**‘Fortune is a Mistresse’: Figures of Fortune in English Renaissance Poetry**

Orlando Reade

*If Fortune speaks, it should at least be in a masculine, rather than feminine, guise.*

ST. AUGUSTINE

*Fortune weary of her malice grew,*

*Became her Captive and her Trophy too.*

KATHERINE PHILIPS

Having been a goddess in ancient Rome, Fortune enjoyed a lively retirement in Christian Europe.[[1]](#footnote-1) As a figure for the unequal distribution of worldly goods, Fortune was praised by queens and bankers, and criticized by abandoned lovers and imprisoned princesses. From St. Augustine to Descartes, Christian thinkers rejected the goddess’s reality in order to assert the supreme reality of God’s Providence.[[2]](#footnote-2) Nevertheless, she provided a rich array of meanings even to those who did not, strictly speaking, believe in her.[[3]](#footnote-3) Fortune was revived in Renaissance visual arts as a figure with a set of iconographic associations with moral philosophy.[[4]](#footnote-4) She also had an important afterlife in Christian literature. From Boethius’s *De consolatione philosophiae* (c. 524) to Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (c. 1353-1366) to Boccaccio’s *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355-60) to Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* (c. 1431-38), literary authors described the strange persistence of the pagan goddess, in her degradation and splendor.

Discourses against Fortune testify to a common human experience of unhappy subjection to external events, and they do so in terms that frequently refer to a man’s frustrated will to dominate women. Daniel Heller-Roazen describes Fortune in Guillaume de Loris’s *Le Roman de la Rose* (c. 1240-1280) as standing for “the essential void—the contingency—at the center of desire.”[[5]](#footnote-5) By figuring desire’s contingency with a female figure, discourses on Fortune participate in the construction of gender difference. Jacques Lacan describes the work of figuration in the construction of gender: “a carrying over onto the woman of the difficulty inherent in sexuality.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Rhetorical figures are often said to involve a carrying over of attributes from one object onto a new one, and in this case the transfer of qualities is reciprocal.[[7]](#footnote-7) With Fortune, the negative attributes of desire’s contingency – its inconstancy, unpredictability, and irrationality – are carried over onto women.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Machiavelli describes the carrying over of the difficulties of desire onto women in a famous passage from *The Prince* (c. 1513). In a chapter entitled “How far human affairs are governed by fortune, and how fortune can be opposed,” Machiavelli argues that the statesman should not submit to matters of politics that appear inevitable but can in fact be changed. He writes: “Fortune is the arbiter of half our actions [*la fortuna sia arbitra della metà delle azioni nostre*].”[[9]](#footnote-9) Edward Dacres, Machiavelli’s first English translator, rendered this thought in even more obviously gendered terms:

I think it true, that it is better to be heady, than wary: because *Fortune is a mistresse*; and it is necessary, to keep her in obedience, to ruffle and force her: and we see, that she suffers her selfe rather to be mastered by those, than by others that proceed coldly. And therefore, as a mistresse, shee is a friend to young men, because they are lesse respective, more rough, and command her with more boldnesse.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Fortune can be mastered, Machiavelli claims, and his advice is figured in terms of the proper treatment of a female lover. In her 1984 study, *Fortune is a Woman,* Hanna Fenichel Pitkin argues that Machiavelli’s use of the feminized figure of Fortune asserts a masculine intellectual autonomy as the proper subject of moral philosophy, implicitly denying that same autonomy to women.[[11]](#footnote-11) By associating women with the inconstant goddess, Renaissance writers reproduced a logic of gender difference that is, unfortunately, still part of our cultural inheritance: it can be seen in the romantic advice of the current US president, and in the pop psychology of Jordan Peterson, where whiteness and masculinity are associated with Order, and blackness and femininity with Chaos.[[12]](#footnote-12) If the figure of Fortune haunts contemporary constructions of gender, Renaissance literature can help to explain how this came about.

Inspired by the growing continental literature on Fortune, English poets wrote poems on the inconstant goddess. This essay looks at poems from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries where a man’s mistress is figured as Fortune. In these poems, the association between Fortune and women is asserted, ironized, and finally refused. If moral philosophy pitted a male subject against a feminized Fortune, poetry can reveal the process by which Fortune’s attributes are transferred onto women. By representing discourses on Fortune as embodied, passionate and artful speech acts, poems betray the work of figuration within the construction of gender.[[13]](#footnote-13) In figuring Fortune as a mistress, their poems show that the figure itself is liable to change.

**Thomas More and the “boke of Fortune”**

As a young man, Thomas More (1478-1535) wrote a set of verses on Fortune. Completed by 1505, the verses were probably written as a preface to a lottery book.[[14]](#footnote-14) More warns against an investment in Fortune without questioning its reality as a cause. The verses begin by setting out the usual complaints against the cruel goddess: “Neyther for eyer cherysshynge, whom she taketh / Nor for euer oppressynge, whom she forsaketh.”[[15]](#footnote-15) They then stage Fortune’s own self-defence. In verses entitled “The words of / Fortune to the people,” the goddess claims power over the whole world: “With owt my ffauour ther is no thyng wonne.”[[16]](#footnote-16) She condemns the books written against her: “hath some men bene or this / My dedly ffooys & wrytyn many a bok, / To my disprayse.”[[17]](#footnote-17) The literature against Fortune is just sour grapes, she claims. Men are foolish to forsake her, since “myrth, honour, & riches” are better than “shame, penvry, & payn.”[[18]](#footnote-18) She denies that man can be happy without her, declaring that politicians need her favor to establish order in the world. Of course, More invites us to read this speech suspiciously, so that we see in Fortune’s vision of harmony a tumultuous world.

Two longer verse essays, “To them that tristeth in ffortune” and “To them that seketh ffortune,” present the case against Fortune. More warns those seduced by her appearance, “lovely fayre & bryght,” that she poses a familiar moral danger: “Lyk any serpent she begynneth to swell, / & loketh as ffers as any ffury of hell.”[[19]](#footnote-19) The verse itself swells with figurative language: men are “Lyke suarmyng bees cum flateryng her abowt.”[[20]](#footnote-20) Fortune’s favors are real only because people value them; but her precious goods are, in truth, “not worth an egge.”[[21]](#footnote-21) Fortune’s appearance is shifting, multiple, internally diverse: “Lo thus dyueris heddes, dyeris wittes. / Fortune alone as dyeris as they all, / Vnstable here & ther amonge them fflittes.”[[22]](#footnote-22) However, wherever a pronoun is given, it is “she.” However, More lists great men abandoned by Fortune, and here the verse is animated by quick alterations: “Thus ffell Iulius from his mighty power. / Thus ffel Darius the worthy kyng of Perse.”[[23]](#footnote-23) Here we find something intimated in the French epigram at the beginning of More’s verses: “Perverse Fortune / Which turns [*versse*] the world.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Just as the reader of the lottery book would have turned the pages to find out the results of the lottery, More’s reader experiences a *frisson* of Fortune’s physics, the experience of turning on her wheel, as we turn from one line to the next to follow the downfall of great men. The only solution to Fortune’s inconstancy that More proposes is voluntary poverty. This is illustrated by a long list of philosophers, including the Stoic sage Byas, who claimed that he carried all his riches inside him.[[25]](#footnote-25) Unlike Machiavelli, More does not propose that we can control Fortune. He simply hopes to warn those who roll the dice to be cautious: “thou wilt nedes medill with her tresur.”[[26]](#footnote-26) He goes on to affirm our free will in negotiating with Fortune: “Do as ye liste, ther shall no man you bynde.”[[27]](#footnote-27) This may be why More does not imitate contingency by introducing poetic ambiguities of meaning: instead he simply instructs the reader in Fortune’s nature.

More’s verses appeared in a volume published a few years after More’s execution in 1535, entitled *The Boke of the fayre Gentylwoman that no man shulde put his truste, or confidence in: that is to say, Lady Fortune …* (c. 1540). Despite their didactic purpose, More’s verses were later seen as evidence of his “dissolute life.”[[28]](#footnote-28) For More, however, thinking about Fortune was no youthful folly. He returned to the topic in two epigrams, “Lewes Ye Loste Lover” and “Davy the Diser,” which appear to have been written shortly before his execution.[[29]](#footnote-29) In “Lewes Ye Loste Lover,” an abandoned lover complains about “flattering fortune,” no longer as attractive as she once was, vowing that, from now on, “Truste shall I god.”[[30]](#footnote-30) Despite this, the final line of the epigraph introduces an ambiguous note: “Euer after thy caulme, looke I for a storme.”[[31]](#footnote-31) The lover knows now that even Fortune’s calm predicts further storms, which he will not escape. In “Davy the Diser,” another fool appeals to his mistress: a gambling man addresses Lady Luck after losing everything.[[32]](#footnote-32) The speaker thanks her, with what could be a hard-won serenity or ironic bitterness, for giving him time to write poetry. The rhetorical effect of these epigraphs is a humble recognition of the power and reality of Fortune. And here, importantly, Fortune is not only an external event but also a kind of linguistic contingency, or ambiguity, that has been integrated into the speaker’s own language.

