses these as an opportunity to praise them in a way which brings out what she believes to be their best qualities and to cement her relationship with them further. Notably, there is no sonnet addressed to Lipsius, reminding us that after their relationship ended, Gournay removed any references to him from subsequent editions of her texts. In the sonnet she dedicates to Montaigne, her praise of him is built around the textual presence of the *Essais*:

A MICHEL SEIGNEUR DE
Montaigne, sur ses *Essais*.

Ainsi que l'œil d'un Astre ornement de la nuict,
Qui void du nouveau jour la pressante saillie;
R'allument toute en soy sa vigueur receuillie:
Décoche un vif esclair puis à chef bas s'enfuit.
Ainsi la France, helas ! dont jà le buscher luit,
Pour voir d'un haut honneur sa biere assouvie;
R'animent à ce coup ses esprits et sa vie,
Comme un dernier chef-d'œuvre entre nous t'a produict.
Toy que dés l'aage simple où l'on sort de l'enfance,
Loin de ton beau sejour, loin de ta cognissance,
Sous la foy des *Essais* pour Père j'ay receu:
Permet qu'en lettre d'or sur leur carte immortelle
Je grave icy ce Vers qui s'éternise en elle:
« Montaigne escrit ce Livre, Apollon l'a conceu. » (OC, 1763 – 1764)

The octet consists of two extended similes which refer to the *Essais*. In the first stanza, Gournay likens the *Essais* to a star, which is able to reignite the ability to reflect before causing a flash of lightning and disappearing immediately afterwards. She is therefore presenting the *Essais* as a powerful text which is able to quickly enlighten people. France is personified in the second stanza; it is referred to by its coffin, of which the life and mind are revived by the *Essais*. The eighth line compares the reaction of France as a whole with an unspecified group of people including Gournay, emphasizing the power of a great literary work in inciting these feelings. In the sestet, Gournay addresses Montaigne directly, praising him for his early intellectual capabilities (line 9) and defining him in relation to her (line 11) as her father. The final sestet reveals that it is this relationship that allows her to praise him publicly in this way and that she is creating a lasting representation of him and his work (line 12). This is reinforced by the idea of engraving and internal eternalisation in line 13. Indeed, the use of a quotation in the final line gives the poem the feel of an epitaph and situates Montaigne in relation to Apollo: he wrote the book, yet Apollo, God of poetry, made such writing possible. Associating Montaigne with Apollo demonstrates Gournay's high opinion of his work and reiterates that she is conscious of the fact that in structuring this sonnet around Montaigne, she has the ability to create a lasting record of him and his work, another sign of friendship with her *père d'alliance*.

Although we saw that Gournay does not appear to consider Léonore to be a *sœur d'alliance* in her correspondence, this poetry collection is dedicated to her and she dedicates a poem to her, referring to her as such. From the ideas evoked in the poem, though, it is clear that Gournay does not intend to praise Léonore for her intellectual qualities. The dedication names Léonore's two titles, her position as Gournay's *soeur d'alliance* and the family into which she married and the title she subsequently acquired. The poem is clearly an occasional poem; the dedication states that Gournay is informing Léonore about a stream that has overflowed in the vicinity of her father's château. The ideas expressed in the poem itself draw on this image but appear to be a series of general, advisory statements as opposed to praise or requests which are specifically for Léonore:

A sa Sœur d'alliance, depuis Vicomtesse de Gamaches, sur
Le desbordement d'un ruisseau voisin de Montaigne.

L'Amour despit que son flambeau,
Perde pour toy ses flammes vaines,

Quittant les feux s'arme de l'eau
Qui devore tes vertus plaines.
Mocquons-nous de ce Dieu mocqueur:
Si l'eau receloit quelques armes
A fausser l'acier de ton cœur,
Mille amants perdroient-ils les larmes ? (*OC*, 1805)

