

# THE CHRIST COLLOQUY Andrew Grattan

## Book II *Letteratura*

### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S DNA CANTO: the spiral staircase at the core of The British Institute of Florence

The British Institute of Florence, is a three-floored building, representing the three parts of *The Divine Comedy*, - *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, and also, the three persons of the Holy Trinity. At the core of the British Institute, is a metal, spiral staircase, linking the ground floor with the mezzanine floor, and this actual spiral staircase, is the spine of the new seven book poem, '*The Christ Colloquy*', symbolizing William Shakespeare's double helix DNA, at the very centre of The Western Canon.

In Book II of '*The Christ Colloquy*', *Letteratura*, is 'Letteratura Land', a whole, new literary world, that exists within a side-altar, inside a side-chapel, in St. Paul's outside-the-walls, in Rome, where Shakespeare guides the new writer and his new friend, Andrew, through the whole of World Literature in 93 cantos, on Holy Saturday morning, 2013. In the middle of 'Letteratura Land', is *The New British Institute of Florence*, founded jointly, by William Shakespeare and Andrew Wood, in the new poem of 2013, in honour of the Royal Family of Heaven.

*The New British Institute of Florence*, is also a new papal state and seat of government for modern day Florence, where More's *Utopia* replaces Dante's *Monarchy*, as a text. At the very centre, of *The New British Institute of Florence*, is also a white, metal, spiral staircase, symbolizing Shakespeare's DNA, at the very centre of the Western Canon. This stairway, 'Shakespeare's Staircase', is later paired with a second staircase, 'Jacob's Ladder', in Book VII *Cielo*, witnessed in a dream, by Andrew, 'the eternal pilgrim' at 40, when he climbs the steps of the Santa Scala in Rome, on pilgrimage, on Easter Monday afternoon. These two staircases are actually prefigured by a third staircase, the hollow, open plan staircase, with no risers, at Adonai Abbey, linking the Novitiate Library and the Monastery Library, which features in the short novel, '*Christ: a depiction of the Writer as an English Benedictine Novice*'.

In Canto XLVII, William Shakespeare leads Andrew Wood, into the vortex of his DNA double helix, this spiral staircase, where each individual author and book of The Western Canon, is symbolized by each step and spindle of the staircase. Halfway up the staircase, William instates and recognizes Andrew, as a new and third canon centre.

## CANTO XLVII

And, I looked up, my foot flat, upon the  
Ingression doorway, of the British  
Institute of Florence, that flat doorway.

And, up I looked, to that cylindrical  
White staircase, stairway white  
Stairway, staircase, stairway.

And, airily waving his arm, as to the white of a  
Corkscrew of a spiral staircase, as, to the acid of an  
Acid deoxyribonucleic acid, said Shakespeare:

'From, this held shaft, spins, the spun of assign  
And contain, where lies the gamut of assignation,

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Leaves, as from the *liber* of the Cross, are agreed, as

Adjudged worthy and decided and determined  
And beneath, the *piano prima*, and the *secunda*,  
Is the mezzanine or the middle of agree, where

Stands the figure, of one immortal English playwright,  
William Shakespeare, and, through me, the oracle of the  
*First Folio*, are, recognized all works literary, as being

Canonical, or not, and their relationship of consanguinity  
With the one true Cross of the Crucified Christ,  
Lording out from lauds and praise, as David at

His Hebrew psalms, the prancing boy in delight, as  
Daniel in the den, the immortal Will, who was not  
Weighed before a Star Chamber and found wanting.

*Regulat et gubernat* for all good, is the judging  
Solomon of I, Shakespeare, who never split his  
Two babes, comedies and tragedies?.

And, William Shakespeare, taking my hand,  
Pulled me up, in twirling corkscrew climb,  
To set, the flat of my foot, upon the

Curling, twisting, rung-ways, to see  
Where the great books and the great  
Writers, were decorously engraved, and,

Upon that white twist of shake-turn,  
The corkscrew, taking me up and  
Indrawing me, into the twisting journey...

And we stopped-halted at the mid-twist  
Of the turn, and turned, and twisted and  
Turned, to look about ourselves, turning.

And I saw, gracious calligraphy italics,  
With names of writers, of The Western Canon,  
With names of books, of The Western Canon.

And William Shakespeare, turned to me, and  
Said: "Of the wood', you are the truest flower  
Of my genius, the execute of my words, histories

And sonnets, that we two, be blood writers,  
Two noble kinsmen, centres, that Stratford be tied  
To Warfield, and William be tied to Andrew?.