Discourses against Fortune are often an elite phenomenon, most applicable to the rich and powerful. They indicate an experience of passivity that was most perceptible to elite men like More at the thought of exceptional misfortune, when they were no longer able to identify with the will of the sovereign, earthly or divine. It is striking that these men do not blame the King or God for their unfulfilled desire; instead their anger is displaced onto the feminine figure of Fortune or Lady Luck.[[33]](#footnote-33) Augustine lamented, ironically, that those who supplicate themselves to Fortune were not even addressing themselves to a masculine god, let alone the true God.[[34]](#footnote-34) Similarly, as A.C. Cousins noted, More’s Fortune is a parody of the Christian deity: she does not reward her devotees or even hear their prayers.[[35]](#footnote-35) Since complaints against Fortune can only fall on deaf ears, they are not effective prayers but ironic, futile utterances.[[36]](#footnote-36) They have no efficacy for the speaker, only for a third-party, which is to say the reader. In More’s verses, didactic purpose is supreme, limiting contingency’s work. The reader is not made to look foolish—or at least not yet.

**The Confusion of Thomas Wyatt**

The use of poetic ambiguity to imitate Fortune’s contingency is perfected in the poetry of Thomas Wyatt (c. 1503-1542). A poet in the court of Henry VIII, Wyatt was asked by Katherine of Aragon to translate Petrarch’s *De remediis* into English. He complained that Petrarch’s manual was too long, and decided instead to translate Plutarch’s “lytell boke” on a similar topic, *De tranquilitate animi*, claiming that it bore “the frutes of the aduertysmentes of theme […] without tedyousnesse of length.”[[37]](#footnote-37) Instruction in the management of fortune can also be found in Wyatt’s poems, which offer almost exclusively negative lessons. In one poem, Wyatt’s speaker realizes that Fortune is “deaf unto my call,” and despairingly complains about the futility of despair, but he cannot turn away from her.[[38]](#footnote-38) In another poem, the speaker complains that he has been abandoned by his mistress, only to have her happily restored to him.[[39]](#footnote-39) Wyatt goes beyond More in the degree to which contingency is part of the speaker’s own language, and this happens most importantly in an association between Fortune and the mistress.

This association happens in Wyatt’s “They fle from me that sometim did me seke,” one of the most celebrated and often interpreted poems of the English Renaissance.

# They fle from me, that somtime did me seke

# With naked fote stalkyng within my chamber.

# Once have I seen them gentle, tame, and meke,

# That now are wild, and do not remember

# That sometyme they have put them selves in danger,

# To take bread at my hand, and now they range,

# Busily sekyng in continuall change.

# Thanked be fortune it hath bene otherwise

# Twenty tymes better: but once especiall,

# In thinne aray, after a pleasant gyse,

# When her loose gown did from her shoulders fall,

# And she me caught in her arms long and small,

# And therwithall, so swetely did me kysse,

# And softly sayd: deare hart, how like you this?

# It was no dreame: for I lay broade awakyng.

# But all is turnde now through my gentlenesse,

# Into a bitter fashion of forsakyng:

# And I have leave to go of her goodnesse,

# And she also to use newfanglenesse.But, sins that I unkyndly so am served:

# How like you this, what hath she now deserved?[[40]](#footnote-40)

Wyatt’s speaker has been abandoned, but it is not clear by whom or what. In the first stanza, “They” are identified by two antithetical oppositions, “flee/seek” and “tame/wild.” Critics have debated whether “They” are one or several; whether they are women, deer or birds (and if so what species of each), or some abstraction of creatureliness.[[41]](#footnote-41) Donald Friedman remarks: “one hardly thinks of deer stalking hungrily through a bedchamber,” but it is precisely this image that animates the first stanza for me.[[42]](#footnote-42) E.E. Duncan Jones points out that you only call something “naked” that is normally clothed and argues that “they” must be women, bearing the attributes of animals (“stalkyng” and “tame”) metaphorically.[[43]](#footnote-43) By the same logic, however, you only call “tame” something that might otherwise be wild. Wyatt’s image teems with possible reversals: “stalking” could indicate that the speaker is a hunter who is now hunted; the speaker could also be precious prey once sought out by hunters who now, sadistically, abandon him.[[44]](#footnote-44) These ambiguities initiate the reader into an important confusion. Whatever “they” are, they come from Fortune; as such, they possess no reason, following Fortune’s physics. Only a fool would ask what “They” are, whereas the wise man recognizes them as Fortune’s ephemeral gifts, and disparages them accordingly. But Wyatt does not expect his readers to be wise.[[45]](#footnote-45)

The movement between the first and second stanzas mimics the “continuall change” of Fortune’s favors. Moving into the past tense, Wyatt’s speaker recalls a room traversed by a woman, now human and singular, whose graceful arms come to embrace him. Pointing out that her beauty, vanishing dress and power are part of Fortune’s iconography, some readers have seen this woman as a representation of the goddess.[[46]](#footnote-46) The only explicit reference to Fortune in the poem is the exclamation “Thanked be fortune.”[[47]](#footnote-47) This ostensibly casual remark indicates that the speaker still hopes to be restored to his former status. He is still Fortune’s fool, and this is confirmed by the affirmation: “It was no dream: I lay broad waking.” Only those who believe in Fortune do not realize that her gifts are always a dream. The speaker cannot help but see all things as coming from, or withheld by, Fortune. This is why, when the figure of the woman appears in the second stanza, she is immediately confused for the beguiling goddess.

The convergence between Fortune and Wyatt’s mistress happens in the curious phrase: “In thinne array.” “Thinne” contains a shadow of the pronoun, “thine.” An early manuscript witness of the poem has “thyn,” an alternate spelling of “thine.”[[48]](#footnote-48) Modern editions have often flattened the phrase into “thin array,” but this is not what most Elizabethan readers would have encountered.[[49]](#footnote-49) After the first two editions of “Tottel’s Miscellany,” the popular anthology in which Wyatt’s poem was first printed, every other sixteenth-century edition has “thine array.”[[50]](#footnote-50) Critics have often overlooked this important ambiguity. Some assume the speaker is talking to his departed mistress in a futile speech act.[[51]](#footnote-51) But this is not necessarily the case. The speaker could be addressing Fortune herself, saying that, when his mistress appeared in that intimate scene, she was dressed in the goddess’s own clothes. The word “array” also has a military sense: the order and arrangement of forces.[[52]](#footnote-52) Fortune’s array is a bright and potentially brutal display. In reading this line, Wyatt compels the reader to confront the same question as the unfortunate speaker: is this a woman, a goddess or a woman who is an avatar of the goddess? It feels true to the contingency described in this poem that “thine” should remain a shadow in the strange and seductive phrase “thyn array.” The poem’s ambiguities ensnare the reader in a poetic experience of contingency: we do not recognize Fortune at first, not until it is too late. To read this poem is to become a fool.

An experience of exceptional misfortune – not imprisonment, as with Thomas More, but unrequited love – compels this elite man to perceive the contingency of desire. There can be no doubt that the happiness of Wyatt’s speaker’s is marked by Fortune. Her contingency is evoked in the phrases “continuall change” and “all is turnde.” He accuses his mistress of a “bitter fashion of forsakyng” and “newfangleness,” a word also used by Chaucer in complaints about women’s inconstancy.[[53]](#footnote-53) Wyatt’s alliteration with “f” keeps the elusive goddess in the reader’s mind. The speaker’s mistress has abandoned him, but he does not ask why. Instead, he wants to know “what she hath deserved.” Leigh Winser suggests that Wyatt’s final line is a *dubbio,* a controversial question that readers can answer at their leisure—and misconstrue at their cost. Some critics answer, with surprising alacrity, that the woman deserves contempt.[[54]](#footnote-54) There are two other possible answers: the first, Machiavellian, and the second feminist. If this question is directed at Fortune, rather than a human mistress, then the answer might lie in the speaker’s claim that “all is turnde now through my gentlenesse.”[[55]](#footnote-55) If he has been too passive, then he should be more commanding of external events in future. If, however, the question is directed at a real woman, then another answer proposes itself. Luce Irigaray describes a “traffic in women” that is fundamental to patriarchal society: exchanges of sisters and daughters that are designed to reproduce social bonds between men.[[56]](#footnote-56) Where this is the case, women’s desire is relevant only as an obstacle to social reproduction, something that does not have to be respected, and only known in so far as it needs to be husbanded. In its fixation on female desire, Andrea Brady suggests, Wyatt’s poem intimates the possibility of women’s desire as a form of resistance to the reproduction of patriarchal society in marriage: something that was structurally speaking unnecessary but nevertheless desired by men too.[[57]](#footnote-57) Identifying the mistress with Fortune might reflect the speaker’s ambivalence about female desire, his fear and perhaps also admiration.

