

# EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



## The 'Doubling' Life of John Florio: Revaluating his Influence on Shakespeare's Style

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### I. Introduction

John Florio was a major figure in the literature of the English Renaissance. As a lexicographer and translator, Florio was responsible for the introduction of 1,149 words into English usage, ranking him eleventh on a list that includes Chaucer in first-place with 2,102. Florio may have edited the 1590 Quarto of Sidney's *Arcadia* and composed the first English translation of Boccaccio's *Decameron*; he contributed to the development of euphuism as a prose style; and he provided source material and inspiration for late-Elizabethan sonneteers building on the Petrarchan tradition. Florio's accomplishments are all the more impressive if one agrees with Frances A. Yates that he was not a native speaker of English, and that in achieving his master-work, the 1603 version of Montaigne's *Essays*, Florio translated 'from a language not his own into a language not his own'. But was this actually the case? Most scholars assume that Florio was, as the subtitle of Yates's seminal work states, 'an Italian in Shakespeare's England'. Yet a commendatory poem by R. Collines prefacing Florio's 1578 Italian-language manual, *His First Fruites*, refers to the author as 'a countryman of ours', and, as Arundell Del Re notes, 'Other similar poems – while stressing his bilingualism – never specifically allude to him as anything but English, nor does Florio himself'. Thus his address 'To the Reader' in *Florios Second Frutes* (1591), where Florio identifies himself as 'an Englishman', albeit 'an Englishman in Italiane'.<sup>1</sup>

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Many thanks to Roberta Zanoni for proofreading the Italian quotations within this essay. Archaic spellings have been retained within these quotations, even when they differ from modern Italian.

<sup>1</sup> For Florio's contribution to vocabulary see Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 230-31; for Florio's possible editing of the 1590

Florio was born in London, lived in England most of his life, and, as Michael Wyatt observes, ‘probably never set foot in what we recognize today as Italy’. Florio’s 1611 portrait lists his age as fifty-eight, dating the year of his birth to 1553. His father, Michael Angelo Florio, had come to England as a Protestant refugee in 1550. A former Franciscan friar, author, translator, and Latin scholar, Michael Angelo became the pastor of an Italian Protestant congregation in London, but was soon involved in some kind of moral scandal. The exact circumstances of this misstep are murky, but Mario Praz defines it as an ‘act of fornication’ (‘atto di fornicazione’). The woman in question became John’s mother. Michael Angelo was forced to flee England with the 1554 ascension of Mary Tudor and her subsequent efforts to restore England to the Catholic fold. Apparently, the ‘little family’ that went into exile with Florio included the infant John. They sojourned for a short time in Strassbourg and then moved on to Soy or Soglio, which Konrad Eisenbichler defines as ‘a small village in the Grisons canton of Switzerland’. There Michael Angelo served as pastor of the reformed church.<sup>2</sup>

Although the portion of Switzerland where the Florios settled was a centre for Italian Protestant refugees, the name of the village elder who recruited Michael Angelo to his church position (Federico von Salis) and that of a local place for public assemblies (Plan Lüder) attest to the community’s multi-ethnic make-up. John Florio in his formative years would have heard at least some Italian spoken on the street, and Yates is certainly correct that ‘Michael Angelo was well qualified to teach his son the rules of the Tuscan tongue’. But it is not clear what language John would have spoken first. Since it was a modest household with few or no servants, this would likely have been the idiom of his mother.

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Quarto of Sidney’s *Arcadia* see Yates, *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare’s England* (New York: Octagon Books, 1968 - originally published 1934 by Cambridge University Press), p. 203; for Florio’s translation of English *Decameron* see Herbert G. Wright, *The First English Translation of the ‘Decameron’ (1620)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 258-63; for influence on euphuism see Konrad Eisenbichler, ‘John Florio’, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 172, ‘Sixteenth-Century British Nondramatic Writers’, ed. by David A. Richardson (Detroit, Washington, DC, and London: Gale Research, 1996), pp. 85-90 (p. 90); for impact on sonneteers see Yates, *John Florio*, p. 137; First quotation from *ibid.*, p. 239; R. Collines, ‘In prayse of Florio his first Fruites’, in John Florio, *His Firste Fruites* [1578] (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo, 1969); Arundell Del Re, ‘Introduction’, in John Florio, *Florio’s First Fruites* [1578] (Formosa, Japan: Taihoku Imperial University, 1936), pp. i-lxiv (pp. vi-lxiv, ix n 22); John Florio, Address ‘To the Reader’ in *Florios Second Frutes* [1591] (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter*, p. 118; Carlo Maria Franzero, *John Florio a Londra ai Tempi di Shakespeare* (Parma: Guanda, 1969), p. 45; Mario Praz, ‘Giovanni Florio’, in *Machiavelli in Inghilterra ed Altri Saggi* (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1962), pp. 167-72 (p.169); Yates, *John Florio*, p. 13; Eisenbichler, ‘John Florio’, p. 86.

Although her nationality is uncertain, Hermann W. Haller deduces from Florio's early fluency in English that his mother was 'of English extraction'. The most recent commentator on this subject, Peter G. Platt, concludes from the existing evidence, 'Florio's mother was an Englishwoman whose identity has never been uncovered.' Michael Wyatt argues that because of his mixed parentage Florio 'may well have grown up using both languages'. In the 1611 Epistle dedicatory to *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, Florio refers to English as 'our sweete-mother-toong'. In quoting this passage, Manfred Pfister places a bracketed exclamation mark after the possessive pronoun 'our' to show his surprise at (what is for Pfister) Florio's level of linguistic assimilation. There is, however, no reason not to accept at face value Florio's description of his 'mother-toong'.<sup>3</sup>

But, one may ask, 'So what?' What difference does it make if Florio's first language was English? For one thing, the case of Florio provides a cautionary tale about linguistic

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<sup>3</sup> Soglio name and place names from Lukas Vischer, 'Michelangelo Florio tra Italia, Inghilterra e Val Bregaglia', Italian trans. by G. Bogo, in *Il Protestantismo di Lingua Italiana nella Svizzera: Figure e Movimenti tra Cinquecento e Ottocento*, ed. by Emidio Campi and Giuseppe La Torre (Torino: Claudiana, 2000), pp. 67-76 (pp. 68, 68 n. 4); Yates, *John Florio*, p. 16; Hermann W. Haller, 'Introduction', in John Florio, *A Worlde of Words* [1598], ed. by Hermann W. Haller (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. ix-xlv (p. xxxviii n 35); Peter G. Platt, "'I am an Englishman in Italian": John Florio and the Translation of Montaigne', in *Shakespeare's Montaigne*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt (New York: New York Review Books, 2014), pp. xxxiv-xlvi (p. xxxiv); Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, p. 3; John Florio, 'Epistle Dedicatory', in *Queen Anna's New World of Words* [1611] (Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1968); Manfred Pfister, 'Inglese Italianato-Italiano Anglizzato: John Florio', in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Andreas Höfele and Werner Von Koppenfels (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 32-54 (p. 47). Most scholars (including, most recently, Eisenbichler) follow Yates in assuming that John Florio left his parents to study under the protection of Bishop Pietro Paolo Vergerio in the Italianate atmosphere of Tübingen at the court of Duke Christopher of Württemberg, and also at the university there. Yet Yates's case is circumstantial and rests on a series of cryptic documents in which the younger Florio is never mentioned by name. The closest Yates comes to proof is a university register that lists the presence in 1563 of a 'Johannes Florentinus'. She reasons that because 'Michael Angelo often added "Florentinus" to his signature' (although he was most likely from Siena or Lucca) it is therefore 'highly probable that "Johannes Florentinus" is none other than John Florio'. Yates, *John Florio*, pp. 19-21. While Yates's theory is feasible, it is equally plausible that the younger Florio's education consisted of being 'home-schooled' at the side of his English mother in an isolated mountain village. According to Del Re (the only scholar to challenge Yates's narrative), Florio was relieved of this pastoral tedium when he returned to England 'not later than 1571'. He deduces this date from passages in the *First Fruites* whose composition, judging from topical references to events in England, appears to pre-date that work's 1578 publication. Del Re argues that, rather than polishing his education at Tübingen, Florio spent his late adolescence toiling as a craftsman in London; Del Re, 'Introduction', pp. ix-x, xxx. An entry in the *Returns of Aliens*, cited by Eisenbichler, also suggests that Florio may have been back in England by 1571. Eisenbichler, 'John Florio', p. 86.