The poem is full of conceits relating to love, which Gournay adapts to Léonore's current situation. She argues that love is unable to touch Léonore by evoking a series of fire and water images, drawing loosely on the idea of the Petrarchan flame. Water is presented as a replacement for fire (line 3). In the first two lines, Gournay has already shown that love and its flame have no effect on Léonore, with the flames being described as 'vaines' in line 2, emphasizing the hopelessness of the situation. The second part of the poem (lines 5-8) moves away from the fire imagery and focuses on the water, questioning whether water would be capable of breaking through into Léonore's heart were it to be appropriately armed. The four lines finish with a question, in which Gournay asks whether 1,000 lovers would be able to seduce Léonore if love is incapable. The overwhelming message of the poem is that even though love is trying, it is not making any progress. It consists of a series of statements and images which are general; Gournay does not give precise details about specific lovers or events. The poem is therefore an opportunity for her to acknowledge Léonore as her sister in public and to mark a notable occasion, her wedding to Charle de Gamaches. In the way that, for example, the Pléiade poets engage with a set of conventions and manipulate them in order to display their skill, Gournay does the same, yet she is not working within the same tradition of love poetry or as part of a circle. This poem nonetheless provides us with insight into her life and the intellectual context in which she was working, although this is not as detailed or personal as we would expect a modern piece to be.

Both the des Roches and Gournay also include poems about the family members who they do not consider to be part of their public, intellectual family. It is clear that in both cases they are happy to acknowledge the existence of these other family members but they do not feel the need or desire to incorporate them into their intellectual community. To an extent, we have already seen this in the way in which Gournay treats Léonore: she dedicates the collection to her, extending an intellectual hand, yet the occasional verse about her does not engage with her as an intellectual in the way that her sonnet about Montaigne does. Here, I will examine a few examples of how they differentiate between their intellectual family and

their biological family in their poetry. Whilst the des Roches construct intellectual communities with the attendees of their salon and women as a general collective, they characterize their presence as writers in terms of their small community of two; their intellectual family is limited to one mother and one daughter and they do not feel the need to incorporate other family members. The following statement which refers to them in general terms under one of their nicknames, Rochers, is indicative of the way in which they refer to themselves as a single unit:

Celuy qui, d'un clin d'œil, forma la terre et l'onde,
Qui fait luyre sur nous les celestes flabeaux,
Qui, du vent de sa voix, fit les ornemens beaux,
Dont l'accord discordant tient les membres du monde,
Voit ores, par quel art, vostre plume feconde
Donne vie et honneur à deus Rochers nouveaux; (*SO*, 95)

Their literary identity is predicated on the fact that their familial community consists of two; they do not acknowledge any other family members, biological or adopted, anywhere in their poetry. Take, for example, Madeleine's epitaph dedicated to her late husband François Eboissard, following his death in 1578. Whilst Madeleine draws on the conceit of living death in response to her husband's death, she does not reveal any kind of intellectual bond between them and Eboissard appears to play no role in her literary production:

Apres avoir vescu d'une loüable vie,
Je fus pris d'un catere, et maintenant le sort
Des Parques me guerit de ceste maladie:
Je mourois en ma vie, et je vis en ma mort.

The poem is written from his perspective; here, Madeleine uses his voice to state that he led a good life and that death was a release from his illness. In this sense, the poem is more of a biographical record than an expression of emotion or feeling. As the poem progresses, Madeleine adds more biographical details. She mentions herself as his wife only in terms of providing a general description of the trajectory of Eboissard's life:

Je fus trente ans Breton; vingt et huict mon espouse

Me retint dans Poëtiers lié de chaste amour.
Mon ame devant Dieu maintenant se repose,
Et mon corps en ce lieu attend le dernier jour.

The only comment about their relationship is the description of their love as chaste, ‘chaste amour’. Whilst this does not reveal any precise details, it is certainly interesting and unexpected, for the relationship between a husband and wife is not usually chaste. In view of the fact that Madeleine and Eboissard did not have any children, this suggests that it was perhaps a marriage based solely on convenience after the death of Madeleine’s first husband. Indeed, even the mention of their friendship is not elaborated upon significantly:

Jamais de son esprit nostre amitié ne tombe;
La mort ne trenche point un si ferme lien. (*O*, 157)