**The Unfortunate Mistress Jane Shore**

Later in the sixteenth century, we encounter another mistress in Fortune’s array in a poem by Thomas Churchyard (c. 1523-1604). First published in William Baldwin’s 1563 *Mirror for Magistrates*, an Elizabethan extension of Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*, Churchyard’s poem describes the rise and fall of Jane Shore, a goldsmith’s wife who became the mistress of Edward IV.[[58]](#footnote-58)

# They frownde on mee, that fawnd on mee before,

# And fled from mee that fellowed mee full fast,

# They hated mee, by whom I set much store,

# They knew full well my fortune did not last,[[59]](#footnote-59)

When she gains influence over the king, Shore dispenses favors like the capricious goddess. Like Wyatt, Churchyard alliterates heavily with “f,” accusing Fortune with almost every word. Stanley Kozikowski argued that the association of Shore and Fortune reflects “a Tudor understanding of Wyatt’s lyric, which likewise views the wayward mistress in the guise of Fortune.”[[60]](#footnote-60) However, Wyatt’s association between the mistress and Fortune reappears here in an altered form.

In Churchyard’s poem, the association between Fortune and women is not an analogy made by a male speaker, but the female speaker’s own act of identification. Shore says:

# My power was prest to right the pooremans wrong,

# My handes were free to geeue where nede required,

# To watch for grace I neuer thought it long,

# To doe men good I nede not be desired.

# Nor yet with giftes my hart was neuer hyred.

# But when the Ball was at my foote to guide,

# I plaied to those that Fortune did abide.[[61]](#footnote-61)

Shore pictures herself as Fortune, with her proverbial ball at her feet.[[62]](#footnote-62) She dispensed her favors “where nede required,” and also, more ambiguously, “to those that Fortune did abide.” Her identification with Fortune is temporary: at the time of speaking, she is already a victim, no longer dressed in Fortune’s array.[[63]](#footnote-63)

If Wyatt’s poetic association of Fortune and the mistress influenced Churchyard, Churchyard transformed that association in an important way. This may have happened, surprisingly, thanks to Thomas More. More had described her downfall in his *History of Richard III* (c. 1513-18), which he wrote while Shore was still alive.[[64]](#footnote-64) There the female character exhibits a moral autonomy that is altogether absent in Wyatt’s poem:

[S]he neuer abused to any mans hurt, but to many a mans comfort & relief: where the king toke displeasure, she would mitigate & appease his mind: where men were out of fauour, she wold bring them in his grace. For many that had highly offended, shee obtained pardon. Of great forfeitures she gate men remission.[[65]](#footnote-65)

In More’s account, Shore was vulnerable to suits by “those rather gay then rich.” This detail illuminates the ambiguous line in Churchyard: “I plaied to those that Fortune did abide.”[[66]](#footnote-66) Shore, said to be where the meretricious London district of Shoreditch got its name, dispensed favors not only to the deserving but also the beautiful, the already fortunate. We find this mixed motivation again in a late Elizabethan ballad, where Shore’s double status as Fortune and a victim of Fortune is preserved.[[67]](#footnote-67)

# I still had ruth on Widdows tears

# I succour’d Babes of tender years,

# And never lookt for other gain,

# But Love and thanks for all my pain.[[68]](#footnote-68)

Here, Shore’s will is made plain. Sara Ahmed argues that the representation of the will in fictional characters illuminates the perceived social threat of wilful women to patriarchal society.[[69]](#footnote-69) Unlike Wyatt’s mistress, whose desire is masked, sustaining her association with Fortune, Shore’s will is rendered intelligible in these accounts.[[70]](#footnote-70) Even when she assumes the position of Fortune, Shore demonstrates a capacity for moral and intellectual decision-making, a mixture of vanity and charity that is all too human, distinguishing her from the inconstant goddess. Where Fortune is a figure of pure wilfulness, the rendering intelligible of Jane Shore’s will is the means by which the mistress comes to appear as fully human.

**Fortune as Sovereign: Ralegh and Elizabeth**

What happens to the association between Fortune and the mistress when the poet’s mistress is a queen? “Fortune hath taken away my love,” a song by Walter Ralegh in 1587, uses the analogy between Fortune and women to playfully criticize Queen Elizabeth I. According to a popular story, Ralegh’s initial rise to favor had been figured as an ascent of Fortune’s wheel: when he first arrived at court, he had written in a glass window: “Fain would I climb, yet fear to fall.”[[71]](#footnote-71) The Queen had then written underneath it: “If thy heart fails thee, climb not at all.”[[72]](#footnote-72) The wheel had continued to turn and, apparently anxious about the rise of a rival, Ralegh wrote his song on Fortune, to which the Queen again wrote a response. Their verses are *contrafacta,* adaptations of a tune, “Fortune, my foe.” This tune was already ubiquitous in England, known on the continent as “Fortuyn Anlois,” and was set by many composers including Byrd and Dowland.[[73]](#footnote-73) As in the original song, Ralegh’s verses are a complaint against Fortune.[[74]](#footnote-74)

# Fortune hath taken away my love,

# My life’s joy and my soul’s heaven above.

# Fortune hath taken thee away, my princess,

# My world’s joy and my true fantasy’s mistress.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Ralegh presents the queen with the quietly threatening idea that Fortune is her sovereign:

# And only joy that Fortune conquers kings.

# Fortune, that rules the earth and earthly things,

# Hath taken my love in spite of virtue’s might:

# So blind a goddess did never virtue right.

Fortune even conquers kings, Ralegh reminds Elizabeth. Tactfully he refrains from saying “queens.” Nevertheless, the challenge is implicit, and Katherine Butler notes that he is subverting the Queen’s motto: *semper eadem* (“forever the same”).[[76]](#footnote-76) There is a hint here of the medieval view of Fortune as the handmaiden of Providence, bringing retributive justice against bad leaders.[[77]](#footnote-77) Ralegh’s song ends with an appeal to a higher sovereignty:

# With wisdom’s eyes had put blind Fortune seen,

# Then had my love, my love forever been.

# But love, farewell—though Fortune conquer thee,

# No fortune base nor frail shall alter me.[[78]](#footnote-78)

In the final stanza, Ralegh rejects the courtly pursuit of Fortune, claiming a virtuous self-sovereignty. Now even if his mistress is subject to Fortune, Ralegh claims, he will not be.

Ralegh tried to cast Elizabeth as a feminine thing of Fortune, incapable of the autonomy of mind necessary to resist it, but the queen refused the role in her response. Mocking him with affectionate familiarity, she turns his accusation back on him:

# Ah silly Pug, wert thou so sore afraid?

# Mourn not, my Wat, nor be thou so dismayed.

# It passeth fickle Fortune’s power and skill

# To force my heart to think thee any ill.

# No Fortune base, thou sayest, shall alter thee?

# And may so blind a witch so conquer me?

# No, no, my Pug, though Fortune were not blind,

# Assure thyself she could not rule my mind.[[79]](#footnote-79)

Elizabeth bristles at the claim to self-sovereignty by one of her own subjects. Ralegh cannot be virtuous if he has been made afraid, she retorts. Fortune never troubled “wise men.”[[80]](#footnote-80) The Queen claims that, unlike Ralegh, she transcends Fortune’s domain.

Earlier in her life, while imprisoned by her sister, Elizabeth had written a poem lamenting the dangerous effects of Fortune.[[81]](#footnote-81) The young princess had given a disenchanted description of Fortune, before making a vengeful appeal to God to do to her enemies what they had wished done to her.[[82]](#footnote-82) As queen, however, she denies being the subject of Fortune and asserts a moral autonomy proper to her station. As Queen, Elizabeth’s social performances confused the conventional categories of Fortune and womanhood, performing chastity while exploiting eroticism as a style of courtly social relations. Five years after their exchange about Fortune, a secret marriage and then the total withdrawal of the Queen’s favor led Ralegh to seek another remedy to Fortune: not philosophical introspection but empire-building projects in Guiana and Virginia, hoping to redeem himself by the extension of the queen’s sovereignty across the world.[[83]](#footnote-83) And, in turn, England’s exploits in the Americas transformed the discourse of Fortune.

**The “Blackening” of Fortune**

When Churchyard came to revise his Jane Shore poem, he did so in a very different climate to its original conception thirty years earlier.[[84]](#footnote-84) In the 1580s and 90s, there was a new craze for Petrarchan poetry among English poets. In 1592, Samuel Daniel (1563-1619) published his sonnet sequence, *Delia*, with a “Complaint of Rosamund” appended to it. This inspired Churchyard to dress his old heroine in fashionable new clothes.[[85]](#footnote-85) Churchyard’s revived Jane Shore compares herself favorably with Daniel’s heroine, the victim of another king’s desire: “Rosamond the faire … could scarse compare with me.”[[86]](#footnote-86) The fashion for Petrarchanism in England brought an intensified attention to the differences between the idea and physicality of the mistress.[[87]](#footnote-87) This had consequences for the figuration of Fortune. In Daniel’s sequence a youthful man encounters a goddess who at times appears similar to Fortune:

WHilst youth and error led my wandring minde,

And sette my thoughts in heedles waies to range:

All vnawares, a Goddesse chaste I finde,

(Diana-like) to worke my suddaine change.[[88]](#footnote-88)

The identity of this female figure is one of the games of Daniel’s sequence, which invites the reader to wonder which real woman, if any, is intended.[[89]](#footnote-89) Despite the “Diana-like” virginity of Daniel’s mistress, she bears some of the antithetical attributes of Fortune: she is fair and cruel; her frowns are clouds and her eyes are sunny; she is unkind but radiates goodness.

