



Jaime Gil de Biedma's literary diaries: queerness,
colonialism and illness in Franco's Spain and beyond
(1956-1985)



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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This dissertation studies the way Jaime Gil de Biedma conceptualises his own identity in his *Diarios 1956-1985*, the complete edition of his personal diaries. This project establishes the construction of the author's identity in his life-writing works in connection to sexuality, colonialism and illness in Spain. Gil de Biedma (1929-1990) was an influential Spanish poet whose diaries represent an example of the finest autobiographical literature. This is a rare case of a Spanish author who provides a complex picture of what it was to be a gay intellectual in Spain and the Philippines during Francoism through life-writing. In addition, Gil de Biedma is one of the few Spanish authors to write extensively about his experience as an AIDS patient. By close reading a selection of fragments of the author's diaries, as well as part of his poetry and essays, this study exposes the connections between sexuality, colonialism, and illness in the author's autobiographical writing. This study claims that, in the nearly thirty years that his diaries span, Gil de Biedma's strategies of representation of his own self are structured around the three symbolic axes of sexual desire, the colonial Other and illness, all of which are interconnected, thus showing a similar evolution towards a detached, cynical view of reality. In youth the author shows a fascination with the slums, coupled with an idealistic political and sexual outlook and an optimistic view of his diseased self. As he matures, Gil de Biedma's thought and self-representation trajectory follows a more conservative trend. This dissertation shows Gil de Biedma's journey in life-writing moves from dandy to camp, from exotic chameleon to postcolonial capital owner and from the little ill bourgeois to the willingly-unnamed illness sufferer that put an end to his self.

Contents

Introduction	5
Chapter One: <i>Quand Gil de Biedma n'aime rien...</i> sexual tribulations of a homosentimental dandy.....	10
1.1. Common diaries and heavenly poetry	10
1.2. The camp and the dandy: masculinity and class in Gil de Biedma's diaries	19
Chapter Two: A fundamental feeling of strangeness: movement, cosmopolitanism and colonialism in Gil de Biedma's diaries.	28
2.1. Gil de Biedma: a European cosmopolitan	28
2.2. What is cosmopolitanism.....	30
2.3. Origins of cosmopolitanism in the author	33
2.4. The Philippines: a pleasant exile?.....	35
2.5. The different facets of cosmopolitanism in the diaries (economic, cultural, political)	38
2.6. Friendships and lovers: Filipino and Spanish people in Gil de Biedma's diary	41
Chapter Three: Gil de Biedma: queerly ill and bourgeois.....	46
3.1. Physical illness and writing: tuberculosis, poetry and the young Proustian bourgeois	48
3.2. AIDS: the end of the plot.....	52
3.2.1. The order of the AIDS discourse.....	53
3.2.2. The illness that dare not speak its name.....	59
Conclusion	66
Bibliography	70

Introduction

Jaime Gil de Biedma is one of Spain's most popular and acclaimed poets of the second half of the twentieth century. Despite the brevity of his poetical output, which he decided to bring to a halt in 1964, Gil de Biedma had a considerable influence on modern Spanish poetry and the generations that followed him. His personal diaries have, however, not yet received the academic attention they deserve, with the exception of the work of Richmond Ellis (1997) and David Vilaseca (2001). This dissertation builds on their work by establishing for the first time the connections between the poet's literary work and his life by examining Jaime Gil de Biedma's diaries through three different, yet complementary, lenses: sexuality, colonialism and illness. These three themes are pervasive throughout the whole of the author's life and work. The approach adopted here centres on the analysis of the use of life-writing as a tool to create and develop the author's identity. It could be argued that the author's life was typically bourgeois and privileged; while this tells one part of the biographical story, this dissertation will analyse Gil de Biedma's personal and literary trajectory, in an attempt to establish the ways the author adhered, confronted and integrated the different sides to his identity.

Gil de Biedma spent his younger years in Barcelona, but he always kept a strong connection with his family's origins in the Castilian village of Nava de la Asunción, where he was born. Later the author lived for some time in Oxford to improve his English and embark upon a course in Economics. According to Carlos Barral, the author's best lifelong friend, the true reason behind his English sojourn was rather to live out a dream (Barral, 2010), the dream of becoming an English gentleman. From that point onwards, Jaime Gil de Biedma considered England his "second country" (2010, p. 98). The author then travelled around Europe while reading the best of French and English literature, which subsequently had a large impact on his writing. Later on, his job at Tabacos de Filipinas (also called la Tabacalera), the Spanish company owned and managed by the author's family in the Philippines, allowed him to explore life outside Europe. He finally spent some time in Paris, being treated for conditions related to AIDS, before returning to Spain to die.

The principal corpus consists of Gil de Biedma's diaries, as edited by Andreu Jaume in the 2017 edition of *Diarios (1956-1985)*. This is complemented with other sources such as Gil de Biedma's correspondence, poetry and essays. All of this material permits this dissertation to offer a view of the author that transcends the most traditional lyrical studies popular in the Hispanic academia. For instance, some of the most recent studies about Gil de Biedma, such as the ones published by Payeras Grau (2020) or Iglesias Arellano (2021), focus on the poetical aspects of the author's work, albeit pointing at rather interesting issues of the self, identity and affection. This dissertation approaches those very themes from a life-writing point of view, thus contextualising them within the diaristic, poetic and essayistic production of Gil de Biedma. Additionally, Sánchez Zapatero (2020), in his paper about the author's biopic "El consul de Sodoma", analyses the cinematographic representation of Gil de Biedma's life in the film, which was mainly based on Dalmau's (2004) biography of the poet. This dissertation, however, nuances these current approaches in the literature, providing an all-encompassing perspective of both his life and work based on Gil de Biedma's life-writing production and complemented with his poetry and essays.

This thesis argues that Gil de Biedma's use of life-writing is paradigmatic of how different facets of the self are created and developed in autobiographical literature. Diaries have the potential to allow us enquire about subjectivities and relationships (Summerfield, 2019), which is the main objective of this research. Following Summerfield's study on the use of diaries as a historical tool, this work is predicated on the idea that one cannot understand the self in isolation, but rather as a phenomenon "embedded within a network of social relations and intellectual discourses" (Summerfield, 2019, p.62). The use of diaries as a tool for understanding personal histories and, hence, the development of ideas around sexuality and illness in a certain historical period, gives us an insight into the author's life journey.

By revealing three of the pillars on which Gil de Biedma built his self, this study shows how sexuality, class and colonialism and illness are interconnected in the author's life and work. This study demonstrates that the analysis of the intersection of those three spheres of life in Gil de Biedma's diaries provides an extraordinary insight into the variety of experiences of LGBTQ+ people during Francoism and the Spanish transition to democracy, highlighting the role of social privilege and illness to determine the experiences and perspectives of life for a gay individual such as Gil de Biedma. By carrying out a critical reading of the author's life writing, not only in

connection to lyrical values, as has most traditionally been the case in the Spanish academia, but, most importantly, with regards to a historical and cultural perspective. Following the steps of David Vilaseca or Robert Richmond Ellis, this dissertation offers an innovative reading of Gil de Biedma's life-writing production, involving the fields of Hispanic literature, medical humanities, history and politics.

Following those three main aspects of identity, this research poses the following questions:

1. What is the author's understanding of sexuality, how it is represented in his diaries and how is that mediated by his socioeconomical and historical context?
2. What is Gil de Biedma's relationship to Spanish colonialism and how is that interconnected with the notions of sexuality and class?
3. How does the poet conceptualise his own illnesses and how does his thinking vary through the axes of time, sexuality and class?

The themes of these main questions follow the ones the author approaches in his diaries. They have resonance, if not clear implications, in every single one of those fields and beyond. Gil de Biedma does not hesitate to reflect on a myriad of different topics; he narrates his life in his diaries, from his favourite books to his encounters with friends, family, lovers or sexual partners, political positions and philosophical ruminations. Such stories offer a unique depiction of the writer's life-affirming experience: it shows his political transformation, the development of his sexual life (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p.16), his doubts and fears, his illnesses. It is the process of writing that becomes Gil de Biedma's tool to make sense of the world around him. We cannot find just one Gil de Biedma but rather a plethora of fragments of his self – showing the dynamism and partiality of the process of finding identity. Nonetheless, his experience becomes extemporal, sharing features of a biography and a fiction piece (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p.16), thus being able to modulate his exploration of identity.

Truth does not concern Gil de Biedma in his diaristic journey, or indeed this dissertation, for it is a concept that pertains to a different realm. Lacan suggested that the terms person and persona have taken a value of unity, which is "affirmed in being" (Lacan, 2006, p. 562). Because of the external united appearance, when we talk about the subject, about the person, it is easy to be misguided by ideas such as truth or wholeness, which are at any rate impossible to achieve. This goes beyond the mere etymological anecdote, pointing instead to the ambiguous process of

conceptualising a unity out of the split subject (Lacan, 2006, p. 562). Gil de Biedma, through the process of writing his diaries, strove to represent his identity as a whole, using morality as a mould to which he intended to adapt.

