CHAPTER 3

Edoardo Sanguineti's New Dante

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Sicuramente Dante anche se era un feroce reazionario. Lui ha capito che il mondo era cambiato, che la borghesia era in ascesa, ha capito che la storia aveva avuto una svolta irreparabile. Insomma ha capito meglio di altri il disordine del mondo.¹

[Surely Dante, even though he was a fierce reactionary. He understood that the world had changed, that the bourgeoisie was on the rise; he understood that history had made an irreparable turn. Indeed, he understood better than others the disorder of the world.]

This was Edoardo Sanguineti's quick and sure answer when asked, in a 2009 interview, which poet had best understood the Italian national character. A little over a year before his death Sanguineti still saw the world through the eyes of a *dantista* of a peculiar historical materialist bent, for whom Dante was a poet on the edge of the capitalist domination of the globe. For Sanguineti, Dante was the first poet to recognize and react to the epochal change toward global capitalism that the critic traced to the communal society of late medieval Italy.² This historical change was recorded in the linguistic and moral scope of Dante's work, especially the *Divine Comedy*, which in turn became the model and guide for Sanguineti in his own political and poetical neo-avant-garde project. In another interview from seven years earlier, Sanguineti connected the landscape of Dante's *Inferno* with the contemporary state of affairs even more explicitly. After responding to a series of questions about where he would locate certain politicians within Dante's infernal system of justice, Sanguineti superimposed the Dantean image upon a sociological view of the globalized world:

Alla luce delle considerazioni sullo stato attuale delle cose, potrei dire che l'inferno è la terra. E' un inferno globalizzato. Per lo meno nel senso dei 'dannati della terra,' che oramai occupano la maggior parte dello spazio disponibile. [...] Quindi direi che l'inferno ormai viene a coincidere con la terra, non per sempre — credo — ma certo — in questa fase — in modo pressoché totale.³

[In light of considerations on the current state of affairs, I would say that hell is the earth. It is a globalized hell. At least in the sense of the 'damned of the earth', who by now occupy most of the available space. [...] So I would say that hell ultimately coincides with the earth, not forever — I believe — but certainly — in this phase — in an almost total way.]

The ruinous landscape of Sanguineti's contemporary world, though beyond anything the Florentine poet could have imagined, was the result of the same capitalist imperialism that began with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the late Middle Ages, the first signs of which Dante was reacting against. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Sanguineti stood opposite Dante at the other end of the narrative of the ascent of the bourgeoisie, as a revolutionary poet to balance the reactionary Dante.

By the time of his death in May 2010, the poetry and career of Dante Alighieri had become for Sanguineti a model for how to use poetry to react to the dejected status of world. He had begun his engagement with the Florentine poet some sixty-odd years earlier as a student of Giovanni Getto and Vittore Branca at the University of Turin in the early 1950s. His 1956 *tesi di laurea* was a narrative analysis of the Malebolge cantos of the *Inferno*. More than this, however, it was a frontal attack on Benedetto Croce's reading of the *Comedy* in *La poesia di Dante* (1920) as a series of detached lyrical episodes and on the aestheticism connected with Croce's idealist philosophy.⁴ In the essays on Dante that followed, from those in *Tre studi danteschi* (1961) and *Il realismo di Dante* (1966) to the anthology *Dante reazionario* (1992),⁵ Sanguineti would develop the reading of Dante as a reactionary poet, whose theory of poetry had evolved as a reaction to the revolutionary political and economic changes that were taking place in fourteenth-century Italy. Sanguineti recognized the key role that literary history had played in forming the ideological underpinnings of the Italian language and the singular importance of Dante's voice as a polemical counter-current within that history, especially from the point of view of the *Novecento*.⁶ Sanguineti's critical engagement with Dante's poetry and with medieval literature in general — which includes essays on Guido Guinizzelli, the Sicilian school, as well as Francesco Petrarca and Giovanni Boccaccio — sought to re-historicize Dante's poem so that the unity of its poetry and its ideology would become clear.⁷

In this essay, I aim to give a succinct overview of Sanguineti's reading of Dante in order to show how it developed from a rigorously formalist analysis of Dante's language to such an easy appropriation of the medieval poet to the life and world of the twenty-first century. I would like to suggest, in the end, that Sanguineti's criticism positions Dante as a model for an ideologically engaged and linguistically variegated poetics. For him Dante was a reactionary counterpoint to the revolutionary poetics that he himself sought to produce, from his experience in the *neoavanguardia* of the 1960s and the poetry of *Triperuno* (1951–64) to the *travestimento dantesco*, or 'Dantesque travesty', of the *Commedia dell'Inferno* (1989). Sanguineti wanted to re-historicize Dante so that he could liberate Dante's poetry from a literary history under the hegemony of Petrarchan and Petrarchist lyricism and insert it into a self-consciously ideological and historically aware narrative.

Fundamental to Sanguineti's engagement with Dante is his *tesi di laurea*, originally completed in 1956, the same year in which *Laborintus* was published for the first time. Even as late as 1992, in the author's note that precedes the collection of his essays on Dante, *Dante reazionario*, Sanguineti refers back to this first study for 'issues of methodology'.⁸ Published in 1961 as *Interpretazione di Malebolge*, this work is set up as

an example of anti-Crocian interpretation that takes the terms of Benedetto Croce's division of the poem as its point of departure. Sanguineti argues against Croce's well-known thesis that the poetry of the *Divine Comedy* must be separated from the theological and historical structure in which it is embedded, against Croce's lyrical reading. When Sanguineti wrote his thesis in the mid-1950s in the years following Croce's death, the idealism embodied by the Italian philosopher's work was still strong in Italian poetics and aesthetics, even though criticism on Dante had already started to move on. Contini's modern stylistic criticism, which was based on the study of textual variants, had helped to found a new era of philology in Italian Dante studies,⁹ and his comparative study of Petrarch's monolingualism in terms of Dante's plurilingualism had inspired an entire generation of modernist Dantesque lyric poets.¹⁰ From the very beginning of his poetic career, however, Sanguineti's poetic engagement with Dante was based on his own profoundly original and rigorously philological reading of Dante's works, not on the scholarship of others. This is not to say that his reading was born *ex novo*: like many Dante scholars of the mid-twentieth century, he was influenced by T. S. Eliot's appreciation for the allegorical 'narrative' that bound the *Comedy* together and by his poetic implementation of Dante as an interlocutor. Also, Ezra Pound's *fascisteggiante*, or 'Fascist-style' reading, as he once called it, and its focus on the social mentality of sin, especially usury, influenced the way in which Sanguineti read Dante's political ideology.¹¹ Nevertheless, his criticism on Dante melds the philological rigour and expertise of the academic tradition with the theoretical and ideological boldness of a poet.

