



OK

Cancel

Dante in the Digital Age

Caleb Taylor, Florida State University

Dr. Elizabeth Coggeshall, Assistant Professor of Italian, Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, Florida State University



OK

Cancel

Background

Dante Alighieri, a towering figure in Italian literature and culture, holds a revered position worldwide, with his works serving as a cornerstone of artistic inspiration and scholarly inquiry. Our research, conducted through the digital archive *Dante Today*, delves into the multifaceted exploration of Dante's global reception and evolving representations across cultures and media. From his seminal work, *The Divine Comedy*, to his broader literary corpus, Dante's influence transcends geographical and temporal boundaries, resonating with audiences far beyond his Italian origins.

In this cross-cultural examination, we observe and document over 2,000 posts within the *Dante Today* archive, meticulously capturing contemporary adaptations and reinterpretations of Dante and his works. Collaboratively curated by students and faculty from Florida State University and Johns Hopkins University, *Dante Today* serves as a dynamic platform inviting submissions from contributors worldwide. Our investigation sheds light on how Dante is perceived and appropriated in diverse cultural contexts, capturing these instances without imposing analytical frameworks and allowing for a nuanced understanding of his enduring relevance in the modern world.

We carefully categorize these 'sightings,' identifying patterns and themes that emerge based on temporal, geographical, and media contexts. Despite Dante's traditional association with Italian language, literature, and culture, our observations reveals instances where he is reimagined and repurposed, becoming a symbol that transcends cultural boundaries and resonates with audiences globally. Through descriptions and a unique tagging system, each post provides insights into the intricate interplay between Dante's legacy and contemporary cultural expressions.

While our research is ongoing and our findings preliminary, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of Dante's global impact and the dynamic nature of cultural icons in an increasingly interconnected world. Explore the rich tapestry of Dante's cross-cultural adaptations, capturing the multifaceted dimensions of his enduring legacy.

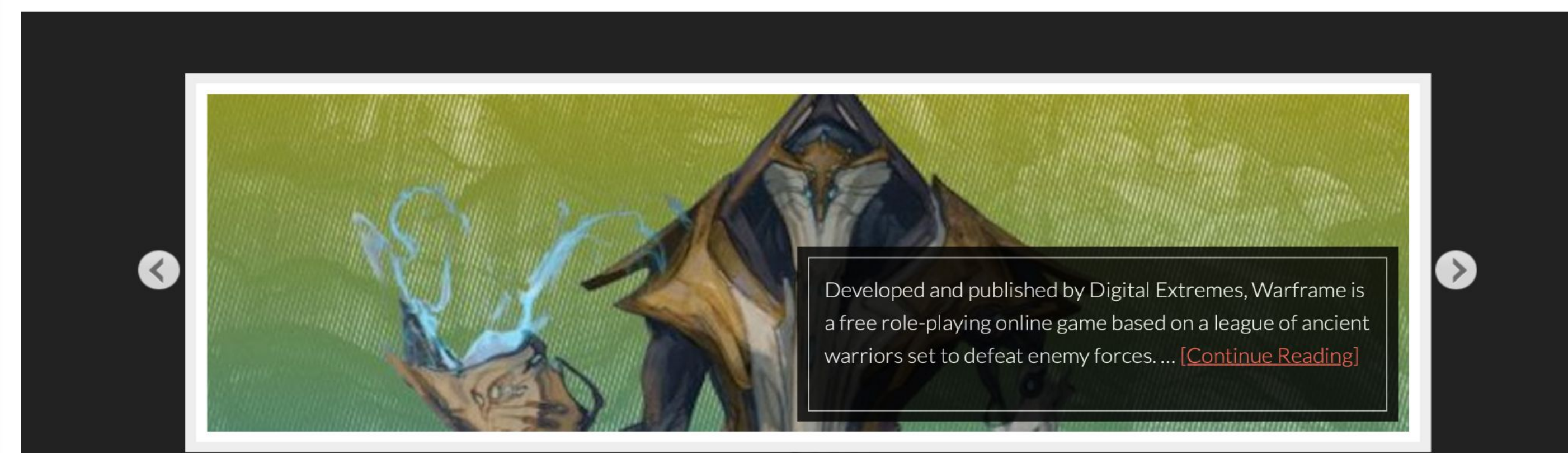
Methods

Posting on *Dante Today*

- Sightings are received via submissions and are added to an ongoing 'to post' list
- Once drafted, a post includes the following
 - Title
 - Hyperlinked image directly to source
 - Description of sighting
 - Major Category based on source media
 - Appropriate tags
- All quotes are cited as: Author, Title, [Source](#), Date (Date of retrieval). *Contributor*
- Posts in which the location is relevant might be added to the site's Google Map
- Each new post must include a 'Featured Image' (1140x340 pixels) to be showcased on the site's homepage

