The Dialect Poetry of Giacomo Noventa*

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Giacomo Noventa composed most of his poetry in Venetian dialect in the first decades of the twentieth century and is considered by critics a representative of the dialect poetry of the twentieth century. If his contemporaries were almost indifferent to Noventa as a poet and intellectual, even in more recent times, his poetry does not find appreciation by a vast audience and is virtually unknown to English language scholarship. Noventa deserves consideration, not only for his fine poetry and clever politico-philosophical essays, but also for his polemical stand in the debate on contemporary culture.

In this paper I shall first give a brief biographical profile of Giacomo Noventa, then focus on those poems that comment on his choice of dialetto and illustrate his poetic discourse of reaction against poesia nuova. His resolution to utilize the dialect was the conditio sine qua non for poetic creation, but his choice of the vernacular as a vehicle for traditional moral values contributed to his exclusion from the official cultural debate of his time. The dialect therefore becomes the centre of a paradox: it is the only language which Noventa considers apt to express his poetic vision, without resorting to the rhetorical tones of the fascist propaganda dominant when he was composing his poetry; but it also confines his message to a limited audience, thereby contributing to Noventa’s marginality in the twentieth-century cultural scene. With this article I intend to pay a tribute to a fine contemporary poet, who deserves better recognition in North American scholarship.

In their introduction to the anthology Le parole di legno, Mario Chiesa and Giovanni Tesio distinguish between “poesia dialettale” and “poesia in dialetto.” “Poesia dialettale” proposes folkloristic, regional or burlesque themes, whereas “poesia in dialetto” belongs to a high and illustrious literary genre in which the dialect is used as a form of poetic language. According to Chiesa and Tesio: “Nel Novecento si potrà parlare solo [...] di poesia in dialetto. Volendo significare con ciò che si tratta di una poesia che, nella ricerca di un linguaggio, lo trova nel dialetto” (12). In Giacomo Noventa, as in most dialettali of the twentieth century, dialect poetry is essentially “poesia in dialetto” because dialect to him is primarily a poetic language and his work is never folkloristic or burlesque. He operates a series of modifications to the existing Venetian dia-
lect which make it his own personal language. Noventa's work is not all in dialect: a few of his verses and all his essays were written in Italian. The exclusive use of the vernacular for his poetic corpus deserves special consideration, the poet himself discusses the problem of dialect and poetry in some meta-linguistic poems. Noventa's conversion to the dialect is a direct consequence of his biographical, poetical, and politico-philosophical motivations.

Biographical elements played a significant role on Noventa's poetic agenda. Giacomo Ca' Zorzi was born in 1898 to a rich patrician family in Noventa di Piave, a small village north of Venice. The choice of the toponym Noventa for his nom de plume reveals his deep attachment to his land of origin and its vernacular. Ca' Zorzi's life was marked by a series of peculiar political and literary experiences caused by his rebellious and unconventional spirit. His aristocratic and Catholic upbringing was coupled with a broad cultural background and an exceptional openness to other European literatures. His extensive travel around Europe enabled him to depart from fascist Italy where, on various occasions, he was detained and arrested for not conforming to the regime. Noventa graduated in philosophy from the university of Turin in 1923 with a dissertation that strongly criticized the fascist form of government. The years spent in Turin were fundamental for the development of his literary friendship with Giacomo DeBenedetti and Mario Soldati; he was also in touch with the most authoritative voices of contemporary culture: he frequented the group of Piero Gobetti, he met Eugenio Montale and Umberto Saba. Despite his acquaintance and dialogue with the poeti nuovi, Noventa played a marginal role on the poetry of the twentieth century and was ignored or criticized for the regressiveness and "inattualità" of his poetry and thought. Mengaldo, who includes him in his anthology, underscores the image of Noventa as an isolated figure, whose ideas are at variance with the main twentieth-century poetic tendencies. Noventa seems destined to remain on the fringe because of his unconventional and controversial approach towards official culture. Although his critical and reformist views targeted the intellectuals of his time, his verses are not easily situated in the contemporary literary scene. In his "Prefazione" to Versi e poesie, Manfriani notes that Noventa has no place in a specific literary group, and that he has been marginalised by critics who mistook the moral and civil commitment of his verses for reactionism. In times of ideology crisis, Manfriani sees an opportunity to re-evaluate Noventa's poetry and philosophical thought as an important contribution to recent cultural history (xiii-xiv). For Manfriani, Noventa was ahead of his times, and his insights and philosophical complexity urged him to take a contrasting position towards the idealistic philosophical tradition. Croce's idealism was still a strong influence for the poesia nuova of the twentieth century and this, according to Noventa, was the weakness of modern culture. According to Manfriani's paraphrase, Noventa aspired to be the critical conscience of Italian culture, and his desire for reform was expressed not only in his poetic activity (that dated mostly from the
1930's), but also in his philosophical works, which developed more fully his reformist ideas on Italian modern culture. His theoretical essays appeared in La riforma letteraria, the journal that he co-founded in Florence with Alberto Carocci in 1936. The final version of his essays was published only in 1960 (the year of his death) in a book entitled Nulla di nuovo. According to Noventa any revision of Italian cultural thought must reject the idealistic philosophy, which was still influential on poets like Montale, Ungaretti, Saba, and the Ermetici. Noventa, who believed in Catholic reform, was convinced that the main fault of modern thought lay in the excessive subjectivism of the idealistic philosophy. Noventa's revival of a highly original and personal form of Catholicism was closely linked with his aversion to De Sanctis's and Croce's criticism. Ca' Zorzi thought that European culture was fundamentally unitarian and that it derived from Medieval Catholic universalism, as shown in Dante. A reform of Italian and European culture would be possible only when the mistakes of the Protestant religion, and of idealism as its latest derivation, were corrected and Catholic universalism could be embraced again. To the idealistic subjectivism of modern poetry, Noventa opposed a revival of universal and objective moral values.

