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# POÉTICAS

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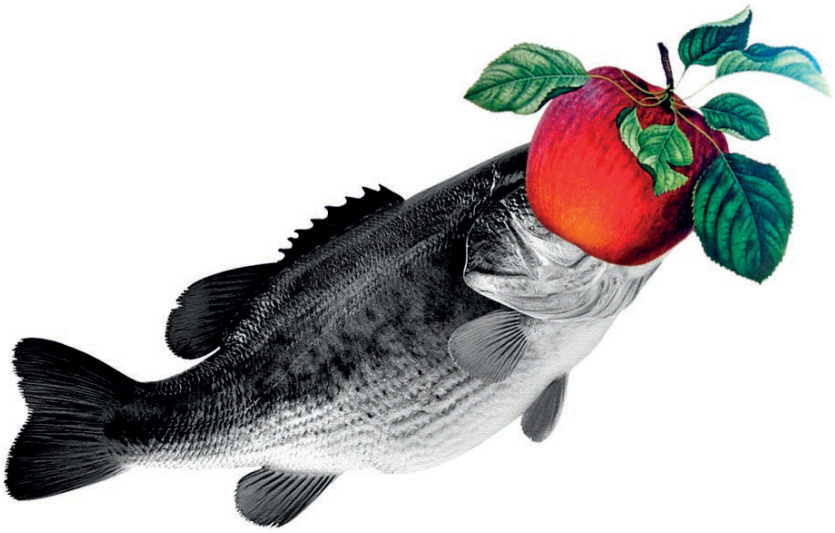

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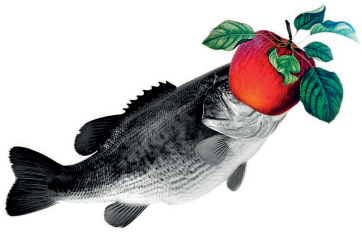
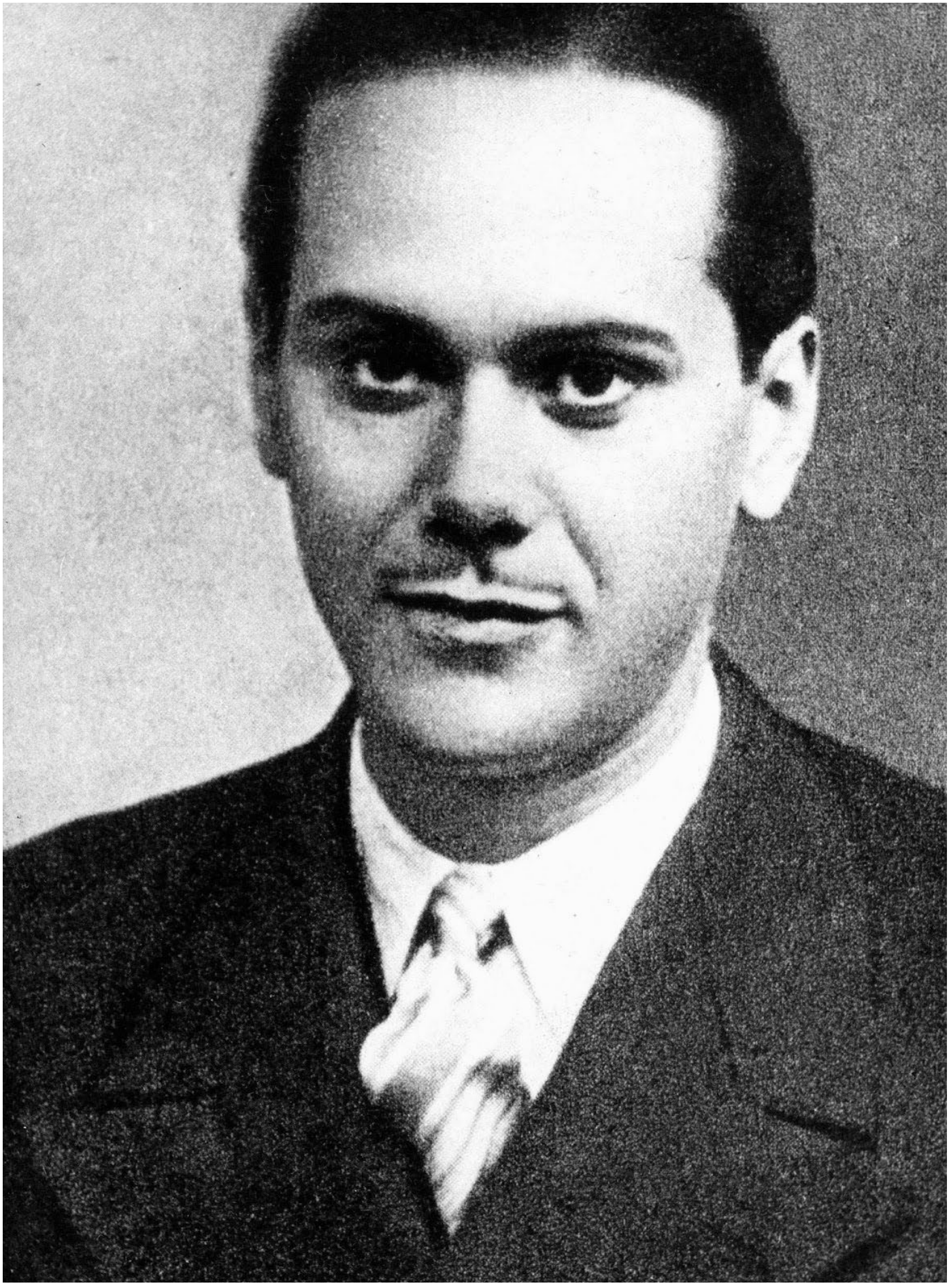


## ÍNDICE

*Págs.*

# [ESTUDIOS]



Luis Cernuda.

# "RECUÉRDALO TÚ Y RECUÉRDALO A OTROS": HISTORICAL MEMORY AND POETIC HISTORY IN LUIS CERNUDA'S '1936'

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS { Spanish Civil War, Republican Exile, Historical Memory, Lyric }

Luis Cernuda's "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" has become a frequent reference in the debates over historical memory of the Spanish Civil War that have taken place in Spain at least since 2004. Readers tend to treat this poetic line as an authoritative exhortation, and in repeating it, they seem to remember Cernuda and remember Cernuda to others, carrying out the act of remembrance that it demands. This essay explores the value of this act of remembrance. Among the questions this essay asks are: What function do the memorial strategies unique to lyric utterance fulfill in shaping collective memory? What social purposes do poetic testimonies serve in a historical period marked by memory and commemoration?

