

Dante's Political Modernities Claude Lefort Reads the *Monarchia*

In the second decade of the fourteenth century, Dante wrote the *Monarchia*, a treatise of political theology deeply rooted in the philosophy of his time, yet conspicuously original in its treatment of secular and ecclesiastical authority. Immediately attacked by the Church, and later banned until 1881, the treatise was long relegated to the margins of the history of political theory. In 1993, Claude Lefort re-established the importance and contemporary relevance of the treatise in an extensive introduction, entitled 'La modernité de Dante', for a French translation of the *Monarchia*. The symposium takes its cue from Lefort's suggestive invitation to reconsider Dante's endorsement of a 'temporal monarchy', that is, a secular order restricted to humankind's common pursuit of earthly happiness and hence fully independent from the Church. Lefort sketches the political reception of Dante's treatise, referenced by humanist advisors of princes, jurists of absolutist rule, and historians of nation-states alike, which, for him, testifies to a profound historical eccentricity of Dante's conception rather than a teleology inherent to the modern history of the West. For Lefort, 'the past always interrogates our present'.

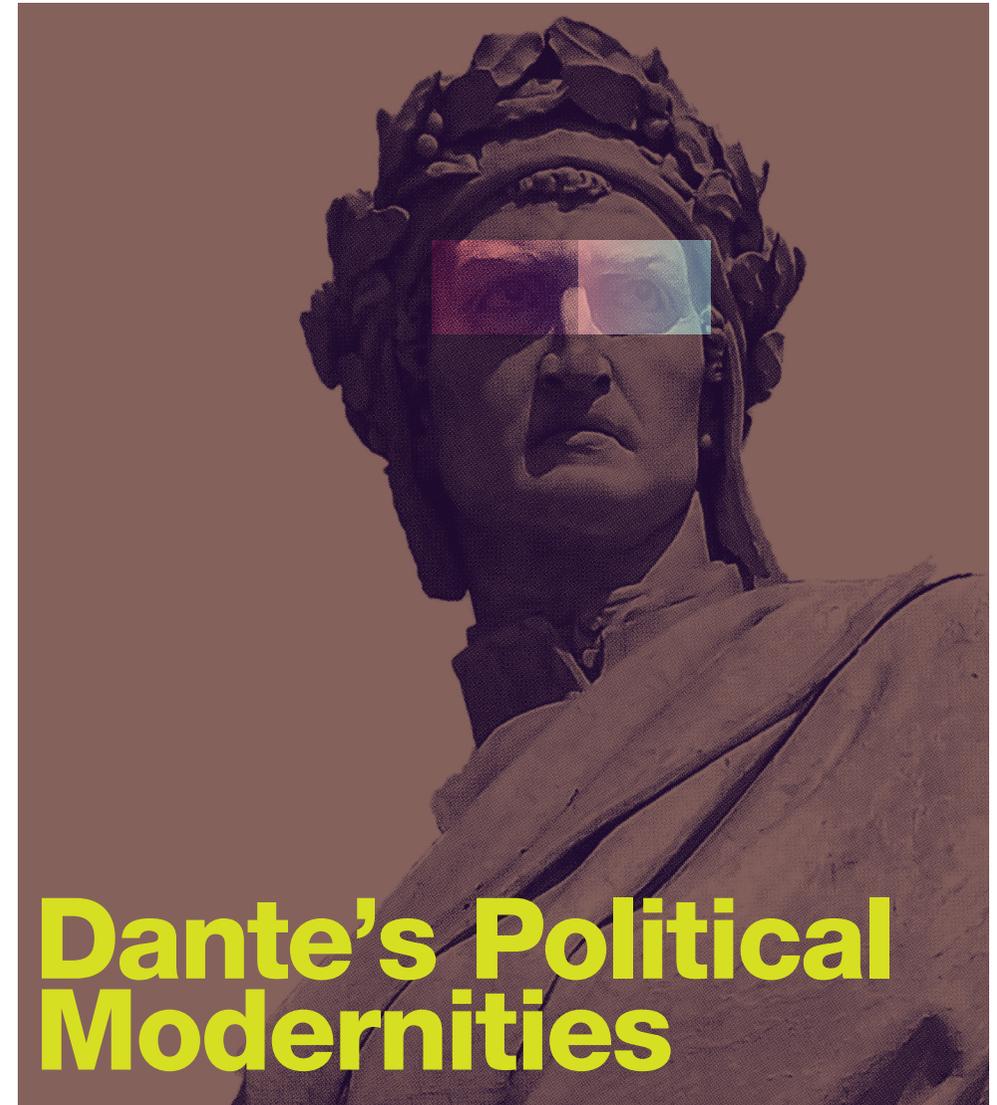
But how can a text of many context-bound contestations such as the *Monarchia* interrogate present political circumstance? Can Lefort's reading serve as a model of a historically reflected political philosophy? How to account for historical efficacy without risking a reamalgamation of history and ideas into a redemptive philosophy of history? How to make sense of the entanglement the *Monarchia* posits between knowledge, happiness, and politics? What is Dante's conception of the common, what its relation to an essentially collective knowledge that can only be pursued in universal peace? The symposium brings together scholars from different fields in order to reconsider the *Monarchia* in dialogue with Lefort's suggestions and discuss its potentials and limits for imagining politics today. Judith Revel (Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense) will give the keynote lecture.

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BERLIN INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL INQUIRY

Symposium

Saturday, 6 July 2019, 10:30–21:00, in English



**Claude Lefort
Reads the *Monarchia***

Organized by
Christiane Frey,
Manuele Gragnolati,
Christoph Holzhey,
Arnd Wedemeyer

Programme:

10:00	Morning coffee	15:30	Christiane Frey Dante's Permanence, Lefort's History
10:15	Welcome by Christiane Frey, Manuele Gagnolati, Christoph Holzhey, and Arnd Wedemeyer	16:00	Facundo Vega Le travail de l'œuvre Lefort: Enigmas of Democracy and Bodies That Matter
10:30	Jennifer Rushworth Translating Lefort on Dante	16:30	Arnd Wedemeyer Claude Lefort and the Test of the Irreversible
11:00	Karl-Heinz Ladeur Dante and the Possibilities of the Law. The Epistemic Crisis of the Late Medieval	17:00	Coffee break
11:30	Franziska Meier The Gap in the Construction of the Monarch	17:30	Matthias Roick Lefort and the Modernity of Civic Humanism Between Dante and Machiavelli
12:00	Coffee break	18:00	Andrea Lanza Dante moderne pensé par Lefort, ou des tensions de la notion lefortienne de modernité
12:30	Manuele Gagnolati, Christoph Holzhey 'La distinction entre deux fins dernières': Poetic Approaches to the Paradox of Happiness in the <i>Commedia</i> and the <i>Monarchia</i>	18:30	Franco Costantini Les parties pensent-elles le tout? La modernité de Dante à travers Borges
13:00	Nicolò Crisafi Exceptions to the Rule: Realms of <i>epikeia</i> , Affect, and Peculiarity in Dante's <i>Monarchia</i>	19:00	Break
13:30	Elisa Brilli Lefort, Dante, and the 'brighe del tempo' (<i>Convivio</i> IV ii)	19:30	Keynote: Judith Revel La modernité de Dante et Claude Lefort
14:00	Lunch break		