Most of Noventa's poetry was published in a complete form only in 1956, even though it belongs to his earlier years, whereas his philosophical essays were written in his mature years. Noventa's participation in political life covers the years from 1940 to 1954. In politics, as in poetry, Noventa assumed a position of extreme independence. After the war he was close to the Partito Liberale and he founded a newspaper (La gazzetta del Nord, 1946-47), in which he defined himself as a "cattolico liberale." In 1947, however, he contributed in Turin to the Socialist journals Mondo Nuovo and L'Italia socialista. As electoral candidate for the party Unità popolare, he proposed political ideas which attempted to reconcile socialism, liberalism and patriotism. Since his ideas did not find any support, Noventa decided to give up active political participation in 1954. Noventa was awarded the Premio Viareggio for poetry in 1956 and died in 1960.

Ca' Zorzi composed most of his poetry during the fascist period. His decision to use the dialect, a language different from that of the official culture, derived from his strong belief that the poetic language commonly used by his contemporaries was tainted from a literary and ideological point of view. Writing in Italian at that time, meant using the high-sounding language of the regime, which had turned ideals into something false and corrupt. The other available alternative was the enigmatic language of Ermetismo, but Noventa did not subscribe to it. Instead, he proceeded to invent his own poetic medium: Venessian. Noventa's vernacular was the most suitable expressive tool to safeguard poetry from any possible complicity with the cultural establishment, and, at the same time, it was distinct from Ermetismo. Noventa, who was close to the tradition of the European Romantics (Goethe and Heine in particular),
strove to produce poetry still capable of affirming authentic values, as simple, and yet symbolically charged as the taste of bread and the light of the sky ("El saor del pan, e la luse del ciel" [Opere 1.44]); but he did not want his message to be mistaken for propaganda. His polemic stand against contemporary poets Montale, Ungaretti and Saba (unified under the name “trio”) originated from their acceptance of the failure of modern poetry: the modern poet could not bring positive beliefs any more, he could only state the limits of poetry and define himself by negation. Montale in Ossi di seppia stated that poets offered just “qualche storta sillaba e secca come un ramo;” their verses were not meant to express the traditional values of the great poetry of all times, such as love, honour and friendship; modern poets were confined to the realm of subjectivism and disavowal: “codesto solo oggi possiamo dirti, / ciò che non siamo, ciò che non vogliamo” (“Non chiederci la parola,” Tutte le poesie 29).