Daniel’s desperate speaker sees the stigma of Fortune in his mistress’s gaze: “My fortunes wheele’s the circle of her eyes, / Whose rowling grace deigne once a turne of blis.”[[90]](#footnote-90) In this, Daniel’s speaker is more sophisticated than Wyatt’s, acknowledging that it is his own projection that dresses the mistress in Fortune’s array.

# Whilst I did build my fortune in her eyes,

# And layd my liues rest on so faire a face;

# Which rest I lost, my loue, my life and all,

# So high attempts to low disgraces fall.[[91]](#footnote-91)

After numerous comparisons between the mistress and Fortune, the speaker suddenly finds inconstancy in the mistress’s own fortune. This is not genuine concern but amorous strategy. In a series of *carpe diem* poems, Daniel’s speaker reminds her that her beauty will fade, while reassuring her that his love will endure.[[92]](#footnote-92) Fortune is no more than an elaborate “neg.”[[93]](#footnote-93)

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) adopts a similar argument in his *Sonnets*, some of which were written under the influence of Daniel, and published belatedly in 1609. Shakespeare’s Sonnets 25 and 29 triangulate the speaker, beloved male friend, and Fortune, claiming that the friend’s love is more important to the speaker than any of the goddess’s other gifts.[[94]](#footnote-94) The speaker’s love is securely invested outside of the domain of Fortune, within the friend’s constant heart: “Where I may not remove, nor be removed.”[[95]](#footnote-95) Later, however, the speaker suffers under the contempt of “Fortune and men’s eyes,” and it is obvious which is the more mesmerizing, potent, threatening.[[96]](#footnote-96) He fears men’s glances, and looks back fearfully at them: “Featured like him, like him with friends possessed, / Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope.”[[97]](#footnote-97) Jeff Dolven has described the importance of poetic imitation in the Tudor court.[[98]](#footnote-98) In Shakespeare’s sonnets, poetic imitation among male poets is part of an economy of desire, enacting in the description of female figures a kind of “traffic in women.” However, it is not only a woman that is trafficked but also the male friend. Shakespeare’s speaker fearfully fantasizes uneasily about the circulation of the friend’s body, shot through with glances like St. Sebastian.[[99]](#footnote-99) In his devotion to the male friend, Shakespeare’s speaker is a victim of a desire that is, unusually, not blamed on women. But this does not last.

The complaints against Fortune early in Shakespeare’s sequence foreshadow an erotic triangle that emerges later between the speaker, a male friend and a woman. The speaker complains at being “made lame by fortune’s dearest spite,” and this unpleasant intimacy is reiterated when the speaker masochistically asks the friend to “Join with the spite of fortune” in hating him.[[100]](#footnote-100) The black-eyed mistress, first mentioned in Sonnet 127, is another candidate for Fortune’s array.[[101]](#footnote-101) In the sonnets that follow, the mistress quickly becomes a symbol of desire’s contingency. The speaker is now subjected to both male and female desire, but only the woman is blamed. With the entrance of the mistress, the speaker’s desire becomes fraught with the antithetical attributes of Fortune’s gifts: “Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.”[[102]](#footnote-102) Shakespeare’s treatment of the mistress has often been taken as a witty attack on “Petrarchan idealism.” In fact, Shakespeare is applying a remedy that had been elaborated by Petrarch himself.

Petrarch’s *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, a manual of Stoic remedies to Fortune, was one of the most popular works of Latin lay literature in the fourteenth century.[[103]](#footnote-103) Set out as a series of dialogues on particular moral problems, Petrarch’s manual numbers women among Fortune’s dubious gifts. In the dialogue “Of pleasant love,” an amorous Joy and a cautious Reason dispute the benefits of romantic love. Ultimately, Joy relents and Reason prescribes his philosophical remedy:

# For it is in the choyce of hym that is sicke, to be made whole, so soone as he begynneth to haue a wyll to be whole, and can finde in his harte to breake of the pleasant linkes of their sweete companie, which is an hard matter to doo, I confesse, but possible to hym that is willing. For as Cicero sayeth most grauely, This is to be declared which is found to be in euery perturbation, that it is nothing but in opinion, in the iudgment, and in the wyl.[[104]](#footnote-104)

Petrarch argues that the bad effects of Fortune can be avoided if the lover represents the object of their cravings – in this dialogue, a woman – as harmful. Letizia Panizza calls Petrarch’s remedy, taken from Cicero, as “blackening the object of desire – therapy by aversion – so that women appear loathsome and sex degrading.”[[105]](#footnote-105) Strikingly, no cognate of “blackening” appears in Cicero.[[106]](#footnote-106) It is a modern projection, inserting a racialized logic into Stoic moral philosophy, and one that is already visible in Petrarch.

One dialogue in *De remediis* compares the misfortune of romantic love with the inability to distinguish black from white. Joy, recently married, disputes with the bullish and Stoical Reason. In the dialogue’s final exchange, Reason lets loose his judgment:

# Ioy.

# I haue met with a noble, chast, gentle, humble, obedient, vertuous, and faythfull wyfe.

# Reason.

# Thou art a notable fouler, thou hast founde a whyte Crowe: and yet there is no man that thynketh he hath founde a blacke one.[[107]](#footnote-107)

Reason says, ironically, that Joy has found a “whyte Crowe” (a good wife), but no man thinks he has a “blacke crowe” (a bad wife). Joy is a “notable fouler” because he has mistaken a bad wife for a good one, confusing vice and virtue, black and white. The distinction between black and white is explicitly moralized here. In this, Petrarch is drawing on the ancient trope of the black swan, which Juvenal uses as figure for the rareness of a good woman.[[108]](#footnote-108) But in Petrarch that trope is inverted: the white crow is rare, and the black crow is a figure for the general burden of wives. Almost all women are black, Petrarch says, even many of those who appear to be white. This argument is the grounds for the remedy of “blackening.” The unhappy lover can remedy his unfortunate desire for the wrong object by spoiling that object in his own mental representation of it.[[109]](#footnote-109)

The description of the dark-eyed mistress in Sonnets 127, 129, 130, 131 and 132 carries out something strikingly similar to Petrarch’s remedy. Shakespeare’s speaker appears to intentionally project the stigma of Fortune onto his mistress’s body. Since the mistress’s desire is unreliable, the speaker must spoil his representation of her. He lists her faults: “My Mistres eyes are nothing like the Sunne.”[[110]](#footnote-110) The use of such a remedy is why he calls her black while acknowledging she is not actually physically black: “In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds.”[[111]](#footnote-111) It is only in her actions that she is “a woman collour’d ill.”[[112]](#footnote-112) In an admittedly “novelistic” reading of Shakespeare’s sequence, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls the mistress an incompletely developed character.[[113]](#footnote-113) If the dark mistress does not emerge as a “well-rounded” character – in such a way as Churchyard’s Jane Shore does – it is because her will remains completely unintelligible.[[114]](#footnote-114) The mistress of Shakespeare’s sonnets is not a biographical woman, or even a social type, so much as a pure act of figuration. This raises a set of questions, not about her true identity (as in Daniel’s sequence) but about her status as a figure: what is being carried over onto the image of the dark mistress? Here we see the work of figuration in the construction of racial difference. What is the moral value of her darkness (i.e. is it wicked or morally neutral)? What is its aesthetic value (is it novel, beautiful or ugly)? Will the speaker be able to repudiate his desire, or will he, in numbering her attributes, however foul, only make his desire grow? The black ink of the poem becomes proof of his desire, rather than its moderation. Precisely where the poem tries to manage desire’s contingency, it emerges as ungovernable. This is not only the case for the dark-eyed mistress, but also for Shakespeare’s speaker.

In Shakespeare’s sonnets, Fortune, so often conceived as unchanging in her changefulness, appears stamped by history. The “blackening” of the mistress is more than the witty application of a moral-philosophical technique from Petrarch: it coincides with the history of European colonialism, and the representation of a racially marked figure as an “exterior” that is at once the source of social reproduction and a threat to it.[[115]](#footnote-115) As Kim Hall has shown, the figure of the black woman was an important part of the poetic imagination of Elizabethan England, where was a symbol of anxiety about the harmful effects of American gold on the English economy.[[116]](#footnote-116) In Shakespeare’s sonnets, the dark mistress is not only a symbol of foreign investments that must be repudiated by the patriotic poet, but also the focus of sexual excitement and aesthetic fascination: “In ould age blacke was not counted faire … But now is blacke beauties successive heire.”[[117]](#footnote-117) This claim makes the dark mistress the symbol of a modern age, and of the desires and fears associated with the Atlantic trade in slaves and other precious commodities.[[118]](#footnote-118)

In Fortune’s array, the woman is blamed for the contingency of desire, and the black woman represents an extension of this logic, a specifically modern re-figuration of Fortune. Theorists of black womanhood have shown how black women have been excluded from the “universal,” but implicitly white, category of woman.[[119]](#footnote-119) Hortense Spillers remarks: ““the black woman” can be seen as a particular instance of the split subject also posited by psychoanalytic theory.”[[120]](#footnote-120) The mistress of Shakespeare’s sonnets is notably split: marked as feminine by the contingency of her desire but also split off from womanhood by her darkness. In being dark and a woman she is doubly distinguished from the safe masculinity of reason, known only insofar as her desire is contingent. The dark mistress is a figure altered by and for a new world, which appears on the threshold of a change in attitudes to figuration, when the exponents of experimental science were starting to reject the use of poetic and rhetorical figures. Its early modernity may be why this particular figuration of black womanhood, and the demand for dehumanized labor that was its *raison d’être*, continues to burden the living.

