

## Gower's Description of the Game of Love

In an extension of the metaphor used by courtly love, that there is a “religion” of love, Gower has his lover, Amans, make his confession to a priest of love, Genius. The sins they discuss are based on the seven deadly sins, but they are focused on the way a lover might sin against his lady, for instance by being idle or sleepy and not diligent in his service. Amans tells Genius a list of all the activities that he does to entertain his lady, in order to prove that he is not an idle or sleepy lover.

### Confessio Sections to Assign:

- Prologue Against Idleness (ff. 5r; 6r-6v / *Confessio* IV, lines 1114-1121; 1165-1211)- In this passage Amans describes how love-smitten he is, and how focused he is on staying near his lady, which requires him to be entertaining. He thinks, talks, sings, goes out riding with her. He will even play with her dog or her bird to stay near her.
- Prologue Against Somnolence (f. 81v / *Confessio* IV, lines 2778-2797)- In this passage Amans lists the activities that Stevens calls the game of love. He is prepared to join his lady and her friends in caroling and dancing, casting dice to tell fortunes, asking love questions, and reading aloud famous love poems.

### Discussion points:

- Which of these activities would you say are still part of our own “game of love?”
- The medieval game of love assumes that all the participants are in love with someone, or could potentially be in love with someone. The ability to fall in love and to love deeply is considered a desirable character trait— it is a sign of a noble heart. Do we still think that way?
- Amans is making a list of these activities to prove he is not a negligent lover, but does he appear to be an exemplary lover? What parts of the text lead you to think he is good at it or not?



Amans confessing his love-sins to Genius.  
Pierpont Morgan MS 126, Fol. 009a  
(<http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/41/77039>)

### Sources:

Stevens, John. “Chapter Nine: The Game of Love” in *Music & Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*. Cambridge Studies in Music. Edited by John Stevens and Peter le Huray, 154-202. New York: Cambridge UP, 1979. 1961.

—I created a PDF that condenses this chapter for my students. Primarily I have shortened it where Stevens gives multiple examples. I also provided translations of the Middle English quotes in popup comments in the PDF.

Gower, John. *John Gower: Confessio Amantis*. Vol. 2. Teams Middle English Text Series. Edited by Russell A. Peck Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006. [Book IV is available online at:

<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/peck-gower-confessio-amantis-book-4> ]

—If you are assigning students to read the Middle English outside of class, use this version. If you are going to teach these passages as an in-class exercise, you may want to use the enclosed pdf I have prepared, which has Modern and Middle English side by side.

## Description of the Love Activities a Lover must be prepared to perform for his lady.

*From the Prologue Against Idleness in Book IV of John Gower's Confessio Amantis (The Confession of the Lover)*

