



Center for the History of Women Philosophers and Scientists  
Paderborn University, Germany

## *Disinterested Love/Friendship* in Anne-Thérèse de Marguenat de Courcelles, Marquise de Lambert (1647–1733)

John J. Conley

Loyola University of Maryland

For Lambert, love constitutes the highest pleasure in human life. Whereas other pleasures (such as music and cuisine) only arise in the immediate presence of the source of pleasure, the pleasure of love can surface and last even in the long-term absence of the beloved. Using the faculties of memory and imagination, the sentiment of love can transfix the will of the lover. Freed from passion, the highest form of love is disinterested friendship. In this state the friends abandon the selfish desire for conquest and approval; they altruistically focus on the needs of the beloved other. Passion is subordinated to a benign and rational will. Unlike the classical authors she has studied, Madame de Lambert argues that it is possible for members of the opposite sex to enjoy this type of intellectual, disinterested friendship.

Primary Source:

Lambert, Anne-Thérèse de Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de 1990. *Oeuvres*. Grandroute, Robert (ed.). Paris: Champion.

### **Secondary Sources:**

Barth-Cao Danh, Michèle 2002. *La philosophie cognitive et morale d'Anne-Thérèse de Lambert, 1647-1733: La volonté d'être*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Conley, John J. Anne-Thérèse Marguenat de Courcelles, marquise de Lambert (1647–1733), in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. URL: [www.iep.utm.edu/lamberta/](http://www.iep.utm.edu/lamberta/) [22|10|2018].

Hayes, Julie Candler 2010. Friendship and the Female Moralist, in *Studies in Eighteenth-*

*Century Culture* 39, 171–189.

Hine, Ellen McNiven 1973. *Madame de Lambert, her Sources and her Circle*. Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation.

Marchal, Roger 1991. *Madame de Lambert et son milieu*. Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation.

**Keywords:**

friendship, love, passion, will, disinterested love