essentialism. This is a particular danger within what Tom Conley calls ‘the fiercely monolingual setting of the United States’, where speaking a language other than English typically signals alterity rather than erudition. In connection to Renaissance studies, Jason Lawrence critiques the assumption that, because John Marston’s mother was at least part Italian, this playwright therefore ‘inherit[ed] an innate familiarity with his mother’s *madre lingua*’. In fact, as Lawrence demonstrates, Marston’s use of Italian material is ‘entirely consistent with that of his contemporaries’. The playwright demonstrates the limits of his Italian language skills through ‘practices shared with Shakespeare which would be used, in the latter’s case, to argue for a limited or indeed non-existent knowledge of Italian’. In other words, while Marston’s ethnic background leads critics to credit him with knowledge of Italian, Shakespeare is denied this same competence due to his quintessential ‘Englishness’. Yet, as Naseeb Shaheen has shown, Shakespeare’s dependence on Italian source material not previously translated into English or French demonstrates that he was able to at least read Italian with some fluency.<sup>4</sup>

Besides challenging dominant attitudes about language acquisition, a re-evaluation of Florio may allow scholars to give him, in the words of Dewitt T. Starnes, ‘credit for what he did accomplish, not for what his admirers thought he accomplished’. This quotation refers to Florio’s supposed originality in compiling his two Italian-English dictionaries. Starnes shows that, rather than drawing his lexicon exclusively from Italian authors, Florio instead borrowed many definitions for Italian words from their cognates in Thomas Thomas’s 1596 Latin-English *Dictionarium*. Florio’s influence on Shakespeare has been similarly misinterpreted. Critics have long seen him as a source of ‘local colour’ in Shakespeare’s Italian plays. At its most extreme, this view led Santi Paladino to the anti-Stratfordian position that Florio (in collaboration with his father Michael Angelo) actually wrote the plays, since there is no other way to explain what Paladino calls the ‘italianità di Shakespeare’. This misguided theory arose during the false optimism of the early fascist period, as can be heard in Paladino’s hope that once Florio’s authorship is accepted, ‘We will be able to shout with pride in a day not far off that, under the influence of a new Italy, another great conquest has been made to further glorify the chosen, renovated race of Rome.’ Tomorrow, apparently, belonged to him. But problems exist

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<sup>4</sup> Tom Conley, ‘Institutionalizing Translation: On Florio’s Montaigne’, in *Demarcating the Disciplines: Philosophy, Literature, Art*, ed. Samuel Webber (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 45-60 (p. 45); Jason Lawrence, ‘Who The Devil Taught Thee So Much Italian’: *Italian Language Learning and Literary Imitation in Early Modern England* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 13-31; Naseeb Shaheen, ‘Shakespeare’s Knowledge of Italian’, *Shakespeare Survey* 47 (1994), 161-9 (pp. 163-4).

even with more level-headed assertions that Florio supplied Shakespeare with Italian details.<sup>5</sup>

For one thing, it is not clear how accurate Shakespeare's representations of Italy actually are. Praz suggests that local allusions to landmarks and customs demonstrate Shakespeare's detailed knowledge of 'a very definite part of Italy: Venice, and the neighbouring towns Verona, Padua, Mantua and Milan'. This leads the critic to conclude, 'There are two possible alternatives: either Shakespeare travelled to the North of Italy, or he got this information from intercourse with some Italian in London.' Praz then identifies Florio as the most likely candidate for this second possibility. Yet, he acknowledges, these accurate representations of Northern Italy co-exist with apparent geographical errors, such as the moment in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (I.i.71) when characters travel by boat from Verona to Milan. On the other hand, Sir Edward Sullivan argues that this reference actually shows a sophisticated knowledge of water travel in the Italy of Shakespeare's day, when a navigable system of rivers and canals made such journeys possible. Giovanna Perini scoffs that the route Sullivan describes 'rather than a reality, was at best a chimeric desire in the utopian projects of Leonardo da Vinci'. Sullivan, however, cites Montaigne's description from his *Travel Journal* (1580-81) of a journey from Lago di Garda to Verona along the Adige River, during which the boat intersects a canal 'deep enough to carry great barks to Milan'. Geographical accuracy aside, Shakespeare would have had many other sources of 'local colour' (especially if he knew Italian as Shaheen argues). These include the Paduan fencing master Vincentio Saviolo who may have trained members of Shakespeare's company, as well as the Italian merchants who gathered at the Elephant tavern in the same neighborhood as the Globe. All things considered, Florio probably had no unique influence on the Italian content of Shakespeare's plays. But he did affect their linguistic form.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Dewitt T. Starnes, 'John Florio Reconsidered', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 6, 4 (1965), 407-22 (pp. 422, 418). For analysis of Florio's contribution of local Italian colour to Shakespeare see Praz, 'Shakespeare's Italy', *Shakespeare Survey* 7 (1954), 95-106 (pp. 104-05), see also Kenneth Muir, 'Shakespeare and Florio', *Notes and Queries* 197 (1952): pp. 493-95; Santi Paladino, *Shakespeare Sarebbe Il Pseudonimo di un Poeta Italiano* (Reggio Calabria: Borgia, 1929), pp. 47-48, translation by present author, original reads: 'E potremo gridare con orgoglio in un giorno che non scorgiamo lontano che sotto l'influsso dell'Italia nuova, un'altra grande conquista è stata fatta a glorificare ancor più l'eletta, rinnovata stirpe di Roma.'