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The verse "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" is arguably a felicitous utterance. It seems to have accomplished what Luis Cernuda envisioned when he wrote it between December 1961 and

April 1962 as the opening line of the poem "1936".[1] The poem was published in *Desolación de la quimera* (1962), Cernuda's last book before his death in Mexico City in 1963, twenty-five years after he left Spain as a consequence of the Spanish Civil War (*Obra I* 544).

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1. "Remember him and remember him to others", Stephen Kessler's translation, is less ambiguous than the original Spanish line. The complete poem follows:

Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros,
Cuando asqueados de la bajeza humana,
Cuando iracundos de la dureza humana:
Este hombre solo, este acto solo, esta fe sola.
Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros.

En 1961 y en ciudad extraña,
Más de un cuarto de siglo
Después. Trivial la circunstancia,
Forzado tú a pública lectura,
Por ella con aquel hombre conversaste:
Un antiguo soldado
En la Brigada Lincoln.

Veinticinco años hace, este hombre,
Sin conocer tu tierra, para él lejana
Y extraña toda, escogió ir a ella
Y en ella, si la ocasión llegaba, decidió apostar su vida,
Juzgando que la causa allá puesta al tablero
Entonces, digna era
De luchar por la fe que su vida llenaba.
Que aquella causa aparezca perdida,
Nada importa;
Que tantos otros, pretendiendo fe en ella
Sólo atendieran a ellos mismos,
Importa menos.
Lo que importa y nos basta es la fe de uno.
Por eso otra vez hoy la causa te aparece
Como en aquellos días:
Noble y tan digna de luchar por ella.
Y su fe, la fe aquella, él la ha mantenido
A través de los años la derrota,

Cuando todo parece traicionarla.
Mas esa fe, te dices, es lo que sólo importa.
Gracias, Compañero, gracias
Por el ejemplo. Gracias porque me dices
Que el hombre es noble.
Nada importa que tan pocos lo sean:
Uno, uno tan sólo basta
Como testigo irrefutable
De toda la nobleza humana. (*Obra I* 544-45)

More than fifty years after its initial publication, Spanish readers continue to repeat this line as an authoritative exhortation. In doing so, they remember Cernuda and remember Cernuda to others, carrying out what the line demands over and over again.

But is this all that "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" demands? Apart from its author, whom or what does Cernuda's line ask the reader to remember? 1936 was, of course, the year that a military uprising challenged the legitimate Spanish Republican government, resulting in the Civil War. Cernuda's poem evokes a meeting some twenty-five years later in Los Angeles, California. The other party to that meeting is an "antiguo soldado", an anonymous former member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, the group of international volunteers who went to Spain in 1937 to fight General Francisco Franco's rebel forces.

The soldier is referred to as an "hombre" three times in "1936". This man chose to "apostar su vida" in the speaker's "tierra", which was "lejana / [y] extraña" to him. The poem demands that the reader preserve the memory of "este hombre solo", who was unlike "tantos otros" who "[s]ólo atendier[o]n a ellos mismos". The soldier's singularity is emphasized by the persistently anaphoric deictics that situate and isolate objects of remembrance: "Este hombre solo, este acto solo, esta fe sola". The soldier, who has been referred to in the third person, with varying degrees of distance, as "este hombre" and "aquel hombre", is then made discursively present through the use of the second person and apostrophized as a "compañero".

And yet the last stanza generalizes this "compañero", making him a representative of the human collective or an indicator that "el hombre es noble". The poem ends gnomically, stressing man's universality through the individuality of the solitary witness: "Uno, uno tan sólo basta / Como testigo irrefutable / De toda la naturaleza humana" (*Obra I* 544-45). What forms of memory, then, did Cernuda enlist in writing "1936"? How do these forms of memory mold the figure of the irrefutable witness? To what extent do these forms of memory shape the historical readings that "1936"

seems to encourage today, in a moment of debate over the value of collective memory?

Immediately following "1936" is the last poem of *Desolación de la quimera*, "A sus paisanos". In it, the speaker, an exiled writer, worries that he may be forgotten in Franco's dictatorial Spain: "soy, sin tierra y sin gente, / Escritor bien extraño; sujeto quedo aún más que otros / Al viento del olvido que, cuando sopla, mata" (*Obra I* 547). "A sus paisanos" addresses the potential "testigos" of the speaker's "existencia y su trabajo", the fellow countrymen who could cast him and his work "afuera / [d]e la memoria" in their "corazón" and "mente" (*Obra I* 547). Both "1936" and "A sus paisanos" depict a solitary stranger who risks his life in a strange land, but they stage the tensions between memory and history, and between individuality and collectivity, from different angles and bring *Desolación de la quimera* and Cernuda's poetic *oeuvre* to a decidedly memorable close.

The phrase "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" has had tangible social effects as a speech act, or an utterance with the illocutionary force to join words to actions. This is demonstrated by its numerous public readings since Franco died in 1975 and Spain transitioned from dictatorship to democracy. Through this act of remembrance, readers bring the poem's speaker to life as a cognitive, affective, and ethical subject, animating the connections between memory and history, and individuality and collectivity, that Cernuda's last poems encourage (Gaylord 8). "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" is thus a felicitous utterance, at least to the extent that, in promoting the collective memorialization of Spain's solitary poet *par excellence*, the line fulfills the desire expressed by Cernuda's poetic persona, an exiled poet deeply concerned about the future of "su trabajo" (Harris, *Luis Cernuda* 10-14). As Cernuda's countrymen recite his poetry, they keep him and "su trabajo" in their "corazón" and "mente" and become "testigos" to his "existencia" as a poet (*Obra I* 547).

