

The work of Paul Celan (1920-1970), a survivor of the Holocaust, seems to be closed in on itself and yet in constant search of dialogue. His poetry, despite its dramatic hermeticism and the enormous problems and dilemmas (both ethical and aesthetic) with its interpretation and reading, has been translated into more than twenty languages. Celan himself has been recognized by countless poets and artists as a revolutionary figure for their own work and for the canons of 20<sup>th</sup> Century literature. In the context of the reception of his body of work, Italy seems to be the country with the greatest significance. The translations of Celan's poetry were a great publishing success, going far beyond the academic sphere of Germanists; they have also gained the interest of essayists, philosophers, historians, translation theorists, comparatists and critics of Italian literature, ordinary readers and artists, among whom poets should be mentioned above all.

For Celan, poetry can be compared to a handshake, to a message in a bottle; it was born out of the lasting trauma of the persecution of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany. At the same time, it is a poetry that sought a dialogue - as painful as it was necessary - with the dead, as well as with the present, with the fate of culture and humanity after the atrocities of the Nazi era. It is, therefore, an artistic work that poses radical questions to the reader, a work which creates new tensions on the line between ethics and aesthetics, between lyrical expression and historical testimony. Any real reading experience compels the reader to answer the questions posed in the text (or some of the questions). In the case of poets reading another poet, their response has particular aesthetic and historical significance. It is infused with their intellectual and creative difference, it leaves visible traces in their own work, confirming that literature is always a dialogue (between statements, texts, traditions, authors, etc.). Therefore, the theme of this project is the reception and adoption of Celan's "encounter meridian" (Roszak) by Italian poets over the last 70 years. The most important Italian poets born between 1910 and 1980, at different times and often from different perspectives, starting from the second half of the 20th Century, have approached his poetry, considering this meeting as a key stage and influence in their own artistic and human experience. The aim of the project is to reconstruct the history of this reception, highlighting the different forms of adoption, quotation, derivative use of the works of the German-speaking writer, dialogue with him and references to him which we can note in Italian poets of several generations.

The specificity of the Italian literary tradition, from Petrarca to Ungaretti, lies in the central role of lyric poetry, even after all its evolutions and transformations. Poetry in the Italian tradition dominates over other literary genres as the most authentic and most complete form of literary experience, both in its reception by literary critics and in the expectations of the average reader. It is true that there is no other European literature that over the centuries has manifested such a strong commitment to the primacy of lyrical discourse over other literary genres (especially the novel), both at the level of linguistic choices and of aesthetic and formal choices. It is this peculiarity in the history of Italian literature which constitutes a very strong feature (almost an identity element) and makes it one of the most active centres for the creation and dissemination of poetry, not only on a national scale, but also as a great genre and heritage in European poetry as a whole. It is no coincidence that lyricism is precisely the key issue which we find at the centre of the dialogue of numerous Italian poets who, from the 1950s onwards, felt both attracted and anxious when confronted with Celan's poetry. We will observe how revolving around Celan and his radical transformation of the lyrical genre, conceived from the experience of the Holocaust, Italian poets will mature to revise the roots of their own tradition, and feel the need to radically transform the genre. We will see how, in the classic opposition typical of the Italian poetic tradition, attributed to the existence of two opposing poles - the lyric poet and the experimental poet - Celan's reception opens new unheard-of possibilities rejecting both pure poetry and purely formal experimentalism in order to authoritatively promote a new alliance between ethics and aesthetics, and between poetry and tragedy, aimed at bearing witness to the dignity of human life against the dread caused by the brutality of history.

This project stems from the conviction of the dialogical nature of culture and literature. Thus, in the dialogue between poets and in the relationship between poetics, we will discover the true core - theoretical and practical - to grasp the way in which poetry functions, as well as the process of its development, consolidation and transformation. In studying the reception of Celan's work by Italian poets, we will seek to promote the need for an aesthetic and ethical reflection that stems from integrating the point of view of comparative literary studies with that of the national literary studies of the different countries. Finally, we aim to reveal (and discuss) the specificity of Celan's reception in Italian poetry (to the point of making him almost an "Italian classic") and the enormous potential of his poetic and human message, which, thanks to his ability to transcend languages and cultures, confirms this poet as an international literary classic.