<sup>6</sup> Praz, 'Shakespeare's Italy', 104-5, 98; Edward Sullivan, 'Shakespeare and the Waterways of North Italy', *The Nineteenth Century* 24 (1908), 215-32 (pp. 217, 223); Giovanna Perini, 'Dialogo didattico e dialogo drammatico: John Florio e William Shakespeare', *Studi Secenteschi* 33 (1992), 167-82 (p. 179), translation by present author, original reads: 'più che una realtà, questa poteva essere al massimo un pio desiderio nei progetti utopici di un Leonardo da Vinci'; Montaigne qtd. in Sullivan, 'Shakespeare and the Waterways', 229. For Chamberlain's Men as possible students of Saviolo see Keir Elam, 'English Bodies in Italian

As far back as 1925, George Coffin Taylor claimed to have found ‘a glossary of about seven hundred and fifty words, selected from Florio’s Montaigne, which were used by Shakespeare during and after, but not before 1603 (the date of Florio’s publication of the Essays)’. Scholars have also perceived the impact of Florio’s language manuals on Shakespeare, beyond the playwright’s direct quotation of these volumes in *The Taming of the Shrew* (I.ii.24-25) and *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (IV.ii.97-98). For instance, Shaheen and Kenneth Muir find inspiration for Iago’s rhyming description of women (*Othello* II.i.109-12) and the Osric scene in *Hamlet* (V.ii.92-105) in chapters twelve and seven of Florio’s *Second Frutes*. In recent years, observers have noted Shakespeare’s borrowings from Florio’s dictionaries, as when Keir Elam describes *Twelfth Night* as ‘veritably steeped’ in Florio’s 1598 *Worlde of Words*, ‘beginning with the names of the Dramatis Personae, which look like an abbreviated and somewhat deformed version of Florio’s lexicon, with its Feste, Malvolio, Olivia, Orsino, Viola, etc.’. Elam concludes, ‘Shakespeare’s nominal Illyria looks suspiciously like Florio’s lexical Italia.’ For all this careful scrutiny of Florio’s influence on Shakespeare, critics have not noted these authors’ shared fondness for rhetorical doubling. Florio’s own proclivities in this area have been duly observed, and Shakespeare’s have been exhaustively examined (most famously by George T. Wright), but no one has yet hypothesised a relationship between the two. This essay will attempt such a connection in arguing that Shakespeare’s well-documented penchant for hendiadys likely derived from an emulation of Florio.<sup>7</sup>

## II. Florio’s Italian Expertise

On at least one occasion, Florio acknowledges that his credentials as a native speaker of Italian are suspect. In the 1578 address ‘A tutti i Gentilhoumini, e Mercanti Italiani, che si diletano de la lingua inglese’ that prefaces his *Firste Fruites*, Florio writes a passage that, due to its centrality to my argument, will be quoted in the original Italian. ‘Só bene’, Florio acknowledges, ‘che alcuni diranno come può scriver costui buon Italiano? & non

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Habits’, in *Shakespeare, Italy, and Intertextuality*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 26-44 (p. 36). For Italians at the Elephant see Gargáno, G. S. *Scapigliatura Italiana a Londra sotto Elisabetta e Giacomo I* (Florence: Luigi Battistelli, 1923), pp. 41-2.  
<sup>7</sup> George Coffin Taylor, *Shakespeare’s Debt to Montaigne* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), p. 5; Kenneth Muir, ‘Shakespeare and Florio’, pp. 493-4; Shaheen, ‘Shakespeare’s Knowledge of Italian’, p. 162; Keir Elam, “‘At the cubiculo’”: Shakespeare’s problems with Italian Language and Culture’, in *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 99-110 (p. 107); George T. Wright, ‘Hendiadys and *Hamlet*’, *PMLA* 96.2 (1981), 168-93.

è nato in Italia? à quelli rispondo che considerano bene i fatti suoi, alcuni altri diranno, come è possibile che costui sappja dar regole & non è dotto? à quelli no só che dire perche dicono la verità.’ The beginning of this passage translates fairly simply as ‘I know well that some will say, “How can this one write good Italian if [literally “&”] he’s not born in Italy?”’ Florio’s response to this hypothetical question is, however, more ambiguous. Michael Wyatt, in an uncharacteristic lapse within a work of otherwise meticulous scholarship, mistranslates this response by linking it to the second of Florio’s hypothetical objections. Wyatt renders Florio’s retort as: ‘To them I respond by saying that considering clearly their case, others will say: how is it possible that he knows how to teach grammar, not being learned?’ The problem is that there is no second ‘d’ in ‘considerano’ – it is a third person plural, not a gerund. The original punctuation is not helpful, but Wyatt’s added colon distorts Florio’s sense. Clearer modern punctuation would place a full stop after the phrase ‘i fatti suoi’, finishing off one objection before moving on to the second. A more accurate translation is therefore provided by Sergio Costola and Michael Saenger: ‘I know quite well that some will ask how I can write correctly in Italian if I am not born in Italy. I will answer by suggesting that they attend to their own affairs.’<sup>8</sup>

Florio’s dismissive retort to the question of his birthplace points to a central fact. In the sixteenth century, speaking Italian was a choice, not a birthright. Used by almost no one as a first language, Italian was instead a lingua franca, a kind of peninsular Esperanto designed to enable the speakers of various dialects to communicate with each other. The language that came to be called ‘Italian’ was based on that of Tuscany. Because he came from that region, Michael Angelo Florio therefore had some claim as a native speaker. There is, however, no single ‘Tuscan’ dialect. The elder Florio’s origins are uncertain, and his speech may have reflected that of Lucca or Siena. More broadly, as Claudio Marazzini notes, being born in Tuscany did not give one automatic access to ‘Italian’. Although based on thirteenth-century Florentine, this language was codified two centuries later by scholars from elsewhere in Northern Italy. The most influential of these was the Venetian Pietro Bembo, whose 1525 *Prose della volgar lingua* sought to establish a linguistic canon drawn exclusively from the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. The irony of this was not lost on Niccolò Machiavelli, who complained that foreigners like Bembo had ‘the presumption to teach the rules of the Florentine language to the Florentines themselves’. In his own *Discorso intorno alla nostra lingua* (1524 ca),

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<sup>8</sup> John Florio, Address ‘A tutti i Gentilhuomini, e Mercanti Italiani, che si diletmano de la lingua Inglese’, in *His Firste Fruites* [1578] (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo, 1969); Michael Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, pp. 165-6; Sergio Costola and Michael Saenger, ‘Shylock’s Venice and the Grammar of the Modern City’, in *Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance: Appropriation, Transformation, Opposition*, ed. by Michele Marrapodi (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 109-119 (p. 112).

Machiavelli rejected Bembo's artificial literary model in favour of the sixteenth-century Florentine dialect as 'alive and spoken' ('viva e parlata') in that era. A more influential alternative to Bembo was proffered by the Mantuan Baldassare Castiglione, who endorsed an Italian that would be 'common, copious, and varied, almost like a delicious garden of diverse fruits and flowers'. Castiglione's paradigm stands in sharp contrast to that of Bembo's followers at the Accademia della Crusca, whose 1612 *Vocabolario* offered 'a form of Italian fixed in an increasingly remote historical past'.<sup>9</sup>

More than most living languages, Italian in this period was thus a work in progress. There was no national standard, which meant that anyone could play at speaking, and indeed at being, 'Italian'. This was part of the appeal for Italianate courtiers like the Earl of Southampton. The new Italian language was widely studied by the English upper classes, and their tuition fees formed a large part of Florio's income. Many were apt pupils. Florio regularly praises the dedicatees of his works for their linguistic competence. Even accounting for some politic flattery on Florio's part, R. C. Simonini's assertion that 'in the days of Elizabeth few courtiers or men of distinction were unable to speak Italian' seems warranted. However, Simonini's accompanying statement that 'Elizabeth herself was an accomplished linguist quite capable of carrying on negotiations with Italian ambassadors in their native tongue' should be tempered by the knowledge that many of these ambassadors communicated with the Queen in what was, for them as well as for her, an acquired language. As Florio warned in the 1611 'Epistle Dedicatory' to his revised dictionary, this new idiom was difficult even for 'natural Italians'. Significantly, Florio does not claim this designation for himself. Nor does he describe any personal contact with Italy. This contrasts with rival language teacher John Eliot, who boasted of having 'been in many Universities, the most famous of Europe, and first in those of Italie: as in Rome: in Pisa: in Bologna: in Padua: in Turin'. Despite lacking first-hand knowledge