Noventa was in search of an alternative to the language and themes of modern and hermetic poetry and he found it in the dialect. Fortini noted his peculiar use of dialect: “Per Noventa il dialetto è [...] un modo di tenere a distanza l’impossibile lingua della tradizione nazionale” (74). Ca Zorzi’s dialect however, was neither the vernacular of his native village Noventa di Piave, nor the dialect spoken in the Venice region; it was the result of a personal manipulation of the existing dialect. As Brevini puts it:

Il dialetto che egli [Noventa] usa è una parlata diversa dalla koine veneziana di ascendenza goldoniana, sia dal patois veneto di terraferma. È invece il veneziano fortemente italianoizzato parlato dalla alta borghesia dell’entroterra veneto con casa a Venezia, ‘in canale’ come si dice: un linguaggio di nobilissima tradizione, che Noventa contrappone ad un italiano, che gli appare insieme lingua del fascismo e dell’ermetismo. (159)

In his collection Versi e poesie Noventa devotes some poems to the issue of his poetic language:

Mi me son fato ’na lengua mia  
Del venezian, de l’italian:  
Gà stì diritti la poesia,  
Che vien da lioghi che regna Pan. (65)

Noventa’s language is a modification of both the Venetian and the Italian language, it is a poetic necessity whose right is guaranteed by the tradition of the mythical places where poetry was first practised. According to Manfriani, Noventa’s decision to create his own language, different from the existing dialects of Veneto, serves two purposes: “maggior libertà linguistica e sintattica rispetto alle regole di un linguaggio corrente; sfuggire alla aborrita e contestata classificazione di ‘poeta dialettale’” (xxi). To justify his poetic choice Noventa composed one poem:
Parché scrivo in dialeto...?
Dante, Petrarca e quel dai Diese Giorni
Gà pur scritto in toscan.
Seguo l’esempio. (84)

Noventa accepted to call his expressive medium dialect only in so far as it retained the dignity of the official language. His poetry should not be confused with the poesia dialettale which critics, at that time, confined to the limited perspective of regionalism, and simplistically dismissed as expression of minor, burlesque themes. This poem is a vindication of the creative rights of poets. Following the example of Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio does not mean using the dialect, but creating one’s own language as those great poets did; the emphasis is all on the creative privilege granted to the poets.¹⁵

Noventa’s opposition to the culture of his time entailed both linguistic-stylistic and thematic difference. The dialect, a personal and new language, was suitable to talk about those values which contemporary poetry had either distorted in political propaganda or repudiated. Universal ideals, if proposed by poeti in lingua sounded more and more like empty rhetoric or “splendide pompe:” it was necessary to use the “Venessian,” a language which still preserved innocence and authenticity, and still enabled the poet to express real sentiments.

Nei momenti che ’l cuor me se rompe
Mi no’ canto che in Venessian
De una lengua le “splendide pompe”
Lasso a chi fa mestier d’italian
No’ gh’è lengua che valga el dialeto
Che una mare nascendo ne insegna
Ah! l’artista xé ben povareto
Che a le prime parole no’ impegna
Le so più vere canzon.¹⁶ (Poesie inedite. Opere 1.139.)

For Noventa the dialect preserved the simplicity and purity of the maternal Ursprache, where the emphatic tones of the aulic language of Fascism were replaced by the confidentiality of oral tradition and proverbial wisdom.

Noventa’s dispute with the intellectuals of his time is well illustrated in his poem “Fusse un poeta,” where he takes a controversial position towards the Ermetici.

Fusse un poeta...
Ermetico,
Parlarla de l’Eterno:
De la coscienza in mi,
De le stele su mi,
E del mar che voleva e no’ voleva
(Ah, canagia d’un mar!)
Darme le so parole.
Ma son . . .
(Parché no’ dirlo?)
Son un poeta.\(^{17}\) (\textit{Opere} 1.48)

For Debenedetti this poem satirizes the all-encompassing function that the Ermetici assign to poetry, their idea of poetry as a supreme and absolute value, bearer of metaphysical truth. Noventa objects to modern poets who entrust poetry with philosophical tasks, such as the explanation of “Eterno” or philosophy.\(^{18}\) If poetry were limited to simple human sentiments such as love and friendship, it would still be able to offer some alternatives, albeit less ambitious. Debenedetti recognizes in “Fusse un poeta” precise references to Montale’s \textit{Ossi di seppia}. Manfriani, too, thinks that Montale was the primary target of Noventa’s attacks against contemporary culture. Manfriani recognizes Montale’s strong influence on the Venetian poet and defines his ambivalent relationship towards Montale as:

Una sorta di sofferta, contrastata, forse inconscia, eppur presente “predilezione” per Montale, [...] una “delusione d’amore”, [...] irritazione quasi per quello che Montale, solo fra i poeti della sua età, potrebbe essere e non vuol essere. (xxxvii)

Noventa appreciated Montale’s effort to acknowledge the limits of modern poetry, and in his theoretical works he praised \textit{Ossi di seppia}, where Montale revealed his poetic impotence.\(^{19}\) Noventa could not conceal his disappointment at seeing Montale’s good energies diverted to the wrong purposes: the poet of \textit{Ossi} was incapable of distancing himself from a cultural thought (Croce’s idealism) that led him to affirm poetic aphasia, the inability to speak and express himself.\(^{20}\) Noventa considered Montale his most direct opponent because he came closer to the truth and was the most dispassionate observer of the truth.