In order to establish his own reading of the poem vis-à-vis that of Croce, Sanguineti identifies and challenges first of all the historical dialectic at the foundation of Croce's study: 'Egli [Croce] proclamava dunque che la distinzione di struttura e di poesia era dottrinale emblema, nella sua interna dialettica, di una assai più vasta e delicata dialettica storica, in cui si doveva anzi riconoscere, di quella, il solo fondamento legittimo' [He [Croce] proclaimed, then, that the distinction between structure and poetry was the doctrinal emblem, in its internal dialectic, of a much more vast and delicate historical dialectic, in which one should recognize the sole legitimate foundation of the former].¹² Croce's belief that the aesthetic value of Dante's poetry was separable from the structure of the poem and from the elements of so-called 'non-poetry' was, according to Sanguineti, based upon a questionable issue of periodization. His internal divisions of the poem (poetry/non-poetry, poetry/structure, etc.) reflect the historical division between 'medieval' and 'Renaissance' employed by Romantic literary historians, such as Francesco de Sanctis, whereby the gothic structural elements that reflect a bygone theological vision of the world are 'medieval' and the poetical representation of humanity and human passions belongs to the 'Renaissance'. Sanguineti notes that the historical basis of Croce's reading hid his debt to Romanticism:

Croce conduceva così il testo di Dante a spostarsi nella zona di una lettura rinascimentale, portando all'estremo il senso della interpretazione romantica (Dante come il primo poeta della civiltà moderna), e garantendo questa con una alienazione storica di paradossale rilievo.¹³

[Thus Croce displaced Dante's text into the area of a Renaissance reading, carrying to the extreme the Romantic interpretation of Dante as the first poet of modern civilization, and guaranteeing this [interpretation] with an historical alienation of paradoxical prominence.]

Sanguineti points out that Croce's abstractions of the aesthetic value of certain poetic moments from the *sottostante romanzo teologico*, or 'underlying theological novel', were due not to the merits of his individual method, but to his 'esercizio, libero e sciolto, del gusto e della lettura' [free and unhindered exercise in taste and in reading].¹⁴ He unmasks Croce as a fundamentally Romantic critic, whose abstract positions only reconfirmed with new tools an aged critical tradition. The systematicity of Croce's lyric reading embodied the Romantic conception of an absolute poetry separated from the historical world in which it was created.

Sanguineti finds the thesis of his predecessor untenable precisely because it separates the aesthetic value of the poetry of the *Comedy* from the awareness of the historical period in which Dante lived and wrote. As Sanguineti puts it in his introduction: 'è evidente come per il Croce "la poesia nella sua eterna natura" si ponga, metastoricamente fondata, come un diverso in essenza dalla "coscienza storica"' [it is evident how for Croce 'poetry in its eternal nature' is proposed in its metahistorical foundation as essentially different from 'historical awareness'].¹⁵ Furthermore, Sanguineti used this historical critique to show how Croce's internal reading of the poem was fundamentally erroneous, because of its origin in Romantic culture. With Croce the Romantics had taken control of the historical and narrative context within which the poetry of the *Comedy* takes place. The first step for Sanguineti in re-appropriating the poem from the hegemony of the Romantics, then, was to read the poem according to such historical awareness, to restore it to its own proper temporal narrative system.

In the place of Croce's lyrical reading of the poem, this first study by Sanguineti proposes a 'metodo di aperta e storica fenomenologia [...] che lascia esistere la poesia nel naturale orizzonte in cui essa viene di volta in volta a manifestarsi, senza preordinare la zona di tale sua manifestazione, che lascia essere poesia nel proprio suo luogo originario' [method of open and historical phenomenology [...] that lets [Dante's] poetry exist in the natural horizon in which it manifests itself each time, without preordaining the area of each manifestation, that lets [it] be poetry in its own original place].¹⁶ This is to say that Sanguineti proposes a narrative reading of Dante's poetry, according to which 'la poesia dantesca [...] si presenta entro il cerchio di un orizzonte narrativo, e si manifesta [...] come "romanzo"' [Dante's poetry [...] presents itself within the circuit of a narrative horizon, and it manifests itself [...] as a 'novel'].¹⁷ The thirteen chapters and over three-hundred pages that make up the *Interpretazione di Malebolge* are an example of how such a historical phenomenology might work when applied to the *Comedy*, while at the same time they are also the foundation for a new ideological Dante. It is not by chance that Sanguineti chose to analyse precisely cantos 18–30 of the *Inferno*, in which Dante is most critical of his contemporary society and its unethical politics of individual gain, the cantos of the ten pockets of the eighth circle of Hell, inhabited by the fraudulent: the panderers and seducers, flatterers, Simonists, sorcerers, barraters,

usurers, hypocrites, thieves, givers of false counsel, sowers of discord, and falsifiers. Sanguinetti rarely refers to 'ideology' as such in this study, but he restricts his critique of Croce to the parameters of formal analysis. In the years that preceded the 700th anniversary of Dante's death, between 1961 and 1965, Sanguinetti published two additional books on Dante and multiple essays on Dante and medieval poetics. The major argument of his thesis would remain the same, as he expanded his 'narrative reading' to encompass multiple episodes of the *Comedy* and as his reading became more openly political.

In the same year as the publication of his thesis, Sanguinetti published a small book, *Tre studi danteschi* (1961), made up of two *lecturae* (*Inf.* I–III and *Purg.* XXX) and a theoretical essay entitled 'Dante, *Praesens historicum*'. In the first of the *lecturae* Sanguinetti notes the elements in the first three cantos that determine the narrative tensions in the *Comedy*, while in the second he shows how the meeting with Beatrice in the thirtieth canto of *Purgatorio* complicates the perspective from which we read the 'comedy' of the poem, in that the movement from being a student of Virgil to being a devotee of Beatrice marks a 'comedy' within the *Comedy*. In '*Praesens historicum*', the theoretical backbone of the two *lecturae*, Sanguinetti's main aim is to read the present tenses of the verbs of the *Comedy* according to the temporality of a single narrative system that demonstrates what he calls an 'inquietitudine cronica', or 'temporal uneasiness', as it switches between different temporal perspectives. There are the *praesens narratoris*, which is the present tense of the narrator who says *dico*, the *praesens logicum*, which is the present tense of the metatemporal unity of the poem and expresses the eternal state being in the *Inferno*, and the *praesens historicum*, or historical present, which assimilates the present tense of the narrator and the past tense of the *narratum*, so that the narrated events seem more vivid and present for the reader. The dialectical relationship between the poet and pilgrim that modern readers have come to expect, from the critical work of Contini and Charles Singleton, is complicated by Sanguinetti in order to highlight the metamorphic quality of the temporal structure of the poem. His reading charges Dante with being a prophet in the present tense, a vatic poet who reveals the state of affairs of his contemporary world. The essay continues Sanguinetti's effort at refuting the Crocian thesis that reads the poetry of the *Comedy* as absolute and separate from the historical, and now temporal, nature of the poetry's self-manifestation. He argues that the narrativity of the poem itself provides a temporal solution for the organization of the poetry, a temporal horizon within which Dante's poetry comes to be. In the concluding paragraphs of the essay, after listing in passing a series of uses of a future-looking, prophetic present tense, Sanguinetti notes that that the temporal unwinding of the poem is the 'common stylistic dimension' that unifies the poetry of the *Comedy* and confirms Michele Barbi's thesis that the poem is not an allegory, but a 'revelation'.¹⁸