Diaries as a genre are worth studying because of their intersectionality between “form and historical context” (Paperno, 2004, p. 563). They are both a literary and a historical activity, history made by its players. In addition, diaries follow a number of epistemological categories that define human existence: “subjectivity, temporality and private-public” (Paperno, 2004, p.571). Gil de Biedma’s very own poetics aspire to create “una relación significativa entre un hombre concreto y el mundo en el que vive” in order to make our lives “un poco más inteligible[s], un poco más humana[s]”. (2018, 571). In using the diaries, Gil de Biedma is formalising that relationship, contrasting his specific self with the world around himself, glimpsing at some understanding about his own human life.

Chapter One will explore Gil de Biedma’s journey through the writing of his diaries in order to add to our knowledge of the life of some homosexual men in Spain. Gil de Biedma’s diaries offer plenty of insights into the subject of his sexuality. His position is often ironic and sceptical, yet Gil de Biedma embraces his homosexuality with no apologies. He is open and articulate about his sexual orientation, without signs of remorse or discomfort, despite the oppressive atmosphere in Spain at the time. The author describes himself not as homosexual, understood as having sexual interest in the same sex, but rather as homosentimental (2017a, 159), i.e., interested in the affection of the same sex, with the emphasis on feelings. He cannot imagine being in love with someone of the female sex, as he argues that would entail a full rearrangement of his mental and sentimental world. Gil de Biedma is taking inspiration from his favourite literature: on the one hand, the sensitivity of French poets, such as Baudelaire, by using desire to establish communication with oneself (Gil de Biedma, 2017, p. 16); on the other hand, his love for English and American literature, such as T.S. Eliot or Langbaun.

In addition, Gil de Biedma was a fierce critic of the Spanish (post)colonialism in the Philippines: “España era un país enfermo, enquistado en sí mismo, y fue un amo tiránico y un explotador tan cruel como incompetente” (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p.170). Even though his family’s company, Tabacos de Filipinas, was a colonialist venture, and despite the fact that he became one of the key managers in the company, Gil de Biedma’s diaries contain a fierce criticism of the

situation in the island. With his characteristic sharp eye for the contradictions of Spain, he criticises how Spaniards do not realise how racist they can be (Gil de Biedma, 2017a). At the same time, he professes a romantic view of the Philippines, with some peculiar ideas, which may now seem downright racist, such as: “un país donde las entrepieernas no apestan a rancio y nadie huele a sobaquina” (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 166). Chapter Two explores the way Jaime Gil de Biedma presents this very own relationship to otherness and foreignness, and how this intersects with the Spanish and Anglo-Saxon approach to gender and homosexuality.

Encompassing the fields of colonialism and sexuality, Chapter Three analyses Gil de Biedma’s experiences of illness, especially of tuberculosis and AIDS, thus examining the author’s narrative of illness and how the process of construction of the self is affected by such experience. Gil de Biedma suffered from different conditions throughout his life, which he explored at length in his diaries. In the first instance, ill with tuberculosis in 1957, Gil de Biedma seems positive in the face of illness, studying how his own body and his perception of time changes when ill. Comparing himself with Marcel Proust and his image of the sick little bourgeois (2017a, 248), Gil de Biedma uses his own illness as a chance to explore how human perception of the passing of time works and how that has an impact on the perception of self against others. He includes ideas on physical change, from the superficial like his putting on weight or the fluctuations of his sexual appetite, to the most profound ideas about the changes of his relationship with family and friends.

In the life journey of Gil de Biedma, there is a dialectical process of change and adaption of the author’s thought and action, conditioned by the social environment he sees himself in. His self in the Philippines is different to the one in Spain, in a variety of aspects and registers: his job, his love life, his health. Mainly, we are seeing in writing the development of a young, gay writer’s life under the historical frame of Francoism. It is a process where we can see the pull of a conservative background and an upper-class upbringing against the tide of an open, reflective and cosmopolitan mind who deeply disagrees with the common ideas and preconceptions of the Spanish society. In this journey, there are several spheres coming into play, overlapping and intersecting at various points, which include concepts such as gender, emigration, colonialism and illness. This dissertation sheds light on those main concepts and their intersection to place Jaime Gil de Biedma’s personal story into a wider historical and social perspective.

Chapter One: *Quand Gil de Biedma n'aime rien...* sexual tribulations of a homosentimental dandy.

“Quand je n'aime rien, je ne suis rien” (Gil de Biedma, 2010, p. 47)

In the first few lines of his diary “Retrato del Artista en 1956”, Gil de Biedma declares his tendency towards order, parallelism; in other words, in his attempt to create the subject of his diaries he arranges a story using his own life (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 69). “La felicidad de controlar los hechos” (2017a, p. 70), as the author puts it, is already pointing at the core of his diaristic narrative. For Gil de Biedma will make it his lifelong project to use life-writing as a means to structure his life experience; this will become obvious especially towards the end of his life (cf. Chapter Three). Yet this morally ambitious project revolves around the hedonistic side of Gil de Biedma’s life. Perhaps the only possible side, for, as expressed in the introductory quote to this chapter, Gil de Biedma is indeed nothing, unless he loves someone/something. Putting love in order could be a way to summarise the first section of “Diario del artista en 1956”, called “Las islas de Circe”. As Richmond Ellis points out in his study about gay autobiography, “[Las islas de Circe] focuses on the self in relation to the other in the context of gay sexuality” (Richmond Ellis, 1997, p. 61). The encounter between the narrative self, the subject and the exotic other, understood in all its possibilities of social class, race and illness, is at the heart of Gil de Biedma’s diaries. “Las islas de Circe” portrays the sexual experimentation that the gay self undergoes when free from the conventions and constraints of the birthplace. The current chapter of this dissertation will analyse the author’s gay, male self in relation with the social, economic and political contingencies surrounding the writing task. By exploring and dissecting the ways Jaime Gil de Biedma subjectivises the self within the parameters of sexual desire and the historical context of Spain and the Philippines in 1956, this section sheds light onto the complicated connections between the author’s narrative self, his sexuality and his social class background.

1.1. Common diaries and heavenly poetry

“Ni pasión de una noche dormida
que pueda compararla
con la pasión que da el conocimiento,
los años de experiencia
de nuestro amor.”

(Gil de Biedma, 2017b, p.158)

In the life and writings of Jaime Gil de Biedma there is a tension between a yearning for human contact and a degree of isolation, which is really not unheard of in the world of art and literature. This tension is conditioned by the historical and social context Gil de Biedma had to deal with. Indeed, the author's place in society, including his upbringing in an upper-class family, his executive, colonial role in relation with the Philippines, his early communist sympathies and his open yet ambiguous sexuality are but some areas of contention in his literary and personal identity. This section will explore in particular the connection between Gil de Biedma's literary project, both poetical and narrative, and his sexual identity, within the framework of his philosophical ideas about love and literature. By examining the author's underlying ideas about romantic and sexual relationships, this section contextualises those attitudes in Gil de Biedma's historical and cultural context, whilst also paving the way for next section's analysis of the impact of social class in the author's sexuality. The interplay between desire and society gives a picture of the lives of upper-class gay people in Spain in the 1950s and the ways they subjectivise their own sexuality within society's constraints.

Sex, sexuality and love are principal themes in Gil de Biedma's works. An important part of his early diaristic writings is dedicated to narrating his sexual desires and encounters, as for instance we can see throughout the first chapter of *Diario del artista en 1956*, where he narrates his identity by describing his relation with his acquaintances in Manila and Spain. One of Gil de Biedma's aims when setting out to write a diary, possibly influenced by his knowledge of British literature, was to practise his writing skills. The author soon after realised that diary writing could work as a useful tool to impose certain moral ideas onto himself. In addition to the general exotic theme, which will be explored in depth in Chapter Two, a big part of his diary deals with the theme of love and sexuality. Firstly, from an identitarian point of view, Gil de Biedma describes himself as being homosentimental, a term that will be explored further in the next section of this chapter in relation with ideas of class and secrecy, but that, according to Richmond Ellis, involves "an emotional, as opposed to an exclusively sexual predilection for the masculine" (1997, p. 61-62). Nonetheless, it is also true that the sexual identity gives precedence to the literary one: Gil de Biedma defines himself as a poet, over and above any other label (Richmond Ellis, 1997).

From an identitarian point of view, Gil de Biedma insisted on pointing out that literature and, in particular, poetry is a way of "inventing an identity" (Pérez Escobedo, 2015, p. 66). The

author, in his essay *Poética* (Gil de Biedma, 2018), admittedly from a novelistic point of view, refused the idea of merging the author and the narrator in his poetry, rather choosing to make a distinction between the poetic voice, which would engage in a relationship with the common experience expressed by the poem, and the writer, who should take a distance from the narrative of the poem.