**Fortune’s Captor: Katherine Philips Among the Stoics**

The Elizabethan super-tune “Fortune, my foe” circulated widely after Ralegh and Elizabeth, becoming a sonic figure for the dangers of female desire.[[121]](#footnote-121) In the seventeenth century, it was used in a popular song, “Doctor Faustus,” as well as a hymn, “Aim not too high in things above thy reach,” where Fortune does not appear but the sins are feminized figures: “pride, the Mother of mishap” and “Gluttony, the mother of excess.”[[122]](#footnote-122) The melody was also used for songs about violent crimes, and became a popular hanging tune: even in 1779, the execution of a popular highwayman was met with a thousand white handkerchiefs and verses of the song.[[123]](#footnote-123) It was also particularly associated with ballads about the crimes of unruly women and their punishment.[[124]](#footnote-124) The melody resurfaces in *The Comical Hash* (1668), a play by Margaret Cavendish (c. 1623-1673). A singer is asked by some ladies at court to perform, and she foolishly chooses a ballad about unruly women:

I was to sing them a Song for my money; so I sung them an old Song, the burden of the Song, *Oh women, women, monstrous women, what do you mean for to do?* but because the Song was against women, they would have had me given them their money back again, I told them no I would not […] so then I sung them *Doctor* Faustus *that gave his Soul away to the Devill*; for I knew Conjurers and Devills pleased women best.[[125]](#footnote-125)

Having upset the ladies, and fearing she will lose their fee, the singer quickly chooses another gruesome ballad, “Doctor Faustus,” which is set to the same tune. This sates the ladies’ appetites with less misogynistic matter. Cavendish’s play goes on to disparage the women’s interest in the misfortunes of others, and proposes instead the austere virtues of contemplation and retirement. Seventeenth-century woman writers, as Susan Lanser argues, helped to invent an intellectual and philosophical autonomy specific to women.[[126]](#footnote-126) In one notable seventeenth-century poet, that autonomy is elaborated as a decisive rejection of Fortune’s array.[[127]](#footnote-127)

Katherine Philips (1632-1664) became famous in the 1660s for her poems and translations, making her perhaps the first non-aristocratic woman in England to be widely acclaimed as a poet. Her posthumous collection, *Poems by the Most Deservedly Admired Mrs. Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda* (1667), represented her as someone who had suffered from Fortune but who had, ultimately, triumphed over it.[[128]](#footnote-128) Many of her poems describe the vicissitudes of friendship as well as the turbulent politics of the English Civil War as the harmful effects of a world dominated by Fortune. Philips’s poetry elaborated a Christian adaptation of Stoic remedies to Fortune. Gilles Monsarrat claimed that Stoicism was adopted mainly in drama, but we have already seen some of the ways in which Fortune’s career in sixteenth-century poetry was entwined with Stoicism. After the outbreak of civil war in 1641, there was another flowering of the “iron philosophy” in England.

The only place where Philips explicitly discusses Stoic remedies to Fortune is in a 1662 letter to her friend Charles Cotterell. She writes: “I […] could never govern my Passions by the Lessons of the Stoicks, who at best rather tell us what we should be, than teach us how to be so; they shew the Journey’s end, but leave us to get thither as we can.”[[129]](#footnote-129) She acknowledges the power of Stoic advice but remains skeptical: “I would be easie to my self in all the Vicissitudes of Fortune, and SENECA tells me I ought to be so, and that ‘tis the only way to be happy; but I knew that as well as the Stoick. I would not depend on others for my Felicity; and EPICTETUS says, if I do not, nothing shall trouble me.”[[130]](#footnote-130) In his *Enchiridion,* the Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus makes an important distinction between things within and outside of the control of the will, and encourages his followers not to invest in the latter but to remain in a state of passionlessness or *apatheia*.[[131]](#footnote-131) This advice might have inspired Philips not to invest in friendship. She acknowledged that her friends belong to the world dominated by Fortune, but she also knew that she could not relinquish them.

Philips remained preoccupied by the Stoic notion of *apatheia* as a possible remedy to the painful effects of Fortune. But her poetry repeats the failure of the attempt to overcome the passions for once and for all. Her poem “Submission” strikes an apathetic pose only to document its collapse. It opens with a complaint against an unspecified, traumatic event:

# ‘Tis so, and humbly I my will resign,

# Nor dare dispute with Providence Divine

# In vain, alas! we struggle with our chains,

# But more entangled by the fruitless pains.[[132]](#footnote-132)

Since all events in the world are caused by God’s Providence, the speaker must submit to God’s will. This is the only way to happiness in a turbulent world: “For why should changes here below surprize / When the whole world its revolution tries?”[[133]](#footnote-133) Only submission allows Fortune to be seen as an illusion:

# For outward things remove not from their place,

# Till our Souls run to beg their mean embrace;

# Then doting on the choice make it our own,

# By placing Trifles in th’ Opinion’s Throne.

# […]

# For right Opinion’s like a Marble grott,

# In Summer cool, and in the Winter hot;

# A Principle which in each Fortune lives,

# Bestowing Catholick Preservatives.[[134]](#footnote-134)

Fortune is an error of perception that only a Christianized Stoic fortitude has the power to banish. Philips goes on to claim: “Could we keep our Grandeur and our state, / Nothing below would seem unfortunate.”[[135]](#footnote-135) In this she echoes the Neo-Stoic advice of Descartes, who argued that a state of spiritual “Grandeur” could be accomplished through regular acts of reflection.[[136]](#footnote-136) In a metaphor inspired by the recent civil war, Philips describes reason as displaced from the court of the soul, where trifles usurp the throne, seeking refuge in the “Marble grott” of Stoic apathy. But Philips herself could not remain for long in that cold state. Where Descartes promoted the sovereignty of the rational mind, she describes a more entangled relationship between self and world.

At the end of “Submission,” Fortune emerges not as a figure for dangerous contingency but as a name for the rewards of spiritual reflection:

# ‘Tis this resolves, there are no losses where

# Vertue and Reason are continued there.

# The meanest Soul might such a Fortune share,

# But no mean Soul could so that Fortune bear.[[137]](#footnote-137)

Here, Fortune does not inspire a contempt for worldly goods but, instead, a generous spiritual relationship to the world. The “meanest Soul” (i.e. someone of the lowest social status) can achieve the benefit of “right Opinion,” but “no mean” (i.e. ungenerous) person can achieve it. This is not Stoic apathy so much as Christian compassion. In the final lines of “Submission,” Philips’s speaker performs her own accomplishment of that spiritual grandeur:

# Thus I compose my thoughts grown insolent,

# As th’ Irish harper doth his Instrument;

# Which if once struck doth murmure and complain,

# But the next touch will silence all again.[[138]](#footnote-138)

The speaker’s identity is split in this image: submission is figured as a colonial occupation: the soul, implicitly the English sovereign, rules over the body, which is associated with the rebellious Irish people. This perhaps also reflects Philips’s own ambiguous position as an English-born Royalist woman who married to a Parliamentarian member of the Welsh gentry. She was also literally invested in colonialism: when in the 1640s and 50s the Irish rose up against their colonizers, Philips’s father invested in Cromwell’s campaign to suppress the insurrection, and Philips herself later travelled to Dublin to try to recuperate his money.[[139]](#footnote-139) By relinquishing her desire to control external objects, and submitting it to God’s Providence, the poet is no longer Fortune’s fool. She identifies her will with the sovereign, but the identification is incomplete. We know that a moment later she will start to murmur again: only in death will she accomplish the stillness that she craves.

Philips was not a Stoic sage and did not believe she could overcome Fortune for good. Her poetic persona, “Orinda,” was a devoted friend who knew that those she loved were subject to danger and death. If Orinda was Fortune’s fool, it is because she did not want to relinquish the pleasure of friendship; she wanted to protect her friendships from Fortune, sometimes through controlling, even manipulative behavior. In poems written for her friends, Rosania and Lucasia, Orinda laments the fact that friendship is subject to the depredations of Fortune, but insists nevertheless that it is the best happiness in the world. Unlike the internal withdrawal of the Stoic, friendship was an enclosure where two souls could be protected from the ravages of the world. These intimate friendships extended out into a “Society of Friendship.” Philips claimed that the friends had the power to teach the whole world.