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<sup>9</sup> Claudio Marazzini, *Storia della Lingua Italiana: Il Secondo Cinquecento e il Seicento* (Bologna: Mulino, 1993), pp. 149-150; Riccardo Tesi, *Storia dell'italiano: La formazione della lingua comune dalle origini al Rinascimento* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2001), v; Tesi, *Storia*, pp. 203-5; Marazzini, *Storia*, p. 164, translation by present author, in original Marazzini cites 'l'aneddoto di Machiavelli che se la prendeva con i veneziani come Bembo, i quali avevano la pretesta di insegnare le regole del fiorentino ai fiorentini stessi'; Tesi, *Storia*, p. 203; Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. by Amedeo Quondam (Milan: Garzanti, 1981) 1:35, p. 76, translated by present author, original reads 'commune [sic], copiosa e varia, e quasi come un delizioso giardino pien di fiori e frutti.' Florio's two Italian-English dictionaries (1598 and 1611) demonstrate his commitment to Castiglione's more expansive linguistic model. Florio indexed words from a wide variety of Italian dialects and social strata, as well as many colourful obscenities that enabled the translation of Pietro Aretino. Description of *Vocabolario* from Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, p. 221.



of the peninsula, Florio offered himself as a guide to Italian language and culture for paying aristocrats.<sup>10</sup>

As the polyglot son of an Italian Protestant refugee, Florio was to some extent the liminal figure described by Pfister: a ‘linguistic go-between’ who could skillfully switch codes between ‘Italian’ and ‘English’ identities. Yet Pfister may overstate the case when he asserts that the professional translator’s normal need to work from a foreign language into his own does not apply to Florio, because ‘with him the difference between own and foreign language becomes uncertain or collapses altogether’. The overwhelming majority of Florio’s translations are, after all, into English from Italian and French. Since Florio lived in London, market forces explain some of this preference, but the example of John Wolfe illustrates the surprisingly high demand for Italian-language publications in England at this time. Giacomo Castelvetro of Modena, for instance, is believed to have contributed to the prefatory materials and editing of Wolfe’s editions of Machiavelli and Aretino. Had he wished to publish in Italian while in London, Florio could likely have found similar opportunities. Instead his output follows Pfister’s proscription for standard translational practice – assuming that his first language was English.<sup>11</sup>

Most commentators nevertheless assume that Florio began communicating in Italian and only gradually developed fluency in English. This includes Wyatt, who finds it ‘apparent in a number of respects that Italian was the language in which [Florio] found himself most at ease’. Del Re (in a stance that seems inconsistent for a scholar who otherwise insists on Florio’s ‘Englishness’) argues that in the early chapters of the *First Fruits* Florio’s command of the local language ‘might be good enough to teach to Italian merchants’, but ‘could not by reason of its uncouthness and lack of naturalness, have failed to raise a smile from his English pupils. It would certainly have been enough to discredit him as a teacher of English.’ Yet if we are willing to thus disqualify the writer of this passage from Chapter 17 of the *First Fruits*:

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<sup>10</sup> For examples of Florio’s praise of his pupils see John Florio, ‘Epistle Dedicatory,’ in *Florios Second Fruits* [1591] (Da Capo: Amsterdam and New York, 1969), see also ‘Epistle Dedicatory,’ in *Queen Anna’s New World of Words* [1611] (Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1968). R. C. Simonini, *Italian Scholarship in Renaissance England* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature, 1952), p. 12; John Florio, ‘Epistle Dedicatory’, in *Queen Anna’s New World of Words* [1611]; John Eliot, *Orthoepia Gallica. Eliots Fruits for the French* [1593] (Menston, England: Scolar Press Limited, 1968), p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Pfister, ‘*Inglese Italianato*’, pp. 47-8; Sonia Massai, ‘John Wolfe and the Impact of Exemplary Go-Betweens on Early Modern Print Culture’, in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Andreas Höfele and Werner Von Koppenfels (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 104-18 (p. 113).

What a clocke is it, thinke you?  
I believe it be twelve.  
It is not so much yet.  
It is stroke already.  
Have you heard it?  
Yea sir, halfe an houre agoe.

Then we must do the same for the author of this more famous dialogue composed a few years later:

**HAMLET** What hour now?  
**HORATIO** I think it lacks of twelve.  
**HAMLET** No, it is struck.  
**HORATIO** Indeed? I heard it not. (*Hamlet* 1.4.3-6)

Rather than marking Florio as a non-native speaker, the simplicity of the English passages in the early chapters of the *First Fruites* is stylistically appropriate for a bilingual instruction manual that, Del Re acknowledges, ‘may, primarily, have been designed for Italians studying English’.<sup>12</sup>

### III. Florio’s English Style

Florio’s English prose did mature over the years, as would any writer’s working in his native language. He is best known as one ‘whose taste for style’, as Praz puts it, ‘sinned on the florid side’. While this accurately describes Florio’s Montaigne translations, his early works were more spartan. The ornate embellishments that mark Florio’s later efforts go hand-in-hand with a lack of fidelity in translation. As Eisenbichler notes, ‘The Montaigne translation is not a precise rendering of the French into English. There are major differences, for example in rhetorical style, with Montaigne’s lean and direct prose being replaced by Florio’s expansive elaborations’. However, Yates’s claim that ‘Florio was never a careful translator’ is belied by his first major venture in this area: the 1580 English version of Jacques Cartier’s *Navigations and Discoveries*, which Florio translated from the Italian of Giovanni Battista Ramusio. Yates attributes Florio’s fidelity in this

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<sup>12</sup> Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, p. 3; Del Re, ‘Introduction’, p. xxxix ; John Florio, *His Firste Fruites* [1578] (Amsterdam and New York: Da Capo, 1969). All Shakespeare act, scene, and line numbers, as well as all quotations, from *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, fifth edition (New York: Pearson Longman, 2003). Del Re, ‘Introduction’, p. xl.

case to the fact that ‘Cartier’s bold, bald narrative does not lend itself to unnecessary ornamentation’. Careful and exact translation was also necessary for the safety of future explorers, as when Cartier warns navigators of ‘a shelve that lyeth about 3 leagues outward from the sayd White Sands on the Southwest side above water like a Boate’, a passage that Florio translates from Ramusio with the kind of fidelity today applied to the rendering of technical manuals.<sup>13</sup>