And, I spun around, half-way up, the apportioning  
Cylinder, as the Alighierian, had been 'halfway,  
Along the road, we have to go'; and halfway

Again, I was between the Charterhouse and the  
Executioner's block, at the Morean age, of twenty-seven, at the

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Equal crossroads, between the lee and the sea.

And I turned my head, twisting three-sixty degrees  
In my poet father's Inferno, to see that mournful  
Visage, flipping on the dunny clouds of Hell, I saw

The fruit of truest courtly love relationship,  
Dante and Beatrice, no longer unique, medieval  
Superseded by modern, Andrew and April.

And, twisting again, looking up, I saw, *miles Christi*  
Written in gold lettering, entwined with Sarah and 'Eucharist',  
As that of King Lear, entwined with Cordelia, and:

Dante  
*The Divine Comedy*  
Florence

Helix of assignation; Othello and Desdemona; Helix of assignation;  
*First Folio*; William Shakespeare; *First Folio*;  
Deoxyribonucleic acid; William and Hathaway; Deoxyribonucleic acid

Andrew  
*The Christ Colloquy*  
Florence

And, other names and titles, intermixed and inter-  
Threaded, in the steps and spindles, and, I rejoiced to see  
*The King James Bible* and names: Sir Thomas More,

Aeschylus, Lucretius, Virgil, St. Augustine,  
Geoffrey Chaucer, Yahwist, Socrates, Plato,  
St. Paul, John Henry Newman, Sophocles,

Aristophanes, Longinus, Plutarch, Herodotus,  
Cicero, Horace, Ovid, Plautus, Terence, Martial,  
Dr. Johnson, Freud, Boccaccio, Aristophanes,

Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Franz Kafka,  
Samuel Beckett, Ibsen, Oscar Wilde,  
Vico, Sir. Thomas Malory, John Donne,

Sir Philip Sidney, Alexander Pope, Swift,  
Machiavelli, Jane Austen, Herman Melville,  
Charlotte Bronte, Jane Bronte, Virginia Woolf,

William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley,  
John Keats, Tennyson, Walter Pater, Homer,  
James Joyce, Goethe, William Faulkner,

Ernest Hemingway, Walt Whitman, George Eliot,  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, Flaubert, William Blake,  
D.H. Lawrence, Honoré de Balzac, Henry James,

Robert Browning, W. B. Yeats, Charles Dickens,

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Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Hobbes,  
Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, John Bunyan,

Gibbon, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Erasmus,  
Lord Byron, Browning, Gerard Manley Hopkins,  
Tolstoy, Proust, Henry James, Mark Twain,

Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Camus,  
Jean Anouilh, Thomas Hardy, Kipling, Joseph Conrad,  
H. G. Wells, T.S. Eliot, Aquinas, William Blake,

E. M. Forster, J.D. Salinger, Tennessee Williams,  
John Ruskin, Dostoevsky, Henry James,  
Thomas Nashe, Thomas Kyd, John Webster,

John Dryden, Montaigne, Molière, Ariosto,  
Seneca, Giacomo Leopardi, Petronius, Baudelaire,  
Juvenal, Hugo, Petrarch, Catullus, Lucan and Ariosto.

And, spinning either side, the central three stairs,  
I saw, the vortex of supreme worthiness, where,  
Gold and silver lettering, flashed out in panorama, titles:

'Dr. Faustus', 'The Canterbury Tales',  
'Dubliners', 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle',  
'A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man',

'The Tempest', 'Paradise Lost', 'King Lear',  
'Paradise Regained', 'Macbeth', 'Samson Agonistes',  
'Ulysses', 'Finnegans Wake', 'Beowulf', 'Kubla Khan',

'The Merchant of Venice', 'Metamorphoses',  
'Eclogues', 'Georgics', 'Oedipus Rex', 'The Koran',  
'The Fairy Queen', 'The Anatomy of Melancholy',

'Lycidas', 'The Iliad', 'The Odyssey', 'The Tempest',  
'Othello', 'The Aeneid', 'In Praise of Folly',  
'The Confessions', 'Hamlet', 'The City of God',

'The Importance of Being Earnest', 'Piers Plowman',  
'L' Allegro', 'Il Penseroso', '*De Natura Rerum*',  
'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 'The Pardoner's Tale',

'Measure for Measure', 'The Idea of a University',  
'The Winter's Tale', '*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*',  
'La Vita Nuova', 'Shakespeare's Sonnets', and 'Utopia'.

And turning, my hand in his, hand-in-hand,  
William Shakespeare, drew me, Andrew Wood,  
Past the ephemeral ghost of Dante Alighieri,

And past, the nubs of pertinence,  
And up the timber-way of tread,  
And before the gallery of survey,

To see, in my lost choir-box, of Arkwright and Sollom, the librarian of Florence...