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Cover Note.

In light of the disruption to my programme of study due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I have encountered several difficulties in researching and writing this dissertation throughout Trinity Term.

Having left Oxford at short notice, I was able to bring some books with me in order to complete both my Hilary and Trinity Term assignments. However, due to the specific focus of my dissertation, I have been without access to important scholarly texts and resources. In addition, I have also been unable to access valuable primary resources, such as contemporary journals or diaries, many of which would otherwise be accessible through the Taylor Institution Library. Many of these texts and resources were not subsequently made available as e-books. This has led to a need to source primary and secondary texts via online platforms and my College Library.

In summary, the restricted access to relevant primary and secondary materials, coupled with initial disruptions to my academic and personal routines, has impacted considerably on the normal writing and researching of the dissertation over the course of the last three months.

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Introduction

As Spain adjusted to the realities of Francoism during the *segunda posguerra*, Spanish poetry moved from an outright focus on social criticism to a more nuanced reflection of individual experiences and emotions, as exemplified in the emergence of the *Generación del '50*.[1] Through this shift in expression towards Castellet's 'realismo histórico', the poetry of this generation came to reflect the lived experiences of ordinary Spaniards, perhaps most readily characterised by an expression of all-consuming loss and a longing for the innocence of youth.[2] This espousal of 'realismo histórico' served to underline the enduring reality of collective loss during the *posguerra* and the imposition of official memory on the part of the Francoist regime.[3]

As perhaps the two most representative poets of the *Generación del '50*, Ángel González and Jaime Gil de Biedma capture the difficulties of their contemporary moment, focusing on the expression of their experience of loss and their search for self-understanding.[4] In building on the overarching preoccupation with loss within the *Generación del '50*, this dissertation explores an expression of lost identity within their principal collections written between 1956 and 1968, corresponding with the height of 'realismo histórico' and a movement away from the openly political focus of Spain's 'poesía social' of the earlier *posguerra*.

In the context of the repression of the *posguerra* and the imposition of official memory, González and Gil de Biedma were forced to contend with the destabilisation of their own sense

[1] The period of the 'segunda posguerra' often refers to the years 1956-1975, coinciding with the gradual relaxation of Francoist social ideology prior to his death in 1975.
[2] See Joaquín González Muela, 'El realismo histórico de Castellet', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 27 (1961), pp. 330-331. José María Castellet's theory of 'realismo histórico', outlined in his *Veinte años de la poesía española* (1960), succeeded in bringing together Spain's emerging poets of the late 1950s under the banner of the *Generación del '50*.
[3] Andrew Debicki, *Spanish Poetry of the 20th Century: Modernity and Beyond* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), pp. 103-04.
[4] Debicki, pp. 105-06.

of self, reflective of the experience of many of Spain's 'niños de la guerra'. In the case of González, his experience of lost identity is rooted in the death of his mother and the exile of his brother during the Spanish Civil War, underpinning his empathy for the loss and anguish of ordinary Spaniards. For Gil de Biedma, as a member of Spain's 'alta burguesía', his poetry reflects a concern with the creation of an authentic vision of self through the disavowal of his bourgeois identity in response to his long-standing separation from the suffering of his contemporaries throughout the Civil War and the early *posguerra*. While this dissertation acknowledges the limitations of a strictly biographical reading of the poetry of González and Gil de Biedma, the lived experience of both authors remains integral to an understanding of the expression of lost or destabilised identity within their works of 'realismo histórico'.

Though critics tend away from a comparison of the work of González and Gil de Biedma, owing to their differing social backgrounds and distinct poetic genealogies, both poets engage with several fundamental themes. In addition to their shared concern with social criticism and amorous reflection, González and Gil de Biedma engage in a common search for the stabilisation of identity, centred on the reconstruction of a stable sense of self through the former's search for familial memory or in the latter's focus on the reconfiguration of a bourgeois identity. By adopting this more panoramic perspective on the poetry of both authors, this dissertation explores a preoccupation with the destabilisation of identity through an emphasis on the relationship between memory and identity within their respective collections.

In light of the contemporary impositions of official memory and enforced socio-political unity, the poetry of González and Gil de Biedma points to a lament for the disappearance of a collective identity in the wake of the cultural trauma of the Civil War. In the first chapter, this dissertation explores a shared acknowledgement of the significance of collective identity and a call for the cultivation of a counter-history in González and Gil de Biedma. Despite the ongoing repression of the *posguerra*, this focus on the creation of a

counter-memory and their hope for the emergence of a collective identity becomes a positive vision in the work of both poets, as manifested in Gil de Biedma's *Compañeros de viaje* (1959) and González' *Sin esperanza, con convencimiento* (1961).

Following this discussion of collective identity, the dissertation moves on to explore the destabilisation of an individual sense of self. In the case of González, the analysis focuses on his desire for the reconstruction of a sense of stable identity in the context of his traumatic recollection and his lack of direct access to his childhood memories. In contrast to this focus on the reconstruction of identity in the wake of Civil War loss in González, Gil de Biedma explores the reconfiguration of his bourgeois identity and the creation of a renewed sense of self as what may be termed a 'compañero de viaje'.[5] In the final chapter, the dissertation emphasises the culmination of this search for the reconstruction or reconfiguration of identity and their coming-to-terms with the (im)possibility of a stable identity.

Through this engagement with their principal collections of 'realismo histórico', this analysis highlights a preoccupation with the stabilisation of identity in the collections of González and Gil de Biedma, closely reflective of the experience of many of Spain's 'niños de la guerra'. Most significantly, as this dissertation will demonstrate, this search for a sense of a fixed identity, emerges as one of the most significant, if unexplored, concerns within their works of the *segunda posguerra*.

[5] The term 'compañero de viaje' will refer to the speaker's reconfigured identity in Gil de Biedma's *Moralidades* (1966), arising from his awareness of the suffering of his contemporaries during the Civil War.

Chapter I

Post-War Trauma and Lost Collective Identity in González and Gil de Biedma.

As the generation of the 'niños de la guerra', the poets of the *Generación del '50* inhabited a world defined by shared loss, the fracturing of collective identities and the oppressive tactics of the Francoist regime. In the case of Ángel González and Jaime Gil de Biedma, this is exemplified by their emphasis on shared or collective loss and the absence of a collective consciousness in the wake of the Civil War, something which will form the focal point of this chapter.

Thematically, this chapter explores González and Gil de Biedma's engagement with collective experience and their specific approaches to the creation and communication of collective identity. As part of this focus on the absence of collective identity, González and Gil de Biedma draw on symbolism and irony as a means of conveying or communicating this collective experience, while evading Francoist censorship. This further stylistic emphasis will enable reflection on the differing approaches adopted by each writer in communicating collective experience and lost collective identity.

To explore this important aspect of their poetry further, this chapter begins by offering a brief contextual overview on the struggle for the articulation of collective identity throughout the *segunda posguerra* and the opposition to enforced social unity on the part of Spain's 'niños de la guerra'. Moreover, this chapter will move on to analyse the concept and expression of collective loss and lost collective identity in the works of both authors, most apparent in Gil de Biedma's *Compañeros de viaje* (1959) and González' *Sin esperanza, con convencimiento* (1961).

(I) Social Change, Collective Memory and the *Segunda posguerra*.

To consider this idea of collective identity more deeply, it is worth reflecting on the wider socio-political landscape and the attitudes of Spain's 'niños de la guerra' towards Franco's self-styled culture of memory. As this generation grew disillusioned with the inherited social divisions of the Civil War, Spanish society saw the emergence of a search for collective consciousness and an acknowledgement of the suffering of the entire Spanish nation.