Florio needed no such care when translating his 1585 *Letter Lately Written from Rome*. Yet this translation, the original of which is unknown, is closer in style to the *Navigations and Discoveries* than to the 1603 *Essayes* from Montaigne. This can be seen in Florio’s use of what would become his greatest stylistic trademark: ‘doublings’ of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. In the *Letter*, such usages are few and mainly conventional, as in the narrator’s statement that he ‘arrived safe and sound’, and his description of ‘torches burning day and night’. In contrast, by the time of the Montaigne translation Herbert G. Wright is able to cite ‘hundreds of examples’ of such ‘doublets’ in which Florio ‘substitute[es] two words for one in the French text’. Characteristic examples include ‘honor or honestie’ for Montaigne’s ‘honneur’ and ‘Dogma or Doctrine’ for ‘dogme’. F. O. Matthiessen lists similar formations, as when Florio expands ‘le receut en grace’ to ‘received him into grace and favor’. Peter Mack cautions that ‘doubling is also a very strong characteristic of Montaigne’s own style’, although he acknowledges that Florio’s translation contains more such instances than Montaigne’s original. Mack adds that ‘Florio’s preference for alliteration in his doublets is not shared by Montaigne, but it is very characteristic of sixteenth-century English prose’. According to Wright, Florio can be seen ‘running amuck’ with doubling in his contributions to the 1626 translation of Traiano Boccalini’s *New-Found Politicke*. Here Florio recommends digestive oil so that courtiers ‘may the more **easily and speedily** digest the bitter distastes, which so **often and daily** they are enforced to **swallow and pocket up** in *Courts*’. He suggests that Tacitus had ‘the **perfect and absolute** forme to learne to write the actions of great *Princes*, with the **learned and apparent** light of the essentiall **force and occasion** of them’; and laments that this Roman author’s life of *Tiberius* was ‘for many ages lyen secretly hidden in the most **secret and concealed** parts of Germany, though the

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<sup>13</sup> Mario Praz, ‘Shakespeare’s Italy’, 105; Konrad Eisenbichler, ‘John Florio’, 89; ‘Careful translator’ and ‘bold narrative’ quotations from Yates, *John Florio* p. 59. John Florio, *A Shorte AND briefe narration of the two Navigations and Discoveries to the Northwest partes called NEW FRAUNCE: First transtalied out of French into Italian, by that famous learned man gio: Bap: Ramutius, and now turned into English by Iohn Florio* [1580] (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1975). Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, ed. by Marica Milanese, 6 vols. (Torino: Einaudi, 1988), pp. 6:932, 6:934 – Ramusio’s text reads, ‘Bisogna avvertire d’una secca che vien sopra l’acqua, simile ad un battello, dalla banda di Garbino de detto Bianco Sabbione per tre leghe in fuori.’

**pestiliferous and diabolicall** curiositie of a Germane, more **dreary and fatall** to all the world than his Coompatriate, that was the first invented the **deadly and dismal Bombard**'.<sup>14</sup>

Although such doubling derived from the Latin concept of *copia* popularized by Erasmus, it was (as Sylvia Adamson notes) a characteristically English phenomenon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), George Puttenham renames the Greek term synonymia as the 'Figure of Store', and defines it as the redundant repetition of words which, though 'but all one' in sense, nevertheless serve to 'much beautify and enlarge the matter'. Robert Greene freely employs this device in his 1588 romance *Pandosto*. For instance, to show their joy at the birth of Pandosto's son, the Bohemians 'made **bonfires and triumphes** throughout all the Kingdome, appointing **Justs and Turneys**' to which knights come from afar 'to win **fame and glorie** by their **proweess and valor**'. Shakespeare was a prolific practitioner of this technique, and frequently went beyond mere synonymic doubling to hendiadys. Puttenham calls this the 'Figure of Twins' and defines it, as does Neil Rhodes in the twenty-first century, as a combination of nouns in which one plays an adjectival function: 'horses and barbs' standing in for 'barbed horses' or 'venom and darts' for 'venomous darts'. A broader definition of hendiadys comes from George T. Wright, who characterizes this figure as 'the use of two substantives (occasionally two adjectives or two verbs), joined by a conjunction, to express a single but complex idea'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For theory regarding the original of Florio's 1585 *Letter* see Yates, *John Florio*, p. 80; John Florio, *A Letter Lately Written from Rome* [1585] (Early English Books Online, Web); Herbert G. Wright, *First English Translation*, p. 223; F. O. Matthiessen, *Translation: An Elizabethan Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), pp. 126-7; Peter Mack, 'Montaigne and Florio', in *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500-1640*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 77-90 (p. 82); Herbert G. Wright, *The First English Translation*, p. 254; Florio quoted from his contributions to William Vaughan, *The New-Found Politicke* (London: Francis Williams, 1626); (emphasis added).

<sup>15</sup> For discussion of *de Copia* see Neil Rhodes, *Shakespeare and the Origins of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 56; Sylvia Adamson, 'Literary Language', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, general editor Richard M. Hogg, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), pp. 3:539-653 (pp. 3:545, 3:557); George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy* [1589], ed. by Frank Wigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2007), pp. 299-300. Robert Greene, 'Pandosto: The triumph of Time' [1588], in *The Descent of Euphues: Three Elizabethan Romance Stories*, ed. by James Winny (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 67-121 (p. 68) (emphasis added). Puttenham, *English Poesy*, pp. 261-2. Neil Rhodes, *Shakespeare and the Origins*, pp. 63-4. George T. Wright, 'Entry under "Hendiadys"', *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 515-16.

Hendiadys is therefore a sub-set of doubling, and critics differ in their distinctions between these terms. Significantly for a discussion of Florio's linguistic heritage, neither doubling nor hendiadys are prominent figures in Italian writing of the period. The nearest analogue can be found in what Riccardo Tesi calls Machiavelli's 'moduli dilemmatici', which consist of alternative propositions contrasted by the coordinating conjunction 'or'. In modern English, most of the examples Tesi cites from *The Prince* would be rendered in an 'either/or' formation, such as Machiavelli's plans for recovering a revolted city which must 'either be recovered by siege or voluntarily return to one's hands' ('o recuperarla per adsedio o che ella ci venga nelle mani voluntaria'). As Tesi suggests, the goal of this structure is to break down a problem and state its possible solutions in binary form. As such, it has little in common with the decorative doublings of Florio or the more sophisticated use of hendiadys by Shakespeare.<sup>16</sup>

One of few Italian-language works of this era to feature a significant amount of doubling is Florio's manuscript translation of James VI's *Basilicon Doron*. Giuliano Pellegrini notes that in this, his only translation from English into Italian, Florio takes 'evident pleasure in the use of doublings, even where they are not completely necessary'. Florio regularly adds a second term 'even if it is a synonym or equivalent, only to give a particular tone of emphasis'. Too many instances of this phenomenon exist in Florio's *Basilicon* to catalogue here, and a few examples must suffice. When James cautions his son that in seeking to punish wrongdoers, 'ye would be troubled to resolve whome-at to begin', Florio turns the adjective 'troubled' into the doubled noun 'travaglio et ambiguità' and doubles 'whome-at' to 'chi e dove' ('who and where'): 'e vi trovereste in gran travaglio et ambiguità, a risolvere con chi e dove acominciare.' James's 'disorder of my country' is doubled into 'confusione e disordine del' regno'. Florio uses 'or' ('o') as often as 'and' ('e') in his doublings, but the graphic distinction between these conjunctions is diminished by the fact that each are represented in Italian by a single letter. For instance, 'malicious men' become 'maligni o mordaci'; and 'that question of *Meum* and *Tuum*' is rendered as 'la questione o dubbio di Meum et Tuum'. At one point, Florio seems to wink at his expansive liberties in translation. When James notes that 'if this treatise were written either in French or Latin, I could not get [these political vices] named unto you but by circumlocution', Florio doubles the last noun to 'perfirasi o circollucotione', employing the very devices James seems to denigrate. When employing Italian doublets in his translation of the *Basilicon*, Florio frequently uses alliteration, as when he describes