The dialect for Noventa served two purposes: stylistically, it was a medium of protest against the official culture that used Italian; thematically, it allowed for a commitment to universal values that a poet like Montale was forced to reject. Noventa’s alternative was not, like Montale’s, one of silence and denial, but rather an affirmative statement of classical ideals such as love, friendship, honour, which in the Italian language had lost their authenticity and real meaning after being appropriated by fascist rhetoric. Noventa, who still believed in the importance of traditional values, created a new linguistic medium to be able to express them. To avoid the easy label of “poeta dialettale” Noventa needed to distinguish his dialect from the existing \textit{patois} of the Venice area; this is why he reinvented the vernacular, refining and enriching it with high literary echoes.\(^{21}\)
Noventa’s conversion to dialect was determined by the desire to use a simple, non-contaminated language still capable of proposing a message that could appeal to a new society of simple people.

Uno qualunque me pare de esser,
Parlo co’ tutti.
Füsselo questo un indizio vero?
Füssela questa la me ambizion?
Picolo farme co’ tutti i picoli,
E morir de passion . . . (Opere 1.66)²²

The Venessian is for Noventa the result of unitarian knowledge, it presupposes the choral participation of every person in the cultural practice. In Noventa’s vernacular society, the recipients of his poetic message, both higher and lower social classes, should ideally come together and find unity in the use of the same dialect. Gioanola, referring to Noventa’s intellectualistic use of the dialect, talks about “progetto romantico di poesia alta e popolare al tempo stesso, contro la cultura borghese” (571). In his poetry Noventa identifies the role of the poet as someone who can indicate the path to a new form of commitment. Noventa has faith in a future for poetry and, despite his awareness of the critical time that modern poets are experiencing, he is confident of the possibility to restore poetry to its original role.

El poeta prepara una fiama,
Pian pianin . . . e el va via pian pianin,
Sue no’ xé che le prime falive,
E la fiama lo spaventarà. (Opere 1.39)

This epigram appears in four different formats, and the revision of the final line indicates the progressive movement towards the poet’s new confidence. The first two versions describe the poet as uncertain, scared away by the flame and forced to keep his message concealed (in the second version the final line is “El [il poeta] va via . . . e nissun savarà”). In the third version the poet suggests the possibility of returning to the themes of the great poetry of all time (“E po’ forse l’amor vignarà”). The fourth and definitive ending distinctively abandons the realm of suspension and uncertainty produced by “forse” and by the ellipsis, and defines the poet’s hierarchy of values: religion and heroism respectively are at the summit (“E po’ i santi e l’eroe vignarà”). Noventa did not expect his verses to serve as supreme value, like contemporary modern poets:

Dove i me versi me portaría,
Acarezandoli come voialtri,
No’ so fradeli.
Tocadi i limiti del me valor,
Forse mi stesso me inganaria,
Credèria sacra l’arte, e la gloria,
Più che l’onor. (Opere 1.37)

The word “voialtri” refers to those modern poets who consider poetic achieve-
ment more important than honour, but to Noventa this is deception. Poetry
should limit its scope to more modest objectives and leave space for a higher
quest:

No’ tuto quello che penso e vedo
Vol i me versi spiegar e dir. . .
Ma la parola che pur me resta
Xé sugerirve: perché più in là:
El Pié-de càvara, in vogia o in festa,
Oltre i so limiti no’ ‘l xé rivà. (Opere 1.65)

Poetry and philosophy should not be confused with one another, they should
retain their specific tasks. Significantly the choice of dialect was limited to his
poetry, to the realm of feelings and traditional values of his cultural roots; for
his theoretical essays Noventa used the Italian language.

