



*“Under my last epistle to the reader **I.F.** made as familiar a word of F.  
as if I had been his brother.”*

- John Florio, *A World of Words*, 1598.

SHAKESPEARE & JOHN FLORIO:

JOHANNES FACTOTUM

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The Shakespeare authorship question began with the publication of *Groatsworth* in 1592, written by Robert Greene, a very famous writer in 1590 and a friend of Thomas Nashe. In the *Groatsworth* we find the same criticism of a plagiarist that is reported in the *Menaphon*, written by Greene and published in 1589, whose introduction was written precisely by Nashe, and it is in this intro by Nashe that we find the criticism of an anonymous plagiarist.

### SHAKESPEARE & JOHANNES FACTOTUM: THE MAGPIE

John Florio's writing method was one of the reasons he was vehemently attacked by his enemies, and it also corresponds to Shakespeare's writing method, which often has been described as "The magpie approach". Author Dewitt T. Starnes, in his study *John Florio Reconsidered*,<sup>1</sup> analysed Florio's writing technic by concluding that he used a "disingenuous method," borrowing and stealing terms from his predecessors to make them his own. Another important element Starnes considers is the criticism that John Florio received during his career. For him, Florio's foreign origins was not the only reason of the harsh attacks and criticism he received by his colleagues. Another reason of these attacks comes from the fact that his enemies knew that John Florio was receiving credit in his *First Fruits*, *Second Fruits*, *Garden of Recreation* and *A World of Words* for what other men had done. He ended his analysis by asserting that Florio's genius does not lie in his erudition, but in borrowing and adapting plots of his predecessors.

*"John Florio's talent lies in recognition of his most accomplished predecessors and in borrowing and adapting their work."*

Starnes, in his article, analysed Florio's writing technique in *A World of Words*, but the same analysis can be done with his other works. One example can suffice to understand Florio's writing method and how close it is to Shakespeare's. For example, he used a great amount of different sources for his first language lesson manual *First Fruits*:

- *Hore di Ricreatione* by Lodovico Guicciardini.
- Antonio De Guevara's *Libro Aureo*.
- James Sanford's translation of Guicciardini's work of 1573.

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<sup>1</sup> Starnes, T. Dewitt, *John Florio Reconsidered*, Texas Studies in Literature and Language, Vol. 6 N. 4 (Winter 1965) pp-407-422.

- Lord Berners's English translation of Guevara.
- Thomas North's version *The Diall of Princes*.

These are also well-known works Shakespeare consulted and used for his plays. Furthermore, Florio also used the works of Boccaccio, Ariosto, Ovid, and Plutarch. To avoid plagiarism, he altered them, re-writing his sources by using his unique stylistic trademark: ‘doublings’ of nouns, verbs, and adjectives; pomposity, alliteration, metaphors, parallelism, rhetorical ornament.