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<sup>16</sup> For extended discussion of hendiadys and doubling see George T. Wright, 'Hendiadys and *Hamlet*', *PMLA* 96. 2 (1981) 168-93. See also Frank Kermode, *Forms of Attention* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 48-61. For description of Machiavelli's practice and quotation from *Prince* see Tesi, *Storia dell'italiano*, pp. 245-6.

the ‘*pueritia e primi progressi della chiesa*’ (‘the infancy and first progresse of the church’), the ‘*salda e santa dottrina*’ (‘suche sound doctrine’), and a young ruler ‘*in eta da regnare e regger un’regno*’ (‘of age to raigne over them’). As Mack notes, such alliterative doubling is a characteristically English device. It can be heard, for instance, in Greene’s repeated use of ‘winde and waves’ and ‘winde and weather’ to describe the hazards of the sea in *Pandosto*; in Thomas Nashe’s lament within *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell* that a certain worthless pamphlet ‘is brought up thicke and threefold, when better things lie dead’; and in this same author’s later description of a hypothetical rival who should ‘stand quivering and quaking’ before him. The 1603 edition of the *Basilicon Doron* translated by Florio dates to the year of James VI of Scotland’s ascension to the throne of England. In his use of doubling, the Anglo-Italian may show himself to be more stylistically ‘English’ than the new monarch. If Herbert G. Wright’s attribution is accepted, then Florio’s 1620 translation of the *Decameron* is likewise ‘a typical English product’ that employs, in addition to such characteristic doubling, frequent compound nouns and adjectives that recall the Anglo-Saxon practice of ‘kenning’. While we will never know how Florio spoke, he apparently wrote with an English accent.<sup>17</sup>

#### IV. Florio’s Influence on Shakespeare’s Style

As with Florio, Shakespeare’s penchant for rhetorical doubling was not constant throughout his career. Critics generally agree that Shakespeare’s period of ‘compulsive doubling’ or ‘above-average use of hendiadys’ begins near the end of the sixteenth century, about the same time the Lord Chamberlain’s men moved to the Globe. For Frank Kermode this stylistic shift derives from the metatheatrical influence of this playhouse – ‘the double of the world’ – on Shakespeare’s language. In a different interpretation of the

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<sup>17</sup> Giuliano Pellegrini, ‘Introduzione’, in *John Florio e il BASILICON DORON di James VI: Un Esempio Inedito di Versione Elisabettiana*, ed. by Giuliano Pellegrini (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961), pp. 1-38 (p. 25), translated by present author – original reads ‘l’evidente piacere che si concede nel fare uso di raddoppiamenti, anche là dove non sarebbe del tutto necessario, nell’uso di aggettivi sinonimi anche quando l’originale non sembra offrire alcun pretesto; l’inserzione di un termine nuovo viene curata, anche se sinonimo o equivalente, solo per dare un particolare tono all’enfasi del discorso’. Parallel quotations from James VI, *The Basilicon Doron of King James VI*, ed. James Craigie (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1944), pp. 61, 64, 65, 69, 99, 85-7, 34, 77, 125, and John Florio, *John Florio e il BASILICON DORON di James VI: Un Esempio Inedito di Versione Elisabettiana*, ed. Giuliano Pellegrini (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961), pp. 68, 69, 71, 87-8, 80, 52, 76, 102. Peter Mack, ‘Montaigne and Florio’, 82. Robert Greene, ‘Pandosto: The triumph of Time’, pp. 80, 83, 87; Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell* [1592], Elizabethan and Jacobean Quartos, ed. by G. B. Harrison (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), 8, 64. Herbert G. Wright, *The First English Translation*, pp. 262, 204, 231-2.

importance of this new venue, Ted Hughes sees the need to appeal to both educated and uneducated spectators at the Globe as motivating what Hughes calls Shakespeare's 'device' (or, elsewhere, his 'famous pincer movement'), in which a familiar Anglo-Saxon word is paired with an unfamiliar Latinate one as 'a little mechanism of translation'.<sup>18</sup>

Besides dating to the opening of the Globe, however, Shakespeare's expanded use of doubling also coincides with Florio's translation of Montaigne. Although not published until 1603, the *Essays* were licensed to Edward Blount in 1600 and, according to Yates, Florio was 'well into the first volume' by 1598. Shakespeare's only incontrovertible borrowings from the *Essays* come with Gonzalo's utopian proposal in *The Tempest* (I.ii.144-68) and to the moment in *King Lear* (I.ii.46-54) when, as Stephen Greenblatt summarizes, 'Shakespeare takes Montaigne's words, in Florio's translation, and fashions them into the forged letter that Edmund fobs off as his brother Edgar's'. Yet scholars have long suspected that the playwright may have had access to Florio's work in manuscript before its 1603 publication, and that echoes of it can be heard in *Hamlet*. A.D. Atkinson, for instance, sees in Shakespeare's use of 'hugger-mugger' (IV.v.83) not merely the verbal borrowing from Book Three, Chapter One of the *Essays* earlier noted by Taylor, but a deeper 'kinship' between the Roman vengeance described by Florio/ Montaigne in this passage and the situation in Shakespeare's play. Greenblatt perceives the influence of the *Essays* in Polonius' advice to Laertes (I.iii.58-80) and more broadly finds 'something strikingly Montaigne-like' in the Danish Prince's mixture of stoicism, scepticism, and inner acceptance. Praz goes so far as to claim that Shakespeare 'bred Hamlet' on Florio's Montaigne. Since, as Kermode notes, 'the central rhetorical device of *Hamlet* is doubling', and since this is also a key stylistic feature of Florio's Montaigne, Shakespeare may have emulated Florio in adopting this figure.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 'Compulsive Doubling' from Kermode, *Forms of Attention*, p. 51. 'Above-average' from Duncan McColl Chesney, 'Shakespeare, Faulkner, and the Expression of the Tragic', *College Literature* 36. 3 (2009), 137-164 (p. 142); Kermode, *Forms of Attention*, pp. 50, 38; Ted Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* (New York: Farrar Straus, 1992), p. 141. 'Pincer movement' quoted from Ted Hughes, 'Introduction', in *A Choice of Shakespeare's Verse* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), pp. 9-13 (p.11); Hughes's description of this formula is similar to Wright's definition of 'hendiadys'. It consists of 'two nouns linked by an "and"' (or it can be two adjectives) directing their combined and contrasting meanings on to a third word, always a noun, in a way that startles all three words into odd metaphorical life': Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess*, p. 132.

<sup>19</sup> Yates, *John Florio* pp. 213-14, 243-4; Stephen Greenblatt, 'Stephen Greenblatt on Shakespeare's Debt to Montaigne', *The Telegraph* 7 Jun 2014; A.D. Atkinson, 'Additional Florio-Shakespeare Resemblances', *Notes and Queries* 194 (1949), 356-8 (p. 357); Greenblatt, 'Stephen Greenblatt'; Praz, 'Shakespeare's Italy', 105; Kermode, *Forms of Attention*, p. 48.

