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Valerie Nao Yoshimura

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Extrait de l'article

Studies of *La Princesse de Clèves* (1678) have long debated the verisimilitude of the marital confession or the potential feminism discernible in Mme de Clèves' famous retreat. Yet little critical mention is made of the importance of secrecy, confidence and gossip in this novel, and the myriad ways in which they create and undermine social boundaries. Whether between kings and courtiers, between confidants and rivals, or between family and friends, social boundaries create order through separation. Endowed with an almost mythical sense of natural permanence and solidity, they are nonetheless far more permeable than is imagined. In this essay I aim to demonstrate how the circulation of secrets creates and permeates seemingly solid social boundaries and further engenders new relationships that simultaneously reshape and affirm the fictive court community of *La Princesse de Clèves*. I focus my discussion on the tale of Sancerre and Mme de Tournon (which Monsieur de Clèves recounts at the beginning of Part II of the novel) to illustrate in microcosm the conventions and consequences of the culture of secrecy at court.

[Lire la suite \(Société d'études pluridisciplinaires du dix-septième français\)](#)