As the country moved from the relative poverty of the 1940s to the greater economic prosperity of the late 1950s, Franco's culture of memory moved from an emphasis on the commemoration of militaristic heroism to the celebration of Spain's socio-economic advancements, namely the successes of national unity and the achievements of Francoist policies of industrialisation.[6] Though the consolidation of a pluralised social memory remained largely unthinkable, the *segunda posguerra* saw the emergence of a generational awareness, characterised by the need for a complete understanding of the nature of Civil War suffering among all Spaniards in opposition to a lost collective consciousness, as outlined by Fernández García:

> Los fanatismos del régimen creaban un clima al que era difícil sustraerse. En esta época, existía siempre una latencia del modo de ser del grupo de origen, que impide visiones claras de la sociedad. A todo ello se une el resentimiento hacia los demás que resta posibilidad de un pensamiento documentado y firme.[7]

Having experienced the brutality of Francoist recrimination throughout the *primera posguerra*, the *Generación del '50* acknowledge the reality of collective loss and the absence of a shared awareness of the collective suffering of the Civil War. This

[6] Michael Richards, 'From War Culture to Civil Society: Francoism, Social Change and the Memory of the Spanish Civil War', *History and Memory*, 14 (2002), pp. 100-102.
[7] María Nieves Fernández García, 'La sociedad española: Hechos que incidieron en una generación de poetas', in *Actas del congreso, Vol. II, Compañeros de viaje: Jaime Gil de Biedma y su generación poética* (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Áragón, 1996) p. 103.

acknowledgement of loss and the desire for collective understanding emerges as a central point of contact between the writers of this generation, manifested in their hope for the cultivation of collective identity through counter-memory, reflecting a burgeoning movement in favour of a greater understanding of Civil War suffering.[8] It is for this reason that the disjunction between cultural trauma, as endured by the 'niños de la guerra', and the development of collective identity becomes a vital consideration in the poetry of the *Generación del '50*.[9]

(I) Searching for Understanding: Representing Collective Loss and Lost Collective Identity in González.

In his early collections, *Áspero mundo* (1956) and *Sin esperanza, con convencimiento* (1961), González engages closely with the shared experience of loss and lost collective identity.[10] Specifically, in his second collection, *Sin esperanza*, González turns his attention to collective loss and the disappearance of collective consciousness, arising from the imposition of official memory and socio-political unity. In his reflections on *Áspero mundo*, González underlines the significance of counter-history and his commitment to encouraging its cultivation through the medium of poetry:

> Al leer los poemas, comprendí que la decepción no era consecuencia sólo de una derrota personal sino de toda una derrota colectiva que incluía la mía. A partir de ese momento, lo que ha sido un testimonio personal se convierte también en testimonio histórico.[11]

[8] Fernández García, pp. 105-06.
[9] See Jeffrey Alexander, 'Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma' in Alexander (ed.), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (London: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 22-24.
[10] In the prologue to his anthology, González references his 'primera etapa' as the period 1956-1967, inclusive of both *Áspero mundo* and *Tratado de urbanismo*. See Ángel González, *Poemas, edición del autor* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1980), pp. 20-21. See this edition for all relevant textual references.
[11] González, *Poemas*, p. 17.

To this end, the poet looks to the experience of the nation and his generation, culminating in the later poems of *Sin esperanza* and their discussion of collective loss, most visible in 'Entreacto'. In poems such as 'Entreacto', the poetic voice laments the silenced loss and suffering of his generation and the absence of collective identity and consciousness, encouraging the development of a national counter-history on the part of his contemporaries.

In representing this idea of collective loss within *Sin esperanza*, González experiments closely with multiple perspectives, visible in poems such as 'Mendigo' and 'El derrotado'. As Payeras Grau points out, González employs this technique in an effort to better understand his contemporary reality and the shared suffering of ordinary Spaniards.[12] This representation of shared loss is best demonstrated in 'El derrotado' as the poet traces the experience of collective loss from the Civil War to the contemporary *posguerra*. While it is difficult to know if González intends this poem to be autobiographical or self-referential, 'El derrotado' captures a sense of collective or shared loss through the speaker's focus on the unnamed second person and the empathy of the poetic voice.

Despite the nominal focus on the individual 'derrotado' through the reference to 'tú', 'El derrotado' captures an archetypal figure, representative of a whole social group who would identify as such. The poem traces a personal journey, beginning with the aftermath of the Civil War and culminating in the expression of familial loss in the final stanza. In the first stanza, the speaker begins with the startling recollection of personal devastation, reflecting an image of Civil War loss and the ravaging of the familial environment. The use of the past-tense in 'atrás quedaron los escombros' (1) depicts a

[12] María Payeras Grau, 'Imagen de Ángel González', *Prosemas*, 1 (2014), pp. 31-32.

lasting recollection of this ravaged setting and its subsequent erosion at the hands of natural forces, representative of a fading recollection. This combination of stylistic devices and imagery, namely the use of the 'tú' pronoun and the images of desolation in the second stanza, as conveyed in the image of the 'corazón deshabitado' (13), represents the lasting trauma of the Civil War and the disorientation of Spain's 'derrotados' or those who suffered as a consequence of the violent conflict of the Civil War and *posguerra*.

In the second stanza, the speaker captures the disorientation of the 'derrotado' and his search for collective self-identification in the face of individual loss (2-13). In presenting this vision of disorientation, the poet draws on powerful landscape imagery coupled with the repetition of the nullifying 'porque ningún'. In this instance, González employs this landscape imagery to capture sentiments of disorientation, most apparent in the image of the ailing heart as 'deshabitado' (13), mirroring the depiction of the landscape or 'tierra' (8). This palpable disorientation within the second stanza, captured through the repetition of 'porque ningún' and the imagery of desolation, culminates in the image of loss and the realisation of the irretrievability of blissful innocence (14-18). By maintaining the unnamed status of the addressee or 'tú' throughout the poem, González succeeds in creating an archetypal figure that embodies the collective loss, suffering and disorientation of many of his contemporaries. As this poem makes clear, González stresses the shared experience of loss of ordinary Spaniards and the possibility of a collective consciousness among all 'derrotados'.

If 'El derrotado' marks González' initial expression of collective loss in *Sin esperanza*, 'Entreacto' highlights the experience of loss endured by ordinary Spaniards and the ongoing search for collective awareness and identity through a veiled appeal to the development of a counter-history. In this instance, the poet establishes an interesting conceit, comparing Francoist rule to a theatrical performance whilst highlighting the

position of ordinary Spaniards as mere spectators therein, as seen in his reference to 'distinguido público' (9). In drawing on this conceit, the speaker ironically adopts the style of Francoist political discourse, addressing the audience as if speaking as Franco himself during an interval or 'entreacto' whilst communicating a subversive message of counter-memory and the possibility for collective identity. In addition to satirising Francoist political discourse through this conceit, the speaker exploits Franco's allusion to the social division of the Republic in order to offer an ironic comment on political recrimination. This can be identified in his cutting reference to 'aquellos tortuosos diálogos' (36-37) and the image of 'el panorama roto' (41-42). This subversive use of speech-like style and theatre-based imagery covers up his critique of Francoism while highlighting his perspective on the absence of collective identity within Spanish society.

While this poem focuses on the idea of shared loss and lost collective identity, the final section of 'Entreacto' points to a hopeful message, once again exploiting the style of Francoist political discourse. In maintaining this focus on 'nosotros', the speaker hints at the demise of Francoism and the potential for a future communal exchange of experience (63-67).[13] If we accept this implicit comparison between Francoism and theatrical performance, this final section draws on the ironic use of political discourse in foreshadowing the culmination of dictatorial rule, as captured in the final image of the fading 'aventura' (65). According to González, 'Entreacto' challenges 'la provisionalidad de la Guerra Civil que siempre veía como un episodio inconcluso'.[14] This use of poetic conceit and irony focuses the reader's attention on the experience of collective loss while

[13] See Luis García Montero, 'Historia y experiencia en la poesía de Ángel González' in *Jaime Gil de Biedma y su generación poética*, pp. 387-89. García Montero emphasises an enduring hope or 'vitalismo' within *Áspero mundo* and *Sin esperanza*, as manifested in the underlying message of poems such as 'Entreacto'.
[14] González, p. 18.

underlining the longing for a shared identity or consciousness on the part of ordinary Spaniards.

(II) Gil de Biedma: Understanding Collective Loss and the Absence of Collective Identity.