David Vilaseca complicates, however, these (anti-)identitarian notions by insisting that the whole point of Gil de Biedma's diary is to establish "the place where the subject sticks out as the 'empty cause' of his/her own (self-)determination by the social and symbolic network" (2003, p. 310). In practice, this implies that the subject in Gil de Biedma's diaries does not have access to his truth or uniqueness, for instance his being a poet. The author is using the process of diary writing, rather than as a re-presentational endeavour, as a way to become the intellectual that he was always set on becoming from an early age (Vilaseca, 2003). Gil de Biedma says: "mi vida ha estado y está determinada desde los diecinueve años por la idea fija de que yo era, de que yo he de ser poeta" (2017a, p. 147). Immediately prior to said declaration, he also admits that "durante años he aspirado a ser un gran poeta" (2017a, p. 147). As David Vilaseca shows, and as will be explored further in Chapter Three when discussing notions of illness, there is a certain pre-determination, a "'Moebius-strip' type of effect" (2003, p. 316) whereby the narrator's "true" self is structured as a message from the Other, which in this case would be his friends (writers, philosophers, intellectuals) who already address him in 1956 as a poet (Vilaseca, 2003, p. 316). This will be complicated once Gil de Biedma contracts tuberculosis (cf. Chapter Three). Thus, under the apparent mask of the day-to-day lawyer, the deeper truth about Gil de Biedma's self lies in his intellectual/poetic core. This attitude to life presents plenty of paradoxes, as both Vilaseca (2003) and Richard Ellis (1997) have explored, yet they signal the eclectic social and intellectual position of the author, supplementing and complicating his thought about sexuality and literature.

On the topic of poetic creation in general, Gil de Biedma states: "Olvida uno tanto, hay tanto en el proceso de composición que luego se borra, que no puedo decir con certeza si esto no me ha ocurrido siempre que tengo un poema entre manos" (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 108). This can be interpreted in the light of the process of becoming a poet, as described above. Indeed, Gil de Biedma himself also asserts that he writes his diaries to erase his life events from his memory (2017a, p. 110). What is shown by these quotes is an active process of creation, forgetting and

recreation that defines one's own identity. It is only through forgetting one's own truth, and returning to it through the Other, through the version of the poem that readers perceive, that Gil de Biedma becomes, to some extent unbeknownst to himself, a poet. Yet, to what extent does this process apply to the author's sexual identity? Bearing in mind Gil de Biedma's sexuality was considered secondary in identitarian terms for authors such as Vilaseca (2003), for whom Gil de Biedma's deeper truth was primordially poetic, and Richmond Ellis (1997), this notion may be complicated by a close analysis of the way desire, love and sex are presented, both narratively and poetically, in Gil de Biedma's works.

Gil de Biedma's poetry often delves into the different facets of love, about which he theorised and proposed two types as a result: carnal love or, as he would call it, Aphrodite Pandemos, and romantic love or, in Gil de Biedma's words, Aphrodite Urania. This difference is fundamental both to the development of the author's notion of homosentimentalism, as well as to understand the development of his thought on sex and love over the years. These notions are rooted in a rather perceptive understanding of Classical literature and sexuality in the Ancient Greek tradition. As Foucault posits in his *History of Sexuality*, the attitudes in Greek and Greco-Roman societies towards sex revolved around practices of the self rather than codification of conducts (Foucault, 1990, p. 31). Gil de Biedma's homosentimentality matches with this spiritual conception of sex, favouring a sentimental relationship, even if circumscribed to a sexual act, over a prescriptive labelling of specific actions. Indeed, in Classical Antiquity "[t]he accent was placed on the relationship with the self that enabled a person to keep from being carried away by the appetites and pleasures" (Foucault, 1990, p. 31). This ties in with Gil de Biedma's moral agenda behind his writing of a diary, as discussed earlier in this dissertation.

In his journals, Gil de Biedma addresses his relationship with love and sex, respectively named by those two titles of Aphrodite, exploring them through periods of numerous sexual encounters, combined with phases of reduced activity, the latter often coinciding with times where Gil de Biedma's mental and physical wellbeing was at a low point. From a "three-year long abstinence" (2017a, p. 152) to his visits to brothels in the Philippines and his numerous lovers in the island, to the idea of "erotic wisdom" (2017a, p. 537) that he tries to instil into the poem *Pandémica y Celeste* (Gil de Biedma, 2017b), the author's literary journey through the creation of his sexual identity is relevant both to understand his self and work, but also from a historical and social point of view.

As a starting point, it is worth considering the origin and definition of Aphrodite Pandemos and Aphrodite Urania, as they are Gil de Biedma's basis to his thought on love and sex. Understanding these concepts will illuminate the motivations and the ways the author engaged in his sexual and romantic life. Those two fashions of love constitute a reference to classical literature, more specifically to Plato's *Symposium* (Plato, 2005), where Pausanias states that "there are two kinds of Aphrodite" (Plato, 2005, p. 13) and, hence, two types of love, given that love and Aphrodite are inseparable. Those two types of love are Common Love (*pandemos*) and Heavenly Love, (*urania*) The word *pandemos* in Greek means popular, common and this facet of love is the one to be found in people who are "attracted to [...] bodies rather than minds" (Plato, 2005, p. 14), i.e., sexual intercourse. This instance of Common Love is described as deriving from Aphrodite Pandemos, the youngest version of Aphrodite who partakes of both masculine and feminine qualities (Plato, 2005). Ultimately, to those under the influence of Aphrodite Pandemos, what matters is "to get what they want" (Plato, 2005, p. 14); it is a selfish type of love, focussed on the physical aspect of it. Contrarily, Heavenly Love, related to Aphrodite Urania, is, interestingly, "directed at boys" (Plato, 2005, p.14). People under the influence of Aphrodite Urania are "drawn towards the male, feeling affection" (Plato, 2005, p. 14) and showing "their readiness to spend their whole lives together and to lead a fully shared live" (Plato, 2005, p. 15). Gil de Biedma uses these somewhat cryptic references (at least to the uninitiated) as a code to share in his writings his inclination towards a sexual relationship, or Aphrodite Pandemos, versus a love relationship, Aphrodite Urania. Already in one of his letters to Carlos Barral in 1952, when Gil de Biedma was doing his military service in Galicia, he shows an example of his engagement in what those two titles of Aphrodite's represent. He tells his friend Barral that he had intercourse with "*une vieille catin*" (Gil de Biedma, 2010, p. 73), an old prostitute, and that this is a sacrifice to Aphrodite Pandemos. Nonetheless, he adds right away that, having been favoured by Aphrodite Urania, he is "deeply and sadly in love" (p. 74) with his "venadico pardo" (p. 74), another one of the author's code words for a man (originally from a Medieval poem). Indeed, the author being 23 years old, he was already pondering the distinction between sex, which, following Plato, does not care for the actual gender of the other person, just for a body, and love, or Heavenly Love, which is all about affection towards men. With all these reflections Gil de Biedma is following a line of classical thinking about how "one ought" to enjoy life's pleasures, hence giving his own answer to the classic problematization of sexual conducts (Foucault, 1990, p. 53).

Gil de Biedma's view fits the Mediterranean model of sexuality, described by Cleminson and Vázquez García, whereby "relations between youths and older men [...] take preference over any strong expression of identity" (Cleminson and Vázquez García, 2007, p. 275). Gil de Biedma, however, takes a modern, more philosophical and more ambiguous spin on such a traditional model, perhaps influenced by his extensive knowledge of English culture. Whilst he keeps a strong emphasis on the performance over the identity aspect of sexuality, thus becoming an interesting male Hispanic precedent to authors such as Judith Butler, Gil de Biedma provides an innovative identitarian framework to sexuality with his homosentimentality. By avoiding an essentialist point of view, whereby gender or sexuality are but a manifestation of a natural inner tendency (Córdoba García, 2009, p.53), Gil de Biedma manages to put together a classically influenced theory of sexuality. This shows how important it was for the author to intellectualise his identity to feel at ease with it. It is possible to track the evolution of this classical perspective of Gil de Biedma's young years in his diaries. In *Diario del artista en 1956*, the author engages in many an occasion in Aphrodite Pandemos, in just sex for the sake of it, with the odd, casual love relationship. However, the key idea of a distinction between sex and love, mere physicality as opposed to ideal feelings, is recurrent in all his diaries and is indeed a source of tension for the author. For example, in the first chapter of *Diario del artista en 1956*, Gil de Biedma states: "antes que homosexual, soy rabiosamente homosentimental" (2017a, p. 159). That furious homosentimentality rings very close to the Platonic idea of Aphrodite Urania; it all revolves around affection for the same sex, beyond the carnal aspect of it, which can be sated by any type of body no matter the gender. Moreover, it is also an anti-identitarian construction of love: it does not assume a homosexual identity.