But "1936" also asks the reader to remember another figure, the anonymous soldier and so-called irrefutable witness who gave

evidence of "toda la nobleza humana" through his "fe" and the "acto" of fighting for a "causa" worth dying for. Unlike Cernuda's poetic persona, this figure is hardly remembered in Spain nowadays. Both the poem and a letter that Cernuda wrote to Carlos Otero in December 1961 describing the encounter in Los Angeles extol the faith that drove the old soldier to fight for his cause, but they do so in vague terms (*Epistolario* 982-83).[2] This referential vagueness is not uncommon in Cernuda's poetry, even his clearly historicallyoriented pieces like the elegies that he wrote between 1937 and 1940 in war-torn Spain and his uncertain first years of exile in Great Britain. As we will see, this referential vagueness extends to the way "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" is publicly repeated and therefore remembered in twenty-first-century Spain, an aspect that complicates the interpretation of the forms of memory that the poem encourages.

Even when "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" is excerpted from "1936" and recast as a standalone exhortation in a different historical framework, the soldier seems to disappear behind the relatively depersonalized figure of a collective representative. This anonymizing recontextualization is most notable in *Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros*, the Spanish translation of *Blood of Spain*, the landmark oral history of the civil war. The book contains the testimonies of more than 300 survivors of the armed conflict, which British historian Ronald Fraser collected between 1973 and 1975. When it was published in Spain and Great Britain in 1979, four years after Franco's death, the book was promoted as a "systematic oral history by eyewitness participants on both sides" (Fraser, *Blood*). Although the entire first stanza of "1936" (including the phrase "este hombre solo") was quoted as an epigraph, Fraser's book never mentions the soldier.[3] As a result, Cernuda's line be-

2. In his 2011 biography of Luis Cernuda, Antonio Rivero Taravillo simply quotes Cernuda's letter to Otero, without mentioning the soldier (317-18).

3. The 1997, 2001, and 2007 Spanish-language editions quoted only the first line of the poem, anonymizing the old soldier even further. All editions, however, include Cernuda's name and the titles of his poem and his last book.

came a somewhat abstract injunction to remember the war in general.[4]

Some thirty years after the publication of Fraser's collection of testimonies, "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" was frequently quoted in the debates over the Law of Historical Memory that took place in Spain between 2004 and 2007 (Richards 353).[5] In 2006, Carlos Castilla del Pino—the writer, neurologist, and psychiatrist who was also an eyewitness to killings committed by both sides of the conflict and a highly respected therapist of war survivors—published an oped titled "El uso moral de la memoria" in *El País*, the most widely-read Spanish newspaper. In it, Castilla advocated for the recovery of the so-called historical memory of those who had been forced to silence their experience of Francoist repression. He argued that these victims needed to be remembered so that they did not die twice: "ser recordado es una forma de existencia, en vida pero también después de haber vivido. Sólo cuando se es olvidado por aquellos que nos recordaban, o cuando éstos han perecido, se puede afirmar que inexistimos" (*n. pag.*).

In defining identity and existence in terms of memory, Castilla echoed the fear articulated by the speaker in "A sus paisanos" that the "viento del olvido" would kill him once the "testigos" to his "existencia" cast him and his work "afuera de la memoria" (*Obra I*

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4. *Blood of Spain* has been criticized for anonymizing the eyewitness accounts. Although the witnesses' names are listed under the heading "relación de personas entrevistadas" in Fraser's "otherwise groundbreaking" oral history, Jo Labanyi has argued that, because of "its mingling of historical narrative and first-person accounts", the reader is "not sure who is speaking" (196).

The English edition did not include Cernuda's lines, instead quoting ten lines from Bertolt Brecht's "Questions From a Worker Who Reads" (27). Ironically, the subtitle of the prologue to the 1997 Spanish edition was "(Especialmente) para aquellos demasiado jóvenes como para recordar", underscoring the non-specific quality of its injunction to remember the war. *Blood of Spain* was first published in 1979, the year that marked the beginning of the so-called *desencanto*, "the mood of political disenchantment / disappointment which prevailed in Spain in the later years of the transition period (1979-1982)" to democracy (Labanyi and Graham 312). According to José Colmeiro, during this period, memory "came to occupy a residual space with a sense of nostalgia for a utopian future indefinitely postponed" (25). A 2016 Spanish reissue confirms the current relevance of Fraser's book in Spain.

5. The debate over the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War and Francoist period gathered momentum at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Graham 141).

547). According to Castilla, the moral basis for the recovery of historical memory was "la constancia ¡cuando menos! de los nombres y apellidos de los que vivieron el drama" (*n. pag.*). To emphasize the social value of both the "derecho a la memoria" and the "deber de recordar", the therapist quoted Cernuda's line, "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros". Although Castilla did not mention the soldier—let alone by name—that the verse also asks the reader to remember, he nonetheless highlighted the mnemonic power of Cernuda's line to remind readers of their duty to remember.

As proof of this mnemonic power, in 2010 the words "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" were chosen to be inscribed on a memorial in a Zaragoza cemetery to honor 3,543 Republican victims of repression between 1936 and 1946 (Valero). This memorial, which was designed in the Spanish regional capital with unanimous political support, was the first to commemorate victims individually. Cernuda's name appears under the first line of "1936" and separate plaques list each victim's name and execution date, when known. This specificity brings the anonymity of the unmentioned "antiguo soldado" into relief. Significantly, Julián Casanova, the historian at the University of Zaragoza commissioned to establish the victims' identities and the circumstances of their deaths, rephrased Cernuda's line in his 2012 obituary of Ronald Fraser in *El País*: "Yo lo recordaré y se lo recordaré a otros" (*n. pag.*).

Other renowned Spanish writers have also resorted to "1936" to make general statements of political value in widely distributed Spanish newspapers such as *El País* and *El Mundo*. Antonio Muñoz Molina, a writer who is publicly committed to promoting the cultural productions of exiled writers, stressed the "justeza del mandato" in Cernuda's line in 2012: "Porque la manipulación política se sustenta muchas veces en la manipulación del pasado, es importante que los que han vivido una época se esfuercen en recordar y en contar cómo fue". Rather than attempting to remember the Spanish Republican exile, Muñoz Molina sought to denounce the "políticas oficiales de la memoria" for distorting the cultural ties between Spain and Catalonia (*n. pag.*).