In the next of his essay collections, *Il realismo di Dante* (1965), Sanguinetti proposes three more *lecturae* (*Inf.* VIII, *Purg.* XXIV, and *Par.* XIX), along with the more theoretical reading in the title essay, 'Il realismo di Dante', in which he argues for the contemporary relevance of the poem from the point of view of Dante's realism. He adapts the narrative and temporal reading of the text, which had defined his

work on Dante up to that point, to the concurrent critical debate on Dante's realism. By situating the poetry of Dante within a narrative unfolding that binds ideology (political, theological, etc.) with aesthetics, Sanguineti shows how the realistic manner of Dante's representation of history is precisely what makes the poem still relevant today. In this essay, it becomes clear how Sanguineti's narratological reading of the poem from the previous decade had come to be informed by his own ideological vision of history; or rather, Sanguineti finally declares openly the ideological origins of his formal disagreement with Croce. The lyrical reading, he writes, was

la geniale invenzione di un lettore laico, tardo-romantico e borghese, il quale, trovandosi di fronte un testo tanto tenacemente compromesso con una a lui inaccettabile ideologia, escogita la maniera, sbrigativa ma efficace, sofisticata ma pratica, di neutralizzare l'ideologia e di salvare intanto, ma adeguatamente neutralizzata appunto, e così tutta gagliardamente stravolta, la poesia.¹⁹

[the ingenious invention of a secular, late Romantic, and bourgeois reader, who, when faced with a text so tenaciously engaged with an ideology unacceptable to him, thinks up the way — hurried but efficient, sophisticated but practical — to neutralize the ideology and to save the poetry in any case — although adequately neutralized, of course, and thus vigorously distorted].

The neutralization of the ideological component of Dante's poetry, which is expressed in the narrative, spatiotemporal apparatus of the poem, was an ideological choice on the part of Croce, who could not bear Dante's reactionary political identity. According to Sanguineti, only a narrative reading of the 'romanzo teologico-politico' [theological-political novel] of the *Comedy* could restore to the poem '[i]l suo autentico significato espressivo e ideologico, il suo senso profetico, profeticamente impegnato' [its authentic expressive and ideological meaning, its prophetic, prophetically engaged, sense].²⁰ He continues by stating unambiguously the ideological, and not merely formal, merits of his own reading of the poem from the point of view of literary history:

Onde il primo merito che conviene allora rivendicare, con piena franchezza, al metodo di una lettura narrativa, è proprio la direzione contraria di riflessione esegetica: il ritorno a un fermo impegno critico con quella ideologia che quella poesia viene intrinsecamente ad implicare.²¹

[Whence the first merit that we must claim, with full openness, for the method of a narrative reading, is precisely the opposite direction of exegetical reflection: the return to a firm critical engagement with that ideology which that poetry intrinsically implies.]

If Croce's reading had avoided the disturbing anti-bourgeois ideology that informed Dante's poetry, then Sanguineti's approach would force readers to come to terms with that ideology above all else.

In *Il realismo di Dante* Sanguineti unveils a political Dante whose *Comedy* was a reaction to the political changes of his era, a Dante who realized and prophetically announced the inevitability of the rise of the bourgeoisie, even as he was crying out against it. For Sanguineti, Dante was a reactionary poet fearful and disdainful of the countrymen who had taken control of his Florence, a poet whose fury and

horror regarding the 'facili trionfi dei banchieri e dei mercanti fiorentini' [easy triumphs of the Florentine bankers and merchants] gives ideological substance to the formal beauty of the poetry of the *Comedy*.²² Risking an anachronism on the ideological opposite pole from that at the foundation of Croce's Romantic reading, Sanguineti compares Dante's political voice to 'gli alti clamori dei grandi scrittori europei della restaurazione ottocentesca, strepitanti di fronte alle facili vittorie del capitalismo industriale, nazionale e internazionale' [the clamours of the great European writers of the nineteenth-century restoration, in an uproar over the easy victories of industrial capitalism, on a national and international scale].²³ From the point of view of the 1965 celebration of the 700th anniversary of Dante's birth, Sanguineti reveals his political reading of the form of Dante's poem and exposes Dante's radically ideological poetics as the foundation for the continued relevance of the *Comedy* as poetry in the twentieth century. Despite being a reactionary, Sanguineti professes, Dante could teach twentieth-century poets how to use poetry to engage openly with a political world; he could expose the fundamental connection between language and ideology.

After 1965, a year which also saw the publication his editions of Dante's *Vita Nuova* and the sonnets of the *Scuola Siciliana*, Sanguineti largely left his thoughts on Dante to the university classroom.²⁴ In 1992, however, he collected his publications on Dante in the volume *Dante reazionario*, the ordering of which is informed by the narrative time of Dante's poetry and poetic career, not the chronological order in which Sanguineti composed them. In fact, the anthology begins with Sanguineti's introduction to the poetics of the *Vita Nuova* and ends with his essay on Dante's realism, both composed in 1964/65. The volume recounts the movement from Dante's rejection of the 'irrealism' of the lyric poetry of his forefathers and contemporaries (Guinizzelli and Cavalcanti especially) to the fully politicized ideological poetry of the *Comedy*. Before moving on to the question of how Dante's poetry has influenced Sanguineti's creative work, I would like to discuss briefly how Sanguineti used the connection between ideology and language in order to understand the transition from Dante's early verse to the poetry of the *Divine Comedy*.

In his introduction to the 1965 edition of the *Vita Nuova*, Sanguineti explores Dante's *libello* as a theory of the lyric. He proposes to read it according to the narrative temporality of the *Comedy* that he had described and defended in his criticism up to that point. This allows him to create a temporal dialectic that sets the two narratives in opposition to one another and seeks to resolve the earlier story within the later one. By reading the *Vita Nuova* from the *a posteriori* perspective of the author of the *Comedy*, Sanguineti can claim that the prosimetrum is the story of Dante's rejection of the lyric. It is, he says, a coming-of-age story in which the poet realizes the full ideological potential of his poetry:

Il *Bildungsroman* di Dante sarà dunque veramente, se si vuole, storia di un'anima, e veramente romanzo, ma nella misura in cui è storia di un discorso lirico, ragionamento intorno a una poetica che ormai si confessa come insufficiente, si riconosce come inadeguata alle altissime ambizioni dello scrittore [...] la *Vita nuova* è, prima di ogni altra cosa, la teoria e la storia delle 'nove rime': una storia che approda al fermo congedo dell'autore da quell'ordine chiuso di così lunga esperienza umana e stilistica.²⁵

[Dante's *Bildungsroman* will truly be, then, the story of a soul, if you will, and truly a novel, but to the extent to which it is the story of a lyric discourse, a line of thinking about a poetics that confesses itself to be no longer sufficient, [that] recognizes itself as inadequate for the very high ambitions of the writer [...] the *Vita Nuova* is, above all, the theory and the story of the 'new rhymes': a story that concludes with the author's firm farewell to that closed order of such a long human and stylistic experience.]