1114	<b>Amans (The Lover):</b> Nay good father, I give a gift as toward love, as by my will, all idle was I never yet nor never shall, while I may live.	<b>Amans:</b> "Nay, fader, God I give a gifte, That toward love, as be mi wit, Al ydel was I nevere yit, Ne nevere schal, whil I mai go."
1121	<b>Genius (The Confessor):</b> When? Son, tell me. So what have you done of busy-ship towards love and towards ladyship for her who is your lady. . .	<b>Genius:</b> "Now, sone, tell me thanne so, What hast thou don of besischipe To love and to the ladischipe Of hire which thi ladi is?" [ . . ]
1170	<b>Amans:</b> My eye follows her about, Whatever she wishes to do, so do I When she will sit, I kneel by her When she stands, then will I stand. But when she takes her work in hand Of weaving or embroidery Then can I not but gaze and muse On her long and slender fingers. And now I think, and now I talk, And now I sing, and now I sigh. And thus I make my countenance fit the situation. And if it befall, for a time, That she doesn't wish to be with me, But to occupy herself with other things, Then I make up reasons to tarry near her To draw forth the long day. For I am loath to depart from her And then I am so simple of bearing, That I feign some disport I play with her little dog Now on the bed, now on the ground. Now with her birds in their cage. For there is no page so young, Nor any chamber maid so simple	<b>Amans:</b> Min yhe folweth hire aboute, What so sche wole so wol I, Whan sche wol sitte, I knele by, And whan sche stant, than wol I stonde. Bot whan sche takth hir werk on honde Of wevinge or enbrouderie, Than can I nocht bot muse and prie Upon hir fingres longe and smale, And now I thenke, and now I tale, And now I singe, and now I sike, And thus mi contenance I pike. And if it falle, as for a time Hir liketh nocht abide bi me, Bot besien hire on other thinges, Than make I othre tariinges To dreche forth the longe dai, For me is loth departe away. And thanne I am so simple of port, That for to feigne som desport I pleie with hire litel hound Now on the bedd, now on the ground, Now with hir briddes in the cage; For ther is non so litel page, Ne yit so simple a chamberere, That I ne make hem alle chere, Al for thei scholde speke wel. Thus mow ye sen mi besi whiel, That goth nocht ydeliche aboute.
1195	That I do not make them all good cheer, Just so they will speak well of me (to her). Thus you must see my busy wheel that spins around never idly.	That I ne make hem alle chere, Al for thei scholde speke wel. Thus mow ye sen mi besi whiel, That goth nocht ydeliche aboute.
1211	And if she wishes to ride out On pilgrimage or to another place, I come, even though I am not asked. And I take her in my arms aloft To set her in her saddle softly. And so forth lead her by the bridle For I would not want to be idle. And if she wishes to ride in a chair, Whenever I am aware of that I quickly prepare to ride Right beside the chair's side. And as I may, I speak from time to time, And at other times I sing a song, Which Ovid made in his book. . .	And if hir list to riden oute On pelrinage or other stede, I come, thogh I be nocht bede, And take hire in min arm alofte And sette hire in hire sadel softe, And so forth lede hire be the bridel, For that I wolde nocht ben ydel. And if hire list to ride in char, And thanne I mai therof be war, Anon I schape me to ryde Riht evene be the chares side; And as I mai, I speke among, And otherwhile I singe a song, Which Ovide in his bokes made [ . . . ]

**Amans:**

2778 . . . When she wishes to stay awake at night  
To carol and dance in her chamber  
I think I may have no greater reward  
Than having her hand in mine,  
Greater than if I had won a King's lands.  
For when I my hold her hand  
With such gladness I dance and skip  
I think that I am not touching the floor.  
The deer that runs on the moor  
Is then not as light as I am.  
So you must understand, on that account,  
For that time, I hate sleep.  
And when it falls otherwise,  
So that she does not want to dance,  
But on the dice to cast chances  
2797 Or ask some love questions,  
Or anything that she pleases to command me—  
To read and hear of Troilus  
Exactly as she wishes, or this way, or that,  
I am all ready to consent.

**Amans:**

[ . . . ] That whanne hir list on nyhtes wake  
In chambre as to carole and daunce,  
Me thenkth I mai me more avaunce,  
If I mai gon upon hir hond,  
Thanne if I wonne a kinges lond.  
For whanne I mai hire hand beclippe,  
With such gladnesse I daunce and skippe  
Me thenkth I touche noght the flor.  
The ro, which renneth on the mor,  
Is thanne noght so lyht as I.  
So mow ye witen wel forthi,  
That for the time slep I hate.  
And whanne it falleth othergate,  
So that hire like noght to daunce,  
Bot on the dees to caste chaunce  
Or axe of love som demande,  
Or elles that hir list comaunde  
To rede and here of Troilus,  
Riht as sche wole or so or thus,  
I am al redi to consente.

## The Findern Manuscript / CUL Ff.1.6 (Late 15<sup>th</sup> to early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)

is a scrapbook of secular Middle English literature created by gentry families and friends in and around rural Derbyshire. It is an archaeological artifact that records some signs of the Finderns' game of love. It shows us that they borrowed books and copied their favorite bits of Gower and Chaucer into homemade paper booklets. They used these booklets for reading aloud to their family and friends. They left extra pages in these booklets so that they could take up some of the love topics in the works, and add poems and songs debating these topics—two-dozen of these appear to have been written by the Findern's gentry creators.