In 2000, Luis García Montero, a left-wing politician and best-selling poet who has supported efforts to remember the history of repression in Spain, described "el ejemplo moral de un antiguo soldado de la Brigada Lincoln", in Cernuda's poem as an example of "la fuerza de la escritura para conservar la memoria histórica" (*Sexto* 253-54). In 2013, García Montero reiterated that Cernuda's poem, "dedicado a un luchador republicano", is a reminder that "la dignidad de la conciencia individual es imprescindible". To García Montero, this reminder is especially necessary today, when capitalism has become one of the "enemigos más poderosos" of individual conscience ("De mayor" *n. pag.*).[6] Thus, reframed in early twenty-first century Spain, Cernuda's line tends to be de-historicized or, rather, re-historicized, serving whoever quotes it as a placeholder for whatever readers "should" remember in their own historical context, including that of the debates over the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War. Even the very occasional references to the anonymous soldier seem to serve this purpose.[7]

This kind of anachronism appears to be the unavoidable fate of any literary text that manages to outlast its original context (Compagnon 10, 27). It is nonetheless a striking development for a poem so deeply grounded in specific historical circumstances. Could it be that the sheer mnemonic power of "1936" runs counter to its historical underpinnings? What forms of historical time does it elicit if readers remember the line today, more than fifty years after it was written, without forgetting Cernuda's warning that the "viento del olvido" may kill his poetic speaker? What must readers remember to keep Cernuda and "su trabajo" from being cast out of "la memoria", or, in other words, to become "testigos" to his "existencia y su trabajo", testifying not just to Cernuda's history but also that of his poetic persona? (*Obra I* 547). In short,

6. For more on García Montero's view of historical memory, see Cruz and Morgado.

7. In a 1996 *El País* article titled "¡Ya se fueron!", literary critic Miguel García Posada, paraphrasing "1936" and its first line, did lament that Spain had paid almost no "homenaje perdurable" to the soldiers of the International Brigades.

what remembrance does "1936" encourage if it is read as both history and poetic history?[8]

Prominent critics have read "1936" as a mimesis of the thoughts and affects of a persona created in the text by the poet, or a dramatic monologue. García Montero has written about its "construcción de un personaje moral" (*Sexto* 248). As a dramatic monologue, "1936" invites the reader to remember the moral value specifically exemplified by an anonymous former soldier that the narrator of the poem describes.[9] But "1936"—and specifically its frequently-quoted opening line—also contains elements that complicate understanding the poem as the simple representation of a past anecdote as told by a narrator. For instance, the poem's memorial speech act pivots on the contrast between an opening expression of disgust and anger at the "bajeza humana" and a closing expression of acclaim and gratitude for "toda la nobleza humana": "Gracias, compañero, gracias / Por el ejemplo. Gracias porque me dices / Que el hombre es noble. / Nada importa que tan pocos lo sean: / Uno, uno tan sólo basta / Como testigo irrefutable / De toda la nobleza humana" (*Obra I* 544-45). "1936" seems a clear example of classical oratory in its articulation of a moral opposition between virtue and vice, which Aristotle called the main topics of invention in epideictic rhetoric (book 1, chap. 9). Cernuda's poem, a song of praise and thanksgiving that deploys the topical and sonic opposition between nobleness and baseness, is paradigmatically epideictic.

Jonathan Culler has argued that epideictic rhetoric is a key to understanding lyric not as "a world-creating fiction", or dramatic monologue, but rather as a "real-world utterance" (*Theory*

8. As Antoine Compagnon has explained from a hermeneutic standpoint, "[t]he answer brought by the text depends on the question we pose it from our historical vantage point, but also from our capacity to reconstruct the question to which the text is responding, for the text is equally in dialogue with its own history" (42). See Timothy Bahti for an analysis of the impossibility of reading lyric poem—or any literature—without reading "their tradition, their constitution and handing-down through writing, rewriting, reading, and re-reading" (7).

9. See also Gracia and Ródenas, Faber, and Blanco Aguinaga, Rodríguez Puértolas, and Zavala. García Montero's interpretation of the poem recalls Jaime Gil de Biedma's reading of Cernuda's *personae*, which is analyzed below.

127). Aside from praise or blame, this epideictic component involves "language as action" and comprises multiple statements of value about the world at large (Culler, *Theory* 128). In this light, "1936" is not just a morality tale told through a dramatic monologue, but a lyric utterance that makes a real-world statement of value about the general need to remember.[10] The effectiveness of Cernuda's poem as a speech act is demonstrated by the fact that its opening line has become a capacious placeholder, used in different contexts for various purposes. In fact, even those readers who interpret "1936" as a dramatic monologue about specific historical circumstances tend to remember the poem as lyric utterance.

If "1936" is read as lyric utterance, its epideictic force as a statement of value is bolstered by those elements that a conventional mimetic explanation would tend to ignore: the intertextuality of its references, its use of the present tense, and the materiality of its language (Culler, *Theory* 118-19).[11] As we will see, intertextuality, the present tense, and materiality are central elements of the statement of value that "1936" asks the reader to share: the need to remember a noble (but lost) life-or-death cause, and the faith of a solitary individual in that cause. In recurring and self-reflexive fashion, the lines of "1936", and most prominently its opening verse, use the mnemonic devices of the lyric to persuade the reader of the value of its remembrance. Only the sheer mnemonic force of her or his statements can make a witness irrefutable, particularly when there is no factual evidence to support her or his account. Testimony is rendered more or less credible by its strength as lyric utterance.

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10. As Barbara Cassin has explained, epideixis consists in performatively "making use of accepted values to propose new ones". To that end, epideixis involves "moving, not from being to speaking about being", but rather "from speech to its effect" (1038).

11. Culler has argued against reading lyric as dramatic monologue because "[t]his model ignores or reduces, with its normalizing novelizing, the characteristic extravagance of lyric on the one hand and its intertextual echoes on the other; and it neglects all those elements of lyric— including rhyme, meter, refrain—not imitated from ordinary speech acts" (*Theory* 118-19). According to Bahti, "transhistorical, interlingual, cross-generic appropriation and recasting of literary materials" is unique not to lyric but to Western literature as a whole (227-28).

The line "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" can refer to "el ejemplo" of the soldier's "fe", which the speaker gives as the reason for his gratitude. "Fe", appearing seven times in "1936", is the most reiterated noun in the poem, and perhaps, therefore, the most likely to be remembered. The soldier—who "decidió apostar su vida" because of "la fe que su vida llenaba"—has kept "su fe, la fe aquella, . . . / A través de los años, la derrota, / Cuando todo parece traicionarla". And that "fe" is "lo que sólo importa", concludes the speaker before thanking the soldier for his "ejemplo". "Esta fe sola" is not only one of the objects of remembrance singled out in the exhortative opening stanza of "1936", but also, given the specificity accorded by the demonstrative and qualifying adjectives "este" and "solo", it is arguably the very thing worth remembering (García Montero, *Sexto* 254-55).