In the *Vita Nuova* Dante surpasses and leaves behind the ethically unengaged poetics of Guinizelli and abandons the solipsistic lyric experiments of the *dolce stil novo*.²⁶ Thus, according to Sanguineti, the *Vita Nuova* represents the potentiality for a different literary history that leads away from an aestheticized lyric towards a politically engaged epic, which meant for the twentieth century the anti-lyric. Although Dante had been able to surpass and combat the lyricism of the rising bourgeois poetics of his age, the potentiality that he created seems to Sanguineti to have withered in the generation that followed. Italian poetry after Dante would be marked by the synthesis of the late Middle Ages enacted by Petrarch in his *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, which Sanguineti held to be 'una conclusione [...] una pietra miliare [...] in quanto pietra tombale' [a conclusion [...] a milestone [...] in as much as [they are] a tombstone].²⁷ Sanguineti read Dante's lyric poetry not only from the point of view of the narrative poet of the *Comedy*, as a passage from the unengaged lyric to the ideologically charged epic, but from the point of view of an anti-lyric poet who wanted to challenge the literary historical foundations of twentieth-century lyricism. The lyric, for him, was the *forma mentis* of the bourgeoisie that had been established under the name of Petrarchism as the national and international genre *par excellence* from Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* to Benedetto Croce's *La Poesia di Dante*.²⁸

Sanguineti's ideological critique of Croce veiled itself as a question of literary form, which was itself sustained by an insistence on historical awareness. The problem with Croce's reading from Sanguineti's narratological perspective was that it forced Dante's poetry to coincide with Croce's own aesthetic criteria, effectively restructuring anachronistically the internal 'story' of the poem and rewriting the history of Italian literature. By deploying his own historical and narrative phenomenology Sanguineti was able to free Dante's poetry from Croce's ideology and partially restore it to its own historical context.²⁹ This newly historicized Dante, however, was also ready to be appropriated by new ideologies. Although this concern with dismantling Croce's Romantic reading of the *Comedy* is fully comprehensible from within the sphere of Dante criticism alone, when it is read alongside Sanguineti's poetical and theoretical activity in the same period, *Laborintus* and his experience as a *novissimo* in particular, it becomes clear that the two activities implicated one another. By arguing for a narrative reading of a politically reactionary Dante, who was both a realist and a contemporary, Sanguineti's 'scandalous experiment',³⁰ as he defined it, proposed the author of the *Comedy* both as a model for an ideologically charged and politically engaged poetry and as the foundation for a new literary history in which poetry had to be understood not as an eternal absolute, but in its own historicity, embedded in the culture of its age and in the ideology of its author.

Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti recently commented in an eulogy of the poet's life and work that '[g]li studi danteschi di Sanguineti, del resto, a me sono sempre sembrati la verifica e la spiegazione della propria scrittura e invenzione poetica più che vere e proprie interpretazioni critiche' [Sanguineti's Dante studies, in any case, have always seemed to me the verification and the explanation of his own poetic writing and invention, more than true critical interpretations].³¹ Bàrberi Squarotti's judgment, though reductive, does unveil a certain connection between Sanguineti's critical writings and his creative process. In the background of his experience as a part of the *Novissimi* of Alfredo Giuliani surely lies his interpretation of Dante as a poet of ideological restlessness who left behind the atemporality of lyric discourse. In 1964, Sanguineti likened, with a slight twist, the neo-avant-garde's injection of chaos into the literary paradigms of the mid-twentieth century to Dante's own poetic revolution in the *Vita Nuova*:

in un momento in cui si profilavano o già si sviluppavano, un po' su tutte le frontiere della letteratura, i più diversi e straordinari ritorni all'ordine, e finivano nazional-popolari, a non dire altri e peggiori, un Pascoli come un Lampedusa, i 'Novissimi' mossero, con il loro aspro stil novo, da un'ipotesi assolutamente opposta: dall'idea di un ritorno al disordine.³²

[in a moment in which the most diverse and extraordinary returns to order were looming on the horizon or were even already developing, a bit on all of the frontiers of literature, and a Pascoli or a Lampedusa, not to mention other worse writers, ended up as examples of national-popular literature,³³ the 'Novissimi', with their bitter new style, set out from an absolutely opposite hypothesis: from the idea of a return to disorder.]

The revolutionary 'sweet style' of the early Dante becomes the model for his, Giuliani's, Nanni Balestrini's, and Antonio Porta's 'bitter new style', which reflected stylistically and linguistically the return to primal chaos that they wanted to impose upon Italian literary history. In terms of Sanguineti's reading of the *Vita Nuova*, it is clear that Dante is a model for the poet who rejects the order of the lyric for the restlessness and disorder of a new kind of poetry.

His first volume of poems, *Laborintus*, composed at the same time as his thesis on Dante, selections of which appeared in Giuliani's anthology of the *Novissimi* (1961), is riddled with medievalisms and phantasms of a world that could have once been that of Dante. The *Palus putredinis* of the first poem may echo Dante's *selva selvaggia* and the *livida palus* of the penultimate poem may be the same *livida palude* of *Inferno* III, 98, but only from the point of view of alchemy and Jungian psychoanalysis. The focus on the body and its fluids carries the bodily poetics of the *Inferno* to the limits of the grotesque and the absurd, while the descent into the shadows of the communal psyche mockingly reverses medieval Neoplatonism's movement towards a disembodied unity. The poet revels in the *hyle* of an embodied and monstrously deformed language.³⁴ Yet if there is a Dantean intertext at work in *Laborintus*, it is more than just a series of textual references by which Sanguineti can establish his authority as a poet or legitimate his poetic project. *Laborintus* exposes the chaos of incommunicability and records the dissolution of the language of reason; its narrative of descent is the inverse of the novel of transcendence that he read in the

Comedy. If Sanguineti uses Dante as an interlocutor in *Laborintus*, then he inverts Dante's ideological and theoretical trajectory, so that all that remains is Dante's radical poetics of history that Sanguineti had noticed in his criticism. Like Dante he rejects the limited lyric mode of discourse, but not so that he might write a poetry that subsumes all of history and subjects it to his own ideology, but so that he might expose the fundamental connection between ideology and language. He went down not so that he could go back up, but so that he could get back to a starting place. Sanguineti employs an inverted and contradictory Dantesque poetics in order to undo the Petrarchan and Petrarchist literary history propagated by the lyric sentimentalism of the Romantics, so that he could re-found that history in a self-consciously ideological fashion. His Dante criticism and his early poetry work toward the same end: to undo the lyric. As Sanguineti remembered in an interview towards the end of his life, 'Dante era un naturale modello di [...] una scrittura anti-lyrica' [Dante was a natural model for [...] an anti-lyrical kind of writing] which he used in response to the 'cultura romantico-borghese che è per eccellenza cultura lirica e lyricizzante' [Romantic-bourgeois culture, which is a lyric and lyricizing culture *par excellence*].³⁵