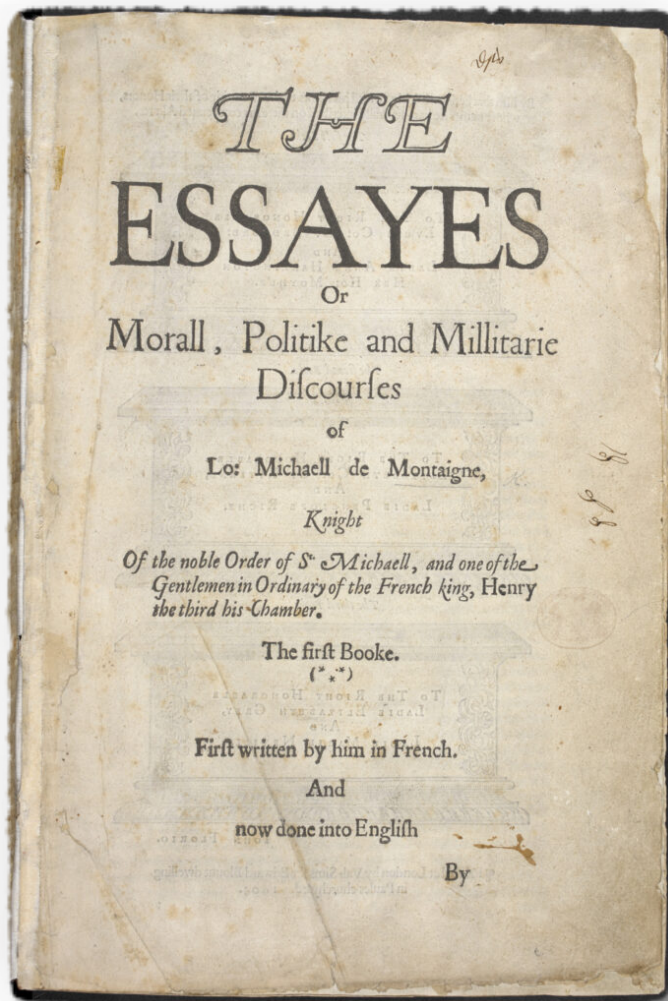
Many Florio's scholars have concluded that the works of John Florio, like those of Shakespeare, are the results of either collaborations with his contemporaries or borrowings from his predecessors.

### **SHAKESPEARE & JOHANNES FACTOTUM: "FROM TRANSLATION ALL SCIENCES HAD ITS OFF-SPRING."**

Another reason that proves John Florio was attacked by his enemies for his writing method can be found in the *Epistle to The Reader* of his translation of Montaigne's *Essays* (1603). As Florio himself admitted in the preface to the reader, his "Old fellow Nolano" (Giordano Bruno) taught him that "From translations all sciences had its offspring." So he understood that by borrowing words and contents from other languages, sources and authors, and translating them, re-writing and adapting those works for the English audience, a new beautiful science would have flourished in England. "I am no thief" he wrote "since I said of whom I had it":

*"If nothing can be now sayd, but hath beene saide before (as hee sayde well) if there be no new thing under the Sunne. What is that that hath beene? That that shall be: (as he sayde that was wisest) What doe the best then, but gleane after others harvest? borrow their colors, inherite their possessions? What doe they but translate? perhaps, usurpe? at least, collect? if with acknowledgement, it is well; if by stealth, it is too bad: in this, our conscience is our accuser; posteritie our judge: in that our studie is our advocate, and you Readers our jurie."*

In his superbe defence of translation in the preface of Montaigne's *Essays*, John Florio wasn't simply defending the art of translation, but mainly himself from the attacks he had received, the same attacks Shakespeare received by his enemies.



*The Essayes, or Morall, Politike, and Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne, Now done into English by John Florio, 1603.*

*The Tempest* contains clear echoes of Montaigne's essay 'Of the Caniballes' (p. 102). In Gonzalo's description of his perfect natural commonwealth (2.1. 148–65) there is 'no kind of traffic', 'no name of magistrate', no 'riches, poverty / And use of service'. The essay also raises key questions explored in the play through Shakespeare's portrayal of Caliban and the Italians on the island. Inspired by reports into the exploration of Brazil, Montaigne celebrates the 'puritie' of societies governed by 'the lawes of nature' (p. 102). He challenges any clear division between civilised Europeans and so-called 'savage' nations, arguing that 'we excede them in all kinde of

barbarisme' (p. 104). In 'prying so narrowly into their faults', he says, we are 'blinded' to our own (p. 104). As Shakespeare seems to suggest in the treachery of his Italian characters – Antonio, Sebastian, Trinculo and Stephano – barbarism is not inherent in one nation or another but a matter of individual behaviour.

## SHAKESPEARE & JOHANNES FACTOTUM: THOMAS NASHE AND THE ITALIANATE PEN

Thomas Nashe (baptised November 1567 – c. 1601) was an Elizabethan playwright, poet, satirist and a significant pamphleteer. The quarrel between John Florio and Thomas Nashe can be traced in everything the two men published during their career.