# Lucasia.

# Nay I know there’s nothing sweet below

# Unless it be a Friend.

# Rosania

# Then whilst we live, this Joy lets take and give,

# Since death us soon will sever.[[140]](#footnote-140)

This is more than a mere riposte to the misogynistic figurations of women: friendship is a world in which women escape the practical and instrumental roles of everyday life; the friends stand as proof of women’s moral, intellectual and erotic autonomy. In this enclosure, Fortune had been dispossessed.

Philips insisted that the virtuous woman could control Fortune. What she wrote in praise of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, might also be the aim of her own poetry:

# Fortune weary of her malice grew,

# Became her Captive and her Trophee too:

# And by too late a Tribute begg’d t’ have been

# Admitted subject to so brave a Queen.[[141]](#footnote-141)

In these lines, Fortune is a spoil of war, captured and enslaved by the virtuous woman. It is no accident that the triumph over Fortune was figured in terms of slavery: Philips’s autonomy was conceptualized in and for a circle of bourgeois and aristocratic readers, living in a society increasingly reliant on slave labor in its colonies. English air, said to be “too pure” for slavery, did not reach Barbados, which legitimized slavery in the notorious Slave Code of 1661, written a year before Philips’s poem.[[142]](#footnote-142) Susan Lanser notes that the articulation of female subjectivity was imbricated with logics of class and race. Accordingly, Philips’s triumph echoes the claims of English merchants that they could capture Fortune through investment and insurance.[[143]](#footnote-143) In this way, Philips’s rejection of the association between Fortune and women imitates the new capitalist rationality and its foreign opportunities.

Renaissance figurations of Fortune were often, to borrow Cavendish’s phrase, “against women.” Dressing their mistresses in Fortune’s array, poets associated women with inconstancy and irrationality, asserting an intellectual difference between the sexes and rendering women’s desire as something to be managed but not respected. However, as we have seen, the association of women and Fortune was also challenged in poetry: displaced by Churchyard’s humane mistress, transcended by Elizabeth’s chaste sovereignty, and rendered obsolete by Philips’s friendships. In representing discourses against Fortune as embodied, passionate, relational speech acts, poetry illuminates the historicity of this figure and its association with womanhood. The early modern re-figuration of Fortune happened within the changing structure of English society, as it grew dependent on slave labor in its American colonies. Contemplatingthesemonuments built with the spoils of Atlantic trade, readers of Renaissance literature are well placed to recognize the origins of our ethics in a slave society, and, in turn, the present need for new re-figurations.[[144]](#footnote-144)

1. Published in *Fate and Fortune in European Thought ca. 1400-1650* ed. Ovanes Akopyan (Brill’s Studies in Intellectual History, Volume: 327, Leiden, 2021).

 On Fortune in ancient Roman and medieval Europe see R.W. Moss et al, “Fortune,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), 88–104; Howard Rollin Patch, *The Tradition of the Goddess Fortuna in Roman Literature and in the Transitional Period* (Northampton, Mass: Smith College, 1922); “The Tradition of the Goddess Fortuna in Medieval Philosophy and Literature” *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages* 3, 4 (1922), 179–235. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. St. Augustine, *Answer to Skeptics*, Book 3, Chapter 2; Descartes, *Treatise on the Passions*, Articles 145-164; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, Charles Scribner, 1971), 78-112. On Fortune in the early modern period see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Lorraine Daston, “Fortuna and the Passions,” in *Chance, Culture and the Literary Text*, Michigan Romance Studies, ed. Thomas M. Kavanagh, 14 (1994), 25–48; Antonino Poppi, ‘Fate, Fortune, Providence and Human Freedom’, in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy,* eds Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 641-67; John Lyons, *The Phantom of Chance: From Fortune to Randomness in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); *Chance, Literature, and Culture in Early Modern France*, eds John Lyons and Kathleen Wine (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See for example Descartes, Discourse on the Method, *Oeuvres de Descartes* 6, eds Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: Vrin, 1996) 26-27; Correspondence with Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia, *Oeuvres* 4, 202-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Aby Warburg writes: “Why this particular pagan deity, Fortuna, was revived by the Renaissance as the stylistic embodiment of worldly energy is explained by her important function in the art of the impresa. In this hitherto insufficiently studied genre of applied allegory, courtly culture had produced an intermediary stage between the sign and the image, as a symbolic illustration of the inner life of the individual. It was characteristic of the early Renaissance to use the words and images of a revived antiquity to express, in terms of pagan heroism, the stance of the individual at war with the world.” Aby Warburg, “Francesco Sassetti’s Last Injunctions to His Sons (1907),” in The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 240. See also Erwin Panofsky, ““Good Government” or Fortune? The Iconography of a Newly-Discovered Composition by Rubens,” Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 68 (1966), 305–26. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Fortune’s Faces: The* Roman de la Rose *and the Poetics of Contingency* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Jacques Lacan, “The Phallic Phase and the Subjective Import of the Castration Complex, trans. Jacqueline Rose, eds, *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, eds Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 119. For a useful survey of Freud and Lacan’s concept of desire, and its relationship to women, see the introductions of Mitchell and Rose in the above volume. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Quintilian, *Instituto Oratoria*, Book IX, Chapter 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It is appropriate that James Strachey, the translator of Freud’s paper “Instincts and their Vicissitudes,” should have chosen this word for desire’s negative effects, given the etymological connection between “vicissitude” (Latin: “vicis,” turn) and Fortune’s emblematic wheel. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *The Prince*, Chapter 25. My translation. Machiavelli also discusses Fortune in *Discourses on Livy*, Book III, Chapter 9, and “Tercets on Fortune: To Giovan Battista Soderini.” See also Thomas Flanagan, “The Concept of Fortuna in Machiavelli,” in *The Political Calculus*, ed. Anthony Parel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 127–56. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Nicholas Machiavel’s Prince,* trans. Edward Dacres (London: William Hils, 1640), 202–9. My emphasis. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). For responses to Pitkin see *Feminist Interpretations of Machiavelli*, ed. Maria J. Falco (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Bonnie Honig, “The Trump Doctrine and the Gender Politics of Power,” *Boston Review*, July 17 (2018), http://bostonreview.net/politics/bonnie-honig-trump-doctrine-and-gender-politics-power; Jordan Peterson, *12 Rules: An Antidote to Chaos* (New York: Allen Lane, 2018), 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Most treatments of Fortune in Renaissance literature have focused on drama. D.C. Allen, “Renaissance Remedies for Fortune: Marlowe and the *Fortunati*,” *Studies in Philology*,38, 2 (1941), 188–97; Frederick Kiefer, *Fortune and Elizabethan Tragedy* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1983); *Fortune: “all is but Fortune*,*”* ed.Leslie Thomson (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2000); Erin Kelly, ““Fortune’s Ever-Changing Face” in Early Modern Literature and Thought” (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More,* vol. 1(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 31–43. See also A.D. Cousins, “More and the Refiguring of Stoicism: The Prefatory Poems to *The Boke of Fortune*,” *Moreana*, 30 (1993), 19-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. More, “Fortune Verses,” 32. On More’s sources see Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen-Hunt, “Thomas More’s Fortune Verses: A contribution to the solution of a few problems,” trans. Amos Johannes Hunt, *Moreana*, 48 (2011), 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. More, “Fortune Verses,” 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. More, “Fortune Verses,” 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid., 34–35. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ibid., 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid., 35–36. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid., 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “Fortune peruerse | Qui le monde versse.” More, “Fortune Verses,” 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid., 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The phrase is from Matthew Parker, Elizabeth I’s first Archbishop of Canterbury. Parker was referring to Wyer’s *The boke of … Fortune* (1556) in which other authors’ writings on gambling are attributed to More. Letter to Sir Nicholas Bacon, 1 March 1558/9; *Correspondence of Matthew Parker 1535–1575* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853), 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. On More’s continued use of Fortune see Herbrüggen-Hunt, “Thomas More’s Fortune Verses,” 145–48. *Complete Works of St. Thomas More,* vol. 1*,* 45–46. William Roper, More’s sixteenth-century biographer, provides the date and context for these writings; *Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, xxxii. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. More, “Lewes Ye Loste Lover,” 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. More, “Davy the Diser,” 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This symbolic operation is absent in Boethius, where Lady Philosophy is the alternative to Fortune. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *City of God*, Book IV, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. A.D. Cousins, “Augustine, Boethius and the Fortune Verses of Thomas More,” *Moreana*, 39, 149 (2002), 29–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. In this sense, such poetic appeals to Fortune have an affinity with the “poetic function” described by Roman Jakobson. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Tho. Wyatis translation of Plutarckes boke*, *of the quyete of mynde* (London: Richarde Pynson, 1528) sig. a2v. Ironically, in this refusal, Wyatt followed Petrarch’s recommendation to read brief books full of useful advice*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. “To wish and want and not obtain,” *Sir Thomas Wyatt: The Complete Poems*, ed. R.A. Rebholz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 142–43. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Wyatt, “Once, as methought, Fortune me kissed,” *Complete Poems*, 143–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. *Songes and Sonettes, written by the ryght honorable Lorde Henry Haward late Earle of Surrey, and other* (London, 1557), fol. 42; text from *Tottel’s Miscellany (1557–1587)* ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (revised edition; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. S.F. Johnson, “Wyatt, They Flee From Me,” *Explicator*, 11 (1952), 39; E.E. Duncan-Jones, “Wyatt’s They Flee From Me,” *Explicator*, 12 (1953), 16–17; J.D. Hainsworth, “Sir Thomas Wyatt’s Use of the Love Convention,” *Essays in Criticism*,7, 1, (1957), 90–95; Arnold Stein, “Wyatt’s “They Flee From Me,”” *The Sewanee Review*,67, 1 (1959), 35; Harry Morris, “Birds, Does, and Manliness in ‘They Fle From Me,’” *Essays in Criticism*, 10, 4 (1960), 484–92; Albert S. Gerard, “Wyatt’s ‘They Fle From Me,” *Essays in Criticism* 11, 3 (1961), 359–65; Leighton Greene, “Wyatt’s ‘They Fle From Me’ and the Busily Seeking Critics,” *Bucknell Review*, 12, 3 (1964), 17–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Donald M. Friedman, “The Mind in the Poem: Wyatt’s “They Fle From Me,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 7 (1967), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Duncan-Jones, “Wyatt, They Flee From Me,” 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. I’m indebted to Oliver Browne for illuminating this for me (private communication). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Leighton Greene may be correct that “busily seeking” readers of this poem go wrong, but the poem itself tempts readers to this activity so that they might be instructed of the dangers against what Wyatt in the dedication to *De Tranquilitate Animi* calls “ouer busy serchers of other menes actis.” Wyatt, *Plutarkes boke*, sig. A2r. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Supporters of the Fortune thesis include: Johnson, “Wyatt, They Flee From Me,” 39; Hainsworth, “Wyatt’s Use of the Love Convention,” 93; George Whiting, “Fortune in Wyatt’s ‘They Flee From Me,’” *Essays in Criticism*, 10 (1961), 220–22; Koziskowski, “Wyatt’s “They Flee From Me,”” 417; See Carolyn Chiappelli, “A Late Gothic Vein in Wyatt’s ‘They Fle From Me,’” *Renaissance and Reformation*, 1, 2 (1977), 95-102. Dissenters include Morris, “Birds, Does, and Manliness in ‘They Fle From Me,’” 484–92; Duncan-Jones, “Wyatt’s They Flee From Me,” 16–17; Leighton Greene, “Wyatt’s “They Fle From Me,”” 28–30; K. Muir and P. Thomson, *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1969), 266–67; Sir Thomas Wyatt, *Collected Poems*, ed. Joost Daalder (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975), 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. “Thanked be Fortune and hire false wheel, / That noon estaat assureth to be weel.” Chaucer, “The Knight’s Tale,” l. 925–26; *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* ed. Fred Norris Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. MS Egerton, 2711; transcribed in *The Poems of Sir Thomas Wiat*, ed. A.K. Foxwell (London, University of London Press, 1913), 86. This variant is passed over in Rollins, *Tottel’s Miscellany,* 170. On the significance of the textual variants see Deborah C. Solomon, “Representations of Lyric Intimacy in Manuscript and Print Versions of Wyatt’s “They flee from me,”” *Modern Philology*, 111, 4 (2014), 668-682. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Wyatt, *The Complete Poems*, 116–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The first and second editions are both 1557. The 1559, 1565, 1567, 1574, 1585 and 1587 editions of Tottel’s Miscellany all print “thine array.” [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Even this final line does not necessarily address the mistress herself, but ironically turns her phrase to a third-person, the reader or someone else. The final line of the MS Egerton edition is “I wold fain knowe what she hath deserved.” *Poems of Sir Thomas Wiat*, 86. In this version, the mistress is never addressed in the second person. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. “array, n.”. OED Online. December 2018. Oxford University Press.