If González' poetry establishes an intimate connection between the speaker and the wider collective, Gil de Biedma's earlier works reveal an underlying tension between the poet's class consciousness and his efforts to understand the nature of collective suffering. Despite his own sheltered existence during the Civil War and the early *posguerra*, Gil de Biedma's poetry captures an understanding of a sense of collective loss on the part of ordinary Spaniards and an absence of collective identity.[15] Through this attention to the notion of collective loss, Gil de Biedma explores an underlying hope for the restoration of a shared consciousness among all Spaniards, as manifested in poems such as 'Amistad a lo largo' and 'En el castillo de Luna'.[16]

In *Compañeros de viaje* (1959), the poet highlights the importance of the development of collective consciousness to his own identity.[17] In the opening poem, 'Amistad a lo largo', the poetic voice addresses the idea of collective loss and his hope for the emergence of a renewed collective identity, consisting of an initial quatrain and three principal stanzas, beginning with a reflective focus and concluding with a direct address to his readership in stanza three, visible in the plural imperative 'callad' (26). In the first and second stanzas, the speaker depicts the collective effort to communicate their experiences of loss in overcoming the solitude of imposed silence. Throughout these initial stanzas, the

[15] Gil de Biedma spent much of his early years, prior to 1946, on his family's estate in Nava de la Asunción, Segovia.
[16] Jaime Gil de Biedma, *Antología poética*, ed. by Javier Alfaya (Madrid: Alianza, 2018), p. 20. See this edition for all relevant textual references.
[17] The title 'Compañeros de viaje' also references Gil de Biedma's burgeoning political engagement. 'Fellow travellers' or 'Compañeros de viaje' traditionally refers to those sympathetic to the Communist party who are not themselves members.

image of the ‘palabra’ becomes a significant symbol of hope as the speaker references the expression of loss among ordinary Spaniards, described in ‘los compañeros que se conocen por encima de la voz o de la seña’ (13-15). In the second stanza, the uplifting image of the rising ‘gentiles palabras’ (16-17) is supplemented by the encouraging tone of the poetic voice and the use of ‘estamos nosotros’ (20), evoking a sense of shared experience, visible also in his positive references to the collective as ‘historia acumulada’ (23) and ‘compañia [..] plena’ (24).

In the final stanza, the poetic voice adopts a more urgent tone in his direct appeal to the collective ‘vosotros’, underlining the speaker’s understanding of collective loss and the possibility of a renewed awareness of a shared past and identity. Specifically, the repeated staccato in verses 28 to 30 captures the reader’s attention in communicating this message of solidarity, contrasting with the depiction of an earlier despair or solitude in the first stanza: ‘Quiero deciros algo. Sólo quiero deciros que estamos juntos’ (29-30). In addition to this appeal to the reader in the final stanza, the speaker recalls several instances of human contact or interaction, underlining his hope for the future exchange of stories of personal suffering and loss. As these verses reveal, the poet acknowledges the shared experiences of suffering and this search for collective awareness, immediately apparent in this opening poem of *Compañeros de viaje*.

In his subsequent collection *Moralidades* (1966), Gil de Biedma’s poetry focuses more closely on social criticism, owing to his growing engagement with the Spanish Communist Party and his desire to actively condemn Francoism after the Asturian miners’ strikes of 1962.[18] As Alberca García highlights, while certain poems in *Moralidades*, such as ‘Noche triste de octubre, 1959’ emphasise a political critique and ideological affiliation,

[18] *Antología poética*, pp. 21-22.

other poems such as ‘En el castillo de Luna’ capture the shared experience of loss and the absence of collective identity.[19] In this latter poem, the speaker narrates the experience of a Civil War prisoner from his incarceration to the contemporary *posguerra* through the sharp rhythms and imagery of the traditional ballad form.

The narration of the prisoner’s experience in the ballad form heightens the poem’s emotional quality, revealing an implicit comparison between the epic hero of the Spanish *romance* and the ravaged soldier or prisoner of the Civil War. From stanza three onwards, as the speaker captures the complete sense of the prisoner’s loss, the poem adopts the octosyllabic metre of the ballad while recounting the prolonged suffering of his contemporary experience.[20] In stanza five, this metre and assonance adds to the images of complete loss and solitude, reflective of a wider collective experience (43-46). Specifically, stanzas five and six highlight feelings of complete loss, described in the prisoner’s inability to appreciate joyous or uplifting experience, as illustrated in the powerful image of the hole or ‘boquete’ (43) within his soul and the all-consuming power of fear, disorientation and bitterness over his existence (44-46).

This depiction of loss is developed further in the final two stanzas as the speaker envisions the prisoner’s return to contemporary society. In adopting the present tense and the second-person pronoun, the speaker contrasts the prisoner’s personal hopes with the realities of lost freedom and identity. The opening line of the final stanza, ‘Serás uno más perdido’ (63), emphasises both the prisoner’s enduring separation from the wider collective as well as that endured by all Spaniards (63-67), highlighting the impossibility of communal dialogue and collective awareness. Though the metaphor of the nation as ‘una

[19] María del Mar Alberca García, ‘’Por mala conciencia escritores de poesía social’: Jaime Gil de Biedma en el contexto del realismo social español de posguerra’ (Published Doctoral Thesis: University of California, 2000), pp. 258-59.
[20] Margaret H. Persin, ‘Intertextual Strategies in the Poetry of Jaime Gil de Biedma’, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 11 (1987), p. 582.

prisión' (71) is often seen as the defining expression of loss in this poem, the final verses reiterate the notion of a common struggle and consciousness, despite the widespread loss and despair of the *posguerra*.[21] As poems such as 'Amistad a lo largo' and 'En el castillo de Luna' illustrate, this lament for the loss of collective identity and the quest for its cultivation forms an essential preoccupation within the poetry of Gil de Biedma.

Emphasising Collective Loss and Identity in González and Gil de Biedma.

In their engagement with the collective experience of loss in their respective works, González and Gil de Biedma underline the shared suffering of many Spaniards and the absence of collective awareness and identity, arising from the imposition of official memory and the complicated reality of memory exchange during the *segunda posguerra*.[22] Both González and Gil de Biedma thus lament the absence of a collective consciousness while underlining their belief in the value of the poetic medium as a means of communicating this collective loss and encouraging the cultivation of a contemporary counter-history.

While this exploration of the collective experience of loss laments the disappearance of collective identity among ordinary Spaniards, González and Gil de Biedma express hope for the recovery of this group awareness and an end to the imposition of official memory and social conformity. This hope for the recovery of collective identity, thus emerges as a concrete positive vision amidst the ongoing intense loss of the *posguerra*.[23]

[21] See Alberca García, pp. 271-72.
[22] Richards, p. 112.
[23] García Montero, pp. 388-89.

Chapter II

The Loss of Self-Understanding: Searching for Stable Identity in González and Gil de Biedma.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the early poetry of González and Gil de Biedma deals closely with the concept of lost collective identity and consciousness in the context of imposed socio-political unity and official memory. In addition to this lament for lost collective or generational consciousness, González and Gil de Biedma each reveal a shared preoccupation with a lost stable individual identity, as seen in the former's quest for the reconstruction of his identity in the wake of familial loss and in the latter's re-engagement with his past experience and the re-configuration of his individual identity. Despite their differing experiences of loss and suffering throughout this period, both writers contend with the weakening of individual identity while searching for its re-stabilisation through their memories of their experience of the Civil War.[24]

In analysing these expressions of lost identity, this chapter contrasts the more existentialist expression of lost identity and solitude in González with a more individual perspective in the poetry of Gil de Biedma. Specifically, this contrast will emphasise the expression of a more universal experience in González' perception of lost identity in the face of familial loss and his resultant solitude, as compared to a more specific reconfiguration of identity in Gil de Biedma, focused on the partial disavowal of his bourgeois or familial identity.