It is of course impossible to definitively demonstrate that Shakespeare developed his penchant for doubling from Florio. To do so, one would need to show that the playwright was not influenced in this usage by other writers, and one cannot conclusively prove a negative. The absence of doubling in the styles of other writers who Shakespeare emulated may, however, be instructive. For instance, Shakespeare was influenced in his early plays by the ornate rhetorical figures (especially that of ‘gradatio’ or ‘climax’) employed by Thomas Kyd in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Some passages in this play are, for Stuart Gillespie, ‘hard to distinguish from similar lines of Shakespeare’s’ in plays like *Titus Andronicus*. Kyd does not employ doubling in a significant fashion and, perhaps as a result of this, neither does Shakespeare at this point in his career. Some significant English writers of the period did dabble in doubling to a greater or lesser degree. John Lyly’s euphuistic style, which Gillespie summarizes as ‘combin[ing] a range of devices – stylistic effects such as antithesis, alliteration and *parison* (balance between grammatical parts of a sentence); rhetorical figures such as simile; and other flourishes such as references to classical history and mythology’ clearly left a mark on Shakespeare and his contemporaries; and doubling is not unknown in Lyly’s work. Lyly’s doubling tends, however, to come in bunches and is not as sustained a habit as it is in Florio’s work. For instance, when young Euphues near the beginning of *The Anatomy of Wit* responds to an old man’s warning of the hazards ahead, he replies with a barrage of some fifteen doublets in the space of three pages.<sup>20</sup> He begins by asserting, ‘**Infinite and innumerable** were the examples I could **alleadge and declare** to confirme the force of Nature, and confute these your **vayne and false** forgeries’, and cites as evidence ‘that which all men doe **affirme and knowe**’, along with what Cicero does ‘**conclude and allowe**’ and Aristotle does ‘**alleadge and confirme**’. Following this outburst, there is little doubling in the rest of Lyly’s romance. The device appears only once every ten pages or so in the remainder of *The Anatomy of Wit*. Nashe doubles more consistently in his 1592 *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell*, with at least one such usage appearing every five pages. This may be significant because A. Davenport sees Nashe’s condemnation of ‘Sloth and sluggish securitye’ as the possible source of Hamlet’s ‘dull and muddymettled’ (2.2.567). The connection is tenuous, as the two phrases are not grammatically comparable – one being a pairing of nouns (the second modified) and the other a pairing of adjectives (the second a compound). But *Hamlet* is the play where Shakespeare begins to double in earnest, and if Davenport is correct this stylistic shift may be due in part to Nashe’s influence. However, the only early modern English writer who doubles at a pace approaching that of Florio is Greene in *Pandosto*. Throughout this work there are occasional patches of heavy doubling such as the one cited above (which describes the

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<sup>20</sup> All references to page counts in this paragraph are from *The Descent of Euphues: Three Elizabethan Romance Stories*, ed. by James Winny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).



celebrations at the Prince's birth), and there is scarcely a page in *Pandosto* where the device does not appear at least once. Shakespeare read Greene's work at some point, since it is the source for *The Winter's Tale*, generally assumed to have been composed between 1609 and 1611. *Pandosto*, however, dates to 1588. Shakespeare may not have read it until shortly before he drafted *The Winter's Tale*, or he may have done so earlier and filed away the plot for future use. Unless he read (or re-read) Greene around 1600, however, it is difficult to imagine *Pandosto* spurring the explosion of doubling that begins with *Hamlet*. Florio therefore remains the most likely candidate for the source of this shift in Shakespeare's style.<sup>21</sup>

Because both Florio and Shakespeare became enamoured with doubling at about the same time, the influence could conceivably have run in the other direction, with Florio picking up Shakespeare's habit after hearing his plays in the theatre or reading them in print or manuscript. However, Florio's disparaging comments about English drama in the *Second Frutes*, where he derides Elizabethan plays as 'neither right comedies, nor right tragedies' and complains that they are staged 'without any decorum', make it unlikely that he valued Shakespeare's theatrical output. According to G.P.V. Akrigg, Florio's neo-classical prejudices were 'guaranteed sooner or later to cause friction between him and Shakespeare', especially since both artists depended on the patronage of the Earl of Southampton. Eisenbichler (among other commentators) believes that Shakespeare may have sought revenge by caricaturing Florio as Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*. If a conflict did exist between these two authors, Shakespeare had the last laugh (at least where posterity is concerned). Although Florio likely employed rhetorical doubling before the playwright, Shakespeare's use of this device has had a more significant impact. In the same way that he transformed Thomas Kyd's creaky formula for revenge tragedy into the sophisticated plot of *Hamlet*, and much as he elsewhere used the Marlovian monster Barabas as the basis for his more subtle characterization of Shylock, Shakespeare took the decorative doubling of Florio and turned it into something more profound.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare Sources* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2001), pp. 276, 304; John Lyly, 'Euphues the Anatomy of Wit' [1578], in *The Descent of Euphues: Three Elizabethan Romance Stories*, ed. by James Winny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. 1-66 (pp. 8-11) (emphasis added); Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell* [1592], Elizabethan and Jacobean Quartos, ed. by G. B. Harrison (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), 84. A. Davenport, 'Shakespeare and Nashe's "Peirce Penilesse"', *Notes and Queries* 198 (1953), 371-74 (p.373); Robert Greene, 'Pandosto: The Triumph of Time' [1588] *The Descent of Euphues: Three Elizabethan Romance Stories*, ed. by James Winny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 67-122.

<sup>22</sup> John Florio, *Florios Second Frutes*, Chap. 2, 23; G.P.V. Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), p. 214. Eisenbichler, 'John Florio', 172.

The figure of hendiadys is, for Duncan McColl Chesney, ‘best defined by what it is not’. Most of Florio’s doublings fall into this latter category. They consist of the ‘yoking of only apparently similar syntactical units’ in ‘grandiloquent re-wording[s]’ by means of ‘overstated symmetries and congruities’. Florio’s usages do not, as do so many of Shakespeare’s, typically include ‘the complex kind of collocations which involve a sort of superfoetation of meaning above and beyond the sum of the parts’. Yet without Florio’s example Shakespeare may never have achieved the richness of hendiadys so prevalent in *Hamlet*. In this tragedy, variants of this figure satisfy every definition of the term. Chris Baldick’s notion of a single idea expressed with ‘two nouns joined by the conjunction “and”’ is manifested by the ‘cheer and comfort of our eye’ (I.ii.116) and ‘the book and volume of my brain’ (I.v.103). For Neil Rhodes’s more exacting demand that hendiadys ‘involves the doubling of nouns in a phrase where one of them has an adjectival function’, there are ‘the expectancy and rose of the fair state’ (III.i.152) (instead of ‘rosy expectation’) and ‘the morn and liquid dew of youth’ (I.iii.41) (instead of ‘liquid dewy morn’). While George T. Wright claims that Shakespearean hendiadys employs nouns seventy-eight percent of the time, he also sees an adjectival version in ‘the sensible and true avouch/ Of mine own eyes’ (I.i.57-58), and perceives verbal hendiadys in the Ghost’s hope that his sins will be ‘burnt and purged away’ (I.v.13). So prevalent is hendiadys in *Hamlet* that not just words but people (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; Cornelius and Voltemand) are doubled into living, breathing examples of this figure. Not all the doublings in *Hamlet* rise to this level. Those of Polonius tend to be ‘purely redundant’ phrases composed of ‘more art than matter’. This Lord’s ‘rank and station’ (I.iii.73); ‘free and bounteous’ (I.i.93); ‘words or talk’ (I.i.134); ‘mute and dumb’ (II.iii.37); and ‘origin and commencement’ (3.2.177) are merely synonymic and add nothing to the sense of the phrase. The fact that Shakespeare gives this character so many purely decorative doublings within an overwrought speaking style that echoes the flowery rhetoric of the *Essays* suggests that Polonius, like Holofernes, may have been intended in part as a caricature of Florio.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Duncan McColl Chesney, ‘Shakespeare’, p. 140. ‘Grandiloquent re-wording’ and ‘overstated symmetries and congruities’ from George T. Wright, ‘Hendiadys and *Hamlet*’, p. 173. ‘Collocations’ quotation from Chesney, ‘Shakespeare’, p. 140. Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), p. 111. Neil Rhodes, *Shakespeare and the Origins*, pp. 63-4. George T. Wright, ‘Hendiadys and *Hamlet*’, p. 174. ‘Purely redundant’ from Chesney, ‘Shakespeare’, p. 142. ‘More art than matter’ from Kermode, *Forms*, p. 57.