As he grows older, however, Gil de Biedma's allusions to his sexual life become more cautious. This is in line with his identity becoming more accepting of the systemic constraints surrounding the author, as will be also seen in relation with colonialism and illness. This might also be related to the fact that the subsequent diaries, with the exception of the *Diario de 1978*, were not prepared for posthumous publication by Gil de Biedma. Therefore, we can find in those journals a more careful approach to writing, so that in case someone read those diary entries they could not know whether the person spoken about was a man or a woman. For example, "*a wonderful love-making night with D., whom I met late in the evening*" (2017a, p. 430). This is one of the few references to sex or love in the *Diario de "Moralidades"* and, not only does it not

mention any clear names, but also it is written in English, to reduce the likelihood of someone understanding it. “D.” was Dick Schmitt, a Philippine man who Gil de Biedma had an on and off relationship between 1957 and 1958 (2017a, p. 466). Indeed, there are several instances of this use of a foreign language in an attempt to conceal the message in Gil de Biedma’s writings. For instance, another reference to Dick Schmitt is again in English, even if the content is already pretty obscure (2017a, p. 466). This suggests that the author was making a rather conscious effort to keep the writing acceptable for his surroundings, in case it ever fell into the wrong hands. The social pressure is increasing and, certainly, a progression from the careless youth to a more measured, discreet maturity. Such an attitude will continue throughout his life; indeed, after his literary “death” in the late 1960s, Gil de Biedma’s bourgeois, professional self will take over, with only a few exceptions. Gil de Biedma will abhor any public reference to his sexuality, for instance, when Dionisio Cañas tried to publish an essay about sexuality in Gil de Biedma’s poetry in 1989, just a few months before the author’s death, Gil de Biedma wrote a letter to Cañas admonishing him for such an idea, and begging him to stop the project (Gil de Biedma, 2010). This idea of secrecy will be further analysed in Chapter Three in connection with illness and AIDS, yet in terms of sexual identity there is a clear link between his poetical ambiguity and the (non)secret which the intellectual image of the author lied upon.

Gil de Biedma, instead of using his diary as a coming out narrative, presents his sexuality as a *fait accompli*, even as a conscious decision. He asserts that he chose to be homosentimental, thus giving prominence to the affection over the sexual side, in line with his conception of better love. Clearly, there is a component of subversion of the youth against the traditional society (Connell, 2005, p.162) Gil de Biedma lived in, linked to the young author’s sympathies for communism and an interest in the marginal side of society (cf. Section 1.2, for more on the economic and social side of sexuality). However, at a first glance, his position and demeanour in society was fits with normative ideas. There is a clear parallelism between life and literature in the two main modes of Gil de Biedma’s writings. On the one hand there is the more subversive, shocking side, represented by Gil de Biedma’s diaries and letters (mostly private, only for the initiated); on the other hand, his most conformist side, such as his poetry, which curiously enough, despite its brevity (or even because of it), became his most popular work, indeed the only part that was published before his death, with a couple of exceptions. Of course, Gil de Biedma’s essays, somewhat numerous, also belong to the more traditional side, their focus being mostly literary, with little to no concession

to his sexuality. The only exception here is an interview with Bruce Swansey and José Ramón Enríquez, where Gil de Biedma did discuss the concept of camp and homosexuality, in very sharp, insightful terms (Pérez Escotado, 2015, p. 99), yet remaining within the literary realm.

Gil de Biedma presents a twofold identity, a double approach to the writer's task, following the aforementioned dichotomy between sex and love. By analysing these two modes of writing and comparing them, a connection between literature, sexuality and identity will be ultimately presented, thus informing our understanding of the author's perspectives on colonialism (cf. Chapter Two) and illness (cf. Chapter Three). The poetry written by Gil de Biedma has a universalistic purpose: he wanted his poetry to be meaningful not just in terms of expressing a personal experience of his, but also for any reader that might engage with the poem. His lyric, thus, revolves around the ideal of love, which can then be realised in a variety of physical appearances. Gil de Biedma's ideal of love, though, involves a homosexual relationship, in line with the Platonic ideal; admittedly, it was the only type of relationship that could make him feel affection (2017a, p. 159). However, despite that Platonic background, Gil de Biedma's poems, even the most torrid ones, are fairly ambiguous: there is not a clear gender for the object of love and, yet, there is this feeling about the existence of some sort of perverse secret, as in Gil de Biedma's translation of Auden's "*At last the secret is out...*": "hay siempre una clave privada, hay siempre un secreto perverso." (2017b, p.120). That private key is needed if what we want is an interpretation of the poems in the light of the author's life. Of course, plenty of people in Gil de Biedma's closest circles knew about his sexuality. Furthermore, anyone with a knowledge of the classics would quickly pick up on the Platonic references. However, the idea of Love in general, especially when it was written in a rather vague, lyrical way, would pass in the social and literary context of Spain in the 50s and 60s (Mira, 2004). As Mira states in his *De Sodoma a Chueca*, that type of "love in general" is not but a poetic convention, a way to nuance how much of the author's self would go in the poem (Mira, 2004, p. 246). Looking at it from an identity point of view, it begs the question of whether the idealistic take on his poetry, the appeal to the masses, the use of a mask to separate narrator and poet are not but a type of defence mechanism, through which the author can channel his identity whilst keeping his position in society. Gil de Biedma would lead his gay life in the shadows, in two simultaneous levels: the social one, where he was a high-level executive for Tabacalera, and the homosexual one, addressed only in his intimate works and glossed over in his published poetic works (Mira, 2004, p. 310). Indeed, as Mira points out, it is a type of "interior

exile” (Mira, 2004, p. 311): this type of exile will be explored further in next chapter, when we look at Gil de Biedma’s view on cosmopolitanism and colonialism. However, that ambiguity is a central part of Gil de Biedma’s make up, and will become more entrenched in his “dandy” identity, which will see an evolution over time, closely related to his writing and to his thoughts on love.

This idea of the creation of identities, of the separation between author and narrative, even to the extent of calling those poetic voices masks, was central to the poetics of Jaime Gil de Biedma. Clearly, there might be a component of the aforementioned self-censorship here — given the political and social context in which the poems were written (Gil de Biedma wrote his last poem in 1964 and his mother did not die until 1989, just a month before the author’s death) the author was not at freedom of writing openly homoerotic poems, if he wanted to keep his job and family on his side. This will also have an impact on the writing and publication of his diaries, given some of their content. That way of writing suited the author’s desire to keep a good name in his social context — as mentioned above, his poetry is situated in Gil de Biedma’s social level.

Contrary to his poetic ambiguity, and related to the homosexual side of his life (Mira, 2004), Gil de Biedma used his diaries as a way of experimenting with his sexuality in writing, especially the ones that he prepared for posthumous publication: *Diario del Artista en 1956* and *Diario de 1978*. In stark contrast to the aforementioned ambiguity of his poetry, those two diaries are written in a clear, open style, including rather crude descriptions of the author’s sexual activities. The style changes drastically from diary to diary. For example, the *Diario del artista en 1956* is the one where a young Gil de Biedma, only 27 years old at the time, explores his sexuality in a variety of ways: visiting brothels, having various lovers from different parts of the world, both men and women. This has been analysed by Vilaseca (2003) in terms of the colonial subject, which will be explored in Chapter Two. Such a frenetic activity slows down in the subsequent journals - this has to do with a change in his opinion on what ought to be told about one’s sexual activity, not necessarily in his deeds. For example, in his *Diario de 1978*, Gil de Biedma, upon reading someone’s correspondence of a very sexual nature, reminisces about his *Diario de 1956* and his own sexual narrative. He says he feels shocked and questions whether this might be due to hypocrisy on his side or to having become more mature. He says:

[H]e caído en la cuenta de cómo la edad modifica nuestra actitud con respecto a las actividades eróticas. A los veinticinco años, consideraba casi obligatorio decir lo que

uno tiene gusto en hacer, llamando pan al pan y vino al vino; ahora pienso que para qué contar lo que a uno le gusta, si a todos nos gusta hacer lo mismo y con media palabras nos entendemos (2017a, p. 566).

The passing of time is indeed the catalyst for change. However, the author expresses his boredom at life and sex, such as when he says “we all like to do the same” (2017a, p.566). In 1978, Gil de Biedma started writing his diaries again, after a nine-year break, hoping to rediscover his passion for writing. He kept this diary for a whole year, despite the fact that he never quite established a working relationship with it and found writing it, for the most part, “una obligación enojosa y constantemente aplazada” (2017a, p. 619). This disenchantment is reflected in the different spheres of the author’s life and, of course, in the sexual field. It gets to the extent of Gil de Biedma comparing sexual activity with someone telling “cómo va de vientre” (2017a, p.566). He has definitely moved on from the sexual experimentation of his youth and by 1978, already nearly fifty years old, he has reached a point where sex, for its sake, is no more than a physical process. Indeed, the author has moved on from his somewhat openly committed youth to a camp approach, ironic and detached. This is linked to his social position — his belonging to a bourgeois family in Spain, his job position as a high executive. Gil de Biedma’s privileged social background and attitudes, even if at times offset by the keen interest of the author in social justice, conditions his identity to a large extent: his free position to experiment with different ways of relating to sexual desire stems from his economic privilege. The following section will explore in detail the relationship between class, masculinity and sexual models of resistance in the life and works of Gil de Biedma.