To explore this expression in the early work of González and Gil de Biedma, this chapter analyses how both writers use their poetry as a means of engaging with their lost individual identity and the connection between this expression and the lived experiences of

[24] For further discussion on the intersection of trauma, memory and identity, see Dominick LaCapra, 'Trauma, Memory, History, Identity: What Remains?', *History and Theory*, 55 (2016), pp. 377-79 and pp. 390-91.

their contemporaries. As this chapter demonstrates, González and Gil de Biedma capture this sense of lost identity while seeking to reconstruct or reconfigure their own sense of self.

(I) González: Familial Loss, Existential Reflection and Urban Existence.

As perhaps the foremost proponent of 'realismo histórico', González captures the extent of his own lost identity and disorientation, thereby reflecting a similar experience on the part of many of his contemporaries.[25] Having endured familial loss and political recrimination during his adolescence, González' experience in Madrid mirrors that of many of his contemporaries, according him what Castellet calls 'una clara visión histórica'.[26] Writing in his anthology, González references this initial disorientation and his commitment to an adapted form of poetic expression, as developed to reflect the lived experience of ordinary Spaniards:

> Yo no estaba seguro de que el mundo fuese susceptible de ser transformado con palabras pero creía que merecía la pena tratar de clarificar el caos, de testimoniar el horror en que me sentía inmerso, nutrido de elementos que pertenecían a la historia de todos.[27]

While González' poetry aligns somewhat with the earlier 'poesía social' of the 1940s and 1950s through its sparing focus on direct social criticism, the poet finds a new way of expressing and representing shared suffering in the wake of the traumatic experience of the Civil War. In *Áspero mundo* and *Sin esperanza*, González' struggle with the destabilisation of individual identity affords the text an existential thread, such is his focus on his experience of familial loss and his response to the solitude of urban life, as opposed to outright social critique or revolutionary pronouncement.[28] As García Montero writes, González' depiction of lost

[25] See 'Introduction' for further analysis of 'realismo histórico'.
[26] See González Muela, 'El realismo histórico de Castellet', p. 330.
[27] González, *Poemas*, p. 16.
[28] *Poemas*, p. 16

individual identity emerges as the most representative depiction of contemporary suffering within the *Generación del '50*, labelling him 'el personaje más cómplice y tierno de su época'.[29]

Through this existential voice of *Áspero mundo*, González reveals his struggle to reclaim his individual identity in the wake of the trauma of familial loss. In 'Para que yo me llame Ángel González', the poet captures the significance of his familial history for his own self-understanding, detailing his acknowledgement of the sacrifice of his ancestors and his duty to preserve their memory, thus affirming a sense of familial belonging. While this awareness of his individual identity captures González' underlying hopefulness within 'Para que yo me llame…', the absence of a more complete recollection manifests itself in the representation of an unstable individual identity throughout this collection, arising from a lack of direct access to his childhood memories. To this end, *Áspero mundo* highlights the central relationship between memory and identity in the wake of the impact of traumatic experience on his childhood or familial memories.

In, 'Aquí, Madrid, mil novecientos cincuenta y cuatro', González captures his existential reaction to modern urban life, located very clearly in both time and space, reflective of the experience of many of the 'niños de la guerra' and their migration to Spain's urban centres during the 1950s.[30] In the opening section of the poem, the poet's use of the varied two-line stanza centres the reader's focus on the figure of the 'hombre solo' (2) while highlighting his essential solitude through the repeated use of punctuation (1-2). By focusing the reader's attention in these opening lines, the reader is introduced to the setting of contemporary Madrid, contrasted through ellipsis with the figure of 'hombre solo' (2).[31] This response to urban life is further developed as the image of the 'hombre lleno de febrero' (3)

[29] García Montero, 'Historia y experiencia en la poesía de Ángel González', pp. 378-79.
[30] Richards, pp. 108-110. Richards details the growth of internal migration in contemporary Spain, referencing an increasing trend in rural-urban migration throughout the late 1950s prior to reaching its peak in 1959.
[31] Luis Bagué Quílez, ''No acaba aquí la historia': Ángel González en la poesía española actual', *Prosemas*, 1 (2014), pp. 246-47.

gives way to the depiction of a perplexed ‘hombre solo’ (2), as time passes around him (5-7). In this instance, time continues indifferent to the figure’s solitude, contrasted clearly with the immobility or disorientation of the ‘hombre solo’.

The speaker’s sense of unstable identity and his experience of solitude is further developed in the final section of the poem. In the second two-line segment, the speaker grounds the reader in the setting of urban Madrid, symbolised by its contemporary scale and its disorientating impact on the ‘hombre solo’. In these final abbreviated stanzas, marked again by clear punctuation, the speaker reiterates the essential solitude of the lone figure and the inescapability of his predicament. The depiction of his wandering ‘entre tranvías y reflejos’ (9-10) establishes the disorientating impact of the urban experience and heightens his sense of lost identity through the city’s scale and uniformity. The combined imagery of ‘tranvías’ (9) and ‘reflejos’ (10) mirrors the figure’s reaction to the bustle of the city (‘tranvías’) and his awareness of his own solitude, as represented through his reflection in the passing buildings and vehicles of the city (‘reflejos’).In addition, this image of the multiple ‘reflejos’ may also indicate the speaker’s perception of the slipperiness of a true sense of self and his disillusionment with his search for a stable identity.

This sense of the figure’s loss also emerges through the depiction of the relentless passing of time, contrasted with the ‘hastío’ (14) of the ‘hombre solo’. The allusion to the passing of the months in the penultimate stanza highlights this contrast, as indicated in the evocation of the passing months, in contrast with the figure’s essential solitude and stasis. In the final verse, the reference to weariness or ‘hastío’ underlines the contribution of contemporary urban life to this heightened sense of lost identity and disorientation, reflective of the collective experience of many of Spain’s contemporary urban migrants, contending both with the anonymity of city life and the struggle to make sense of their traumatic memories of the Civil War. ‘Aquí, Madrid…’, while also depicting the ‘hombre solo’ as a captivated

wanderer or *flăneur*, thus reveals a shared sense of lost identity among this generation, as shown here through the figure's reaction to the contemporary urban environment, highlighting the connection between individual and collective experience in the early poetry of González.[32]

If *Áspero mundo* reveals the rawness of González' 'testimonio existencialista' through his clear sense of lost identity and solitude in 'Aquí Madrid…', *Sin esperanza* also attests to this perception of lost identity.[33] In 'Otro tiempo vendrá distinto a éste', the speaker dwells on his commitment to the recovery and assertion of his lost identity and his vision for a future existence, centred on his hope for the recollection and communication of familial suffering and loss. While this underlying hope endures, this collection showcases the poet's struggle with identity and his difficulty in accessing his own past experience as a means of achieving a stable identity. In the poem 'Esperanza', the speaker employs the captivating metaphor of the 'araña negra' (2) as reflective of hope itself, communicating his underlying hope and positivity in the wake of his intense loss through the transformation of this outwardly menacing image. Moreover, the contrast between the use of sombre assonantal rhyme and the underlying message of 'esperanza' (1) attests clearly to a veiled hopefulness within his second collection.

As Debicki points out, *Sin esperanza* reveals a concurrent hope for the reconfiguration of identity, as seen in 'Otro tiempo vendrá...' while highlighting an increasing weariness in the face of his sense of lost identity and overwhelming solitude.[34] In 'Crisis', the speaker captures an overwhelming despair through a depiction of his existential struggle and his desire for death. In the opening section, the speaker conveys a feeling of disillusion through imagining the act of dying, marked out by the repeated use of the infinitive (3-6). Here, the resignation of the speaker becomes apparent in the short verses of the initial section, communicated through

[32] See *Poemas*, p. 17.
[33] *Poemas*, pp. 16-17.
[34] Debicki, *Spanish Poetry of the 20th Century*, p. 115.

consecutive imperatives, marked by the use of the comma and the full-stop (3-8). The matter-of-fact tone in the speaker's visualisation of death, communicated through a series of thought-out instructions, underlines his apparent resignation in the face of familial loss and the destabilisation of individual identity (5-8).