The manuscript is a paper quarto originally created as 9 to 11 booklets. These booklets circulated separately before being bound into a single volume at a later time. They contain over 40 different hands, some of whom sign their names or give themselves sobriquets. By looking at the Findern coterie's selection of love texts and their insertion of lyrics and musical fragments into their booklets, we can see signs of how the game of love can be played through questions, conversation, games, poetry, and songs. (The Finderns even copied Aman's descriptions of these activities from the *Confessio*.) Their game of love gave the Finderns a way to show their wit and worth—performing these activities well gave the participants a way to represent themselves to their peers in a positive light.

**An example: Debating the War of the Sexes:** One of the Findern's booklets begins with Richard Roos' ME translation of *La Belle Dame sans Mercy* (The beautiful woman without mercy.) In it, the would-be lover, Amans, tries to woo the beautiful lady at a dance. They debate many of the common love questions. For instance, Amans argues that her beauty has forced him to love her, and so she owes him her love. The Lady replies that what his eyes gaze on has nothing to do with her, and she owes him nothing. The Finderns take up this lively debate in several lyrics that they add after Roos's poem.

### Lyrics to Assign:

- "Some time I loved as ye may see" (no. 32, ff. 136v-137r)—is a carol (a popular song form) that takes up Aman's view. The author has signed the lyric with the sobriquet "Amen pur charyte," possibly a family or personal motto.
- "Some time I loved so do I yet" (no. 39, f. 139v)—is a response to the first carol, which answers from the Lady's viewpoint. It is also in carol form and even has a musical incipit on the page. Both of these carols are probably *contrafacta* (poems written to a well known tune). This author signed with the sobriquet, "Desormais."
- "Now would I fain" (no 34, f137v)—is a song that appears in another manuscript with music. In it a male lover wishes that his lady would love him as much as he loves her. However, he reports that she has told him, "seldom seen is soon forgotten"—that he will soon recover from this rejection. It is signed, "A god when."

### Make your own Findern Booklet (Manuscript Study/Poetry Assignment):

Each group of 4 students will create a booklet: **1).** Choose a "base" text to which you will all respond. (A text covered in class or a modern work that you all know. *The Hunger Games?* *Harry Potter?*) **2).** Fold 11x17 paper twice and cut open the edges to make a booklet. **3).** Copy your "base" text into the booklet and talk about the different viewpoints each of you will take. **4).** Each of you adds your own poem or "filked" song lyric to the booklet. Extra points if you manage to borrow key words from the base text and/or your group member's poems.

### Discussion points:

- What aspects of these lyrics seem game-like? Is there a way to read them as authentic expressions of emotion? How does this make us rethink our assumption of public and private? (For instance, what about the sobriquets?)
- People speculate about whether women wrote some of the lyrics in the Findern, but we don't know for sure. How do the male and female voices in the lyrics differ? Does that give us any clues as to the author's genders?
- The two carols are metrically identical, so they might have been sung to the same tune. How do you think that might influence the audience's reception of it? What other repetitions/responses do you find that tie the two carols together?
- How does the music play into our understanding of these three songs?
- Do you think "Now Would I Fain" was originally written as a continuation of this debate?

### Sources:

- My transcription of the lyrics with glosses follows this handout.
- Musical performance of "Now Would I Fain" on *English Ayres* by Gustav Holst is available online at: [https://youtu.be/RYGsG\\_pVmBo](https://youtu.be/RYGsG_pVmBo)
- Beadle, Richard, and A. E. B. Owen, eds. *The Findern Manuscript: Cambridge University Library Ms Ff.1.6*. London: The Scholars Press, 1977.

## Playing the King Who Cannot Lie

The Findern MS has an excerpt from a Romance about Alexander called “Les Voeux du Paon” (The Vows of the Peacock.) Their Middle English translation of the text includes a description of five noble characters playing a medieval version of “Truth or Dare.” The “king” in the game gets to ask each of the other players questions, and they must answer truthfully. Of course, like modern games of this sort, everyone understands that these will be questions that center around romantic love. The trick to the medieval game is that if the king’s questions are too invasive or unkind, he will be paid back when all of the other players get to ask him/her questions. Nora Corrigan has worked out a quick version of the game as an introduction to the idea that love literature/conversation/debate is often used as a game in the Middle Ages. With four members in each group, it takes about 10-15 minutes for everyone to have a chance to be the “king.” (She has kindly allowed me to share her instructions below.)