1.2. The camp and the dandy: masculinity and class in Gil de Biedma’s diaries

The way in which Gil de Biedma experiments and construes his ideas around sexuality is influenced by the cultural, social and economic context surrounding the author. This section will establish the role the concepts of masculinity and social class play in Gil de Biedma’s diaries, while exploring the ways they relate to cultural and literary trends that influenced the author’s writing.

In order to explore the author’s journey through sexual identity, Connell’s concept of gender as an agent by which different social practices are arranged (Connell, 2005) is key to contextualise Gil de Biedma’s thought and performance about it. Gender is a process and a structure, internally

complex and with a number of relationships to other areas of the self (Connell, 2005). Even though Gil de Biedma intends to explore his sexuality somewhat radically in the writing of his diaries, as argued by Richmond Ellis, which may be construed as a progressive position, Gil de Biedma's view on gender is rather traditional. The author considered himself a 'homosentimental' person, seemingly giving importance to affection over sexual attraction. Because of this very particular blend of affection, sex, and his own masculine self, the author demonstrates Connell's postulate that masculinity is not just some homogeneous concept that can be applied equally to any man (Connell, 2000). Instead, it is flexible, adaptable, and malleable.

According to Connell, masculinities "come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using the resources and strategies available in a given social setting" (Connell, 2000, p.12). There is a clear link between masculinity and social class. Gil de Biedma's resources and strategies were of course the typical for any bourgeois Spanish man of his times. The author went to a good university to read Law, often the preferred first choice for men, and tried to follow the diplomatic career, although not successfully. He had a strong sentimental education, but he admitted that he did not start to love literature until later in life. Gil de Biedma was offered early on a good, high position in the Tabacalera, a classic example of paternal nepotism. It is safe to say the author was imbued in upper-class, male privilege from the moment he was born. Indeed, his social performance, based on his social setting, was roughly what society would have expected. He had the occasional sexual encounter with women, both in his adult life, for instance during his brief stay in Hong Kong (2017a, p. 152) and also in his youth, as he explains in his correspondence (2010). However, he never considered himself bisexual, rather homosentimental, as discussed above. Arguably, it was Gil de Biedma's sexuality that changed the course of his otherwise plain, bourgeois life, as he verified in his youth that women could not provide the "mood" that he would look for in a partner (2017a, p. 152). In fact, he made it sound as a conscious choice, to the extent of asserting: "decidí en toda deliberación pasarme al bando homosexual" (2017a, p. 159). Both concepts, mood and deliberation, must be contextualised within the times Gil de Biedma lived and his literary influences, which had a clear impact on his (self)understanding.

In order to analyse the historical and cultural context in which Gil de Biedma developed his homosentimentality, this dissertation will follow Alberto Mira's framework as developed in *De Sodoma a Chueca* (2004). Mira identifies three "models of resistance" (Mira, 2004, p. 27) that

appear all together in the Spanish homosexual culture. These models are related both to the way homosexuals give sense to their lives and to three parallel homophobic models (Mira, 2004). The three models of resistance are: *malditista* (decadentist, oriented towards the marginal side of society), homophile (aiming for a normalisation of homosexuality), and camp (an ironic perspective that questions the importance of moral imperatives and social structures) (Mira, 2004). In the life and work of Gil de Biedma it is possible to identify a combination of those three perspectives, with a tendency for camp over the other two, especially in his maturity. The author's understanding of his sexuality is modulated by his adherence or refusal of these three general trends. Social class plays an important role here: these three models of resistance can only take place in a certain social sphere, the bourgeoisie, which would have been the one with the capacity to create such artistic resistance. Nevertheless, they are helpful to understand the way cultural influences play against each other, which is why this thesis will apply these models to the analysis of Gil de Biedma's sexual identity.

As has already been discussed, Gil de Biedma's younger period in Manila involved an exploration of his sexuality, among other themes. The style used is simple, clear and explicit. There is not a trace of the ambiguity that features in his poetry: the first chapter of *Diario del artista en 1956* is a celebration of the young author's excesses. Gil de Biedma starts his diaries the night before his trip to Manila, the first one in his life, and begins to narrate his journey. The night before, he already shows his inclination for a decadent lifestyle:

Todavía de resaca. Los amigos se dan el gusto malévolo de contarme lo que hice y dije durante los prolongados lapsos de tiempo de los que no guardo recuerdo. Todos coinciden en que disparaté de lo lindo. (2017a, p. 71)

Gil de Biedma is setting the tone for his diary; he wants to explore the side of his life that lies outside of bourgeois conventions. The author's hedonism and penchant for excess will be a recurrent theme, not only in this diary, but throughout his life. That life of pleasure is at odds with his upper-class background and job — which is why it seems so appealing to him. For instance, Gil de Biedma finds a certain poetic quality in the darker, dirtier corners of the city: “lo delicioso es que el cubo mediado con orines, el olor a zotal y el tapete pegajoso de la mesa en la cantina participan de esa calidad paradisíaca del paisaje” (2017a, p. 73). That scene makes the author reminisce about Saint-John Perse and his own youth. In his diaries, Gil de Biedma shows a will to

explore that underside of society and to find its beauty in contrast with his bourgeois background. The author's literary influences at the time, mainly the French symbolist poets such as Baudelaire, whom he quotes at the beginning of his first diary, are a sign of his predilection for romanticism, if not necessarily in his style, which was strongly influenced by the English literature, certainly in his chosen themes — poverty, brothels, the exotic. In addition, Gil de Biedma was acquainted with modernist writers, Saint-John Perse for example or Juan Ramón Jiménez. What we can see is “an element of romantic rebellion” (Mira, 2004, p. 115) in the focus of the diary, fitting with the model Mira calls “*malditista*” (2004).

To be *maldito* or *malditista* implied, for a gay person, a refusal to “wash the sin” (Mira, 2004, p. 116). The main purpose of the *maldito* is to live in the fringes of society, to avoid being integrated in the bourgeois society (although, as it is paradoxical in this case, Gil de Biedma was very well integrated into such a social milieu), which of course frowned upon homosexuality. The *maldito*'s objective is to reject the current values and to experiment with the underside of society: drugs, sex, crime. This made perfect sense in Spain where same-sex relationships were illegal. In 1956, homosexuality was legally persecuted in Spain, the Francoist government having modified the *Crooks and Vagrants Act* in 1954 to include the category of homosexuals (in addition to gypsies, drug addicts and vagabonds) (Pichardo Galán, 2004, p. 159). Being *maldito* implied a subversion against the rules, a rebellion against the current status quo. This may be coupled, as it is the case for Jaime Gil de Biedma, with a dandy attitude. Dandyism revolves around “the development of individualism” (Mira, 2004, p. 121). The focus is on the surface, with a feeling of superiority over the rest, and a *carpe diem* approach to life: a person has to enjoy every moment of their life. We have already identified this hedonist approach in Gil de Biedma's diaries, especially in the earlier ones. Indeed, throughout his life Gil de Biedma was considered a mysterious dandy and it is not uncommon to see references to him as such (Mira, 2004; Fernández, 2015). The concept of dandyism, popularised by Oscar Wilde, is connected to social class — it seems as if it is a privilege of the upper-classes to be able to become a dandy (Mira, 2004, p. 122). Orientalism also plays an important role in this romantic view of the world, which we will explore further in Chapter Two. In comparison with the Spanish legal framework, Filipino society has traditionally been tolerant towards homosexuality. There have never been laws criminalising homosexuality and social attitudes towards same-sex relationships are often favourable (Rodríguez, 1996). Indeed, Gil de Biedma makes references to this openness throughout his first

diary. For instance, he admits looking at certain scenes with “ojos de homosexual español” such as when two men walk into a bar holding hands (2017a, p. 57). These attitudes to sexuality and colonialism will be analysed further in Chapter Two. Yet, suffice to say for now that Gil de Biedma remains within the western frame of mind, thus following through on the Spanish *malditismo* and his obsession with marginality.