While this initial section establishes the intense loss felt by the speaker, the use of the first person in the final stanzas reveals a subjective perspective as the speaker observes his surroundings from his position of solitude. The rhythm and assonance of these final verses, as seen in the pause of '-corazón asediado por el llanto' (16), provides a sense of the speaker's complete disorientation and his consumption by the solitude of urban life. In the final verses, the speaker sets up a dichotomy between his own vitality in 'vivo' (15) and the expectation of his own death (16-17), such is his growing disillusionment with the anguish of life. Here, the speaker expects his own passing only to seemingly realise the impossibility of immediate death (17-18). Though the message of the final two lines underlines the present inaccessibility of immediate death, this poem illustrates the extent of the speaker's disorientation, capturing his experience of the destabilisation of individual identity, engendered by the effects of familial loss, the lack of direct access to his childhood memories and the solitude of his existence.

(II) Gil de Biedma: Childhood Experience, Remembering the Civil War and the Reconfiguration of Individual Identity.

If González' experience of contemporary urban life exposes a lost sense of stable identity, Gil de Biedma's poetry centres, in no small part, on the idea of conflicting identities and the lament for the impossibility of a fixed identity. In addition to the poet's exploration of the themes of love and friendship in *Compañeros de viaje* and *Moralidades*, the reader also observes a fundamental preoccupation with the notion of individual identity through a dialogue between childhood and adult experience, as identified in poems such as 'Infancia y confesiones' and

'Intento formular mi experiencia de la guerra'. In his quest for self-understanding, developed most clearly in 'Intento formular…', the poet's recollection of childhood experience moves between romantic adventure and imagination and an almost complete disavowal of his childhood identity, owing to what Alfaya calls 'su posición por encima de la asfixiante realidad española', referencing his privileged upbringing and essential separation from the childhood and adolescent suffering of his contemporaries.[35] In contrast to González' more universal experience in *Áspero mundo* and *Sin esperanza*, centred on familial loss and his ensuing disorientation, Gil de Biedma focuses on his coming-to-terms with the experience of his childhood and his search for the creation of a renewed sense of self.

Through his early poem 'Infancia y confesiones', the poet recalls his childhood experience, focusing initially on the narration of a blissful youth (1-22) before introducing a more confessional focus through his lament of Spain's collective tragedy in the final two sections (23-38).[36] In the initial narrative section, the speaker expresses his nostalgia through the use of free verse and everyday language, lending the poem the spontaneous quality of remembering, perhaps most visible in his interjection in the opening lines, marked by the use of parentheses (2-3). While undoubtedly longing for the innocence of his youth within his 'pequeño reino afortunado' (35), with the benefit of hindsight, the speaker turns his attention to the recollection of class privilege, represented through the imagery of his natural surroundings: 'Continuaba el mundo con senderos de grava, cenadores rústicos, decorado de hortensias pomposas' (18-20). Here, the speaker marks an initial disassociation from his childhood identity, drawing on his memories to highlight the social deprivation at the heart of Spanish society.

[35] *Antología poética*, p. 13.
[36] See Bagué Quílez, 'La importancia de llamarse Jaime: Identidad privada y memoria colectiva en la poesía de Jaime Gil de Biedma', *Revista de Letras Hispanoamericanas*, 31 (2016), p. 39.

In the poem's next section, beginning with 'La vida, sin embargo' (24) the speaker continues with the recollection of his awareness of Civil War suffering and brutality. In these verses, the references to reported information, through the use of the third-person plural or impersonal reflexive, emphasise a shameful recollection of ignorance, represented in the speaker's lack of awareness of the events of the Civil War. As this stanza shows, the speaker recalls his knowledge of the Civil War through reported information or 'historias penosas' (27) and the distant sound of echoing gunfire (32). In keeping with the contrite tone of this penultimate section, the speaker moves from recollection to direct confession, reflecting on his childhood experiences from the perspective of adult consciousness (35-37).[37] Here, the speaker captures his intense guilt through a series of suggestive images, communicating an almost complete disavowal of his childhood or familial identity. While the final reference to his 'propensión imposible al mito' (37) underlines his latent shame, the reference to 'mito' (37) suggests an underlying irony, highlighting the essential function of myth to the act of poetic creation while revealing a possible ambivalent relationship between the speaker and this notion of artistic creation.

In contrast to 'Infancia y confesiones', 'Intento formular…' offers a more ambivalent judgment of his childhood experience through the speaker's emphasis on nostalgic memories of adventure.[38] Prior to the evocation of his childhood adventures in stanzas three to five, the speaker reflects on the care-free nature of youth, pointing to his nostalgia in his opening reflection (2-4). Leading on from this initial reflection in stanzas one and two, the narrative focus of stanzas three and four offers an insight into this conflict of identities, visible through the initial nostalgic recollections of childhood and his ensuing acknowledgement of collective

[37] Eduardo Chirinos, 'Confesiones inconfesables; La infancia recuperada en dos poemas de Jaime Gil de Biedma', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 27 (2002), pp. 368-69. Chinos refers to the final section of 'Infancia y confesiones' as the 'third age' of the speaker, marking his almost complete disavowal of his childhood identity.

[38] Roberta Quance, 'Writing Posthumously: Jaime Gil de Biedma', *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 12 (1987), pp. 298-300.

suffering and death, most visible at the close of stanza two (16-20). In stanza three, the speaker begins his narration of a blissful childhood existence, visible in the rich description of the winter sky as 'celeste' (16) or the rural landscape as 'sonrosada' (17). This first show of ambivalence becomes apparent in verses 18 to 20 through the contrast of tranquillity and brutality, as seen in the opposition of idyllic beauty with mass extermination (16-20). Here, the reference to 'casi un millón de muertos' (20) underlines his heightened awareness of the suffering of the Civil War and the corruption of his nostalgic memories of youthful innocence.[39]

In stanzas four and five, the speaker's nostalgia for his care-free existence becomes visible while also underlining his own initial awareness of Civil War suffering and death. Specifically, these two stanzas focus both on youthful escapism and the reality of contemporary suffering, as seen most clearly in the recollection of the excursion to Segovia in stanza four. While this opposition is maintained in this instance, stanza five recalls his youthful imagination through the memory of this childhood excursion. The use of the present tense throughout this stanza establishes the significance of this recollection to the speaker, reaffirmed in the positive images of hope and natural regeneration in the opening lines (38-43). In the latter half of the stanza, the speaker recalls his childhood response to his town's 16th century 'torre de la iglesia' (46), referencing his childhood vision of Francoism as a contemporary embodiment of this earlier period of Spanish national ascendancy, captured here in his vision of 'otro tiempo mejor' (49). As Quance contends, this emphasis on the imagination of youth underlines the speaker's positive recollection of his childhood experience and his yearning for the simpler existence and identity of these formative years.[40] Finally, the reference to this experience in the rhetorical interrogative, '¿qué niño no lo acepta?' (52), captures the adventurous and imaginative spirit of childhood and his lingering attachment to the memories and experiences of his youth. By

[39] 'Un millón de muertos' references the estimated number of fallen on each side during the Spanish Civil War.
[40] See Quance, pp. 299-300.

including this rhetorical interrogative, the speaker underlines the universality of childhood innocence, encouraging an understanding and sympathy on the part of the reader.

Although this attachment to childhood adventure emerges in this penultimate stanza, the speaker quickly moves to disassociate himself from his childhood or familial identity, as his confessional reflection in the final stanza shows. In concluding the narration, the poetic voice employs the present tense, marking an unbridgeable gap between his past and present identities (53-56). Here, the unequivocal tone of the poetic voice immediately stands out, referencing a partial rejection of his past identity in favour of the creation of a renewed sense of self.[41] In keeping with 'Infancia y confesiones', 'Intento formular…' thus reveals a critical awareness of class privilege while tracing an individual journey from childhood ignorance to a more authentic view of both the world and of self. To this end, while 'Intento formular mi experiencia de la guerra' never professes a complete rejection of his childhood identity, the speaker nonetheless shows a willingness to revisit and correct his vision of the Civil War and Francoism as he initially perceived it as a child.

González and Gil de Biedma: The Search for Stable Individual Identity in Francoist Spain.