Whilst Madeleine states that death does not mark the end of their friendship, she does not explain why their friendship is important. Whilst sixteenth century poetry did not contain specific, personal detail, the statements in this poem are not supported by any description or allusions to the reasons for which her bond with her husband was important to her. In comparison to the poems addressed to Catherine, it is evident that Eboissard does not play a role in Madeleine’s intellectual life and the inclusion of this poem is a mere formality. Indeed, Catherine’s sonnet, ‘A MES ESCRITS’, which is dedicated to her writing, uses terminology drawn from the semantic field of family, personifying her writings as her children. She establishes a closer poetic bond with them than Madeleine does with her late husband. Take, for example, the second stanza, in which Catherine, directly addressing her writings, forbids them from leaving her:

Et pource mes escrits, nul de vous ne s’efforce
De vouloir me laisser, car je le vous deffens.
Où voudriez-vous aller? He mes petits enfans,
Vous estes abillez d'une si foible escorce. (*O*, 293-94)

This is resonant of the parts of the des Roches’ and Gournay’s correspondence in which they talk about the possession of books and emphasize the value that dedicating or giving a book can have in terms of intellectual currency. Here, Catherine refers to her writing directly as her

grandchildren, ‘mes petits enfans’. This suggests that she sees her writing as biological offspring in the way that authors see their books as children but also situates them in a line that starts with her mother, moves onto her, and then leads to grandchildren, her writing, linking her work back to her mother and the education she provided for her. Her protective role is emphasized by the fact that her writings are only wrapped in a very weak papyrus. She forbids her writings from leaving her, questioning where else they would like to go, and telling them that none of them would try to leave. Catherine seems possessive over the children, which could be read as her rejecting the role of being a mother to biological children and asserting that instead of doing what is expected of her, she is choosing to focus on her literary creations instead. The tone of this poem is starkly different from that of Madeleine’s addressed to Eboissard, emphasizing that for the purposes of their poetry, the parts of their family which they deem to contribute to their intellectual personae are written about in such a way that clearly distinguishes them from those whose presence is merely incidental.

A similar pattern is seen in the ‘Tombeaux’ section of Gournay’s *Bouquet*. These occasional poems mark the death of various people, some of whom Gournay knew personally and some of whom she did not. The section includes poems dedicated to her biological parents and to her biological sister, Léonore. In the same way that Madeleine’s poem about Eboissard does not indicate that he played any role in her intellectual life, Gournay’s poem about her parents does not show any participation in her education nor contain any attempts to integrate them into her intellectual community via praise. Gournay describes their qualities in generic terms:

Ah pere justement vanté,
De foy, d'esprit, et d'équité!

Ah mere que d'un rare exemple,
Diane élisoit pour son Temple! (*OC*, 1839)

Gournay indicates that her father deserves the praise he receives for his faith, mind, and fairness, which is a general description of good qualities one would expect a father to display. She praises her mother by asserting her belief that Diana, Roman Goddess of Hunting, would have selected her to have a place in her temple which was granted to her by King Servius Tullius. A supporter of lower class citizens, Diana allowed slaves to stay in her temple. Gournay is therefore acknowledging her mother’s social class as well as suggesting that she

is worthy of being included in a specific group of people, praising her in general terms and drawing on a classical reference which would have been recognised by her readers. This factual description reads just like an engraving that one might find on a real tombstone, emphasizing that Gournay is drawing on generic conventions in order to acknowledge her parents' death; she does not attempt to go further and to express other, less conventional feelings. Even her use of conventions therefore reveals something about her relationship with her parents.

This is echoed by Gournay's epitaph addressed to her biological sister Léonore. She defines her sister in relation to her and by her status as a nun. The only other detail given that is specific to Léonore is the place of her burial; the poem itself is again characterised by ornate, conventional language of praise:

De Leonor de Jars sa sœur tres-digne Religieuse, et enterrée au Couvent de
Chantelou.