The epideictic force of "1936" as a statement of value rather than the narrative mimesis of a past anecdote requires the reader to remember similar utterances and Cernuda's poetry intertextually, albeit incompletely or disjointedly. That is, the poem's mnemonic power relies on the reader to remember its poetic history. Indeed, Cernuda built his poetic persona around a solitary individual who keeps his faith in a righteous but lost cause. This sort of "fe" is clearly echoed in another historically-oriented poem from *Desolación de la quimera*, "Díptico español". That poem's speaker emphasizes his sense of alienation from his "tierra" and his individual experience as a human being. Having learned "[e]l oficio de hombre duramente", and putting his own "fe" in "él", he refuses to return to his homeland, "cuya fe, si una tiene, dejó de ser mía" (*Obra II* 503). In *Ocnos*, Cernuda's mythopoetic autobiography written between 1949 and 1961, the poet also resorts to "fe" to establish a similar contrast, this time through an opposition between the poet and the Christian: "cuando el poeta adquiere o recobra la fe, lo que el cristiano quiera decir, como cristiano, acaso no interese al poeta, como poeta" (*Obra II* 607). Cernuda's "fe" is, in this light, the faith of a poet.[12]

12. Important scholars of Cernuda's work have emphasized his fidelity to the poet's fate (Harris, *Luis Cernuda* 36, 164-65, 166; Sicot 41).

The earlier poem "Vereda del cuco" is important for understanding Cernuda's commitment to his poetic "fe" as well as an example of the intertextuality and self-referentiality that subtend his poetry. It was published in 1947 as part of *Como quien espera el alba*, a book that, like *Desolación de la quimera*, is profoundly marked by the experience of exile.[13] Octavio Paz, in "La palabra edificante", the influential obituary of Cernuda that he wrote in 1964, called this poem's reflection on erotic love a decisive step towards self-reflexivity in Cernuda's poetry: "en la conciencia ajena no ve sino su propio rostro interrogante" (12). Cernuda rehearses a number of signature moods, motifs, and modes in "Vereda del cuco". This ruminative secondperson dramatic monologue is structured as a fictional representation of a past event—in this case, a solitary summer stroll down a dark lane to a fountain. However, the monologue also includes the present-tense utterance of real-world statements of value. It is a reflection on the life-risking experience of love, or "a contemplation of daimonic eroticism", in Derek Harris's description ("La poesía" 87), perceived as existential exile by the solitary traveler as he engages in a never-ending dialectic of life-and-death (and, correlatively, memory-and-oblivion). By the end of the poem, the individual speaker has merged with both a collective that knows the "original fire", and the phoenix, in an allegory of love's deadly but transcendent power: "Sin ceniza no hay llama, / Ni sin muerte es el cuerpo / Testigo del amor, fe del amor eterno" (*Obra I* 375-79).

This figure, an exiled solitary traveler engaged in an endless dialectic of life-and-death and memory-and-oblivion, is emblematic of Cernuda's self-perceived otherness, or what Jaime Gil de Biedma has called the poet's romantic identity as an "hijo unigénito". The singularity of Cernuda's "diferencia", his experience as a unique "hijo de dios" in contrast to everyone else's "experiencia común", is linked to his self-understanding "en tanto que homosexual y en tanto que poeta", a two-fold condition that found "confirmación definitiva" in the

13. Another significant iteration of this poetic "faith" can be found in "Río vespertino", also from *Como quien espera el alba* (*Obra I* 373).

experience of the civil war and exile (Gil de Biedma 342). This form of exile is exemplified in the 1942 edition of *Ocnos*, where the poet describes a moment as a boy when he observed some "maricas" who behaved "[c]on dignidad de alto personaje en destierro" (*Obra I* 563).

Cernuda's "irrevocable compromiso interior" to his singularity predated his experience of civil war and political exile (Gil de Biedma 342); it was already evident in *Un río, un amor* (1929) and *Los placeres prohibidos* (1931). For example, "Destierro", written in Toulouse in 1929, features a ghostly third-person figure who bears "su destino a solas" and feels the "[f]atiga de estar vivo, de estar muerto" (*Obra I* 146). Cernuda's poetic persona was always already exiled from society and even life. It is notable that a song in "Destierro" introduces this self-image of a solitary and uncompromising individual on the threshold between life and death: "Ante las puertas bien cerradas / Sobre un río de olvido, va la canción antigua" (*Obra I* 146). In succinctly referencing the Orphic myth rehearsed by Garcilaso de la Vega in his "Égloga tercera", Cernuda constructs a self-elegy out of the figure of the exiled poet.

Numerous critics have argued that Cernuda saw himself as an exiled poet long before his political exile.[14] In his introduction to *Poesía del exilio*, an anthology of Cernuda's poetry after 1937, Antonio Carreira wrote that the poet felt exiled "no de un país, sino de su familia, del ambiente sevillano, de toda la sociedad, por su condición de homosexual y de poeta, así como por su personalidad insobornable" (7). The literary *topoi* of exile animates much of Cernuda's production. As Michael Ugarte has noted, desire—one of two terms in the dialectical title of Cernuda's complete poetry, *La realidad y el deseo*—is "both a motif and the force which sets his life and poetry into exile, an eternal movement away from a secure home" (329). Paz went further, arguing that exile is Cernuda's founding myth as a modern poet, without which the dialectic between reality and desire cannot be understood: "errante en los cinco continentes, vive siempre en el mismo cuarto, habla con las mismas gentes y su exilio es el de todos... Vamos

14. See Ugarte, Sahuquillo, Jiménez Fajardo, Baquero, and De Villena.

de lo mismo a lo mismo. Sevilla, Madrid, Toulouse, Glasgow, Londres, Nueva York, México, San Francisco: ¿Cernuda estuvo de veras en esas ciudades?, ¿en dónde están realmente esos sitios?" (xvi).