### Classroom Rules for “Le roi qui ne ment” (The King Who Cannot Lie) by Nora Corrigan, Mississippi University for Women

Originally from: “Like Medieval Cards against Humanity: Adapting *Le roi qui ne ment* for the British Literature Survey.” IMC, Kalamazoo 2017. (Reproduced with the author’s permission, July 2017)

1. Students should form small groups. Four to five students per group is ideal; all groups must have at LEAST three.
2. Each group selects a “king.” The king poses a question from the list of *demandes*, or makes up a question along similar lines; all other players must answer in turn *and explain the reasoning behind his or her answer*.
3. After all the players have given their answers, the king chooses the best answer and explanation. That player then becomes the new king.

#### Sample Demandes D’Amour

The first eight questions are adapted from the Middle English *Demaundes off Love* (ed. W.L. Braekman, Brussels: Omirel, 1982); the last two are adapted from examples in Richard Firth Green’s “*Le Roi Qui Ni Ment* and Aristocratic Courtship” (in *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context*, eds. Keith Busby and Erik Kooper, Utrecht: John Benjamins, 1990, pp. 211-25).

- Which is more important in love, good looks or intelligence?
- Would you rather see your beloved every day, but be uncertain whether they really love you, or see your beloved only rarely, but be certain of their love?
- Which better, *looking* at the person you love or thinking about them?
- Would you rather marry the person your best friend loves, or have your best friend marry the person *you* love?
- Does love have more good in it, or more evil?
- If your lover has said they will kiss you only ten times, and never again for the rest of your life, would you take all ten kisses at once, or would you wait?
- You’re in a boat with two people. One of them loves you, but you don’t love them; *you* love the other person, but they don’t love you. The boat capsizes. Which of the two would you save?
- Is jealousy in love ever a good thing?
- Would you rather possess your lover from the waist up or the waist down?
- A lady takes off the flower she is wearing and gives it to one of her admirers; she replaces it with a flower given to her by her other admirer. Which of them does she love more?

#### Discussion points:

- What modern games do you know that are like this? Do you know fortune-telling games that foretell who you like or who you will marry? (I bring a paper fortune teller, sometimes called a cootie catcher or whirlybird. They have a good time telling me about the games they know and express surprise that linking love/games/fortune goes back to the Middle Ages.
- Do you think that everyone in your group told the truth? Why might one “assume a position?”
- Where do you see questions like this in our readings? (For instance Chaucer’s “Knight’s Tale”).

**Sometyme y loued as ye may see (136v–137r)**

Burden: Who so lyst to loue god send hym right good spede

Sometyme y loued as ye may see  
A goodlyer ther myght none be  
Here Womanhede in all degre  
ffull well she quytt my mede° *gave me a reward*  
—Wo so lyst. . .

Unto the tyme vpon a day  
To sone ther fill a gret affray° *commotion*  
She badde me walke forth on my way  
On me she gaff none hede° *to me she gave no heed*

I askid the cause why and wherfor  
She displeside was *with* me so sore  
She wold nat tell but kepe in store° *kept to herself*  
Pardy it was no nede

Ffor if y hadde hure displeased  
In word or ded or hire greued  
Than if she hadde before meved° *gone*  
She hadd cause in dede

But well y wote° y hadd nat done *know*  
hure to displese but in grete mone  
She hath me left and ys a gone  
Ffor sorwe my hert doth blede

Some tyme she wold to me complayne  
yff she had felt dysease or payne  
Now fele y nought but grete disdayne  
Allas what is youre rede° *advice*

Shall y leue of° and let hure go *off*  
Nay never the rathere will y do so  
Yet though vnkyndnesse do me wo  
Hure will y loue and drede

Some hope that whan she knowith the case  
Y trust to god that withyne short spase  
She will me take a gayne to grace° *again into her good will*  
Than haue y well a bydde° *abided, waited*

And for trew louers shall y pray  
That ther ladyes fro day to day  
may them rewarde so that they may  
With ioy there lyues lede.° *lives lead*