Convent de Leonor concierge,
Qui ses Vertus a peu celer:
Ou parle pour les reveler,
Ou n'enferme plus telle Vierge. (*OC*, 1841)

Gournay situates Léonore as the housekeeper or guardian of the convent ('concierge') in the first line, prior to stating that she was capable of hiding her virtues if she remained silent (line 2) or speaking which would reveal them (line 3). Gournay is therefore praising her in terms of her role as a nun and also in terms of her ability to conduct herself in a virtuous manner and to modify her self-presentation when necessary. She stresses the power of speech in terms of revealing her good qualities, before suggesting that death has freed Léonore from these responsibilities (line 4). This is a succinct description of a life cycle of a nun which could be applied to anybody in Léonore's situation: she performed her duties as a nun and then died. Gournay is therefore publicly acknowledging the death of her sister but like the description of her biological parents, she is presented as being entirely separate from Gournay. Interestingly, Gournay does not include poems about Montaigne or Léonore de Montaigne in this section, therefore we do not have examples of her writing specific epitaphs about her *famille d'alliance* with which we could compare the language of those about her biological family. It is telling that she composes poems about her *famille d'alliance* that

allow her to exploit conventions in order to compliment them intellectually and does not accord the same treatment to her biological family.

All of the poems discussed within this section involve the poet working out how to present her desired relationships and ideas within the framework offered by poetic trends of the time. We have seen that whilst all the women allude to various images and conceits that were commonplace in the poetry of the period, responding to and appropriating these is not their main focus; such images are certainly present, but this is more a symptom of the intellectual context in which they were working than a conscious choice. Debora Lesko Baker describes Labé's poetry as 'a fundamental reassertion of women's capacity for self-expression and a crucial restructuring of the identity of the traditional Renaissance speaker.'¹⁶³ I cite this here because the des Roches and Gournay do not use the love poetry genre in the same way as Labé, that is to say they do not reverse the position of the speaker and the beloved in order to challenge identity and gender norms in poetry, building directly on work done by male poets in the process. They undeniably assert the belief they have in common with Labé, namely that women are capable and indeed should be educated and write poetry, yet this manifests itself in a different, less uniform way in their occasional poetry. The current status of Labé as a canonical author shows great progress, although this is largely determined by the fact that she so closely responded to a male-dominated tradition and that this kind of 'personal' poetry has enjoyed enduring popularity over time. Now I think it is time to consider other poets, both male and female, whose is not classified as lyric, in more detail. This chapter has focused on just one theme of their poetry, how they represent intellectual kinship, and we have seen how they succeed in doing so in spite of the constraints placed upon them by the genre, conventions, and society.

¹⁶³ Baker, *The Subject of Desire*, 5

Conclusion

Is it now possible to grant the question of the definition of intellectual kinship with a definitive answer? In view of the fact that existing scholarship in this area tends to assume a common understanding of this concept or at best provide a loose definition drawn from the case studies on which the work is based, I hesitate to give an affirmative answer to this question. Certainly, we have seen that in presenting their familial bonds, the des Roches and Gournay are far more similar than they are different. Aside from the obvious differences between their situations, namely the des Roches's relationship as biological mother and daughter and the fact that Gournay lacks any such biological relationships that she is able to exploit in her intellectual life, their familial bonds are all built on praising one another for their intellectual capabilities, exchanging knowledge and material, literary objects, and using writing to provide a fixed presentation of their relationships for the reading public, immortalising them in literary history.

Arguably, if I were to remove their names from this description, this could function as a definition of the term. Indeed, there are several other relationships in French literary history which could be placed under this kind of umbrella term. This would carve out a new category of analysis in the friendship tradition, creating a new discourse focused on examples of intellectual kinship. For instance, nobody has ever discussed the des Roches and Gournay in relation to Madame de Sévigné and her daughter, yet the way in which Sévigné's exchanges replace the role that her daughter's husband should be playing in her life would lead to a fruitful direct comparison with the des Roches's relationship and a less direct yet nonetheless productive comparison with Gournay's intellectual circle, for she too uses family members, albeit adopted ones, to fill roles which would otherwise remain empty. Even looking at a single signature already reveals a number of parallels that could be drawn: 'Adieu, ma chère enfant, l'unique passion de mon cœur, le plaisir et la douleur de ma vie. Aimez-moi toujours, c'est la seule chose qui peut me donner de la consolation.'¹⁶⁴