Thomas Nashe, a very talented author, was part of the famous University Wits and his writings are an important key to understanding who Shakespeare was. In fact, in the Preface to Robert Greene's *Groatsworth*, we find Nashe accusing an upstart-crown that the Stratfordian literary critics associate to Shakespeare:

*"... trust them not, for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blancke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his owne conceit the onely shake-scene in a countrey".*

A famous phrase from this play is quoted in *Groatsworth*, namely "O tiger's heart, wrapped in a woman's hide", taken from *Henry VI*:

*"Thou art as opposite to every good,*

*As the Antipodes are unto us,*

*Or as the South to the Septentrion.*

*O tiger's heart, wrapped in a woman's hide,*

*How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,*

*To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,*

*And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?*

*Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible;*

*Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless."*

John Florio, in his *First Fruits* (1578), Chapter 14, *Amorous Talke*, wrote a dialogue about love, in which a man who has fallen in love with a woman, asks his friend some advices on how to court her. Florio writes a reference to the woman's heart of tiger:

*"What wil you that I doo?"*

*"Feede on hope"*

*"Hope holdeth me alive"*

*"Know ye not, that tyme the deuourer of al things, with tyme & a drop of water doth peirce the flint stone: so perhabs also your continual louyng of her, wil make her heart of Tiger, to become mercyful. It may be, but I beleene it not."*



The only known image of Thomas Nashe is this satirical woodcut from *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe* (1597) depicting Nashe in chains and unkempt hair. (Folger STC 12906) Moreover, in the Preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, Thomas Nashe also wrote: "But herein I cannot so fully bequeath them to folly as their idiot art-masters that intrude themselves to our ears as the alchemists of eloquence, who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse. [...] and, to conclude, their whole method of writing from the

*liberty of comical fictions that have succeeded to our rhetoricians by a second imitation, so that well may the adage Nil dictum quod non dictum prius..."* (Menaphon)

Sir William Vaughan, writer and Florio's contemporary, writing about the literary controversies of his time, mentioned in his *The Spirit of Detraction* (1611) what Nashe, in the *Menaphon*, wrote about John Florio, and in particular that Latin phrase quoted by Nashe that says "Nihil dictum quod non dictum prius":

*"At which last imputation, though I confesse this auncient saying makes for them: nihil dictum, quod non est dictum prius: that nothing can be spoken, but what is spoken of before..."* (William Vaughan)

Miss Frances Yates, in her book *A Study in Love's Labour's Lost*, writes that Sir William Vaughan in *The Spirit of Detraction* defends John Florio for that quotation that presents him as an empty head, who just copies, and apostrophises him with the Latin saying "Nihil dictum, quod non est dictum prius". Miss Frances Yates confirmed that Nashe's target in the *Menaphon* is John Florio, since it is precisely on this occasion that we find this phrase.

Moreover, Nashe, in the *Menaphon*, also writes:

*"I can but engross some deep-read schoolmen or grammarians."* (Menaphon)

We understand that the subject in question is a man who teaches and is a man of letters who knows grammar well. In this passage he becomes even more precise in making the sketch of the person he has in mind:

*"...or the Italianate pen that, of a packet of pilferies, affords the press a pamphlet or two in an age, and then, in disguised array, vaunts Ovid's and Plutarch's plumes as their own..."* (Menaphon)

So the man attacked by Nashe is someone who either is *Italianate* or love Italian literature. The circle narrows in terms of identifying who Nashe is talking about:

*"Indeed, I must needs say the descending years from the philosophers' Athens have not been supplied with such present orators as were able in any English vein to be eloquent of their own, but either they must borrow*



*invention of Ariosto & his countrymen, take up choice of words by exchange in Tully's Tusculans & the Latin historiographers' storehouses."* (Menaphon)

Here the criticism is of those who use material from both classical antiquity and the Renaissance productions of Italian artists, such as Ariosto for example and "his countrymen", Among them are Aretino, Bandello, Boccaccio and many others. Many of these authors ended up in Shakespeare's texts. Nashe did not agree with all this and even less with the translators who flooded England with dangerous readings. One of these translators was John Florio.