As the poets of the *Generación del '50* adapted to the realities of the imposition of official memory and socio-political unity, their poetry reveals an acknowledgement of the destabilisation of individual identity in the wake of the trauma of the Civil War and the *posguerra*. In seeking to explain this fundamental expression in the work of both authors, this chapter emphasises the relationship between memory and identity, as made clear in González' lack of recollection and Gil de Biedma's critical engagement with his recollection of Civil War

[41] See Bagué Quílez, 'La importancia de llamarse Jaime', pp. 38-39.

suffering. This preoccupation remains a point of contact between both poets, highlighting the impact of conflict and trauma on the instability of memory and individual identity.

As this chapter has shown, this focus on the construction or reconfiguration of individual identity establishes a dialogue between the individual and the collective, such is its connection to the experience of ordinary Spaniards. In the context of the ongoing trauma and suffering of the *posguerra*, both poets reveal a struggle with the destabilisation of individual identity, manifested in González' search for the reconstruction of his identity in the wake of familial loss or solitude and in the reconfiguration of individual identity in the poetry of Gil de Biedma.

Chapter III

The Culmination of the Search for Stable Identity in González and Gil de Biedma.

Following on from their respective search for a sense of stable identity in their principal works of the 1950s and 1960s, the collections of González and Gil de Biedma of the *segunda posguerra* reveal an endpoint in their search for the reconstruction or reconfiguration of identity, reflecting a realisation on the part of both poets of the (im)possibility of this lost ideal. Specifically, in González' *Tratado de urbanismo* (1967) and Gil de Biedma's *Poemas póstumos* (1968), both poets reach a tangible culmination in their search for the stabilisation of identity, owing perhaps to the opening up of Spain's culture of memory throughout this period and the gradual re-affirmation of identity on the part of ordinary Spaniards. Here, the discussion will focus on the coming-to-terms with familial loss in González and Gil de Biedma's realisation of the complexity of his individual identity and the impossibility of achieving a reconfigured sense of self.

In analysing this culmination of the search for stable identity, this analysis will focus on González' *Tratado de urbanismo* and Gil de Biedma's *Poemas póstumos* as landmark or seminal works, published at the height of 'realismo histórico' and prior to the emergence of postmodern poetry in Spain.[42] In this respect, these works mark a culmination in the search for identity in both writers, highlighted further by Gil de Biedma's questioning of the idea of stable identity and González' later turn to postmodern poetry.

With this perspective on culmination in mind, this chapter begins by exploring González' re-discovery of identity in *Tratado de urbanismo*, focusing on the recollection of Civil War suffering in 'Ciudad cero' and familial loss in 'Primera evocación'. In the case of

[42] *Poemas*, p. 21. González describes *Tratado de urbanismo* as 'el final de una etapa y de una actitud', referencing his shift from 'realismo histórico' to postmodern poetry.

Gil de Biedma, the focus will rest on the speaker's coming-to-terms with the impossibility of his reconfigured identity in *Poemas póstumos* and his ultimate acceptance of his unstable or complex identity.

(I) González: Re-discovering Memory and Identity in *Tratado de urbanismo*.

In his final collection of 'realismo histórico', González focuses on his experience and recollections of the urban environment. Throughout this collection, the speaker recalls various experiences of city life, often drawing on images of urban spaces as a means of combining social criticism and deeper ethical reflection:

> En *Tratado de urbanismo*, se funden la Historia y mi historia, los recuerdos y las vivencias personales y la contemplación crítica del panorama social en el que se produjeron.[43]

By writing poetry 'a partir de la experiencia de lo cotidiano en la ciudad', González captures his response to contemporary urban life, as observed in this dual focus on social critique and ethical reflection throughout the initial section, 'Ciudad uno'.[44] In a later section of *Tratado de urbanismo*, entitled 'Ciudad cero', perhaps referencing his native city of Oviedo and the idea of total devastation or 'ground zero', the poetic voice examines his memory of his childhood experience of the Civil War, as observed in the individual poems 'Ciudad cero' and 'Primera evocación'. While his earlier works reveal the effects of trauma on recollection and his sense of lost identity, as seen in his disorientation in *Áspero mundo*, these later poems showcase a clearer recollection of loss, reflecting an awareness of his own past experience, notably in the process of remembering in 'Primera evocación'. Though it is difficult to pin-point an exact reason for this clearer recollection

[43] *Poemas*, p. 20.
[44] *Poemas*, p. 20.

and re-discovery of identity, perhaps owing to the growing exchange of memory in Spain's cities, Jiménez Millán references 'la exploración más profunda de la memoria' within *Tratado de urbanismo*.[45] Despite the lasting effects of his experience of familial loss and suffering throughout the Civil War and the *posguerra*, 'Ciudad cero' and 'Primera evocación' point to a partial re-discovery of memory and identity on the part of the speaker.[46]

In his analysis of the depiction of the city in *Tratado de urbanismo,* Bagué Quílez emphasises the speaker's urban surroundings as a vehicle for his enhanced historical understanding, leading to the resultant re-discovery of his own memory of his childhood experiences. For the critic, the contemporary city, through its testimony to loss and suffering, inspires or draws out memories of the Civil War conflict, thus allowing the speaker a growing knowledge of his own experience.[47] In the poem, 'Ciudad cero', the speaker provides an insight into his childhood perspective on the destruction of his urban environment. As this poem moves from an image of the partial ignorance of his childhood perspective to an understanding of the meaning of his experience, the speaker comes to better understand the nature of the generational experience of the Civil War and that of collective suffering.[48]

In his initial reflections of verses 1 to 9, the speaker establishes the starkness of this situation through the use of abbreviated stanzas and defined punctuation, situating the reader within this moment of loss and suffering in 'aquellos dos años' (3). In moving from reflection to recollection, the speaker recounts a series of childhood experiences, captured

[45] Antonio Jiménez Millán, '*Tratado de urbanismo* de Ángel González', *Cahiers d'études romanes,* 19 (2008), p. 82.
[46] Jorge Rodríguez Padrón, 'Ángel González: *Tratado de urbanismo*', *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos,* 216 (1967), p. 680.
[47] Bagué Quílez, 'No acaba aquí la historia', pp. 247-48.
[48] 'No acaba aquí la historia', p. 247.

through the consecutive images and run-on lines of the first principal stanza. In this stanza, through such use of run-on-lines and fragmented imagery, the reader gains a sense of the speaker's process of remembering, visible in the combination of care-free childhood moments in 'suspensión de las clases escolares' or 'Isabelita en bragas en el sótano' (10-11) with a series of more negative experiences. As the speaker remembers his childhood experience, the images emerge as largely fragmented, lacking any overarching connecting thread to bind them together. This fragmentation, indicated in the use of the run-on-lines and the ellipsis (32-33), reinforces the partial or scattered nature of his memory of the Civil War.

In moving from this recollection to reflection in the second and third stanzas, the poetic voice now appears to grasp the full meaning of his experience, relating his memory of 'miedo' 'ira' and 'ganas de llorar' (40-43). Having witnessed and recalled these events of suffering and loss, the speaker now remembers them for their reflection of collective fear and suffering, indicating the traumatic nature of these recollections for the speaker and his belated experience of trauma. As he acknowledges these realities of 'miedo' 'ira' and 'ganas de llorar' in the final stanza, the speaker comes to better understand the experience of the collective loss of the Civil War from the position of adult reflection, highlighting his later processing of trauma and a renewed sense of understanding of this experience. To this effect, 'Ciudad cero' reveals how the speaker obtains a deeper knowledge of the nature of Civil War loss and suffering and of the experience of the generation of his parents.