Gil de Biedma has read Cernuda's use of dramatic monologue as a way to deal with this self-image of a poet exiled from himself. Cernuda famously wrote that Richard Browning's poetry taught him to project his emotional experiences onto "una situación dramática, histórica o legendaria", whether that situation be serving in the International Brigades or being Lazarus (*Prosa II* 647). And in some of Cernuda's dramatic monologues, the situation is his own; that is, the speaking voice impersonates the author's. In Gil de Biedma's terms, the "protagonista" is "el mismo autor": "La voz que habla en un poema, aunque sea la del poeta, no es nunca una voz real, es sólo una voz posible, no siempre imaginaria, pero siempre imaginada" (348). Cernuda's dramatic monologues thus perform Rimbaud's "I is another", discursively exiling the lyrical I from himself. This "another" is Cernuda's "doble", his "persona poética"; in "Vereda del cuco", it is even his "daimon" (Gil de Biedma 353).

Indeed, the life-and-death dialectics that define the poet's self-perceived otherness are dramatized by daemonic figures endowed with destructive and self-destructive powers. According to Christopher Soufas, in Cernuda's poetry daemonic power "motivate[s] men to act even in spite of themselves" (168). Like Eros, it is "an energizing, a shocking of our normal existence" (Soufas 169). Although seemingly devoid of mythic qualities, the old soldier's heroic "action" in "1936" has the same purpose as any action driven by daemonic power in Cernuda's poetry: to exemplify human nobility. And the consequences of such heroic actions include isolation, exile from daemonic paradise, and a return to ordinary reality (Soufas 171). And yet Cernuda's persona has another outlet for this daemonic power: poetry. In *Ocnos*, Cernuda uses the praise-and-blame rhetoric of "1936" to connect daemonic power and poetry in a very memorable way, through the characterization of a panther as a destructive force: "¿Qué poeta o qué demonio odió tanto y tan bien la vulgaridad humana circundante?"

(*Obra II* 593). The poet predicates his mythical self-creation as a noble creature on exile from ordinary life.

Cernuda's essays about poetry clarify that this destructive daemonic force behind human nobility plays a role in his poetics. In his 1935 "Hölderlin", for example, the poet asks: "¿Quién ignora como lo mejor, lo más noble que la humanidad puede ofrecer, ha sido realizado por genios aislados y a pesar de los otros hombres? Una demoníaca fuerza aniquilaba a Hölderlin por el fuego, fuego que al propio tiempo lo salvaba" (*Obra II* 105). In his 1941 "Marsias", Cernuda deploys the eponymous myth of the young satyr as an allegory for his poetics. The contest between Marsyas and Apollo demonstrates that the poet must know "cómo tiene frente de sí toda la creación, tanto en su aspecto divino como en el humano, enemistad bien desigual en la que el poeta, si lo es verdaderamente, ha de quedar vencido o muerto" (*Obra II* 800). When Marsyas defies his "limitación mortal" and challenges Apollo, he is skinned alive. He is nonetheless able to use his flute to express "un afán sobrehumano" (*Obra II* 799). Cernuda's 1958 depiction of Keats echoes this mythical self-construction of the poet; Keats was a solitary writer committed to "una experiencia humana y poética en la cual todo se arriesga" (*Obra II* 350, 339). Keats's life thus serves as an "ejemplo de un poder bien raro": "experimentar lo que es morir y resucitar una y otra vez antes de la hora final" (*Obra II* 337). Cernuda summarizes this idea of poetry as deadly but transcendent by quoting Keats's words: "el genio de la poesía debe procurar en el hombre su salvación propia" (*Obra II* 341). In its emphasis on total dedication to one's cause, this mythical self-construction of the solitary poet driven by a daemonic force foreshadows the old soldier in "1936".

In a 1935 essay titled "Palabras antes de una lectura", Cernuda describes his introduction to poetry in terms that reiterate this reality-and-desire, life-and-death dialectic:

> El instinto poético se despertó en mí gracias a una percepción más aguda de la realidad, experimentando, con un eco más hondo, la hermosura y la atracción del mundo circundante. Su efecto era, como en cierto modo ocurre con el deseo que provoca el amor, la

> exigencia, dolorosa a fuerza de intensidad, de salir de mí mismo, anegándome en aquel vasto cuerpo de la creación. Y lo que hacía aún más agónico aquel deseo era el reconocimiento tácito de su imposible satisfacción. (*Obra II* 602)

Cernuda also allegorized this sort of destructive engagement with a daemonic power in "Lázaro", one of his favorite compositions, included in the 1940 volume *Las nubes*. The speaker of this self-elegiac poem is "un muerto / Andando entre los muertos". Feeling "el desconsuelo del hombre que está solo", the speaker asks for the strength to "llevar la vida nuevamente". Cernuda wrote the poem during the war and his early exile, and according to C. B. Morris, he felt "besieged and threatened by death" at the time (239).

This life-death imagery spans Cernuda's entire poetic production. It was already salient in *Los placeres prohibidos*, a book that was published in 1931, five years before the war began.

More than twenty-five years later, in "Díptico español", Cernuda memorably describes Spain as "la tierra de los muertos, / Adonde ahora todo nace muerto, / vive muerto y muere muerto". In this ominous setting, the speaker explains that he has learned the "oficio de hombre duramente", and has put "su fe" in "él" (*Obra I* 239). The historical referentiality of "Díptico español" reinforces the myth of a solitary traveler who must endure a life-or-death ordeal to survive as a poet. Cernuda's resolution to be "faithful to himself" and to his "love of solitude" gives the late poems of *Desolación de la quimera* a "predominantly elegiac mood", as Morris has described it (238). Some of Cernuda's most memorable post-civil-war compositions are explicitly predicated on results of that war. This is particularly true of some of the 1937 "Elegías españolas", including "Elegía a la luna de España", and "A un poeta muerto (F.G.L)", which were published three years later in *Las nubes*. In this sense, the war "arroja a Cernuda a la historia de España", making the poet "contemporáneo de su tierra y del mundo" (Dobry). *Desolación de la quimera* also foregrounds a historically-oriented mimesis to the extent that its thematic center is the poet's sen-

se of exile. Two decades later, his perception of the consequences of Spain's internecine conflict serve to organize the narratives in compositions such as "Díptico español", "Otra vez, con sentimiento", and "A sus paisanos".