At the conclusion of the heroic years of the first *neoavanguardia*, between 1963 and 1965, contemporaneous to his work on Dante's realism and on the *Vita Nuova*, Sanguineti began to experiment with more explicit engagements with Dante in his creative work, just as he had announced the ideological basis for his reading of Dante in his scholarly work. For *Laborintus II*,³⁶ a musical radio play, and homage to Dante commissioned by the *Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française* for the 700th anniversary of Dante's birth, Sanguineti wrote the libretto set to Luciano Berio's music. The text is a montage of works that range from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* to Dante's *Vita Nuova*, *Convivio*, and *Comedy* to Ezra Pound's and T. S. Eliot's rewritings of Dante, as well as citations from Sanguineti's first *Laborintus* and lines composed for the work itself. Dramatizing the dialectic of sin and godliness in a collage of literary references, it collapses a Dantesque literary history into a spatially and temporally embodied performance of textual connection and historical alienation.³⁷

Also dating to the years immediately following the *Novissimi* anthology and the first season of his neo-avant-garde poetics, *Purgatorio de l'Inferno* signalled a shift in the way that Sanguineti saw Dante's posterity.³⁸ The title of the work is a reference to a lost or possibly imaginary work by Giordano Bruno, which he promises at the end of *Cena delle ceneri* (1584) and in which he claims that his interlocutor will find 'il frutto della redenzione' [the fruit of redemption].³⁹ If *Laborintus* had been Sanguineti's recourse to a proto-anti-lyric in Dante's infernal poetry whose primary motivator is the descent into incommunicability, then *Purgatorio de l'Inferno* signals a qualified ascent out of the quagmire of language.⁴⁰ Its title marks Sanguineti's poetics as a Baroque reception and disruption of Dante's poetic patrimony. It is a promise for the historical redemption of a poetic future that never arrives, a purgatory in hell, not an earthly paradise. That Sanguineti represents his Dante as the product of reception is even more evident when one considers the way in which he entitles the collection of his first three works, which appeared together

for the first time in 1964 under the title *Triperuno*. By recalling the encyclopedic dialogue by macaronic poet Teofilo Folengo, *Chaos del Triperuno* (1527), Sanguineti is further signalling that the Dante of his creative work must be approached through the myriad levels of historical disruption.⁴¹ He takes a historically received Dante as a point of departure in an agonistic understanding of literary history that pits Dantism against Petrarchism, plurilingualism against monolingualism, the anti-lyric versus the lyric, in order to historicize his own ideological re-appropriation of the medieval poet. He evokes the macaronic Renaissance and the scientific Baroque as predecessors in order to undermine the lyric tradition of the *Novecento*. Much as his work on Gozzano painted the picture of the parodic end to the lyric sentimentalism of the Romantics and the beginning of a new anti-lyricism, his critical work on Dante and his evocation of Dante's poetry in his neo-avant-garde creative works coincide to create the foundation for a theory and practice of the anti-lyric.⁴²

Many years later Sanguineti would return to Dante in his creative work for two different commissioned pieces: the first, *Commedia dell'Inferno: Un travestimento dantesco* (1989), was a theatrical version of the *Inferno* completed in conjunction with Federico Tiezzi;⁴³ the second consisted of two short satirical poems written for Enrico Baj's 1995 political manifesto, *Malebolge 1994/1995*.⁴⁴ Both works seek to appropriate the *Inferno*'s rhetoric of sin as a critique of modern society. Much like *Laborintus II*, however, the *Commedia dell'Inferno* re-enacts the historical alienation created when modern ideologies take over Dante's text. The script that he adapted from Dante's *Inferno* for Federico Tiezzi lets the most famous sinners of the *Inferno* speak to the audience in the original language of the text. Yet Dante's hendecasyllables are continually split into fragments and words are purposefully left out in key places in order to de-familiarize the text to its listeners.⁴⁵ In addition, the first act of the play is a dialogue derived entirely from quotations from the *Accessus* in Boccaccio's *Esposizioni sopra la 'Commedia' di Dante*, after which he sets the cinematic movement of the text from sinner to sinner within the frame of Benvenuto da Imola's Latin commentary to the *Inferno*, thus forcing the audience to face the culturally familiar scenes of the *Inferno* as they have been transmitted in the official conduits of culture.⁴⁶ Sanguineti also makes palpable the status of the *Comedy* as a receptor of medieval culture by inserting quotations from Dante's own sources, from Giacomo da Lentini and Dante's own *Vita Nuova* to Andreas Cappellanus and Chrétien de Troyes. Yet, while the text of the play dramatizes the reception history of which it is a part, the setting of the play, as imagined in the stage directions, masks and embodies Dante's images of sin for the contemporary world, as it moves from a hospital and a dance hall to a construction site and a movie set, finally concluding with a mechanized Lucifer. In *Commedia dell'Inferno* Sanguineti stages the historicization of his own anachronistic appropriation of Dante in a characteristically contradictory manner. With it, his work on and through Dante comes full circle and he is finally able to take the self-sustaining 'lyric' episodes of the *Comedy* and set them to his own ideological narrative, which, unlike that of Croce, is fully aware of its historical position in relation to the poem's original context.

I would like to conclude by considering the significant role that Sanguineti assigned to Dante in the essay of revisionary literary history 'Plurilinguismo nelle

scritture novecentesche' (1996).⁴⁷ In it, Sanguineti looks back on the writings of the Italian twentieth-century in terms of Contini's dichotomy between Dantesque plurilingualism and Petrarchan monolingualism, concluding with his own poetry in *Laborintus*. He contrasts Contini's reading of Dantesque 'linguistic expressionism', in which modernist *poetese*, or poetic language, sought its own legitimation, with a counter-current of *mistilinguismo*, or mixed-language, that includes not only multiple poetic registers, dialects, and languages, but also a plurality of tone, form and style that results not just when naturalistic modes of speech are imitated, but when there is a 'vera rottura di sostanziale [...] uniglossia' [true rupture of substantial [...] monoglossia].⁴⁸ He makes this seemingly minor distinction in order to juxtapose the 'inert' plurilingualist poetics of Continian poets like Pascoli and Montale with the Baroque *mistilinguismo* of writers like Gadda, Lucini, and Gozzano, in a move to split twentieth-century Dantism between the Montalian lyricists and the anti-lyricists like himself. At the end of the brief presentation, in fact, he comments on his own efforts at *mistilinguismo* in the 1950s and '60s as a 'ritorno a Dante come a modello attivo e prossimo e concretamente fabbrile' [a return to Dante as an active model, who is near to us and concretely fabrile].⁴⁹ Only Dante's 'mistilinguismo primario e originario, e [...] una pratica scrittoria che mira a liquidare, senza più remore, le frontiere del poetese' [primal and original *mistilinguismo*, and [...] a writing practice that aims at liquidating, without further delay, the frontiers of *poetese*] could make 'disponibili tutti gli idiomi, le forme, gli stili' [accessible all of the idioms, forms, styles].⁵⁰