Although intellectual kinship has always been discussed, it has been granted comparatively little attention in comparison to friendships between men and even friendships between women. However, such labelling can be damaging and ignore the variety and richness of individual relationships by forcing them into boxes for the sake of organisation in literary studies. Would any definition of the *famille d'alliance* be able to include relationships

¹⁶⁴ Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, ed. by Bernard Raffalli (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1976), 73-74

such as that of the des Roches, which stems from a biological relationship as opposed to being actively sought out by its participants from the beginning? As I have shown, the biological aspect of their relationship is rarely mentioned and almost always appears to be merely incidental, yet if a definition of *famille d'alliance* were to be strictly applied in their case, it would exclude them because they did not have to go through the process of seeking each other out and agreeing to form a bond of *d'alliance*. And what of cases such as that of Gournay and van Schurman, whereby there is no remaining evidence of the pair expressing affection towards each other in familial terms, yet their own writings display all the features of a *famille d'alliance* situation apart from the use of relevant terminology and other sources indicate that such a conversation did happen? Could it be considered anachronistic to retrospectively apply such terminology to these relationships when the writers did not use it themselves, even if modern scholars might find it helpful or an interesting intellectual exercise? Instead, it is perhaps more productive to use the term intellectual kinship, for this does not specify whether or not a relationship is biological or chosen nor does it give precise details pertaining to the kind of family members that can be included.

Let us return briefly to our two case studies in order to ascertain whether or not we can begin to categorise them in the same way. The question of intellectual community has recurred throughout my thesis, not least because fostering and participating in scholarly groups was a common purpose in the Republic of Letters. This is also of particular interest here because the way in which the des Roches and Gournay engage with the idea of community is determined by their respective starting points. The des Roches have a constant, automatic community of two, their mother-daughter bond, although the educational opportunities that Madeleine offers Catherine and their decision to forge a writing career together render their situation remarkable. When they reach out to women, the attendees at their salon, publishers, and general readers in order to build other intellectual communities, they do so as a pair, supplementing their private community. They do not attempt to classify any new relationships that they form in familial terms nor do they speak of their other family members in that way. This, combined with the constant textual reminders that they are mother and daughter, suggests that family is only relevant to them insofar as it allows them to publish when they might not have been able to otherwise and also to add value to their relationship: due to their intellectual capabilities, they are able to overcome the standard expectations for a mother and a daughter and set their own criteria.

Gournay's case is different from that of the des Roches, with her trajectory being determined by the fact that her biological family discouraged her from learning and offered

almost no opportunities or sense of intellectual community. Instead of publishing with a parental figure like Catherine, Gournay's literary identity is never stable. She is often defined by her role as Montaigne's editor and *fille d'alliance* or as a single author in her own right. She is therefore a lone agent or someone who had to seek an association as opposed to gaining one naturally via birth; this need to foster a close, personal community is also seen in how she interacts with Lipsius, van Schurman, and Léonore de Montaigne. Gournay's self-presentation is therefore inconsistent; sometimes she is defined in relation to others, sometimes she is just a single woman writer. This is a key difference between her and the des Roches, who are treated as a pair both by their peers and by literary history.

It is difficult to say whether the des Roches or Gournay are more successful as writers and the extent to which this is determined by their intellectual kinship. The des Roches certainly never experienced the same level of criticism and mockery as Gournay did during their lifetime, but Gournay features far more prominently in recent scholarship, albeit often in relation to Montaigne. Association with each other appears to have shielded the des Roches from issues faced by Gournay during their lifetime, yet having such a canonical *père d'alliance* means that Gournay was never quite forgotten from literary history, even if it is only recently that she has really begun to be seen as a writer in her own right again. The fact that much of the work that has been done on the des Roches focuses on Catherine's interaction with Pasquier in *La Puce* suggests also that being linked to a male literary figure is an indicator of the likelihood that a woman will be written about in scholarship in the same way that a writer's choice of genre can determine future literary success. This is a key factor that I did not anticipate when I began this project; the fact that the des Roches and Gournay both wrote poetry which would predominantly be classed as occasional is a clear reason for which their work has not been on the radar of mainstream poetry scholarship in comparison to love poetry, which is something which is still familiar to a twenty first century readership in ways that occasional poetry is not. This is also true of correspondence, for modern readers do not tend to choose letters over novels, plays, or poetry. Whilst these genres allowed the des Roches and Gournay to participate in the literary world during their lifetime, these genres do not feature as much as they perhaps should in modern scholarship. Ultimately, though, the authors all used familial associations to enhance their writing and to gain intellectual opportunities and as I have shown, their work bears the marks of this. The fact that they were even able to publish and that their associations enabled them to take part in direct exchanges with publishers, publicly dedicate texts to their intellectual kin, and praise them shows not