## V. Conclusion

Students of Renaissance literature are accustomed to thinking of Shakespeare as someone that ‘loved words with an aesthetic delight in their strength, delicacy, colour, and infinite variety’, and who collected words ‘as another might collect jewels in a cabinet’. The assumption, however, that Shakespeare had an expansive vocabulary of 30,000 words has recently been challenged by David Crystal, who puts the number closer to 20,000 and notes that ‘any modern writer uses far more words than Shakespeare’ because ‘most of us [today] use at least 50,000 words’. Perhaps it is therefore fitting that the quotations which begin this paragraph do not describe Shakespeare, but are instead Yates’s tribute to John Florio. As Haller notes, Florio’s ‘love of words’ can best be seen in his 1598 Italian-English Dictionary. While Florio’s 1611 edition contained more Italian entries (74,000 compared to 46,000), this greater lexicon constrained Florio to inhibit the most fascinating attribute of his 1598 *World of Wordes*: the expansive English definitions and synonyms offered for each Italian entry. ‘It is here’, Haller writes, ‘that we find perhaps his strongest expression of Renaissance *copia*, with this passion for explications and amplifications. Numerous single nouns, adjectives, and verbs among the Italian entries are explained with ten, twenty, even forty terms and definitions’. Hughes’s claim that ‘Shakespeare as a word collector – as a successful naturalizer of words to his own use – was in a class of his own’ therefore needs to be qualified in light of Florio’s lexicographical efforts.<sup>24</sup>

The influence of the *World of Wordes* on Shakespeare can be seen, for example, in its definition of *tarabara* as ‘helter-skelter’ (cf. *2 Henry IV* V.iii.94) and of *volgo* as ‘the many-headed monster multitude’ (cf. *2 Henry IV* Induction.19). While Hughes does not mention Florio by name, he unwittingly signals Shakespeare’s debt when he describes the playwright’s method of combining familiar and exotic words. ‘The model’, Hughes asserts, ‘is that of the word primer, the dictionary’. In defending this claim, Hughes analyzes the opening speech of *Twelfth Night*:

If music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken, and so die.

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<sup>24</sup> Exaggerated Figure of Shakespeare’s vocabulary (“31,534 different words”) from Bradley Efron and Ronald Thisted, “Estimating the number of unseen species: How many words did Shakespeare know?”, *Biometrika* 63. 3 (1976), 435-47 (p. 435); David Crystal, *Think on my words’: Exploring Shakespeare’s Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 2-3; Yates, *John Florio* p. 239; Hermann W. Haller, ‘Introduction’, pp. xxxii, xxix; Hughes, *Shakespeare*, p. 138.

That strain again! it had a dying fall:  
 O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,  
 That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
 Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:  
 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.  
 O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,  
 That, notwithstanding thy capacity  
 Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,  
 Of what validity and pitch soe'er,  
 But falls into abatement and low price,  
 Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy  
 That it alone is high fantastical. (*Twelfth Night* I.i.1-15)

Hughes opines, ‘The three words here that might have given his groundlings pause are “capacity”, “validity” and “abatement.”’ He then describes how each of these words is ‘translated’ by Shakespeare for the benefit of his audience: ““Capacity” is immediately reduced to a plain image: “Receiveth as the sea.” ‘Validity’ is similarly paraphrased with the more common ‘pitch’. After the elevated ‘abatement’, Shakespeare ‘bends to the groundlings and quite shamelessly adds “that means a cutback to . . . ‘low price’”’. What Hughes does not mention is that (in this play which Elam shows to be so highly indebted to the lexicographer) the Italian cognates of these three ‘high’ or ‘unfamiliar’ words – ‘Abbattimento’, ‘Capacità’, and ‘Validità’ – are all defined in Florio’s dictionary. Furthermore, two of the three phrases that Hughes addresses in this passage (‘validity and pitch’ and ‘abatement and low price’) conform to most definitions of hendiadys. One can thus see how Florio’s contributions to Shakespeare’s vocabulary go hand-in-hand with his stylistic influence on the playwright’s patterns of doubling.<sup>25</sup>

By perceiving Florio primarily as an authentic provider of ‘local colour’ from an Italy that he likely never visited, scholars have, Wyatt notes, ‘mistakenly relegated [him] to the sidelines of early modern cultural history’. George T. Wright’s contention that Shakespeare uses hendiadys ‘far more than any other English writer,’ for instance, depends on a narrow definition of this figure and, more importantly, on the assumption that Florio is not an ‘English writer’. Florio is better understood as a fellow countryman

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<sup>25</sup> John Florio, *A Worlde of Words* [1598], ed. by Hermann W. Haller (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 710, 783. Hughes, *Shakespeare*, pp. 141-2 – original ellipsis. John Florio, *A Worlde of Words*, pp. 24, 119, 760 – ‘valido’ is defined on page 760, ‘validità’ does not appear until Florio’s revision *Queen Anna’s New World of Words* [1611] (Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1968), p. 586. One can reasonably assume, however, that a wordsmith of Shakespeare’s mettle could easily have fashioned a noun from the adjective ‘valido’.

whose literary style affected the playwright. As Wyatt observes, ‘Though he produced no plays, poetry, or narrative prose of his own, Florio’s work as a language merchant in Elizabethan and early Stuart England placed him squarely within the most important cultural currents of the period.’ As an influence on Shakespeare, Florio stands closer to Kyd or Marlowe than to Cervantes or Cinthio, and his legacy should reflect this status. In an effort to claim Florio for the Italians, Franzero sees in his 1611 portrait ‘an expression of highly Italian erudition: *Johannes Florius, Italus Ore*’. Yet Franzero omits the rest of this Latin motto, which reads in full, ‘*Johannes Florius, Italus ore, Anglus pectore.*’ Despite his great linguistic capabilities, Florio remained at heart, as David. O. Frantz summarizes, ‘a proud Englishman privileged in his knowledge of the best that Italy has to offer’.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, p. 3; George T. Wright, ‘Entry’, p. 516; Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, p. 3; Franzero, *John Florio*, p. 209, translated by present author, original reads ‘ma con sul volto un’espressione di italianissimo erudito: *Johannes Florius, Italus Ore*’; David O. Frantz, ‘Negotiating Florio’s *A Worlde of Wordes*’, *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America* 18 (1997), pp. 1-32 (p. 21).