Sanguineti wanted a return to Dante as figurehead of a Babelic *mistilinguismo* that 'rispondeva a un'idea di poesia come anarchia [...] piuttosto, come rivoluzione' [responded to an idea of poetry as anarchy [...] or rather, as revolution].⁵¹ He hoped that, beneath the standard of this revolutionary Dante, 'il duemila imminente restituisca, a coloro che scrivono, che scriveranno, un qualche gusto di ribellione, e non nel linguaggio soltanto, ma nelle cose stesse' [the imminent year two thousand might restore, to those who write, who will write, a certain taste of rebellion, and not only in language, but in things themselves].⁵² As an answer to the *Dante reasonario* whom he had established academically in his criticism, Sanguineti proposed through his own poetry a return to an ideologically renewed *Dante rivoluzionario*, poet of the contemporary world. From his first studies that called for a historically informed narrative reading of the *Comedy* and his formalist critique of Benedetto Croce to his formulation of a politically reactionary and poetically revolutionary Dante, from the Dantesque poetics of chaos in *Laborintus* to the Dantesque parody in *Commedia dell'Inferno*, Sanguineti sought to establish a new Dante who could help him in his effort to 'farla finita, al possibile, per sempre, con la lirica e il lirismo' [put an end, possibly and for ever, to the lyric and lyricism].⁵³

Notes to Chapter 3

I would like to thank Professor Giuseppe Mazzotta of Yale University for his guidance and encouraging comments regarding a draft version of this essay, and Professor Sabrina Ferri of the University of Notre Dame for her insights on the culture of twentieth-century Italian poetry and on Sanguineti's often obscure critical prose. It goes without saying, however, that I am solely responsible for any shortcomings herein.

1. Edoardo Sanguineti, 'Conversando con... Edoardo Sanguineti, poeta e scrittore: "Questa Italia scoraggiata è finita nelle mani dell'uomo delle tende azzurre"', interviewed by Pietro Spataro, *Unità*, 12 April 2009, p. 21. Translations in the text are my own unless otherwise stated.
2. Sanguineti's reading of Western economic history is indebted to that of Max Weber in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
3. Edoardo Sanguineti, 'La terra è un inferno globalizzato', interviewed by Riccardo Bonavita, *Griseldaonline*, 1 (March–October 2002) <<http://www.griseldaonline.it/temi/inferni/terra-inferno-globalizzato-sanguineti.html>> [accessed 6 December 2012].
4. Croce's most important work on Dante is *La poesia di Dante* (Bari: Laterza, 1920), to which Sanguineti often refers. His primary point of reference, however, is to the more recent *Lecture dei poeti* (Bari: Laterza, 1950), in which Croce replies to his many critics. Croce's influence on Italian literary criticism and on Dante Studies in Italy was pervasive in the early twentieth century. After his death in 1952, primarily through the philological and historical exegesis of Gianfranco Gontini, Natalino Sapegno, and many other Italian philologists, including Sanguineti himself, Croce's reading of Dante's poetry was gradually replaced. Nevertheless, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the weight of his reading was still considerable in the field. Croce's influence on the interpretation of Dante's works has been extensively studied. See Massimo Verdicchio, 'Croce Reader of Dante', *Dante Studies*, 108 (1990), 97–112.
5. Most of Sanguineti's contributions to the study of Dante date from the early 1960s. In 1961 he published *Interpretazione di Malebolge* (Florence: Olschki, 1961), which he had submitted in 1956 as his thesis, and *Tre studi danteschi* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1961), which contains three essays written between 1956 and 1958. In 1965 he published an edition of the *Vita Nuova* (Milan: Lerici, 1965; repr. Milan: Garzanti, 1977) which included a substantial introduction. In 1966 he published for the 700th anniversary of Dante's birth three *lecturae* composed between 1964 and 1965, along with the 1965 essay which gave its title to the book, *Il realismo di Dante* (Florence: Sansoni, 1966; repr. 1980). All of the articles and introductions on Dante and his works were collected in 1992 in the volume *Dante reazionario* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1992), which also includes a few previously uncollected or unpublished articles, most from the 1980s, when his interest in Dante experienced a resurgence. Only two of his studies have been translated into English: 'Dante, *Inferno* XXXIII', *Lectura Dantis*, 5 (1989), 5–13, appeared as 'Count Ugolino and Others', trans. by Charles Ross, Richard Collins and Tom Harrison, in *Lectura Dantis: Inferno*, ed. by Allen Mandelbaum et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 424–31, while 'Canzone sacra e canzone profana', in *La musica nel tempo di Dante*, ed. by Luigi Pestalozza (Milan: Unicopli, 1988), pp. 206–21, appeared as 'Infernal Acoustics: Sacred Song and Earthly Song', trans. by Adriana De Marchi Gherini, *Lectura Dantis*, 6 (1990), 69–79.
6. Sanguineti was not alone in this. His understanding of the ideology of language and Dante's plurilingualism was similar to and perhaps to some extent influenced by Gianfranco Contini, though Sanguineti is much more radical. See for example Gianfranco Contini, 'Preliminari sulla lingua di Petrarca', in *Varianti e altra linguistica* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), pp. 169–92, and compare with Sanguineti's Introduction to *Francesco Petrarca* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2007), pp. iii–viii.
7. Sanguineti's criticism on medieval authors other than Dante includes work on the other two 'crowns', Petrarch and Boccaccio, and on the early Italian lyric. In *Il Chierico organico: Scritture e intellettuali*, ed. by Erminio Riso (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2000), he republished his introductions to his editions of the *Sonetti della Scuola siciliana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), of Guido Guinizzelli, *Poesie* (Milan: Mondadori, 1986), as 'Per forza di scrittura', and of Giovanni Boccaccio, *Corbaccio*