only that they were able to achieve this in spite of their gender but also that consequently, their texts bear witness to the process they underwent in forming the very intellectual bonds that made this possible.

Evaluating their success as authors must also take into account the role played by other factors, namely social class, historical context, geography, and educational opportunities. It is clear that the des Roches and Gournay faced the same common set of issues relating to contemporaneous attitudes towards women, namely the lack of educational opportunities which would enable them to participate fully in intellectual life and the difficulties of doing so when women were supposed to remain silent in public and subordinate to men. We have seen that their works engage closely with these ideas and that simply just by writing and showing awareness of this, they are able to publicly challenge these views. They clearly use their links to other intellectuals to legitimize their position in public, intellectual spaces.

Aside from their gender, though, the des Roches and Gournay were writing in very different circumstances. The des Roches moved in a bourgeois circle in which they were able to populate their Poitiers salon with influential lawyers, civil servants, and writers, which was made possible in part by the connections offered by Madeleine's husband. Madeleine directed Catherine's education, offering her intellectual opportunities and connections which enabled her to function on the same level as her male counterparts. Gournay's trajectory is different; an autodidact who made herself responsible for her own education in response to her parents' lack of investment in her intellectual development as a result of her mother's belief that women did not need to be highly educated, she moved from her family's provincial home in Gournay-sur-Aronde to Paris where she kept her own salon. Often a subject of ridicule by her contemporaries due to her comparative lack of money, status, and contacts, Gournay faced negative criticism and satirical pamphlets directed at her and her work. She therefore had to work harder in acquiring the educational skills and social advantages that the des Roches already enjoyed. This is reflected in the way in which the des Roches focus on themselves as mother and daughter whereas in Gournay's work, we are privy to the process via which she attempts to acquire her education and intellectual kin. There is no evidence to suggest that she knew the work of the des Roches, so it is impossible to say with any certainty whether or not she was familiar with their relationship or used it as a model.

Writing about intellectual kinship involves creating a permanent record of the nature of the relationship, implicating both the author and the participant who is being written about.

Regardless of the genre, this process has the same basic components: whether they are writing letters or poetry, the des Roches and Gournay not only work within the conventions of the genre but also engage closely with them, adapting them to suit their own purposes. In both their correspondence and their poetry, they replace male examples and modify male rhetoric so that they are able to write about their own relationships convincingly in a mould that was not originally conceived for women writing about intellectual kin. This allows them to express what they wish to say in a way which is presented acceptably for their peers as well as to subtly challenge accepted norms. These techniques are, however, a reminder that no matter what they did, they could not change the fundamental obstacle to being treated on the same level as their male peers. Had this been possible, their work would not display the plethora of ways in which they had to continue to justify their presence and decision to write.