<https://dantetoday.krieger.jhu.edu/>

Dante Today



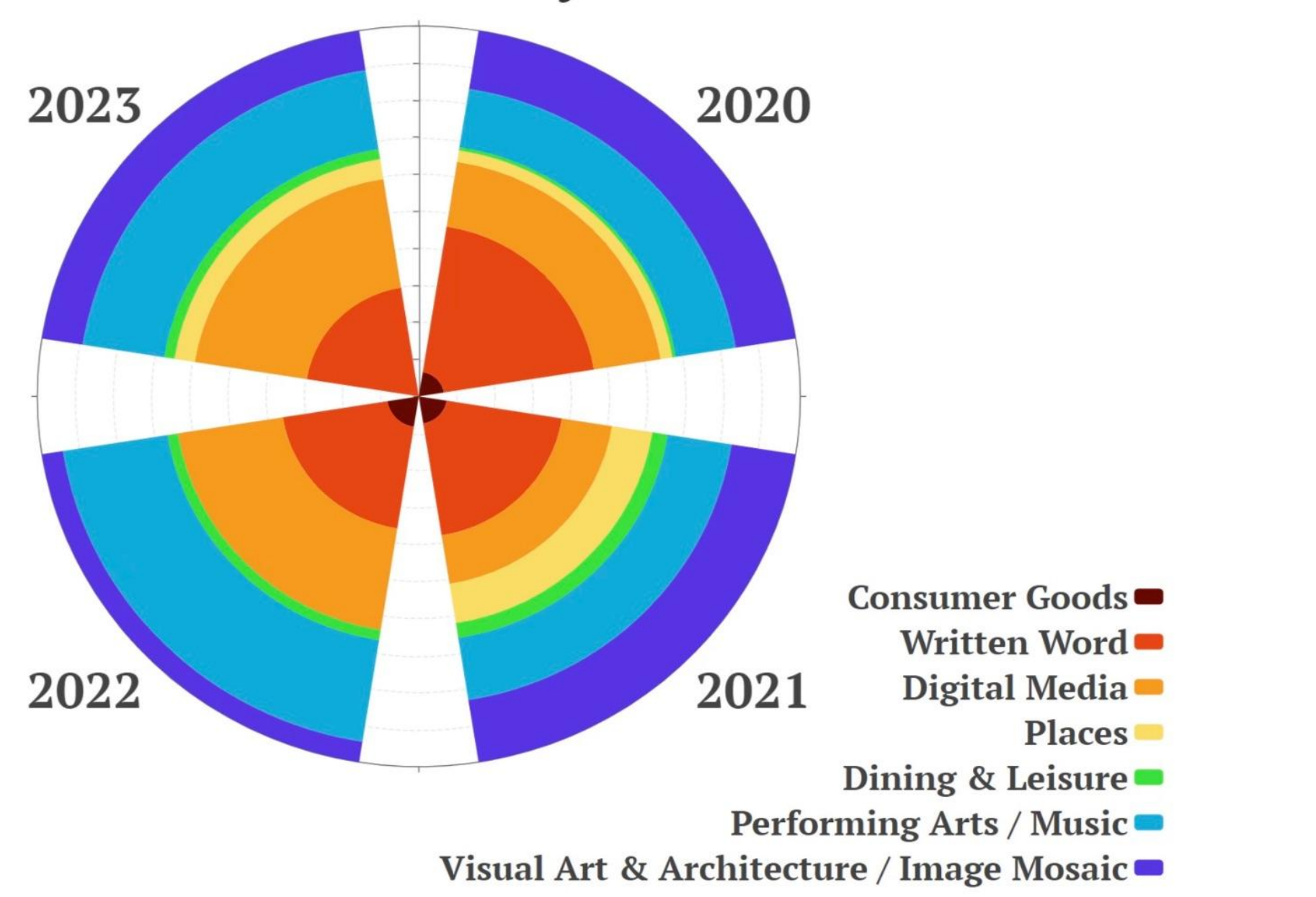
Welcome to Dante Today

STOP Abandon all hope, ye who enter here

OK

Preliminary Results

Categorical Trends on *Dante Today* Over Time - Post 2020



Discussion

The preliminary results offer insight to the evolving trends of cross-cultural adaptations and global representations of Dante and his works. These trends are visualized from 2020 to 2023, and by observing seven consistent categories: Consumer Goods, Written Word, Digital Media, Places, Dining & Leisure, Performing Arts/Music, and Visual Art & Architecture/Image Mosaic. Notably, digital media and performing arts/music exhibited a significant increase in frequency over this period.

Though the data is represented via percentages, the sheer number of posts in 2021 vastly exceeded any other year in observation due to it being the 700th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's death (September 14, 1321). This likely contributed to the increased number of sightings tagged 'Places' where many towns and regions hosted celebrations of this anniversary. Additionally, the absence of Consumer Goods in 2023 and Places in 2022 prompts further investigation into potential factors influencing these fluctuations.

Of particular interest is the surge in music-related posts, with contemporary artists like Hozier drawing explicit inspiration from Dante's *Inferno* in his recent EP and album. This phenomenon not only introduces Dante to a modern audience but also underscores the enduring relevance of his themes in current discourse. Such integration into popular culture highlights the adaptability of his works across generations and mediums.

The gradual rise in digital media and performing arts/music sightings suggests a growing popularity of internet connectedness and online activity. This shift reflects a cultural preference for digital consumption over traditional print media, as individuals unsurprisingly turn to online platforms for information and entertainment. Moreover, the significance of engaging with Dante's legacy offers a lens through which to understand today's politics, literature, and humanity across trans-regional, cultural, and linguistic boundaries.

Looking ahead, the evolution of the Dante Today archive into a more user-friendly platform promises to further amplify Dante's relevance so many years after his death. *Dante Today* serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of Dante Alighieri and the profound influence of his works on modern society.

References



Acknowledgements

My contributions to *Dante Today* would not exist without the teachings of my research mentor, Dr. Elizabeth Coggeshall. Being in her classroom and now working on the site has been central to my undergraduate experience. I would also like to thank Dr. Arielle Saiber of Johns Hopkins University for trusting me with the project and Dr. Coggeshall have spent the past 18 years growing all the way from Baltimore. Lastly, a thank you to Sofia Nuonno for being another shoulder to lean on for questions and advice.