

## Dante's Narrative in Italian Fascism and Post-Fascism: A Long-Lasting Linguistic and Critical Manipulation



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Dante Alighieri wasn't just a poet, a philosopher, and a theologian too, as demonstrated by Franke (1996; 2021; 2023). In fact, he was also a politician (Brando, 2023). In Italy, Dante was interpreted as an example by many movements. The Church, fighting modernism, praised him in the *Manifesto medievalista* (1914) by Gemelli (Bocci, 2011; Rossi, 2014). Pope Benedict XV, with *In praeclara summorum* (1921), ordered all Catholic schools to study Dante, 'the most eloquent bard of Christian thought'.

Moreover, the 1921 anniversary marked the appropriation of Dante by the Fascist Party, when 3.000 fascists marched on Ravenna. After some violent actions, they gathered in front of Dante Alighieri's shrine, their 'spiritual father', and 'an Italian by blood and heritage' (Frassetto, 1933). Obviously, the enigmatic figure announced by Beatrice as 'Cinquecento dieci e cinque' (*Purg. XXXIII*) was then interpreted as the 'Duce' himself, i.e. DVX (Venturini, 1927; Albertini, 1996; Jossa, 2023), and Mussolini personally illustrated his interpretation of Dante in an interview by Orano (1928).

Almost one hundred years later, in October 2022, in Italy, a Government led by the main post-Fascist party was elected, and a new Dante's revival was ready to come. So, the Minister of Culture, Sangiuliano, recently declared Dante 'the founding father of right-wing thought' (Salvia, 2023). Maybe Sangiuliano's surprising statement is not just a case of medievalism (Eco, 1986; Di Carpegna Falconieri, 2011; 2015; Holsinger, 2007), but something deeper, and more significant, as we'll try to demonstrate by literary and linguistic means.

### Biography:

I'm currently Research Fellow (Ricercatore TD/A) for Linguistics at "Università Telematica e-Campus" (Novedrate CO, Italy). After graduating in the field of classical literature, philology and linguistics (Università Cattolica, Milano), and after a PhD in linguistics and philology (Università "G. d'Annunzio", Chieti-Pescara), I started working as research assistant and academic teacher, which I'm currently doing. In the previous years, I also founded a scientific publishing house in my hometown in Italy. So far, I've written 6 academic books, and 30 scientific articles or essays.