### **SHAKESPEARE & JOHANNES FACTOTUM: ROBERT GREENE & THOMAS NASHE IN JOHN FLORIO'S SECOND FRUITS**

Florio's scholar Miss Frances Amelia Yates pointed out that John Florio's introduction of *Second Fruits* is "A review of current production in different departments of Journalism, lyric poetry, and Drama." She also points out that Florio mentioned Robert Greene's work, *Mourning Garment* (1590).

In The Epistle Dedicatorie of *Second Frutes* (1591) John Florio in fact attacks Robert Greene by mentioning his work:

*"Sir in this stirring time, and pregnant prime of invention when everie 'bramble is fruiteful, when everie mol-hill bath cast of the winters mourning garment..."* (John Florio)

In the same Epistle, John Florio also attacks Thomas Nashe. Two years earlier, in fact, in his work *Anatomy of Absurdity* (1589), Thomas Nashe analysed all the absurdities, according to him, that ruin the art of writing and in doing so he attacks many authors, above all, John Florio's works:

*"This green fruit, being gathered before it be ripe, is rotten before it be mellow and infected with schisms before they have learned to bridle their affections."* (Thomas Nashe)

In *Second Fruits*, John Florio replied by writing:

*"I, but (peradventure), thou wilt say my frutes are wyndie, I pray thee keepe thy winde to coole thy potage. I, but they are rotten: what, and so greene?"* (John Florio)

He also continues his attack toward Nashe, that according to Florio, is someone who:

*'[...] Bestow three yeares toyle in manuring a barraine plot, and have nothing for their labor but their travel: the reason why, because they leave the lowe dales, to seeke thrift in the hill countries; and dig for gold on the top of the Alpes, when Esops cock found a pearle in a lower place.'* (John Florio)

Florio here is attacking Nashe, who often quotes Aesop in his attacks on his enemies, and had been at Cambridge for three years but had not completed his studies. Nashe, in the *Menaphon*, had railed against those who do not drink, since he was a heavy drinker, and writes that poets are heavy drinkers:

*"Which their dagger drunkenness, although it might be excused with "Tam Marti, quam Mercurio"* (Thomas Nashe)

And again Nashe criticises those scholars, like Florio, who prefer moderation:

*"Tush, say our English Italians, the finest wits our climate sends forth are but dry-brained dolts in comparison of other countries."* (Thomas Nashe)

These are all statements by Nashe, in the *Menaphon*, to which Florio responds in his *Second Fruits*:

*"...Who among manie that beare their crests hie, and mingle their titles with TAM MARTI QUAM MERCURIO... are an unfayned embracer of virtues, and nourisher of knowledge and learning."* (John Florio)

This quarrel, "Tam Marti Quam Mercurio," punctuates the banter that Nashe and Florio alternate between one in the *Menaphon* and the other in the *Second Fruits*. This makes it clear, if it were still necessary, that there was no friendship between Nashe and Florio and that they did not belong to the same intellectual circle.

John Florio also attacks John Elliot who had criticised him in his *Ortho-Epia Gallica*. From what Florio says here we understand that this group of people was very aggressive towards Florio and the group included Greene, Nashe and Eliot, mainly. And after so much venting, here is one of the reasons for so much nastiness towards him:

*"As for me, for it is I, and I am an Englishman in Italian."*

Which solves the problem of finding out who is the "**Italianate pen**" mentioned in the *Menaphon*. In addition, Florio adds a sentence that gives the dimension of the dangerousness of these individuals in its counterfactuals:

*"I know they have a knife at command to cut my throate."*

*An English Italianate, is a Devil incarnate."*



Woodcut showing Robert Greene. The image is of the dead Greene, and comes from a pamphlet published in 1598, *Greene in Concept*, by John Dickenson. It shows the late author in his shroud.