Gil de Biedma’s fascination with the marginal side of society is explored in depth in “Las islas de Circe”, the first chapter of *Diario del artista en 1956*. There is, however, a quick evolution in his diaristic writing towards other ways of conceptualising homosexuality in the third chapter and in the rest of the diaries. Gil de Biedma expresses a candid enthusiasm in that first chapter, which is never devoid of irony. Indeed, he struggled with these marginal experiences and used the diary as a way to vent: “me he quitado el mal sabor de boca” (p. 98). There is an ambivalence, a certain detachment that will always influence Gil de Biedma’s *malditismo* — this will become more evident in later diaries. Indeed, Gil de Biedma is not usually considered *maldito*, because of that ironic detachment from what he would dismiss as posing; indeed, he even says he does not like *malditismo*, referring to a tryst Gil de Biedma and his friend Juan Goytisolo had with a shoe shiner in Barcelona (2017a, p. 236). Furthermore, earlier in his diaries on a reference to Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Gil de Biedma criticises the lack of irony and excess of truculence in the book (2017a, p. 139). In opposition to that *malditista* pose, Gil de Biedma opts for an ironic detachment, as will be explored below.

However, despite his dislike for that contrived pose of *maldito*, the author describes similar experiences in his first diary. For instance, one of the main encounters with that social underside took place in a brothel in Manila, at the beginning of the author’s stay. Gil de Biedma starts by reflecting on the concept of temptation, after which a taxi driver took him to a sordid brothel full of boys and girls. He spent no more than five minutes there, since the boy he was given was but ‘an unhappy shipboy, punished to row’ (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 97). Slavoj Žižek defines the Lacanian Real as what is ““more than reality”” (Žižek, 2008a, p. 63). In his work, he makes a distinction between reality, structured by fantasy, and the Real (Žižek, 2006, p. 57). Said fantasy *qua* structure of reality, for example our own identitarian labels, functions as “an escape from encountering the Real” (2006, p. 57). Gil de Biedma’s reality is based on the image of the intellectual, homosentimental lawyer with a penchant for the poor and destitute. This is the author’s attempt at

subjectivising the Real of the abhorrent scene in front of his eyes – tying it to a literary and camp trope in the symbolic field that could well fit with his intellectual identity. In that fragment, Gil de Biedma reminisces about Spanish male prostitutes, who he seems to think give better value for money. The author finds the experience very disturbing, and rightly so: he did not like the idea of sleeping with an underage person (2017a, p. 98). This passage, which has received a lot of media attention in recent times (Morales, 2021), is considered one of the darkest ones in the life of Gil de Biedma, because of the events taking place, which are indeed problematic. Although execrable at any rate, it would be unfair to overlook how much the author is at pains to prove that he disapproved of relationships with underage people: ‘[L]os chiquillos no me gustan. A cada cual, lo suyo: el colegial con el colegial, el adolescente con su amigo íntimo, [...] y el hombre joven con el hombre joven’ (2017a, p. 98).

Even if controversial, this passage is key to understand Gil de Biedma’s model of homosexual desire. His *malditismo* is apparent in the topic of choice, in the way he explores these early, marginal experiences. He does not fully engage in them, and the detachment and the criticism are clear, yet there is a part of him who would happily go for a Spanish prostitute. Marginality, yes, but coupled with a sense of morality: no underage, forced children. Gil de Biedma’s style in this excerpt makes sense both in the realm of his experimentation, but also in the use of the diaries as a tool to impose certain moral standards upon himself (2017a, p. 153). The author uses the diaries to erase things from his mind (2017a, p. 110). The process of recording and narrating his sexual experiences can be interpreted as a way of dealing with both the positive and negative sides of those encounters, finding ways to do what is morally correct. Gil de Biedma’s interest in conventional morality (a rather bourgeois concept) clashes with this model of *malditismo*, which is, at least superficially, an antibourgeois attitude, hence why in his middle age he is quick to reject that fascination for the marginal, turning instead on to a more ironic, yet deeper and more sophisticated, approach to the gay, the colonised, the Other.

From the second chapter of *Diario del artista en 1956* to the end of that diary, Gil de Biedma reduces the number of sexual references and his interest for sex. This stems mainly from his return from the Philippines, back to the motherland, and from his subsequent tuberculosis. That change of interests and outlook, although already taking place in Manila, was influenced by his move back to Spain — the process of migration often triggering

changes in the perception of gender and masculinity (González-Allende, 2018) — this is something we will explore in detail in Chapter Two. For now, from both a literary and a diaristic approach to sexuality, it is necessary to explore the change from that young *malditismo* in the Philippines, though full of doubts and irony, to the mature swing between respectability and camp in Gil de Biedma’s diaries.

Gil de Biedma was never one for a passionate defence of same-sex relations. His references both in his diaries and interviews are clear and straightforward, yet they rarely involve an argument for or against it. Gil de Biedma shows a somewhat arrogant haughty whereby he chooses to enjoy his sexuality in whichever way he wants without really explaining why, in line with his dandyism. This is so especially in his younger years. His first letter to Carlos Barral starts with the following lines: “¿Sabes que ya casi deseo empicorotarme nuevamente? *Quand je n’aime rien, je ne suis rien*” (Gil de Biedma, 2010, p. 47). *Empicorotarme* is an Asturian verb, the Spanish version would be *empingorotarme*, meaning to rise up — a connection between an erection and love — Aphrodite Pandemos. Later on, again writing to Carlos Barral, he makes a reference about José Agustín Goytisolo talking to Alberto Oliart, a writer friend of Jaime Gil de Biedma, about Gil de Biedma’s sexuality. This does not seem to concern the author, although he expects a more judgemental reaction from Alberto Oliart, who just answered to the effect of: do as you wish, just be careful (2010, p. 69). Such a natural way of presenting himself from a sexuality point of view is fairly common in Gil de Biedma’s diaries. There is no clear reference to a struggle or even homophobia, although this was pervasive in the Spanish 1950s society. It is possible to glean that social pressure when we analyse Gil de Biedma’s attitudes a little closer, we can find he does think carefully about the ways he presents himself to society. This is related to his poetic ambiguity, which we discussed above, in the sense that, although seemingly based on literary principles, the ambiguity and his attempts at respectability are in fact inflected and influenced by social pressure. The relationship with his parents is a good example of this social pressure. The references to his mother and father are scarce, but they do come up every so often. Generally, they are negative — they seem to exert a suffocating influence on the writer. At some point in the third chapter of *Diario del artista en 1956*, Gil de Biedma narrates an argument with his parents about a divergence of ideas on the Compañía de Tabacos (2017a, p. 219). Gil de Biedma’s mother criticises his “camaleonismo”, his “novelería” (2017a, p.

219). The author explains that such chameleon-like adaptability is one of his most valued poetic qualities: the ability to absorb the surrounding culture. He displayed this in Oxford and in Manila. His parents dislike it though: perhaps a subtle reference to the author's cosmopolitan sensitivity that is at odds with the respectability a son of the bourgeoisie should display. Indeed, the author points at a fear to what they might be told — again a reference to the author's secret sexuality? This illustrates that, despite the fact that the author adopts an arrogant, dandy attitude, he is actually more influenced by his social milieu than he would like, thus feeling the impact on his mental health. For example, around this time Gil de Biedma starts realising he has a problem with drinking, after crashing his father's car against another vehicle, when he was taking some man home to sleep with (2017a, p. 235). Overall, the social pressure just described does not prompt the author to a defence of homosexuality, following Mira's homophile model (2004), but rather to both a detachment and a criticism of social rules (following the camp model) and an attempt at respectability, at keeping the appearances and the ambiguity going — a modern, twentieth century take on the dandy. The author's dandy quality is established in connection to his ideas and attitudes around the concept of camp, which he tried to integrate with the traditional Spanish approach around homosexuality and culture.

Indeed, Gil de Biedma is one of the best Spanish authors at providing a definition of camp. Camp has no straight translation into Spanish — *pluma* might work occasionally, and Gil de Biedma uses it interchangeably on occasion, but for the author the idea of camp is wider than just the more physical idea *pluma* refers to. In 1978 Gil de Biedma gave an interview for Bruce Swansey and José Ramón Enríquez, for a book called *El homosexual ante la sociedad enferma*. The interview involved a discussion on the homosexual sensitivity of the Generación del 27 (Pérez Escotado, 2015, p. 99). Nowhere in the interview does Gil de Biedma talk about his own experience, yet he displays a full range of literary references, from Goethe to Lorca, from Susan Sontag to Christopher Isherwood, to explain the multiple facets of camp in the Spanish literature. For Gil de Biedma camp is “the author's deliberate treatment of referential and thematic elements in his work [...] as mere formal categories [...] the author partakes of ironically” (Pérez Escotado, 2015, pp. 100-101). Gil de Biedma clearly distinguishes camp from homosexuality: although related, they are not always together, even though in the post Stonewall era this became a common occurrence, according

to Mira (2004, p. 149). The main point of camp for Gil de Biedma is the game factor, the use of language and irony as a code that only those who know it (who understand it, *entender* being a Spanish shibboleth to ask if someone is gay) would understand. Gil de Biedma makes a difference between camp and *pluma* — camp is a more general aesthetic whilst *pluma* would be “a deliberate projection, an ironic stylization of the queer” (Pérez Escohotado, 2015, p. 105). The *pluma*, according to Gil de Biedma, is a sure way of communicating in the gay world, which involves a varied mix of people from different backgrounds with little in common but their sexual preference. It is also loaded with provocation; it defies the straight world, it is but “a refined vendetta against all heterosexuals” (Pérez Escohotado, 2015, p. 105). Gil de Biedma shows his campiest *pluma* in this conversation: his literary references are but a clear sign to the initiated, yet he does not put it to words. Again, as we described in the previous section, Gil de Biedma operates on two levels: the social, where he might broach these issues ambiguously, afraid of the social, familial and labour repercussions of his words; and the gay one, sexually daring and open. The camp dandy quality to the author is what brings those two worlds together: his detachment and irony help him keep his social position, whilst delivering a clear gay message to those acquainted with the conventions of camp. The question now would be: how is this camp quality reflected on Gil de Biedma’s diaries? Is Gil de Biedma’s camp a result of his class privilege, a message to his own class?