*Amen pur Charyte*

**Sometyme Y loud, so do Y yut (139v)**

Burden: Vp son and mery wether Somer draweth nere

Sometyme Y loud, so do Y yut  
 In stedfast wyse and not to flit  
 But in danger my loue was knyght  
 A pitous thyng to hire

For when Y offrid<sup>o</sup> my seruice *offered*  
 I to obbey in humble wyse  
 As fer ferth<sup>o</sup> as Y coude deuise *as far forth*  
 In contynauce and chere

Grete payne for nought Y dude endure  
 Al for that wyckid creature  
 He and no mo Y you ensur  
 Ouerthrew al my mater<sup>o</sup> *matter, affair*

But now, Y thancke of hys sond<sup>o</sup> *of his sending (i.e. message)*  
 I am ascapid from his band<sup>o</sup> *bond, something used to bind*  
 And fre to pas by se and land  
 And sure fro yere to yere

Now may Y ete drynke and play  
 Walke vp and doune fro day to day  
 And herkyn<sup>o</sup> what this louers say *hearken, hear*  
 And laugh at there maner

When Y shal slepe Y haue good rest  
 Somtyme Y had not altherbest  
 But ar<sup>o</sup> that Y cam to this fest *ere, before*  
 Y bought hit al to dere<sup>o</sup> *dear, expensively*

Al that affray<sup>o</sup> ys clene agoo *commotion; is completely gone*  
 Not only that but many mo  
 And sith Y am ascapid so  
 I thencke to hold me here

But all the true<sup>o</sup> that suffren smert *true [lovers]*  
 I wold thay sped lyke yure desert<sup>o</sup> *they achieved your reward [ie their lovers escape them]*  
 That thay myght synge with mery hert  
 This song with vs in fere<sup>o</sup> *in company together*

*Desormais*

**Now wold y fayne sum merthis make (f. 137v)**

Now wold I fayne<sup>o</sup> sum merthis make *gladly*  
 All oneh<sup>o</sup> ffor my ladys sake *only*  
 and hit wold be  
 But nowe I am so fferr<sup>o</sup> from hir • hit will nat be *far*

Thogh I be long out of your sight  
 I am your man both day *and* night  
 and so will be  
 Wherefor wold god as I love hir that she lovid me

When she is mery than am I glad  
 When she is sory then am I sad  
 and cause whi  
 ffor he lovith not that loveth hir • as well as I

She sayth that she hath seen hit wreten<sup>o</sup> *written*  
 That seldyn sayn<sup>o</sup> is soon for yeten<sup>o</sup> *seldome seen; forgotten*  
 hit is not so  
 ffor in good feith save oneh hir I love no moo

Wherefor I pray both night *and* day  
 That she may cast care away  
 and leve mi rest  
 And ever more wher so ere she be to love hir best

And I to hir for to be true  
 And never chaung<sup>o</sup> hir for noon new *exchange*  
 un to myn end  
 And that I may in hir *servise* forevyr amend

*A god when*

*one leaf cancelled*

Whe so best to lone god sende hom righte good speede  
Some tyme y lovede as ye may see  
A gadther ther myghte none be  
Here womanhode in all degre  
Hatt well she gnytt my mede

¶ In to the tyme upon a day  
To lone ther fill a greet affray  
She hadde me walke forth on my way  
On me she gaff none heed  
Was so lyst 20

¶ I asked the cause why and wherfor  
She displeide was w<sup>th</sup> me so fore  
She wold nat tell hit kepe in store  
Purdey it was no mede  
Was so lyst 20

¶ For if y hadde hym displeysed  
In word or dede or hir greued  
Ther if she hadde before meded  
She hadde cause in dede  
Was so lyst 20

¶ But well y wote y hadde nat done  
Him to displese but in grete mone  
She hath me left and ys a gone  
For forwe my hert. Deth she dede  
Was so lyst 20

¶ Some tyme she wold to me complaine  
Yff she had felt dyscase or payne  
Now fele y nought but grete dysdaine  
Alas what is yowr rede  
Was so lyst 20

Shall y love of and let him go  
May new the rather will y do  
yet though vntydnesse do me the  
hind will y love and deade