Moreover, In the *Second Fruits* (1591) the only sonnet dedicated to Florio is Phaeton's sonnet which reads as follows:

*Sweet friend, whose name agrees with thy increase*

*How fit a rival art thou of the spring!*

*For when each branch hath left his flourishing,*

*And green-locked summer's shady pleasures cease,*

*She makes the winter's storms repose in peace*

*And spends her franchise on each living thing:*

*The daisies spout, the little birds do sing,*

*Herbs, gums, and plants do vaunt of their release.*

***So when that all our English wits lay dead***

***(Except the laurel that is evergreen)***

*Thou with thy fruits our barrenness o'erspread*

*And set thy flowery pleasance to be seen.*

*Such fruits, such flowerets of morality*

*Were ne'er before brought out of Italy.*

On lines 9 and 10 of this sonnet we find: "*So when that all our English wits lay dead (Except the laurel that is evergreen)*", which seems to be a mockery of the Wits, especially **Greene**, who is indirectly but clearly pointed out. The fact that John Florio, at the beginning of his *Second Fruits*, first attacks Greene and his *Mourning Garment* accentuates the suspicion that Phaeton is speaking of Greene in line 10 of this sonnet. Thus, we find John Florio, allied with the Earl of Essex and

Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, at war with Thomas Nashe and Robert Greene. Florio ends his Epistle by signing himself as "**Resolute J. F.**"

Florio's *Second Frutes* (1591). He signed this work as "Resolute J.F." (*Resolute Johannes Florius*) Later, in *A World of Words* (1598), Florio accused Hugh Sanford to have insulted his last name *F.* with an offensive Latin nickname.



## JOHANNES FACTOTUM: GABRIEL HARVEY & HENRY CHETTLER

Another proof of John Florio's involvement in the Nashe-Greene quarrel "Johannes Factotum" is the defence took by his friends, one of these is Gabriel Harvey.

Gabriel Harvey was a contemporary of Florio, who together with his brother, waged a similar literary battle with Nashe. His personal copy of Florio's 'First Fruits' is still preserved with Harvey's student notes in the margins, in which he underlines in the annotations, Florio's talent as tutor.

The quarrel between Harvey and Nashe also confirms that there was a working relationship between Shakespeare and Florio which was known about and commented on by their peers. But it also reveals that Gabriel Harvey commented the Johannes Factotum attack made by Greene and Nashe toward Florio, and as Florio's friend, he took his defence, who described Greene as "Vile" for attacking the talented Anglo-Italian and describing him as someone with "Italianated brauery":

*"Green, vile Greene, would thou wearest halfe so honest, as the worst of the foure, whom thou vpbraidest: or halfe so learned, as the vnlearnedst of the three. Thanke other for thy borrowed & filched plumes of some little Italianated brauery: & what remaineth, but flat Impudencie, and grosse Detraction: the proper ornaments of thy sweete vtterance? I alleadge not mine owne inuentions."*

Three months after the publication of *Groatsworth*, someone powerful condemned the book, and dramatist Henry Chettle, who was also involved in the publication of *Groatsworth*, had to publicly apologise. He denied in print having any hand in it:

"It was all Greene's", he commented.

Chettle also apologised extensively by writing, in a twisted and unctuous apology, that he should have blocked the printing of Greene's unwarranted remarks about this playwright.

Nashe did everything he could to ensure that his vehement disclaimer would be taken seriously, and Florio's writing method and his foreign origins are not the only two reasons why Nashe was so angry toward him. Another reason of the Florio-Nashe battle is that Southampton gave the patronage to Florio and not Nashe, for which Nashe never forgave him. Nashe tried to secure the patronage of the Earl of Southampton by dedicating to him "*The Unfortunate Traveller*". In the dedication, he termed the Earl "A dear lover and cherisher...as well of the lovers of poets, as of poets themselves." When Henry saw the dedication, he was deeply displeased and told Nashe that he would not have it. Later, Nashe will agrinly admit:

*"Amongst their sacred number I dare not ascribe myself, though now and then I speak English..."*

On analysis of the evidence, it becomes clear that this relationship had turned sour. Florio, during that period, worked as secretary and personal tutor to the young Earl. They also played at tennis together and went at theatre to see comedies. Florio was intimate friend of Southampton, and the Johannes Factotum attack was also conceived for this reason.