- (Milan: Motta, 1990), as 'La corte e il labirinto'. This volume also contains his reading of 'Gli "schemata" del *Decameron*', which also appeared in his *Lettura del Decameron*, ed. by Emma Grimaldi (Salerno: Edizioni 10/17, 1989), a volume of his lectures on the *Decameron* at the University of Salerno during the 1973–74 academic year. More recently Sanguineti also edited and introduced an anthology of Petrarch's works, *Francesco Petrarca*.
8. Sanguineti, *Dantè reazionario*, p. x.
 9. Italian *nuova filologia*, or 'new philology', was inaugurated in the early 1930s by Michele Barbi with his edition of the *Vita Nuova* and was directly opposed to Croce. This 'new philology' led to Gianfranco Contini's stylistic criticism and the study of authorial variants, which he began to theorize and debate in the late 1940s. By the 1950s Contini's mode of criticism had come into its own institutionally and by the 1960s it was a dominant critical approach to key issues of Dante's poetry. On Contini's response to the Crocian aesthetic model, see Manuela Marchesini, *Scrittori in funzione d'altro: Longhi, Contini, Gadda* (Modena: Mucchi, 2005), pp. 17–50.
 10. Anna Dolfi speaks of the study of twentieth-century poetic Dantism as possibly 'condizionato da uno schema incrociato, per cui il rapporto dovrà essere quanto meno non soltanto con Dante, ma col Dante di Contini o (e sarebbe il caso limite) con il solo Contini' and goes on to link the critical nexus between Contini's Dante and that of Montale and Pasolini, among others ('Dante e i poeti del Novecento', *Studi danteschi*, 58 (1986), 307–42 (pp. 309–10)). Dante's influence on twentieth-century poetry has been a subject of much critical inquiry since the 1960s. For an overview of the criticism on Dante and the *Novecento*, see Daniele Maria Pegorari's exhaustive 'Presentazione', in *Vocabolario dantesco della lirica italiana del Novecento* (Bari: Palomar, 2000). Sanguineti himself participated in these efforts with his work on Gozzano. See his 'Da D'Annunzio a Gozzano', in *Tra liberty e crepuscolarismo* (Milan: Mursia, 1961; repr. 1977), pp. 40–79 (pp. 68–69) and his 'Dante e Gozzano', in *La missione del critico* (Genoa: Marietti, 1987), pp. 82–98. Among those critics who deal directly with Sanguineti's poetic engagement with Dante, see Carlo Bo, 'Dante e la poesia contemporanea', *Terzo Programma*, 4 (1965), 192–99; Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti, *La cultura e la poesia italiana del dopoguerra* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1968), pp. 165–66; Bàrberi Squarotti, 'L'ultimo trentennio', in *Dante nella letteratura italiana del Novecento* (Rome: Bonacci, 1979), pp. 245–77; Bàrberi Squarotti, 'Elogio di Edoardo', *Satura*, 2.10 (2010), 3; Marziano Guglielminetti, 'Con Dante attraverso il Novecento', in *Petrarca fra Abelardo ed Eloisa e altri saggi di letteratura italiana* (Bari: Adriatica, 1969), pp. 291–328; Guglielminetti, 'Dante e il Novecento italiano', in 'Per correr miglior acque...': *Bilanci e prospettive degli studi danteschi alle soglie del nuovo millennio*, Atti del Convegno internazionale di Verona-Ravenna, 25–29 October 1999, 2 vols (Rome: Salerno, 2001), II, 515–31. The general consensus is that Sanguineti was more critically than poetically engaged with Dante. Recently, however, Ilaria Tufano, in 'Lezioni di Sanguineti su Dante', *Italianistica*, 1 (2003), 69–72, has called for an 'indagine globale' of Sanguineti's critical and poetic Dantism. Valeria Pilone has engaged the topic more directly and philologically in her "'Il postmoderno ha un cuore antico": Intertestualità dantesche in Edoardo Sanguineti', *L'Alighieri*, 30 (2007), 135–52. Although he does not address Sanguineti, Zygmunt Barański, 'The Power of Influence: Aspects of Dante's Presence in Twentieth-Century Italian Culture', *Strumenti Critici*, n.s. 1.3 (1986), 343–76, has offered a powerful paradigm for considering Dante as a cultural and political influence that transcends mere textual reference. For a reading of Dante's presence in *Laborintus* as broadly cultural, precisely in the terms outlined by Barański, see Lidia Bertolini, 'Memoria del viaggio dantesco agl'Inferi in Pasolini e in Sanguineti', *Letteratura italiana contemporanea*, 9.23 (1988), 241–59. Although it is not the principal topic of her study, see also Elisabetta Baccarani, *La poesia nel labirinto: Razionalismo e istanza antiletteraria nell'opera e nella cultura di Edoardo Sanguineti* (Bologna: Il mulino, 2002), for the author's many enlightening comments on Sanguineti's use of Dante from the perspective of literary history.
 11. For Eliot's reading see his 1929 essay entitled 'Dante', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber & Faber), pp. 234–77 (esp. pp. 242–48). For Pound's reading, see his 1910 essay entitled 'Dante', in *The Spirit of Romance* (New York: New Directions, 1953), pp. 118–65. Their poetic engagement with the *Comedy* was often his main point of reference, however. In *Interpretazione di Malebolge* Sanguineti notes that the *Cantos* and *The Waste Land* are often better commentaries on the *Comedy* than contemporary criticism (pp. 264–65, n. 6). See also the explicit connections he draws between Eliot's and Pound's poetic uses of Dante and the Dantesque *mistilinguismo* of the neo-avant-