The three models analysed above – *malditista*, homophile and camp – constitute the social context for Gil de Biedma’s sexuality. The camp approach is overarching the author’s life and work, after a brief *malditista* period. These three models of resistance are part of a wider gender and class picture, which are interrelated. Gil de Biedma’s upper-class masculinity is based on his economic privilege, which let him have the time to create and explore and perform those models of resistance in his life and literature. Indeed, his contacts and his travels are partly due to his familial background that helped him get his job at Tabacalera. The next chapter will delve into the role of travelling, cosmopolitanism and colonialism on Gil de Biedma’s life and work.

Chapter Two: A fundamental feeling of strangeness: movement, cosmopolitanism and colonialism in Gil de Biedma's diaries.

Gil de Biedma's diaries show the life of a man, with a chameleon-like ability, in his mother's words (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 219, cf. Chapter One), to adapt and change his identity and outlook according to his cultural surroundings. This chapter will first delve into the implications of travelling on the author's identity and writing, structured by the concept of cosmopolitanism. Secondly, said cosmopolitan identity, deeply entrenched in the author's dandyism and, hence, social class, will be contrasted against Gil de Biedma's portrayal of colonialism in the Philippines and the issues arising from it. This thesis is predicated on the belief that a cosmopolitan perspective is key in Gil de Biedma's thought and identity and, by extension, in those of Spanish upper-class intellectuals in the late twentieth century. A cosmopolitan perspective is understood as an approach, rooted in the Greek and European humanistic tradition, which focusses on humanity's common features, regardless of national or racial boundaries, with an emphasis on moral justice (Fine, 2007). This understanding will in turn deepen this thesis's overall analysis of the construction of the male, gay self through the writing of diaries, in relation to notions of spatial and social changes. The main objective of this chapter is to prove that territorial movements, be it through migration or exile (two important concepts in Gil de Biedma's diaries) or indeed travel, produce changes in the identity (González-Allende, 2018) and, subsequently, how those changes are interconnected with the notions of sexuality, class, cosmopolitanism and colonialism. The roots of the author's cosmopolitanism will be considered, together with the ways they can be problematic from a postcolonial point of view and how his views on race and the colonial other are intertwined with the concepts of class and sexuality.

2.1. Gil de Biedma: a European cosmopolitan

In his last night in Europe before setting off for the Far East, the Philippines, in January 1956, Gil de Biedma feels "embriagado de romanidad" (2017a, p. 71). In that quote, the author describes his strong connection to Europe, one of its cultural centres being Rome, where he had spent a few days visiting friends, such as María Zambrano, the Spanish philosopher, who was exiled in Italy at that point. Later, on the plane, about to land in Manila, the author wishes to carry on his "vida intrauterina" in the plane — the plane understood as the maternal womb, where one feels cosy, protected and sheltered — and finally he feels "horror de llegar" (2017a, p. 73). The

author is anticipating, in a negative way, his arrival in the Philippines, a place that represented the exotic, the foreign, the other, in colonialist terms: he finds it all frightening. There is a detachment from the motherland, where Gil de Biedma felt he was both culturally and literally conceived — a new birth, a new identity reached through travelling. This section of the thesis will identify the origin and the importance of the geographical movements in the life and diaries of Gil de Biedma, as well as some of the changes he acknowledges as part of his identity in different places in the world. Those changes lead to a cosmopolitan outlook, in other words, Gil de Biedma develops in his diaries a view of himself as a citizen of the world. This thesis will explore the author's cosmopolitan identity in the next section, in relation to the notions of class and colonialism.

Gil de Biedma already was a well-travelled man by 1956, especially for the standards of his times. He spent his earliest childhood in Nava de la Asunción, a little village that always held major significance for the author. However, soon after the Spanish Civil War finished, the family returned to Barcelona, the author's birthplace, where he developed "an obsession with the city" (Dalmau, 2004, p. 35). That keen interest in the urban life can be seen, later on in his life, especially after his return from his first trip to Manila in 1956, in poems like "*Barcelona ja no és bona: o mi paseo solitario en primavera*" (Gil de Biedma, 2017b), written in 1961, where he criticises the capitalistic developments of the city. After his teenage years in Barcelona, Gil de Biedma moved to Galicia to complete his military service and then to Salamanca to finish his degree in Law. From there on to Oxford, Madrid, Barcelona and Manila, through Rome, there is no doubt that he was a keen traveller. The reason for his ability to travel, especially back in the late 50s, early 60s was twofold: monetary, for he could afford it, given his family's wealth; and professional, as it was part of his job at the Tabacalera. The Gil de Biedma family were the major shareholders of Tabacalera. This means that he was working for his father, whose role in the company the author would take up later on in his life. Gil de Biedma's position is thus problematic. Although his overview of a colonial company certainly had a positive influence on the author's ideas around racism, common European values and his own identity, it must be acknowledged that it was all directly or indirectly facilitated by the company he worked for and his family owned: one of the last remainders of Spanish colonialism; in other words, he enjoyed both class and colonial privilege. The tension between the author's positive ideas about cosmopolitanism and the (mostly unintended and even unconscious yet still there) colonial abuse is a constant in the early diaries

and they will be central in our exploration of the author's identity with regards to travel and colonialism.

2.2. What is cosmopolitanism

At this point, it is necessary to define cosmopolitanism and its connection to identity. As in Chapter One sexuality was explored as a strand of identity, in connection with socioeconomic factors, it still has major presence in the author's vision of the international world. Following Gurfinkel, this thesis is based on the idea that cosmopolitanism and queerness have in common "a hospitable acceptance of the national, ethnic, religious, sexual, and other Others and recognition of their rights" (2014, p. 404). These ideas follow a lineage of philosophical theories and positions, starting in the ancient Greece and linked to Kant, Derrida or Butler among others (Gurfinkel, 2014).

According to Robert Fine, in his book *Cosmopolitanism* (2007), cosmopolitanism is a concept that nowadays encompasses "the reforming of social solidarity within the nation-state, the political integration of the European Union, the role of international law in the current world order, the phenomenon of humanitarian military intervention, the prosecution of crimes against humanity, the critique of the life of the modern mind, and the formation of an anti-totalitarian politics" (2007, p. 133). This modern definition is relevant to our analysis in the sense that the construction of Gil de Biedma's identity through his diaries foreshadows and, ultimately, represents these intellectual ideals and their evolution throughout the second half of the 20th century. From a literary point of view, the author acted as a connection between the modernist English tradition, French symbolism and Spanish contemporary poetry. Gil de Biedma clearly expressed his faith in what we may consider a cosmopolitan view of literature in his essays on T.S. Eliot, his criticism of English poetry, his translations, his poems and, of course, his diaries. It was through his writing that Gil de Biedma enacted his cosmopolitanism thus giving way to his multifaceted identity. However, even though his openness will bring a positive, universal lyrical perspective, it will also underline some contradictions. Indeed, the theory of cosmopolitanism has often been criticised, and rightly so, on the grounds of its white, European universalism. More specifically, gay male cosmopolitanism has often remained "within the framework of the nation-state, trying to assimilate the Other within it, instead of destroying its borders altogether" (Gurfinkel, 2014, p. 412). This is often the case in Gil de Biedma's diaristic writing: his approach

is classically Eurocentric. A certain degree of colonial guilt and a sharp eye for injustice and inequalities in the Philippines must be, however, acknowledged in what can be considered a previous stage to a less assimilating approach. In the next sections, we will define and question the tensions, dynamics and interrelations between Gil de Biedma's identity, his Eurocentric cosmopolitanism, and his postcolonial ideas, in the writing of his diaries.