Two so liff / 27

Some hope that when the hnd with the case  
y eruge to god that withyng short spase  
Will we take a myne to grace  
Then hane y well a byde

Two so liff / 27

And for trew lovers shall y pray  
That their ladies few day to day  
May them remede so that they may  
With ioy char hines lede

Two so liff / 27

Amen your charge

Such fortune hath me be that with my wif  
The love you best callis to ~~me~~  
you to come and tiddo q' d' d' d'  
to my d' d' d' and to my d' d' d'

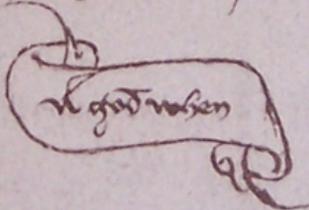
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Handwritten marginalia on the left side of the page, including the word "End" at the bottom.



I had wold I fayne sum myght make  
 Hit ouer for my lady sake \_\_\_\_\_ and hit wold be  
 But now I am so fere from hit. hit will nat be  
 Though I be long out of your sight  
 I am your man both day & nyght \_\_\_\_\_ And so will be  
 Whether wold god as I lone hit that she londe me  
 When she is merry than am I glad  
 When she is sad then am I sad \_\_\_\_\_ And canse aron  
 For he leueth nat that londe hit. as well as I.  
 She saith that she hath oren hit nyghten  
 That deloyd fayn is foun for yeten \_\_\_\_\_ hit is nat so  
 How myght fere fane ouer hit I lone no moe  
 Whether I pray both nyght & day  
 That she may cast aw away \_\_\_\_\_ and lebe myght  
 And euer more whether or en she be to lone hit best  
 And I to hit for to be tyed  
 And neuer charyng hit for meowndes \_\_\_\_\_ son to mynd end  
 And that I may in hit cause <sup>for</sup> by amend \_\_\_\_\_


 In god waken

Alas alas and alas why  
 hath fortune dand so ~~quately~~  
 fro me to take away p<sup>o</sup> fyte  
 Wh. p<sup>o</sup> p<sup>o</sup> gollent my hart by to  
 Of all pyng put in ouer y<sup>e</sup>  
 do me hit as p<sup>o</sup> most blyse  
 Whan p<sup>o</sup> p<sup>o</sup> was in p<sup>o</sup>sonde  
 do Arham my hart gott p<sup>o</sup>sonde

## **The Devonshire Manuscript / British Library Additional 17492 (16<sup>th</sup> century)**

is a blank book originally owned by Mary Fitzroy, who was married to the illegitimate son of Henry VIII when they were both 14 years old. At some point, it passed to her friend Margaret Douglas (a niece of King Henry VIII). It seems to have been used as an album for Mary and her friends who were courtiers in Anne Boleyn's court. We can identify many of the hands that wrote poems and comments into the manuscript, which lets us see some of the lively interactions at the court. Margaret Douglas wrote out to the side of some of the poems, "and this," apparently to remind herself to memorize them for performing. One of them she marks, "learn but to sing this," perhaps meaning—be able to sing this while reading the text.

**Mary's Story:** Mary Shelton (a cousin of Queen Anne Boleyn) was romantically linked in gossip with the poets Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard the Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Clere. She was interested in poetry and appears to have written/edited poems in the Devonshire MS. (She was so interested in poetry, she was once scolded for writing idle "poesies" (poems) in her prayer book).

**Poem to Assign & Folios to view:** Poem 8 on fols. 6v-7r is a declaration of love to Mary Shelton from one of her admirers. The first letter of each stanza spells out her last name. She seems to have known the author, as she writes a tart reply to his poem just below it— "Undesired service, requires no hire (payment)." Margaret Douglas seems to have also known the author and the fact that her friend was rejecting him, as she writes out to the side of this poem, "Forget this." Mary, being a little more charitable, writes underneath Margaret's comment, "It is worthy."