With Cernuda's poetic history in mind, then, the irrefutable witness remembered in "1936" both represents an empirical person, the former member of the Lincoln Brigades, and constructs a new avatar of Cernuda's lyric persona. According to the poet's myth of selfcreation, this figure must endure a life-or-death ordeal. Paz has pointed out that readers can only know whether this persona is crafted as a historical exile or a figure from myth and poetry if they are familiar with Cernuda's poetic history (14). "1936" also, albeit indirectly, asks the reader to remember other figures that haunt Cernuda's *oeuvre* as daemonic characters. It is telling that individuality is deictically multiplied in the poem. "[T]ú" is the speaker, and thus "forzado tú a pública lectura" accomplishes a pronominal self-distancing that appears elsewhere in Cernuda's post-war poetry (Monegal 73). But later in the poem, "tú" also refers to the "antiguo soldado" ("gracias, compañero"), moving the speaker (and reader) from the second-person ("te dices") to a first-person position of utterance and listening ("me dices").

The protagonist of the poem is then both "el hombre", an indeterminate, universal man and "un hombre solo", a specific man who serves as an irrefutable witness. This deictic fluctuation between identification and alterity makes "1936" yet another example of what Gil de Biedma has called Cernuda's "irrevocable compromiso interior" to the otherness of his poetic persona (342). The soldier, the man alone, is the poet as other and as himself in poems from *Como quien espera el alba* such as "Elegía anticipada" and "Noche del hombre y su demonio" (*Obra I* 356, 366).

The complex personal deictics in "1936" allow the "tú" of the speaker to become the "tú" of the soldier, and both to become the "tú" of the reader. When the reader remembers the poem and, specifically, its reiterated first line, "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros", the "tú" has retrospectively come to refer not only to the objectified

I (following the conventions of dramatic monologue), but also to that reader (following the conventions of lyric utterance).[15] This works because the poem is read not only as a narrative or the mimesis of the specific encounter in Los Angeles in 1961, but also as a lyric utterance. The reader of lyric poems can "occupy the position of the speaker, ritualistically performing . . . lines" (Culler, "Language" 162). In this sense, "tú" remains ambiguous and/or indeterminate, an example of what Culler has called a "blurred you", which "gestures toward the reader but is also plausibly taken as either the poet himself or someone else" (*Theory* 194). This "blurred you" emphasizes the non-fictional nature of the first line. While the poem may be narrative in the sense that it is the mimesis of a situation that can be recreated, the agent addressed in its first line remains undecided.

When "you" can be construed to refer to the reader, apostrophe revolves around the communicative situation (Culler, *Theory* 192). Paz emphasized the intertextuality, self reflexivity, and present tense of this special sort of communication in Cernuda's poetry: Al hablar con las criaturas del mito, Cernuda habla para sí pero de esta manera habla con nosotros. Es un diálogo destinado a provocar indirectamente nuestra respuesta. El tiempo real no es el cotidiano de la conversación mundana sino el de la comunicación poética:

> el instante de la lectura, un ahora en el cual, como en un espejo, el diálogo entre el poeta y su visitante imaginario se desdobla en el del lector con el poeta. El lector se ve en Cernuda que se ve en un fantasma. Y cada uno busca en el personaje imaginario su propia realidad, su verdad. Su demonio, en el sentido socrático. Cernuda también evoca personas históricas: Góngora, Larra, Tiberio. Son rebeldes, seres al margen, desterrados por la estupidez de sus contemporáneos o por la fatalidad de sus pasiones. Máscaras, *personae*. (14)

15. According to Culler, the underlying structure of lyric is one of "triangulated address", where "an audience of readers is addressed through the act of address (implicit or explicit) to an imagined addressee". Thus "the lyrical *you* is at bottom characterized by the foregrounding of that indeterminate potential that makes *you* at once a specific other, the most general other, and *one*, a pure place holder for indeterminate agency" ("Language" 164-65).

Paz here references poetic history, attuned to both the rhetorical force embedded in the now of apostrophic address and Cernuda's mythopoetic self-fashioning. This same self-fashioning is also at work in the markedly political and narrative "1936". Dramatic dialogue, understood as novelization, dominates Cernuda's later work. Yet "1936" is not just the representation of biographical situations or "la construcción de un artificio capaz de elaborar un personaje significativo", as García Montero has argued (*Sexto* 248, 264). Its narrative construction is disrupted by lyric utterances.

Herbert Tucker has called the eruption of a "lyrical interlude" within dramatic monologues "a paratactic pocket, an insulated deviation from the syntax of narrative line" (234-35). As in Robert Browning's dramatic monologues, "1936" features

> "*an* interference effect between opposed yet mutually informative discourses: between an historical, narrative, metonymic text and a symbolic, lyrical, metaphoric text that adjoins it and jockeys with it for authority" (Tucker 229).

In this sense, the first five lines of "1936" can be read not as an interlude but as a lyrical prelude that shapes the narrative from the outset. The voice of this mode of remembering, even if it is a "historical, narrative" poem about a solitary figure, is also and simultaneously a poetic voice that recalls those of Cernuda's multiple mythopoetic *personae* like Keats, Marsyas, and Lazarus. Thus, the poetic address of the line "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros" seeks to foster remembrance of poetic voices.

Discussions of Cernuda's poems about exile tend to neglect this poetic aspect. As a result, his other history, the mythopoetic history of a solitary protagonist who dies and comes alive again as a poet, may be forgotten. In a way, poetic history keeps the memory of dead poets alive; poets die over and over again so that they can live on.[16] If lyric time is the time of remembrance, as

16. See Ugarte for the tensions between socio-political history and poetic history in Cernuda's poetry of exile (340). [17] See Ugarte for Cernuda's poetry understood as

Culler has claimed, it is also the time of the present and of presence—that is, "the special 'now' of lyric articulation", which belongs in "a time of discourse rather than of story" (*Theory* 226). Although this claim may be debatable, it nonetheless helps us to understand Cernuda's use of apostrophe. In the poem "Qué más da" from *Los placeres prohibidos*, Cernuda employs apostrophe to evoke an absent, adored "prodigio rubio" and bring him to the present, the moment of reading: "Porque aun siendo brillante, efímero, inaccesible, / Tu recuerdo . . . / Basta para iluminar, tú ausente, toda esta niebla que me envuelve" (188). "Qué más da" is also an elegy to the extent that it substitutes "an irreversible temporal disjunction, the movement from life to death, with a reversible alternation between mourning and consolation" (Culler, *Theory* 227). The supposedly irrevocable past is temporarily revoked in the discursive now of lyric through the elegiac reading and remembering of the apostrophe "tú ausente".