http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/10979. Milton is notable in his attention to its sartorial and militaristic senses: see for example *Paradise Lost*, IV, 596. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Prologue, *The Legend of Good Women*, 1.153; “Balade, Against Woman Unconstant,” l.1. On Wyatt’s allusions to Chaucer see Helen Cooper, “Wyatt and Chaucer: A Re-Appraisal,” *Studies in English*, 13 (1982), 104–23; Dennis Kay, “Wyatt and Chaucer: “They Fle from Me” Revisited,” *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*,47, 3 (1984), 211–25. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Leigh Winser, “The Question of Love Tradition in Wyatt’s “They Flee From Me,” *Essays in Literature*, 2, 1, (1975), 3–9; Johnson, “Wyatt, They Flee From Me,” 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *Machiavel’s Prince*, 202–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The phrase “traffic in women” is from Claude Levi-Strauss, and it is developed into an analysis of homosociality in Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Andrea Brady, *Poetry and Bondage* (manuscript in preparation). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Churchyard’s poem was first published in the 1563 edition of *The Mirrour of Magistrates*, and also included in the 1578 and 1587 editions. On Fortune in Baldwin’s book, see Frederick Kiefer, ‘Fortune and Providence in the “Mirror for Magistrates,”’ *Studies in Philology,* 74, 2 (1977), 146-164; Allyna E. Ward, ‘Fortune Laughs and Proudly Hovers: Fortune and Providence in the Tudor Tradition’, *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 39, 1/2 (2009), 39-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Thomas Churchyard, “Howe Shores wife, Edwarde the fowerthes concubine, was by king Richarde despoyled of all her goodes and forced to do open penance,” in *THE LAST part of the Mirour for Magistrates*, ed. William Baldwin(London, Thomas Marsh, 1578), 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Kozikowski, “Wyatt’s “They Flee From Me,”” 417. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Churchyard, “Shores wife,” 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. This appears to be an early instance of the English proverb, “He has the ball at his feet.” Morris Palmer Tilley, *A dictionary of the proverbs in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1950), B63. On the ubiquity of the ball in Fortune iconography see Panofsky, ““Good Government” or Fortune?” 314. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. “Fortune then did me so sore molest”; Churchyard, “Shores wife,” 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Churchyard’s first published verse was *Dauie Dicars Dreame*, a satire that landed the young writer in a pamphlet controversy and in trouble with the lords. Orion St. Onge, *Thomas Churchyard: A Study of his Prose and Poetry* (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1966), 31–43. On the connections between Churchyard’s poem and More’s history, see Barbara Brown, “Sir Thomas More and Thomas Churchyard’s “Shore’s Wife,”” *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 2 (1972), 41–48. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. More, “The History of Richard III,” in *Complete Works of St Thomas More,* vol. 2, 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. “The Wofull Lamentation of Jane Shore,” Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1966), 121. On this ballad’s circulation in the late Elizabethan period, see James L. Harner, ““The Wofull Lamentation of Mistris Jane Shore”: The Popularity of an Elizabethan Ballad,” *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 71, 2 (1977), 137–49. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad,* 657. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Sara Ahmed, “Willful Parts: Problem Characters or the Problem of Character,” New Literary History, 42, 2 (2011), 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. On Shore’s agency see Wendy Wall, “Forgetting and Keeping: Jane Shore and the English Domestication of History,” *Renaissance* Drama, 27 (1996) 123-156. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662), sig. 2M1. On Elizabethan courtiers’ use of lover’s discourse see Arthur F. Marotti, ‘“Love is Not Love”: Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order,” *ELH*, 49, 2 (1982), 396-428. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ibid, sig. 2M1. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Gerald Heal Abraham, “A Lost Poem by Queen Elizabeth I,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 3457(1968), 553. Simpson notes a speculative origin in 1565/6, when a license was granted to John Cherlwood for a ballad of “one complaining of the mutability of fortune.” Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, 225–31. On the *contrafactum* see Gavin Alexander, “The Elizabethan Lyric as Contrafactum: Robert Sidney’s ‘French Tune’ Identified,” *Music & Letters*, 84, 3 (2003), 378–402. They must have been an early adaptation of the song, since they are mentioned in Puttenham’s *Arte of English Poesie* (1588) and were printed as broadsides in the early 1590s. Bruce Olson notes that a broadside ballad, “ffortune hath taken thee awaye my love, being the true dittie thereof,” was entered into the Stationers Register on June 13, 1590; and “The second part of the Defianc to fortune” was entered on August 7, 1592; “A Lost Poem by Queen Elizabeth I,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 3472 (1968), 1032. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, 225; Christopher Marsh, ““Fortune My Foe”: The Circulation of an English Super-Tune,” in *Intersections. Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture: Identity, Intertextuality, and Performance in Early Modern Song Culture,* eds Dieuwke van der Poel, Wim van Anrooij, and Louis Peter Grijp (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 316. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. “Verse Exchange Between Queen Elizabeth and Sir Walter Ralegh,” in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, eds Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 307–9; Inner Temple Library, MS Petyt, 538, vol. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Katherine Butler, *Music in Elizabethan Court Politics* (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Kiefer, “Fortune and Providence,” 150-151. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Elizabeth, “Verse Exchange,” 308. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid., 309. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Elizabeth I, “Written on a Window Frame at Woodstock,” in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 44–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid., 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. On the links between Ralegh’s fall from the queen’s favor and his imperial projects see Joyce Lorimer, *Sir Walter Ralegh’s Discoverie of Guiana* (London: Hakluyt Society, 2006); Louis Montrose, “The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery,” *Representations*, 33 (1991) 1-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Thomas Churchyard, “Heere follovves the Tragedie of Shores VVife, much augmented with diuers newe aditions.” *CHVRCHYARDS Challenge*, (1593), 125–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Some of Daniel’s sonnets were first published in an unlicensed edition of *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella Wherein the excellence of sweete poesie is concluded* (London, 1591); the rest of the sequence appeared in *Delia* (London, 1592). [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Churchyard, “Tragedie of Shores VVife,” 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. On the Petrarchan tradition in England see Helen Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchanism and Its Counterdiscourses* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); *Petrarch in Britain: Interpreters, Imitators, and Translators over 700 years*, eds Peter Hainsworth and Martin McLaughlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Daniel, Sonnet 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. On the poem’s different referential possibilities see Marotti, “Love is Not Love,” 409. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Daniel, Sonnet 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Daniel, Sonnet 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Sonnets 33–39 in the 1592 *Delia*; 32–38 in the 1594 edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. An insult presented as a compliment, typically given by a man to a woman, used as a strategy of seduction. See *Urban Dictionary*, https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=neg. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. The text is from *Shake-speares Sonnets* (London: [Thomas Thorpe], 1609), Sonnet 25. Compare with Daniel’s Sonnet 32 in the 1594 *Delia*. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Shakespeare, Sonnet 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Shakespeare, Sonnet 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Jeff Dolven, “Reading Wyatt for the Style,” *Modern Philology,* 105, 1 (2007), 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. In this respect, my reading differs from that given in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 28-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Shakespeare, Sonnet 37; Shakespeare, Sonnet 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Shakespeare, Sonnet 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Shakespeare, Sonnet 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Robert Coogan, “Petrarch and More’s Concept of Fortune,” *Italica*,46, 2 (1969), 168; Letizia A. Panizza, “Stoic Psychotherapy in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Petrarch’s *De remediis*,”in *Atoms,* Pneuma, *and Tranquility: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought*, ed. Margaret J. Osler(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Petrarch, *Phisicke against fortune,* trans. Thomas Twyne (London: Richard Watkyns, 1579), 93–96. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Panizza, “Stoic psychotherapy,” 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. The verb “denigrare” was rare in the Ciceronian period, and the few instances I have found do not use it in the moral sense: i.e. Pliny, *Natural History*, XXVII, 52; Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*. Using the adjective “black” to connote moral failings is not a common locution in Cicero: as an exception see, *In Defence of A. Caecina*, 27 (“nec minus niger nec minus confidens quam ille Terentianus est Phormio…”). Disturbingly, where “black” is used in the morally pejorative sense, it seems to be the interpolation of Cicero’s modern translators; i.e. “pirata nefarius” translated as “black deeds of piracy” (*Verrine Orations* 2, I, 154); “tam perditus” is translated as “so black” (2, II, 27); “falsa delata ab eo iudicavimus” is translated as “condemnatory judgments and black marks” (*Philippic* 12, 11); “turpissimum” is translated as “a black disgrace” (*Tusculan Disputations*, II, 12). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Petrarch, “Of the woorthinesse of Marriage,” *Physicke against fortune*, 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Juvenal, Satires, 6. 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Panizza, “Stoic psychotherapy,” 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Shakespeare, Sonnet 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Shakespeare, Sonnet 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Shakespeare, Sonnet 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. I am again drawing on a connection made in Ahmed, “Willful Parts,” 231-253. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. There have been black people in the British Isles for millennia. The production of this figure, by which blackness is figured as “new,” is a key part of the problematic of the colonial imaginary. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1996) 62-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Shakespeare, Sonnet 127. In this respect, the mistress anticipates later developments of European visual art, where the black model stands as a symbolic bearer of aesthetic modernity. See Denise Murrell, *Posing modernity: the black model from Manet and Matisse to today* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); *The image of the Black in western art*, eds David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 5 vols (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010-2014); *Revealing the African presence in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Joaneath Spicer (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. On 1492 as the beginning of a new era see Sylvia Wynter, “1492: A New World View,” in *Race, Discourse, and the Origins of the Americas*, eds Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 5-57. By 1600 it was clear that the opening of the Americas to European commerce had transformed the world; see for example George Hakewill, *An apologie of the power and providence of God in the government of the world* (1627). [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Anna Cooper, *A Voice From the South* (Xenia, Ohio, The Aldine Printing House, 1892), https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/cooper/cooper.html, accessed December 10 2018; Claudia Jones, *An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!* (New York: National Women’s Commission, 1949); Frances Beal, “Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female*,*” in *Black Woman’s Manifesto* (New York: The Third World Women’s Alliance, 1969); bell hooks, *Ain’t I a woman: Black women and feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981); Angela Y. Davis, *Women, race & class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983); Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum,* 1 (1989) 139-67. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Hortense J. Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” *Diacritics,* 17, 2 (1987) 64-81. See also Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” *Small Axe,* 12, 2 (2008), 1-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. This paragraph draws on Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad*, 225–31; Marsh, “The Circulation of an English Super-Tune,” 308–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. “An excellent song, wherein you shall find, / Great consolation for a troubled mind. / To the Tune of, Fortune my Foe;” cited in Marsh, “The Circulation of an English Super-Tune,” 318. Also in *English Broadside Ballad Archive*, http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20688/xml. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Diana Poulton, “The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad and its Music,” *Early Music*, 9, 4 (1981), 427–37. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Sarah Williams, “To the Tune of Witchcraft: Witchcraft, Popular Song, and the Early Modern English Broadside Ballad,” *Journal of Seventeenth Century Music*,19, 1 (2013), https://sscm-jscm.org/jscm-issues/volume-19-no-1/to-the-tune-of-witchcraft. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Margaret Cavendish, “The Comical Hash” in *Playes written by the thrice noble, illustrious and excellent princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle* (London, 1668), 573. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Susan S. Lanser, *The sexuality of history: modernity and the Sapphic, 1565-1830* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. This is not to suggest that Philips was the first English poet to reject the association, as we have with Elizabeth I. Philips was not the first English poet to celebrate female autonomy (Emilia Lanier is one earlier example). [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. In a commendatory poem for the volume, Abraham Cowley wrote that, thanks to Philips, “Even Boadicia’s angry Ghost / Forgets her own misfortune and disgrace.” “Upon Mrs. K. Philips her Poems,” in Philips, *Poems,* sig. B2v–c1v. All subsequent references to Philips’s poems are from this edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Philips to Cotterell, August 20, 1662; *The Collected Works of Katherine Philips: The Matchless Orinda, Volume II, The Letters,* ed. Patrick Thomas (Stump Cross, Essex: Stump Cross Books, 1992), 46–47. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Ibid., 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Philips could have read the *Enchiridion* in Thomas Healey’s 1610 translation, or in the abbreviated French translation, in Gilles Boileau, *Vie d’Epictète* (Paris, 1655). Philips’s admirer John Davies of Kidwelly published a translation of Boileau’s volume in 1670. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Philips, “Submission.” [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Philips, “Submission.” [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Philips, “Submission.” [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Philips, “Submission.” [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Descartes elaborated a Neo-Stoic ethics in his letters to Elisabeth, Princess of Bohemia, as well as in his *Treatise on the Soul* (London: J. Martin and J.R. Ridley, 1650). The correspondence was not printed until much later but circulated in manuscript during Descartes’s lifetime, and the intellectual nature of their relationship was also indicated in dedications from his *Principia* and in the prefatory letters to the *Treatise on the Passions*. The friendship between the philosopher and the princess must have been known to Philips and Cotterell, who had been steward to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, the mother of Descartes’s correspondent, between 1652 and 1655. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Philips, “Submission.” [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. On Philips’s visit to Ireland see Penelope Anderson, *Friendship’s Shadows: women’s friendship and the politics of betrayal in England, 1640-1705* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 100. See also Philips’s poem “The Irish Greyhound.” [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Philips, “A Dialogue betwixt Lucasia, and Rosania.” [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Philips, “On the Death of the Queen of Bohemia.” [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Hilary McD. Beckles, *The First Black Slave Society: Britain’s “Barbarity Time” in Barbados, 1636-1876* (Kingston, Jamaica: The University of West Indies Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Lanser, *The Sexuality of History*, 6, 250; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 462-505; Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). Philips, the daughter of a cloth merchant, was aware of mercantilist discourse: “A Relation of mine, who had travell’d in foreign Countries, was often wont to say, *Interesse e tutto il Mondo, e cosi son io*, All the World is made up of Interest, and so am I.” Letter to Cotterell, 28 March 1662; Philips, *Letters*, 24. Hirschman identifies that maxim as a common figure of mercantilist discourse, *The Passions and the Interests,* 42-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. The artist Morehshin Allahyari has conceptualized “re-figuration” as a feminist and anti-colonial art practice. See Joel Kuennen, “Refiguring Monstrosity: Interview with Morehshin Allahyari,” *The Seen Journal* (September 28, 2018), http://theseenjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Morehshin\_Allahyari.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)