- garde poetics of the 1950s and 1960s in Italy, in 'Plurilinguismo nelle scritture novecentesche', in Sanguineti, *Il Chierico organico*, pp. 282–97 (pp. 286, 294–97). Sanguineti notes the Fascist reading of Dante in Pound's *Cantos* in 'Il realismo di Dante', in *Dante reazionario*, p. 282. Another fundamental influence for the early Sanguineti, given the ubiquity of references in his thesis, was surely Leo Spitzer's *Stilkritik* as applied to the *Comedy* and his analysis of chaotic enumeration in modern poetry. Cf. Pilone, "Il postmoderno ha un cuore antico", pp. 140 and 145.
12. Sanguineti, *Interpretazione di Malebolge*, p. ix. Here Sanguineti is responding to a page in a late work by Croce that he reads as a justification of the critic's consistent reading of Dante's double character. See Croce, *Lecture di poeti*, p. 7.
 13. Sanguineti, *Interpretazione di Malebolge*, p. xi.
 14. Sanguineti, *Interpretazione di Malebolge*, p. xiii. Here Sanguineti is referring explicitly to Croce's reading in chapter 6 of *La Poesia di Dante*.
 15. Sanguineti, *Interpretazione di Malebolge*, p. xvi.
 16. Sanguineti, *Interpretazione di Malebolge*, pp. xvi–xvii.
 17. Sanguineti, *Interpretazione di Malebolge*, p. xviii.
 18. Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, p. 68. Sanguineti cites Michele Barbi, *Dante: Vita, opere e fortuna* (Florence: Sansoni, 1933), p. 98.
 19. Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, pp. 282–83.
 20. Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, p. 282.
 21. Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, p. 283.
 22. Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, p. 284.
 23. Ibid.
 24. Sanguineti published 'Dante, *Purg.* I' in 1970 in a festschrift for Giovanni Getto, but otherwise between 1967 and 1992 he only published three essays on Dante, 'Dante, *Inf.* XXXIII' (1989), 'Canzone sacra e canzone profana' (1988), and 'Figure della demonologia dantesca' (1989), collected in *Dante reazionario* along with three previously unpublished essays which Sanguineti dates to 1985 ('*Purgatorio* IV–VI' and '*Purgatorio* XV') and to 1989 ('Gli angeli della *Commedia*').
 25. Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, p. 6.
 26. Sanguineti addresses the lack of an ethical engagement in Guinizzelli's poetic project in *Il realismo di Dante*, p. 13, and in his introduction to Guinizzelli's poetry, 'Per forza di scrittura', in *Il chierico organico*, p. 42, where he claims that the angelic *sembianza* of Guinizzelli's *donna* in the conclusion to *Al cor gentil* functions as a justification of the poet's desire, not as its sublimation. Cf. Ilaria Tufano, 'Lezioni di Sanguineti su Dante', pp. 71–72.
 27. Sanguineti, Introduction to *Francesco Petrarca*, p. v.
 28. Cf. Baccarani, *La poesia nel labirinto*, pp. 187–231. Baccarani's insightful comments about the Dante–Petrarch nexus in Sanguineti's reconstruction of Italian literary history according to the demands of an anti-lyric avant-garde help to place Sanguineti's medievalist criticism within the various stages of his career as a poet. Also illuminating in this regard is Sanguineti's own introduction to the 2007 anthology of the works of Francesco Petrarca, cited above.
 29. Sanguineti never really challenges the formal foundations of Croce's 'lyrical reading'. He relies both on Croce's individuation of Dante's 'poetry' and his understanding of the poem's structure as a 'novel'. Indeed, even when he is most critical of Croce, Sanguineti appreciates the ideological engagement of Croce's reading, which suggests that he sought not to attack Croce as a reader as much as Croce as a figurehead of bourgeois aestheticism. For his thoughts on Croce vis-à-vis the weakness of contemporary readings of the poem in the initial paragraph to 'Il realismo di Dante', see Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, p. 273.
 30. Sanguineti, *Dante reazionario*, p. 283.
 31. Bàrberi Squarotti, 'Elogio di Edoardo', p. 3.
 32. Sanguineti, 'Il trattamento del materiale verbale nei testi della nuova avanguardia', in *Ideologia e linguaggio*, ed. by Erminio Rizzo (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2001), pp. 77–107 (p. 94).
 33. The concept of 'letteratura nazionale-popolare' was developed by Gramsci in his *Quaderni del Carcere*, especially notebook 17.
 34. Cf. Bertolini, 'Memoria del viaggio dantesco', p. 252, Baccarani, *La poesia nel labirinto*, pp. 126–40 and Pilone, "Il postmoderno ha un cuore antico", pp. 140–43.
 35. Sanguineti, 'Una nuova lettura di Dante', interviewed for *Scrittori per un anno*, Rai Educational,

- Italy, [n.d.] <<http://www.scrittoriperunanno.rai.it/scrittori.asp?videoId=3¤tId=4>> [accessed 6 December 2012]. In this four-minute video clip from an interview, the transcript of which is to my knowledge still unpublished, Sanguineti connects his narrative reading of the *Comedy* and his critique of Croce's lyrical reading to his earliest poetic activity.
36. Composed with Luciano Berio between 1963 and 1965, and published as *Laborintus II: Per voci, strumenti e registrazioni* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1976), it was reissued in Sanguineti, *Per musica*, ed. by Luigi Pestalozza (Modena and Milan: Mucchi-Ricordi, 1993), pp. 53–64.
 37. Cf. Vivienne Hand, 'Laborintus II: A Neo-Avant-Garde Celebration of Dante', *Italian Studies*, 53 (1998), 122–49.
 38. The composition of *Purgatorio de l'Inferno* dates to the years between 1960 and 1963, and the first poem appears in Giuliani's anthology as 'Alphabetum', but it was published as a volume only in 1964, as the third part of *Triperuno*.
 39. Giordano Bruno, *Cena delle ceneri*, in *Dialoghi italiani. I: Dialoghi metafisici*, ed. by Giovanni Aquilecchia, 3rd edn (Florence: Sansoni, 1958), pp. 3–171 (pp. 168–69).
 40. Cf. Tommaso Lisa, *Le poetiche dell'oggetto da Luciano Anceschi ai Novissimi: Linee evolutive di un'istituzione della poesia del Novecento* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2007), p. 248.
 41. See Baccarani, *La poesia nel labirinto*, pp. 212–31, for an interpretation of Sanguineti's use of Folengo and Bruno in his attack on Bembo's (and Croce's) Petrarchist literary program, and pp. 269–318, for an interpretation of the significance of his use of these two sixteenth-century writers in his titles.
 42. For his work on Gozzano, see Sanguineti, *Tra liberty e crepuscolarismo*, pp. 17–79. That Sanguineti saw the neo-avant-garde as a reformulation of Desanctian literary history, see Sanguineti, 'Per una critica dell'avanguardia poetica in Italia', in *Ideologia e linguaggio*, 115–27 (p. 116).
 43. Originally published with the Genoese editor Costa & Nolan in 1989, it was reissued in 2005 as *Commedia dell'Inferno: Un travestimento dantesco*, ed. by Niva Lorenzini (Rome: Carocci, 2005), along with Tiezzi's original introduction and an interview with Sanguineti.
 44. Enrico Baj and Edoardo Sanguineti, *Malebolge 1994/1995, o del malgoverno da Berluskaier a Berluscaos* (Castel Maggiore: Book Editore, 1995). Sanguineti's poems, 'Malebolge 1994' and 'Chaos', are on pp. 21–23 and 55–57 respectively.
 45. An example of this technique of de-familiarization, cited by Tiezzi in his introduction to Sanguineti's text, is the replacement of 'tutto' with a rhythmic pause in Francesca's famous line 'la bocca mi baciò tutto tremante' (*Inf.* V, 136). Cf. Federico Tiezzi, 'Introduzione (teatrale) a commedia (cinematografica)', in Sanguineti, *Commedia dell'Inferno*, pp. 11–22 (p. 14).
 46. Also part of the nexus of citation embodied by the play are quotations on usury from Ezra Pound's *Cantos*.
 47. Originally composed for a conference in Genoa on English literature in a comparative context, this essay was reissued in Sanguineti, *Il chierico organico*, pp. 282–97.
 48. Sanguineti, *Il chierico organico*, p. 286.
 49. Sanguineti, *Il chierico organico*, p. 296.
 50. Sanguineti, *Il chierico organico*, p. 294.
 51. Sanguineti, *Il chierico organico*, p. 297. Cf. Antonio Pietropaoli, *Unità e trinità di Edoardo Sanguineti: Poesia e poetica* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1991), pp. 62–63.
 52. Sanguineti, *Il chierico organico*, p. 297.
 53. Sanguineti, Introduction to *Francesco Petrarca*, p. viii.