Singing love and honour as poetic values, when others were hardly uttering
“qualche storta sillaba,” highlights the “inattualità” of Noventa’s poetry. Debe-
nedetti and Manfriani, however, have underscored the role of Ca’ Zorzi as an
intellectual who was fully active in the culture of his time. His critique of mod-
ern poetry reveals a desire to engage in a dialogue with contemporary culture
and yet his dispute with the Ermetici and Montale fell on deaf ears. Noventa’s
primary target, Montale, who was receptive to other dialect poets of the twen-
tieth century, never entered in a debate with Noventa. Noventa’s failure to
establish a contact with the intellectuals of his time may well be attributable to
the “inattualità” of his message, or in Manfriani’s terms, to the fact that he was
ahead of his time. In fact, Noventa was advocating the rejection of idealistic
subjectivism at a time when such a move was still inconceivable. However, we
should also consider the impact which the choice of dialect must have had on
his chances to appeal to a vast audience. Noventa’s linguistic conversion to the
Venessian made his poetry as exclusive as that of the Ermetici, who were
among his main polemical targets. Chiesa and Tesio state:

Nonostante la sua polemica con gli altri ermetici, [Noventa] moveva dalle loro stesse
esigenze: la ricerca di un linguaggio lontano da quello retorico e banale [...] della
cultura ufficiale; con un di più in lui di aperta polemica politica. (12)

In his essay on dialect poetry Montale made a significant remark regarding
the poesia ermetica: “Che hanno fatto i poeti italiani impropriamente detti
eretici – da Ungaretti in poi – se non ricavare una loro lingua, e quasi un loro dialetto, dal linguaggio aulico della poesia corrente?” (“La musa dialettale” 175). Here Montale states that the creation of a personal, exclusive linguistic medium is tantamount to the use of dialect. This formula (hermetic, exclusive language=dialect), if applied to Noventa’s language, leads to the conclusion that his dialect acts as a form of Ermetismo, as a private and exclusive code, which was not the one accepted by his contemporaries. Noventa intended his Venessian as a lingua franca, free from rhetorical tones and hermetic obscurity, suitable to express ideals abandoned by modern poetry. Instead, his verses were destined to marginality and oblivion. There is almost a paradox in Noventa’s poetry: the dialect, a kind of language by definition peripheral for a minority, was entrusted with a message intended to revive universal values that other poets were forced to reject. Noventa’s attempt to stir the contemporary cultural scene and to engage in a dialogue with the intellectuals of his time was impeded, not only by his traditional ideas, but also by the linguistic choice of the dialect, which limited the scope and the operational impact of his message.

In time of ideological revision, now that we can take an objective and more critical look at the heritage of idealistic philosophy, it is possible to better recognize the role of Noventa as poet and intellectual. It is time to free his ideas from the accusation of reactionism, and to give recognition to his verses, as an important contribution to twentieth-century poetry.

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NOTES

* My thanks to Professor Pier Massimo Forni for introducing me to the poetry of Giacomo Noventa. A modified version of this paper was presented at the AAIS convention in 1995.
1 The first contribution to dialect poetry in the twentieth century is the anthology edited by Pasolini in 1952. In more recent years some dialect poets appear in collections of modern Italian literature, such as Ravegnani and Rosa; Fortini; and Mengaldo. These anthologies include poetry by Virgilio Giotti, Biagio Marin, Giacomo Noventa, Delio Tessa. Also Gioanola includes some dialect poets in his anthology of Italian poetry of the twentieth century. Exclusively devoted to dialect poetry are the collections of Chiesa and Tesio; and Brevini. These last two anthologies include a bibliography on dialect literature and bibliographical notes on each poet. In North America Haller introduces for the first time to the English-speaking public Italian dialect poetry organized by geographical region and with an English translation.
2 To my knowledge only one article by Fido in the English journal The Italianist has devoted some space to Giacomo Noventa. Fido identifies a linea veneta of twentieth century poet in dialetto, which includes two other fine poets: Biagio Marin and Virgilio Giotti. Pier Massimo Forni kindly made available to me the manuscript of his article “El saor del pan...” of imminent publication in a volume of studies in honour of Dante Della Terza.
3 Noventa also composed a remarkable amount of critical work that Manusfrani has collected in the five volumes of Opere complete. Volume 1 contains Versi e poesie, Volume 2 “Nulla di nuovo” e altri scritti. 1934-1939, Volume 3 “Il grande amore” e altri scritti. 1939-1948, Volume 4 “Dio è con noi” e altri scritti. 1947-1960, Volume 5 “Il Castogallo” e altri scritti. 1922-1959. All quotations of Noventa’s texts are from this edition of Opere complete.
The issue was first raised by Pancrazi in an article about Virgilio Giotti, whose dialect poetry is considered an \textit{écriture artiste} rather than a popular language; it therefore deserves to be distinguished from \textit{poesia dialettale}. On this topic and on the debate about dialect literature see Bonora.