**Margaret's Story:** Margaret Douglas and Lord Thomas Howard became betrothed in 1536 without the King's permission. Both of them were jailed in the Tower of London in July 1536—a frightening time. They may actually have been placed in some of the same cells that Anne Boleyn and the courtiers accused with her had occupied before they were executed just two months before. Margaret and Thomas appear to have exchanged messages and sent each other poems while they were in the Tower. These poems (nos. 41-48) were copied into the Devonshire MS at some point. (Perhaps by Thomas himself, or perhaps later by a scribe.)

**Poems to Assign:** Four of the poems (44, 46, 47, 48) on fols. 27v to 29r are a good example of the exchange between the two lovers. Poem 44 is by Thomas, and 46 by Margaret. In 47, Thomas included his initials; and in 48 Thomas combines two sections of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* to make a new poem. He exchanges Criseyde's name for a blank space. (Putting in Margaret's name would have been dangerous.)

### **Discussion points for both:**

- The tenets of courtly love require lovers to keep their love secret. In the modern world, we also often think that private speech between a couple is more authentic than words spoken in public. How do these poems trouble our ideas about public and private? Think about how and why these poems are being shared, and responded to. [This invites students to think their way out of the two most common mistakes made in regard to the game of love: 1). To think that these are private, rather than social performances, and 2). To think that just because it is a game, it never had serious consequences.]
- Are all these poems "original?" (What about the mashup of Chaucer?)
- Do the women's writings differ in tone? trope? spelling? Mary's exchange probably happens before the Queen is beheaded, Margaret's afterwards. Does that seem to affect the "game?"

### **Sources for the text and photos of the manuscript pages:**

The online "Social Edition of the Devonshire Manuscript" has side-by-side photos of the manuscripts' pages with transcriptions of the texts. I use Elizabeth Heale's published edition of the manuscript in class, as it gives the poems with modernized spelling. (For convenience, I've included the folios of Mary's poem below.)

- Heale, Elizabeth, ed. *The Devonshire Manuscript: A Women's Book of Courtly Poetry: Lady Margaret Douglas and Others*. Toronto: Iter. Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012.
- A Social Edition of the Devonshire Manuscript: ([https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/The\\_Devonshire\\_Manuscript](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/The_Devonshire_Manuscript))

Suffering in sorow in goye to attayn  
 Desyryng in first & last not covayse  
 know of beliffe in wofome yb all my trust  
 do thou axly to cast me off my payn  
 els thou to sue & suffice. Nylt I must

402  
 1584  
 1580  
 1580  
 1580

Hope yb my gold / yet in dyspayre to speke  
 I drye from tyme to tyme & dotte not take  
 hote long to lye thou after love last  
 in studeyt Nylt of that I dare not speke  
 wofore to sue & suffice Nylt I must

Encaste of case I fynd botte day & nyght  
 I farte that was entymt all my delect  
 the cause theroff yt knowe I fave dyscast  
 & yet to beffrayn yt passyng my myght  
 wofore to sue & suffice Nylt I must

Love wofe so lye at longtpe so shall well say  
 to love & lye in first yt yb no play  
 Record that knowyng & yt thge be not just  
 that wofe ab love dotte lude thez yb now  
 want sue & suffice inen Nylt so must



I thin for to leve no<sup>+</sup> losse of Lybertye  
 at last p<sup>r</sup> favour shall be giv<sup>n</sup> Remedye  
 & for giv<sup>n</sup> rewarde dignit<sup>y</sup> w<sup>th</sup> fals mystrust  
 w<sup>ch</sup> wo<sup>ld</sup> not yee to se how wrongfullye  
 I shal for to fute & suffer myll I must

Wherw<sup>th</sup> be trust of myn<sup>e</sup> gatte me betrayed  
 mysifying my govt myll to be delayd  
 fortune always I shal by found unjust  
 & to w<sup>th</sup> lyke rewarde now am I payd  
 that y<sup>e</sup> to fute & suffer myll I must

Wher to rest nor yet lyke to attayn  
 as long as I in fere dare not complayn  
 trewe of beliff gatte always. Ken my trust  
 & tyll Ie knowyng<sup>e</sup> the cause of all my payn  
 content to fute & suffer myll I must

~~Myng to be~~  
 on desyrd myn<sup>e</sup>  
 rep<sup>r</sup>er no lyar  
 Mary Seleon