Accordingly, Cernuda's elegies—most notably "Lázaro"—can also be read as self elegies. In "1936" the speaker asks himself and the reader to remember an old soldier, but he also asks them to remember the mythical poet so that he can be reborn in the reiterative now of lyrical time. The irrefutable witness is the soldier, but he is also Cernuda's poetic persona, apostrophizing the reader and demanding to be remembered and kept alive in the reversible temporality of the poem. Thus, self-elegy is arguably the generic response to a poetics of self exile. Absence and presence shape the temporality of "1936" in complex ways. The temporality of narrative history contrasts with that of poetic history, bringing 1936 and 1961 to the present. It also reanimates Cernuda's absent voice (and, through it, the ghostly voice of the soldier) through the reader's voice. This triangulated act of remembrance recalls "Destierro" and "Lázaro" in that they ask the reader to evoke and re-evoke the poet, discursively revoking his death. As self elegies, these poems enable a reiterative and ritualistic performance of death and resurrection.

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linguistic exile (341).

"1936" is also memorable for its sheer materiality, or the sententious propulsion of its opening stanza. In the first line, two coordinated hemistichs join the apostrophized "tú" to "otros" both thematically and rhythmically: "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros". The commemoration is therefore both constative and performative. Remembrance occurs and recurs, but with a difference—the consonant stress on the second syllable of each half-line ("é"-"é") is both reinforced and countervailed by the assonant stress on the pronouns ("tú"-"otros"). When this two-step commemorative move is repeated four lines later, the three intervening lines have filled the first verse with ethical import. "Este hombre solo, este acto solo, esta fe sola", is underscored rhythmically and appositively by the syntactical parallelism of the two previous lines ("Cuando asqueados de la bajeza humana, / Cuando iracundos de la dureza humana") regarding collective reactions to reprehensible human behaviors, as well as by the contrast between collectivity and individuality. The fifth line both repeats this contrast between the collective and the individual and also recasts it to prevent forgetting.

Functioning as a direct object in "Recuérdalo tú y recuérdalo a otros", the repeated pronoun "lo" can arguably refer not only to the soldier, but also to the meaning of the year 1936.

"Recuérdalo" can also involve any of the three elements of the fourth line's appositional phrase ("[e]ste hombre solo, este acto solo, esta fe sola"), as well as the example of the soldier's faith and / or the solemn figure of the irrefutable witness of all human nobility that concludes the poem. "Recuérdalo" can even refer to the entire poem as an emblem of the values it commemorates— nobleness, dignity, and faithfulness. Moreover, the urgency of the reduplicated command to remember in the first and fifth lines grammatically underscores the importance of "1936" as an act of shared memory and commitment.

The appositional phrase "[e]ste hombre solo, este acto solo, esta fe sola" evokes specific past events involving a historical individual. But it is also a deictic pointer that (re)iterates Cernuda's

particular poetic project, a project that consists of an act of remembrance in the present. The present tense of the poetic apostrophe evokes something that happened in the past but it is also a real-world utterance happening now, at the moment of reading. Every time the reader reads and repeats the first line, this now serves to highlight an understanding of the "present of the past" (Ricoeur 101). Cernuda's line, understood as an iterable speech act, recasts memory as a poetic event, as the duty to remember now and again; the poem is not just a narrative representation of things past remembered, but also the poetic event of remembering things present. Self-reflectively, "1936" relies on the contrast in the temporality of lyric: if story is "about what happened next", Cernuda's poetic enunciation is "about what happens now" (Culler, *Theory* 226).

To interpret the poem as the mimesis of a past anecdote is to undermine its rhetorical mnemonic force. Indeed, most readers remember the poem as lyric utterance. That is because, as we have seen, the speech act of memory that opens the poem relies heavily on its materiality: its self-reflexivity, refrain-like quality, meter, and reliance on iteration. From this standpoint, its mnemonic devices invite the reader to remember its opening stanza, particularly its first and fifth lines. When the poem's first lines are read today, and "[e]ste hombre solo, este acto solo, esta fe sola" are remembered again, the anecdote about the speaker's encounter with "aquel hombre" is somehow left behind in the past of representation and thus dialectically brought into more distinct historical relief.

The idea of lyric as a paratactic pocket within a dramatic monologue echoes T. W.

Adorno's critique of Heidegger's content-oriented, "realistic" interpretation of Hölderlin's poetry: "Heidegger glorifies the poet supra-aesthetically, as a founder, without reflecting concretely on the agency of form" (114). Caroline Levine has similarly reflected on the interaction between lyric forms and social forms, proposing new ways to connect literature and politics in

the face of historicism's dominance: "literary forms can lay claim to an efficacy of their own. They do not simply reflect or contain prior political realities" (16). The narrative reading of "1936" cannot be remembered without at least some recollection of its richly textured lyric form. Voices of the historical past are heard through those of the lyric present. The sociopolitical efficacy of "1936" is inescapably mediated by its lyric force.

Sebastiaan Faber has correctly claimed that Cernuda paid his debt of gratitude to his American hosts "como solo lo puede hacer un poeta"; if "1936" can be remembered as "el mejor poema que hay" about the 2,800 Americans who fought in the International Brigades, that is because the poem is indeed memorable as a poem (*n. pag.*). Whatever readers may understand by the combination of the terms "history" and "memory", the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War and its tragic aftermath would hardly be possible without some living memory of poetic history. The poetic memory of "1936" gives Cernuda and the soldier another form of existence, "también después de haber vivido", in Castillo del Pino's poignant words.

Two years before his death, and only a few months before he wrote "1936", Cernuda wrote the explicitly historically-oriented "Díptico español". Using the present tense of lyric address, the speaker instructs himself and his readers to listen to the complex music of poetic history: "Hablan en el poeta voces varias: / Escuchemos su coro concertado / Adonde la creída dominante / Es tan solo una voz entre las otras" (*Obra II* 501). When we read Cernuda's "1936" today, past and present voices come together suddenly to form a self-elegiac image of history where "aquel hombre" and "este hombre" encounter each other in the now of remembrance (Benjamin 463). In this way, without being deprived of his "dignidad de alto personaje en destierro", Cernuda gains a "nueva forma de existencia" (Castilla *n. pag.*). Thus, even if it is only incompletely and disjointedly, through a single line of verse, Cernuda's voice and his persona can both be remembered.

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