In 'Ciudad cero', the reader thus gains a sense of the speaker's belated experience of the trauma. Here, the poetic voice reveals the coming of this trauma as an adult and his subsequent understanding of the widespread suffering and loss of his parents' generation, as experienced 'años más tarde' (38). As Payeras Grau contends, this belated experience of trauma, as indicated in the short verses of this final stanza, reflects the experience of

many ordinary Spaniards throughout this period as they make sense of the suffering and conflict of their childhood during the *segunda posguerra*.[49]

In keeping with this enhanced understanding of his Civil War experience in 'Ciudad cero', 'Primera evocación' offers a further insight into the speaker's way of dealing with the past. In this poem, the poetic voice provides an intimate reflection on his recollection of his mother's life, expanding on her thoughts through his memory of her fear of storms and the coming of violence (7-8). While the poem highlights the suffering and death of his mother during the Civil War, (36-40), 'Primera evocación' also demonstrates his process of remembering, revealed through the use of form and the repetition of 'recuerdo' (1,15), demonstrating his confrontation with this traumatic experience. In this struggle to confront and access this experience of loss, 'Primera evocación' marks the clearest recollection of past experience in González' poetry while also revealing a sense of a more stable identity. For the reader, this evocation and understanding of his past experience offers a hopeful message, despite the loss and suffering endured by the speaker during the Civil War.[50]

In this most personal of poems in *Tratado de urbanismo*, the speaker begins by recalling his memory of his mother in the first stanza. Here, the poetic voice remembers the figure of his mother, reflecting the associative process of remembering through the use of enjambment and the sudden shift from her physical description to the memory of her fear of 'los truenos y las guerras' (4-8). The repetition of 'recuerdo' (15) as an isolated line reinforces this ongoing process of remembering within the second stanza, reaffirmed through the mention of 'por otra parte' in verse 24. In the second stanza, the poetic voice

[49] Payeras Grau, p. 23.
[50] Andrew Debicki, 'Transformations and Perspective in the Poetry of Ángel González', *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 6 (1981), p. 14.

recalls his childhood reaction to the experience of the storm, evoked through the imitation of the sound of the wind in 'el viento se llevaba silbando' (17-18) and 'el trueno tronaba' (24-25). In this stanza, the 'viento' and 'trueno' (17-27) provide the basis for the speaker's memory of his mother, showcasing his clearer recollection of his earliest experiences.

In the following stanza, the speaker captures his own irretrievable loss as a result of the Civil War. In this stanza, the poetic voice alludes to his familial loss during this period, drawing on the symbol of the 'huellas de la sangre' (37) to communicate this suffering, seemingly impermeable in the face of the usual cleansing power of the 'lluvia' (36). While the death of his mother is not made explicit in the repetition of 'perdido' and 'muerto' (38-40), the speaker is nonetheless able to acknowledge this reality. Having come to understand this experience of his familial loss of the Civil War, the speaker is able to access this memory of his mother, as seen in his reference to the 'viento' (43) and its reminder of the destruction and brutality of this period. Despite this veiled reference to the source of his own trauma in the repetition of 'perdido' and 'muerto', this sense of the speaker's understanding of his earliest memories attests to his more stable sense of identity.

In the final stanza, the poetic voice reflects on the pervasiveness of contemporary conflict and the role of such conflict in triggering an understanding of his experience of Civil War loss (55-57).[51] Here, the speaker creates an ironic distance between the media portrayal of war as 'lejos y pequeña' (57) and his understanding of the realities of war, thus consolidating his sense of identity through this connection between his experience and that of contemporary civilians in other parts of the world. Moreover, by choosing to reject this media depiction of global conflict (57), the poetic voice chooses to accept his mother's preoccupation with the brutality and suffering wrought by war. By incorporating this moral

[51] The speaker may be referencing the coverage of the Vietnam War during the late 1960s.

lesson into his own beliefs, the speaker is able to keep his mother's memory alive, thus consolidating his own identity. This ability to learn from his mother's beliefs underlines an understanding of his past experience and his sense of a more stable identity, arising from this more direct access to his earliest memories.

While this evocation of his mother's life reveals a deeply tragic story, 'Primera evocación' signals the speaker's understanding of his past experience, differing markedly from his disorientation and lack of recollection in *Áspero mundo*. As the poetic voice comes to recall his experience of loss, perhaps triggered by his awareness of contemporary conflict (55-60), 'Primera evocación' highlights his process of remembering and his tangible recollection of his family life, indicating a renewed sense of identity, arising from an enhanced understanding of his earliest memories. Despite the confirmation of the speaker's loss, *Tratado de urbanismo* reveals an underlying hopefulness, reflected in the speaker's more direct access to his memories and his enhanced sense of identity, as shown in 'Primera evocación'.[52]

(II) Gil de Biedma: The Impossibility of Stable Identity in *Poemas póstumos.*

As discussed in the previous chapter, Gil de Biedma's preoccupation with individual identity centres on his search for the consolidation of a reconfigured identity, as seen in the critical engagement with his past in 'Intento formular mi experiencia de la guerra'. While González focuses on the reconstruction of identity through his coming-to-terms with familial loss, Gil de Biedma rethinks his past in 'Intento formular…' as a means of reconfiguring his own identity through his memory of lived Civil War experience, underlining his understanding of Civil War suffering. Though 'Intento formular..' captures the speaker's hope for the consolidation of this reconfigured identity, *Poemas póstumos*

[52] Jiménez Millán, p. 88.

highlights the speaker's acceptance of his contradictory or multi-faceted identity, manifested through his acknowledgement and relationship with his poetic or intellectual self.[53] In contrast to the hope for the reconfiguration of identity in *Moralidades*, *Poemas póstumos* reveals both an initial resentment and tacit acceptance of the impossibility of this reconfigured identity.[54]

In the poem 'Contra Jaime Gil de Biedma', the speaker establishes a contrast between his renewed sense of self as a 'compañero de viaje' and his poetic or intellectual self, characterised by recklessness, flamboyance and indulgence. According to Margaret H. Persin, 'Contra Jaime Gil de Biedma' reveals a struggle between these two identities, exposing the speaker's dependence on this poetic or intellectual identity and his inability to fully assert his reconfigured identity, thus introducing the complex notion of a split self.[55] This poem thereby shows the speaker's coming-to-terms with the complexity of his self and his acceptance of the impossibility of fixed identity through the examination of his poetic or intellectual self.

In 'Contra Jaime Gil de Biedma', the speaker openly confronts this bourgeois or intellectual facet of the self, introducing this figure in the first stanza through the use of the pronoun 'tú' (7). Here, the emphasis rests on an analysis of this facet of the self, manifested in the condemnation and reflection of the subsequent four stanzas. Through this first stanza, marked by a varied metre and a conversational style, the speaker considers his relationship with this other facet of his self, highlighting his frustration in the shift of tone in 'si vienes tú, luego, pelmazo' (7). The image created in the final verses of this stanza of 'un embarazoso huésped' (8) underlines an initial depiction of 'self' and 'other', introducing

[53] *Antología poética*, p. 26.
[54] Pere Rovira, 'La voz ensimismada de *Poemas póstumos'*, *Revista Litoral*, 163 (1985), pp. 122-23.
[55] Margaret H. Persin, 'Self as Other in Jaime Gil de Biedma's *Poemas póstumos'*, *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, 12 (1987), p. 278.

the complex concept of a split self.[56] Through his use of a conversational style and direct imagery, the speaker expresses his resentment of this 'other' while seeking to distance himself from this facet of his self (8-11).

In keeping with this idea of confrontation, stanzas two and three trace a recollection of the various social infractions of this other facet of the self. In the second and third stanzas, the tone is one of frustration as the speaker reproaches this figure for his reckless public image in stanza two or his general abandon or 'desenfado' (24) in stanza three, communicated through run-on lines, highlighting both his exasperation and resentment (24-30). While the poem comprises a condemnation on the part of the speaker until this point, verses 31 to 33 reveal a direct confrontation through the response of this other facet of the self and his promise of self-improvement. The interjection on the part of this 'other' self, underlined through 'llorar' and 'prometer' (32-33), heralds a shift from condemnation to reflection, showcasing the speaker's coming-to-terms with this facet of himself.