Using genre in this way is another common aspect shared by the des Roches and Gournay, but although their methodology is the same, the product thereof is shaped by their individual views and circumstances. This leads us back to the problem of finding a way which will allow us to talk about intellectual kinship without excluding those who do not meet a stringent set of criteria, for this would simply reproduce the same problematic pattern that has dominated the history of literary friendship until recent years, albeit with a different set of authors being omitted. In the future, I hope that the growing number of studies about friendships which do not correspond to the traditional, male-male perfect friendship will continue to stimulate interest in the friendships they take as their case studies. Further work on understudied relationships should lead to an increase in variety in the ideas which are most commonly associated with the idea of friendship. If we are able to fully move away from the consensus that the Aristotelian perfect friendship was the ideal and that nothing else was worthy of being recorded or studied, we may no longer need to define the *famille d'alliance*, for there will not be one single, dominant, exclusionary definition which means that anything else which deviates from this norm requires a separate category of its own. In a sense, we have begun to do what Christine de Pizan and Catherine des Roches did in compiling their catalogues of famous women. In pointing out that there are exceptions to the rule that can be grouped together due to having something fundamental in common, in this case gender, whilst still acknowledging the uniqueness of each example, Christine and Catherine started a dialogue which still continues today.

The more studies about ‘imperfect’ friendships that appear, the more contributions that our own, current catalogue will gain. To return to Joan Scott’s work about gender as a category of analysis, I would say that in terms of scholarship about intellectual kinship in

early modern France, we are currently at the same stage as Scott argues feminist scholarship was before scholars began to consider gender as a category of analysis in 1986:

It requires analysis not only of the relationship between male and female experience in the past but also of the connections between past history and current historical practice. How does gender work in human social relationships? How does gender give meaning to the organization and perception of historical knowledge? The answers depend on gender as an analytic category.¹⁶⁵

This suggests that in order to progress further, we must study not only intellectual kinship but also how this relates to friendship discourse, the context in which the writers in question formed these relationships, and how this can be talked about within the framework of an analytic category which works in the same way that gender does.

To conclude, I return to the beginning of my thesis in two ways. First, let us think again about Facebook, which, as we can now see, functions in another similar way to friendship in early modern France: Facebook hosts billions of digital friendships, yet it would be a huge task for scholars to study a number of these friendships and develop categories of analysis based on the constraints of Facebook itself and the society in which the participants in these relationships exist, classing relationships as, for instance, ‘Romantic’, ‘Best friends’, ‘Schoolfriends’, ‘Acquaintances’, etc. This is in essence what I have tried to do with the *famille d’alliance*, highlighting that it is imperative that we find a system which allows for organisation and coherence whilst according enough attention to the individuality and complexity of each individual relationship and accounting for the fact that the chosen medium, be it digital or material, may not encompass all aspects of a given friendship and that it may actually tell us more about the society in which the relationship was conceived than the relationship itself.

Finally, I turn to the following poem, written by François La Mothe Le Vayer (fils) after Gournay’s death. This is included as part of the appendices of Bertelà’s edition of *Bourquet de Pinde*, which contains a series of eleven poems dedicated to Gournay after her death.¹⁶⁶ To my knowledge, no modern scholar has written a detailed analysis of any of these poems, which, like the poems discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, are decidedly

¹⁶⁵ Scot, *Gender*, 1055

¹⁶⁶ Bertelà, 175-180

occasional poems. I do not wish to comment on this poem in detail; I include it here in order to finish my thesis by reiterating that there is a lot of material which has never been studied in any detail about Gournay and other early modern writers which reveals how another intellectual figure thought about her and how the expression of these thoughts can be mapped onto the contemporaneous intellectual context. Like the other ten poems in this section, Le Vayer's sonnet gives a marked positive impression of Gournay, something which would make for an interesting case study in future scholarship about occasional poetry and intellectual kinship:

Sur Mademoiselle de Gournay, et sur son livre intitule, *Les Advis*, etc...

Sonnet

L'Astre qui présidoit au point de sa naissance
A la favoriser épuisa ses efforts,
Pour nous montrer en elle une illustre alliance
Des beautez de l'esprit et de celle du corps.

Le Ciel luy departit des plus riches tresprs,
Elle les cultiva de toute sa puissance,
Et l'on ne vid jamais avecque la science
L'humilité former de si charmants accords.

Critique iniurieux, vain pedant, monstre infame.
Toy qui crois pour estre homme, estre plus qu'une femme,
Abbaisse ton orgueil, escoute ses Advis.

Ton Platon, ton Seneque, et ces autres Idoles
qu'avec tant de respect encensent tes escoles,
Tireroient vanité de les avoir suivis.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ ibid, 178

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