Noventa admired European literature, among his favourites were Goethe, Hölderlin, Heine, Ronsard, Lope de Vega, Machado. His predilection for the German language culminates in the composition of verses in German (“Es war einmal . . .” \textit{Opere} 1.133).

Noventa’s dissertation \textit{Ricerche sulla forma migliore di governo} was a critique of the fascist government in law and philosophy. The thesis appears for the first time in vol. 5 of \textit{Opere} (5-27).

Pampaloni was the first to call Noventa’s thought on poetry “inattuale” (3770). Pozzi considers Noventa’s choice of the Venetian dialect a return to a nostalgic and regressive past, and his poetic message of moral and universal values anachronistic (350; 352).

In the biographical note to Noventa’s verses, Mengaldo states: “Per la posizione letteraria e ideologica non solo isolata ma controcorrente del suo autore, la poesia di Noventa non ha trovato grazia presso la critica ufficiale più legata alla ‘lirica nuova’ […] scarsa anche l’udienza presso la migliore lirica successiva” (632).

“Noesia” or “lirica nuova” is intended in the terms posed by Luciano Anceschi in his anthology \textit{Lirici Nuovi}, which includes the lyric production (from 1925 to 1942) of those authors which reflected a new tendency in contemporary poetry, such as Ungaretti, Saba, Montale, Quasimodo, Bertolucci, Gatto, Luzi, Penna, Sereni.

“Principio di una scienza nuova,” “Manifesti del classicismo” and “I calzoni di Beethoven” are the three theoretical works that mark the essential development of Noventa’s thought. \textit{La riforma letteraria} was published until 1939 and was the centre of circulation of new ideas in strong opposition with the other Florentine periodicals of the time. Among its collaborators were Franco Fortini, Geno Pampaloni, Giorgio Spini, Valentino Bucchi.

\textit{Nulla di nuovo} includes “Principio di una scienza nuova” and “Manifesti del classicismo;” it was first published by \textit{Il Saggiatore} in Milan in 1960.

Manfriani illustrates Noventa’s philosophical ideas of reform in the lengthy “Prefazione” to the second volume of \textit{Opere} (ix-cxxi). This volume is devoted primarily to \textit{Nulla di nuovo}. The reform of contemporary Italian culture entails a rejection of Protestantism and idealism, and a return to Catholicism. Noventa’s Catholicism does not include any form of relation with the Church.

Noventa himself prepared his biographical profile for Pasolini’s anthology of \textit{Poesia dialettale del Novecento} and defined himself “rivoluzionario liberale, cattolico, socialista mili-tante” (384).

Noventa was also founder of \textit{Il Socialismo moderno} and \textit{Il Giornale dei Socialisti}, periodicals of cultural and political thought which did not belong to any official party and had a very limited and exclusive circulation.

Mentioning the three most important representatives of the Italian literary tradition Noventa indicates the stature he attributes to his poetry. He preferred Dante for his political commitment and for his strong Catholic faith.

The original text of these verses exhibits this omission of punctuation.

Debenedetti (204-5) finds in “Fusse un poeta” precise references to Montale’s poems “Mediterraneo” and “Esterina” of \textit{Ossi di seppia}.

In lines 4-5 Debenedetti identifies references to Immanuel Kant’s \textit{Critique of Practical Reason}, and precisely to the most famous sentences of the final chapter. Hermetic poets were not interested in Kant’s philosophy, so in this context Kant is a metaphor for the complexity of philosophy; of Kant Noventa quotes the most famous sentences, the ones everybody knows, thereby mocking the Ermetici’s philosophical pretences and pointing at the weakness of their theoretical ideas \textit{vis à vis} the thought of the greatest modern philosopher.

In his essay \textit{Principio di una scienza nuova} (\textit{Opere} 2.63-278) Noventa states that Montale’s best verses are “quelli in cui egli parla della poesia che muore e che è morta per lui” (91).
WORKS CITED