Stephen Greenblatt, in his book "*Will in the World*" confirms that it was John Florio, through the intimidating and powerful Southampton, who was sent to complain about the harsh attack made by Nashe and Greene in the *Groatsworth*. After this incident, Chettle publicly apologised.<sup>2</sup>

### **SHAKESPEARE & JOHANNES FACTOTUM: From *Resolute Johannes Florius* to *Absolute Johannes factotum***

Why is Shakespeare referred to as *Johannes Factotum*? And above all, why even *Absolute Johannes Factotum* and not simply *Johannes Factotum*? For John Florio, the name ***Johannes Factotum*** was given to him by Hugh Sanford, *secretary* of the Pembroke family, in 1591, when it became known that Florio had been the editor of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, printed by Richard Field.

Moreover, John Florio was known among his inner circle to be a real "Factotum". When he worked at the French Embassy, between 1583 and 1585, John Florio worked as Italian tutor to the French ambassador's daughter, Catherine Marie. He also worked as secretary, legal representative of the ambassador, and as spy for Francis Walsingham. It is also known that between 1586 and 1589 Florio worked as agent between the Italian community in London, the Oxford literary circles, and the "Italianate" progressive gentry, such as Sir Edward Dymock, friend of Samuel Daniel. When he entered the patronage of Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, John Florio worked as his tutor, personal secretary, and got involved in the murder of the Danvers-Long Feud, backing Henry's friends in their effort to escape, and threatening the sheriff Grose who was investigating on the case. For this reason too, John Florio was seen, by his enemies, as a real "Factotum", working not as a mere tutor, but in the service of his patrons and doing any kind of work required of him, thus securing their loyalty.

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: how Shakespeare became Shakespeare*, Pimlico, 2012, p. 227

## SHAKESPEARE & JOHANNES FACTOTUM: A WORLD OF WORDS, "A FAMILIAR A WORD". WHY JOHN FLORIO IS JOHANNES FACTOTUM

In Florio's Epistle to the Reader of *A World Of Words* (1598) it is definitely clear that John Florio is the *Johannes factotum* mentioned in *Groatsworth*. First of all Florio writes:

*"I knowe not how I may again adventure an Epistle to the Reader'.*

He begins his epistle in this way because the last time he published something, namely in *Second Fruits* of 1591, it was a disaster:

*"So should I fear the fire who have felt the flame so lately, and flie from the sea, that have yet a vow' to pay for escaping my last ship wracke. Then what will the world say for ventring againe? A suo danno, will one say. E a torto si lamenta del mare, chi due volte ci vuoi tornare will another say. Good counsel! Indeede, but who followeth it? Doe we not daily see the contrarie in practise? Who loves to be more on the sea, than they that have bin most on it?"*

Florio here recalls his "Old danger," the attacks of his enemies. Then he starts making a long list of people who have harassed him in recent years, i.e. from *Menaphon* onwards, that he defines as:

*"[...] those notable Pirates on this our paper-sea, those seadogs, or lande-Critickees, monsters of men, if not beastes rather than men; whose teeth are Canibals, their toongs adder-forkes, their lips aspes- poyson, their eies basiliskes, their breath the breath of a grave, their wordes the swordes of Turkes, that strive which shall dive deepest into a Christian lying bound before them. But for these barking and biting dogs they as well knowne as Scylla and Charybdis."*

He then proceeds to name "H.S." for most of Florio's scholars Hugh Sanford, *secretary* of the Pembroke family:

*"But my quarrell is to a roorb-lesse dog that hateth where he cannot hurt, and would faine bite, when he hath no teeth, His name is H.S."*

Florio writes that this man:



*"Under my last epistle to the reader I.F. made as familiar a word of F. as if I had been his brother."*

Florio is underling that this H.S., under the last epistle of his *Second Fruits*, in which he signed himself as *Resolute J.F.*, made a "familiar" a word of his last name **F.** as he had been "his brother." Florio signed his works as *Johannes Florius*. The fact that he mentions the last name, **F.** means that Hugh Sanford had mocked his last name, because the first name, Johannes, was the same. Florio then continues by writing, in the same mocking tone used by Sanford, Latin insults with Hugh Sanford's initials, which confirms, once again, that Hugh Sanford had made of Florio's last name, a Latin insult:

*"And might not a man that can do as much as you (that is, read) find as much matter out of H.S. as you did out of I. F.? As for example H. S. why may it not stand as well for Haeres Stultitiae, as for Homo Simplex? or for Hara Suillina, as for Hostis Studiosorum? or for Hircus Satiricus, as well as for any of them? And this in Latin, besides Hedera Seguace, Harpia Subata, Humore Superbo, Hipocrito Simulatore in Italian. And in English world without end. Huffe Snuffe, Horse Stealer, Hob Sowter, Hugh Sot, Humphrey Swineshead, Hodge Songelder."*

Florio ends his attack by writing:

*"How then will scoffing readers scape this marke of a maledizant?"*

John Florio's Epistle of *A World of Words* proves that his enemies changed his surname from Florius to Factotum, "as if I had been his brother," a latin insult created by the new pen name John Florio used for his work *Second Fruits*, in which he signed himself as "Resolute Johannes Florius". His enemies mocked him by changing Resolute Johannes Florius to Absolute Johannes Factotum, the same attacks and criticism Shakespeare received during his career. Shakespeare never replied to Johannes Factotum insult, John Florio did.

Nashe would not have missed the opportunity to take the name given by Sanford to Florio, i.e. *Johannes Factotum*, as we have seen, and turning *Resolute* into *Absolute*, which have the same meaning, and apostrophising him as *Absolute Johannes Factotum* removes the doubt that he is really talking about **Resolute Johannes Florius**. John Florio is the only author who replied to all the attacks made by Nashe and Greene, that are widely known as the main focus of

Shakespeare's authorship. John Eliot and Hugh Sanford didn't just see John Florio as a foreigner who had success among the most important London literary circles, but also as a magpie who nicked stuff from everywhere: dictionaries, prose narratives, history books, and other manuals. A social climber who wrote his works by translating, borrowing, re-writing, and adapting European works for the English audience. Arundel Del Re, Florio's scholar, underlined that John Florio was involved in a quarrel with Nashe<sup>3</sup>, but didn't specify what the quarrel was about.

### **SHAKESPEARE & JOHANNES FACTOTUM: "A knife at command to cut my throat": Why John Florio wrote anonymously?**

It is important to consider that from 1517 onwards, after that famous **Evil May Day** in which many foreigners were killed, foreigners in England were often subjected to violence by the English who saw foreigners as a threat to their jobs. The play *Thomas More*, where Shakespeare wrote an act, deals with precisely these problems. When Shakespeare wrote his part in *Thomas More* it was 1592, the time when Florio was most under attack from his enemies. For him, acting discreetly, if not anonymously, was a matter of life and death, as it is stressed by Florio himself in the following sentence, which sums up the dangerous situation he was in:

*"I know they have a knife at command to cut my throate."*

These documents prove that John Florio was at the heart of the most important debate surrounding Shakespeare authorship and the Johannes Factotum story. While Shakespeare never replied to the attacks received as Johannes Factotum by Thomas Nashe and Robert Greene, we find John Florio defending himself from the harsh criticism received by his enemies and replying precisely at Nashe, Greene, Elliot and Hugh Sanford, who made a "familiar" a word of his last name "**F**": Factotum.




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<sup>3</sup> Willcock, G. D.; del Re, Arundell; Florio (October 1937). "Florio's First Fruits". *The Modern Language Review*. **32** (4): XIII