Throughout the final two stanzas, the speaker reveals an ambivalent relationship with this aspect of the self, acknowledging his feelings of dependence and resentment.[57] In the penultimate stanza, the tone turns to confusion as the poetic voice considers his relationship with this facet of his self (34-37). Here, the speaker describes this intellectual or bourgeois facet of the self as both 'débil' and 'fuerte', drawing attention to his feelings of reliance and resentment, reiterated through the hesitation of the ellipsis (36-37). Though this confusion pervades this penultimate section, the final stanza reveals the speaker's coming-to-terms with the presence of this 'other' self, as suggested in the tone of tacit acceptance, indicated in his reference to 'impotencia', underlining his own sense of fatigue

[56] Persin, 'Self as Other' pp. 278-82. Persin uses the terms 'self' and 'other' as a means of describing the relationship between the speaker and this 'other' facet of his self.
[57] Persin, p. 282.

in previously resisting this realisation. To this effect, 'Contra Jaime Gil de Biedma' reveals a coming-to-terms with the impossibility of a stable sense of identity in light of the significance of this 'other' facet of the self to his overall identity.

If 'Contra Jaime Gil de Biedma' underlines the speaker's dependence on this 'other' facet of the self, 'De *vita beata*' draws attention to his acceptance of this complex identity. In the title of this poem, the speaker references a work of the same name by the stoic philosopher, Seneca, written to emphasise the stoic principles of indifference and complete harmony with nature as central to a fulfilled existence.[58] Here, the poetic voice reveals this tension between the possibility of the idyllic existence of the 'vita beata' and his own intellectuality and politically committed stance. In this sense, this poem deals with the speaker's acknowledgement of the complexity of his identity and the acceptance of this tension between his intellectual self and his renewed self-image as a 'compañero de viaje'.

From the opening of this poem, the speaker offers an image of a contemporary idyllic existence, reflective of the sheltered lives of Spain's upper classes during the *posguerra* while also engaging with the trope of *alabanza de aldea* or the idealised depiction of natural tranquillity and isolation (1-4). While these opening lines seem to depict a general or impersonal setting, the later reference to his own situation in verse 8 allows the reader to place the poetic voice within this setting of 'España entre dos guerras civiles' (2-3).[59] Here, the speaker describes the contemporary reality of this indifferent existence, removed from the preoccupations and memory of modern society ('memoria ninguna') (5). Nonetheless, by situating the reader within this period of 'España entre dos

[58] Given Seneca's Spanish heritage (he was born in Córdoba in the 1st century AD), these attitudes of indifference and harmony with nature were traditionally viewed as established Spanish virtues.
[59] See Tiffany D. Gagliardi, '*Poemas póstumos* por Jaime Gil de Biedma: Un retrato de su último fracaso', *Espéculo*, 25 (2003), n.p.

guerras civiles', the reader quickly understands the inaccessibility of this contemporary 'vita beata' to the speaker.

In the second half of the poem, beginning 'no leer, no sufrir…' (5-6), this idea of the impossibility of this 'vita beata' is reaffirmed to the reader. In verses five and six, the speaker presents the various features of this stoic or idyllic existence, focusing once more on the idea of tranquillity and separation from society.[60] While the poetic voice examines the idea of this 'vita beata', the final lines indicate the impossibility of this existence for the speaker, such is the complexity of his identity. In this sense, for the speaker, this 'vita beata' would go against his own sense of self, leading to his own desolation, as indicated in the repetition of 'arruinado' and 'ruinas' (7-8). Hence, in engaging with this idea of the 'vita beata', the speaker comes to understand the significance of both his intellectuality and his committed social stance to his overall sense of self. Thus, in building on the discussion in 'Contra Jaime Gil de Biedma', this poem underlines the poetic voice's acceptance of his complex identity and the impossibility of a sense of a stable or fixed identity.

As both these poems illustrate, *Poemas póstumos* captures the culmination of the speaker's struggle for a stable identity, leading on from the earlier poem, 'Intento formular mi experiencia de la guerra'. Despite the previous emphasis on the search for a stable identity, *Poemas póstumos* underlines his acceptance of the complexity of his individual identity, foregrounding the significance of his renewed sense of self as a 'compañero de viaje' and the centrality of his bourgeois or intellectual identity to his overall self-conception.

González and Gil de Biedma: Concluding the Search for Stable Identity.

[60] See discussion on 'De *vita beata*' in Gagliardi, n.p.

In their final works of 'realismo histórico', González and Gil de Biedma conclude their search for a sense of stable identity, arising from their experience or awareness of the events of the Civil War. While this search differs markedly in the work of both authors, centred on the reconstruction of lost identity through memory in González or the reconfiguration of an individual sense of self in Gil de Biedma, both writers acquire a heightened awareness of the possibility or otherwise of a fixed sense of self.

As poets striving for a more stable identity, both González and Gil de Biedma reach an end point in their search for the stabilisation of individual identity, as highlighted in González' subsequent turn to postmodern poetry and Gil de Biedma's realisation of the impossibility of a stable identity. For this reason, this search for the stabilisation of identity, while fundamentally different in both poets, finds its ultimate expression in *Tratado de urbanismo* and *Poemas póstumos*, reflective of an underlying preoccupation throughout their works of the *posguerra*.

Conclusion

As perhaps the two most representative poets of the *Generación del '50*, González and Gil de Biedma each address a range of intimate themes, drawn from their lived experience and their own search for meaning in the wake of the loss of the Civil War and *posguerra*.[61] Through their shared engagement with 'realismo histórico', González and Gil de Biedma engage in a personal reflection on the difficulties of a specific historical moment, in contrast to the more openly political poetry of the earlier 'poesía social'.[62] In building on the concept of loss within the *Generación del '50*, this dissertation has drawn close attention to a concern with lost or destabilised identity in the poetry of González and Gil de Biedma and their search for fixed identity throughout their principal works of 'realismo histórico'.

In summary, this dissertation has sought to bring to the fore a shared preoccupation with the stabilisation of identity in the poetry of González and Gil de Biedma while revealing the connection between memory and identity, as seen in the work of both poets. By way of this reading, the analysis has facilitated a deeper understanding of the thematic similarities between both poets while also allowing for a comparison of their stylistic techniques in conveying this sense of a lost or fragmented identity. Through the study of this search for the stabilisation of identity, this analysis has also cast light on the contemporary preoccupation with the reconstruction or reconfiguration of identity within the wider generation of the 'niños de la guerra' through an analysis of the connection between memory and identity within their respective collections.

In building on the exploration of this thematic connection between the poetry of González and Gil de Biedma, this discussion of identity may also be developed through the

[61] *Poemas*, p. 17.
[62] Debicki, *Spanish Poetry of the 20th Century*, pp. 104-05.

exploration of González' concern with lost identity in collections such as *Grado elemental* (1963) or in the analysis of his disillusionment with his search for a fixed identity in his postmodern works, most notably in *Procedimientos narrativos* (1972). Similarly, it may be worth exploring Gil de Biedma's considerations on the complexities of his identity in his earlier collections or essayistic writings, such as in *El pie de la letra* (1980). In addition, with regards to the study of memory and identity in the wider *Generación de '50*, it may be useful to draw on Herzberger's theory of the 'novel of memory' and its focus on the process of remembering and identity formation during the *posguerra*. This overarching concept would facilitate further exploration of the preoccupation with identity formation in the collections of various poets, highlighting their respective preoccupations with identity formation or reconfiguration, as visible in the works of Carlos Sahagún or José Ángel Valente.[63]

By adopting a panoramic perspective on the poetry of González and Gil de Biedma, this dissertation has explored their preoccupation with the stabilisation of identity, as seen in González' search for the reconstruction of identity through access to his childhood memory and Gil de Biedma's reconfiguration of his bourgeois identity through his critical engagement with his memory of the Civil War. In doing so, it has addressed the connected concepts of lost collective and individual identity and the importance of the search for a stable identity in the work of both poets. Most significantly, this dissertation has cast light on the connection between the poetry of González and Gil de Biedma and the contemporary 'niños de la guerra' through their desire for the stabilisation of identity throughout the Spanish *posguerra*.

[63] For discussion on the 'novel of memory', see David Herzberger, 'Narrating the Past: History and the Novel of Memory in Post-War Spain', *PMLA*, 106 (1991), pp. 37-39.

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