Fine explains that there are two sides to cosmopolitanism: the outlook and the condition (2007, p. 134). In this thesis we are going to use the concept of cosmopolitan outlook, which Fine defined as "a way of seeing the world, a form of consciousness" (2007, p. 134): Gil de Biedma's cosmopolitan outlook allows for him to see the world, it is an "intellectual expression" (Fine, 2007, p. 134) that is possible to trace in his diaries. The author makes the point of trying to "clear himself out of his own habits and prejudices" (2017a, p. 220) — such an outlook is central to our notion of cosmopolitanism.

Whilst some of the concepts discussed above (e.g., the European Union) are anachronistic when applied to Gil de Biedma's times, especially his youth, the underlying notion of cosmopolitanism, according to Calhoun, has to do with "focussing on the world as a whole rather than on a particular locality or group within it [...] being at home with the diversity" (Calhoun, 2008, p. 428). It involves a necessary tension between that openness to the world and its varied possibilities and the reflection thereof in the mirror of one's own culture. Indeed, such a tension becomes apparent in Gil de Biedma's diary on his arrival to Philippines; he writes to María Zambrano a letter saying: "queda Europa tan lejos de aquí y me siento tan desplazado en estos primeros días de vida filipina" (2017a, p. 76). His cosmopolitan outlook involves an idea of Europe as his own origins and the encounter with the Far East creates a friction in those first few days that makes Gil de Biedma feel out of place. However, to what extent can we consider these reflections truly cosmopolitan, for they border on the exoticism, precisely the assimilation of the other that Gurfinkel (2014) warned against, as discussed earlier in the chapter?

The answer to that may lie on Calhoun's remark "being at home with the diversity" (2008, p. 428). For, as Calhoun explains, in the notion of cosmopolitanism there are several different strands involved that often get confused, but which can be summarised into, on the one hand, the interconnectedness of the world and, on the other hand, the diversity of the world (2008, p. 429). These two sides of cosmopolitanism become enacted in what Gurfinkel defines as "a hospitable

acceptance of the national, ethnic, religious, sexual, and other Others and recognition of their rights” (2014, p. 404). This very act conflates both queerness and cosmopolitanism into the ethical obligation of “breaking the rigid boundaries of identity” (Gurfinkel, 2014, p. 404). Thus, this thesis argues that Gil de Biedma’s outlook can be considered cosmopolitan, even if its Eurocentrism can, and should, be criticised, because of the poet’s challenge to the rigid boundaries of identities. The author is part and parcel of a world of interconnections, as his international links both in business and literature show, and of a world of diversity: sexually, literary, personally. Indeed, the concept of cosmopolitanism is closely tied with queerness. For example, Domeier, in his article about the masculinization of German politics before World War I, mentions the case of Hans von Tresckow, once director of the Berlin Police Department for Homosexuals who recorded in his memoirs that he found a lack of national feeling in homosexuals because they are “international in outlook and consider themselves cosmopolitan” (Domeier, 2014, p. 747). Gil de Biedma fits that definition neatly, even though the time and historical circumstances are rather different. This is an example of how queerness and cosmopolitanism are two overlapping concepts. In the following sections we will explore further examples of how cosmopolitanism is key in Gil de Biedma’s identity through his diaries and how his own queerness, or as he would call it, homosentimentality, as we discussed in Chapter One, is intertwined with it.

Finally, and before we delve into the origins of the cosmopolitan outlook in Gil de Biedma, let us look at the following quote again to assess the impact of cultural and physical movement: “queda Europa tan lejos de aquí y me siento tan desplazado en estos primeros días de vida filipina” (2017a, p. 76). The use of the word “desplazado” is key, because it makes reference to a process of being physically removed from the original culture and by the new one; culture acts as both agent and context in the process of becoming. This quote highlights two simultaneous movements: the merely physical travel and the movement of identity that is caused by the change of place. This will be explored in depth in the next section. However, for now suffice it to say that Gil de Biedma’s outlook suffers a shock when confronted to the Philippines. In order to understand the reasons for this tension and its resolution, it is necessary to look closely into the formation of the author’s thought and ideas about home and abroad.

2.3. Origins of cosmopolitanism in the author

Gil de Biedma's cosmopolitan outlook, his way of seeing the world, was a consequence of his bourgeois education, combined with his dandy attitude. In his youth, Gil de Biedma's interest in poetry led him to read extensively the works of poets like Mallarmé, Rimbaud or Baudelaire. It is possible to pinpoint the origin of his cosmopolitanism to that interest in French literature. It was not uncommon for Spanish bourgeois children to learn French in school; Gil de Biedma took his interest further, though, and by the age of twenty-two he was quoting Mallarmé in the original French in his letters to Carlos Barral (Gil de Biedma, 2010). Although the author's thinking around European literature and its common features had not been fully formed yet, in reading the earliest writings of Gil de Biedma there is a European undertone to them: the recurrent use of French, sometimes to quote poetry, sometimes to show off his knowledge of literature or sometimes just to give some French character to his letters, brings an early cosmopolitan flavour to his correspondence with friends (mainly, Carlos Barral).

However, it is not until Gil de Biedma spends some time in Oxford that this cosmopolitan outlook is developed more consistently. On his arrival in England, the author writes to Barral, excusing his lateness in writing because of his process of "adaptation" (2010, p. 86). This is the first time Gil de Biedma acknowledges this idea of change to fit into a different place. The author's first noticed change has to do with boredom: "no creo que exista país donde el aburrirse resulte, como aquí, una ocupación verdaderamente satisfactoria" (2010, p. 86). Boredom as an occupation is a concept that will come up again in Gil de Biedma's dealings with his illness, which we will explore in Chapter Three. However, this is the first instance of Gil de Biedma's adaptation to a new country, England, in what his mother would call his chameleon like attitude. The author also develops a strong love for England, which he will from then on consider his second country (2010, p. 98) — he will miss the "*vieille Angleterre*" (2010, p. 96).

The author's literary affinities start following the English route. After his stay in Oxford, Gil de Biedma developed an interest in English and American poets such as T.S. Eliot or W.H. Auden, both of whose works had an impact on his poetry. That impact was of course mainly literary; Gil de Biedma goes to the extent of saying that his poetry would not have been possible without his reading of certain English poets (Pérez Escobedo, 2015, p. 200). However, more surprisingly perhaps, the linguistic side of his literature became one of Gil de Biedma's personal

hallmarks. The author, who as we have already seen was keen on writing in other languages, such as French, asserts in an interview in 1979 that, if he could choose, he would write in English or Catalan (Pérez Escohotado, 2015, p. 126). Indeed, in his diaries there are regular examples of his interest and proficiency in the English language: he translated T.S. Eliot and even corresponded briefly with him and other authors such as Langston Hughes; he also had a famous encounter with James Baldwin. This encounter will be discussed later on in this chapter, when looking into the reflections on race, class and colonialism Gil de Biedma includes in his diary. Nevertheless, their short but intense encounter had such an impact on the Spanish author that he dedicated a poem to “Jimmy Baldwin” titled “En una despedida” (Gil de Biedma, 2017b, p. 150).

In addition to the literary influences, from a linguistic point of view Gil de Biedma includes many idiomatic English and French expressions in his diaries, letters and poems instead of the Spanish equivalent. For instance, “*trompe l’oeil*” (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 85), puns such as “en vez de *poetry* ha entendido *poultry*” (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 125), and many other examples throughout his works. This is a sign of his efforts, from early on, to immerse himself in other cultures, allowing his identity to change and adapt to them, perhaps as a way to free himself from the shackles of Spanish society in the 50s. Through the use of other languages, he is forging himself a different identity: they bring a flexibility to the author’s expression and, ultimately, to his life that he would otherwise not be able to find in Spanish only. He integrates those European languages, French and English, into the expression of his subjectivity, thus breaking literary and international boundaries. In order to follow the process of identity creation, Gil de Biedma had to look abroad to incorporate cosmopolitanism at the core of his self -understanding.

This search for the foreign or the different to free oneself from the local, the familiar, is not unique to Gil de Biedma. As we have discussed in Chapter One, the author’s homosexuality was presented and connected, in his youth, with a “*malditista*” mode of resistance. This was an influence of authors such as Oscar Wilde or Arthur Rimbaud, an early sign of that tendency to find a way to freedom away from the own nation. Indeed, a cosmopolitan attitude to life has often been a feature of gay literature (Binnie, 2000, p. 172).

As has been discussed above, the literary influences of his youth are the origin of Gil de Biedma’s cosmopolitan outlook. However, the author’s perspective, at least in the beginning, is undeniably Eurocentric, which is indeed problematic from a modern point of view and, as

discussed above, is in line with the critics of a narrow idea of cosmopolitanism (Gurfinkel, 2014). It also matches the tension between home and abroad that Fine (2007) describes. Despite that friction, which is a common thread in his life and works, Gil de Biedma's paradigm changes and adapts on his first trip to Manila, where he encounters further, deeper changes related to travelling, a certain type of exile and facing, probably for the very first time, the colonial other.

2.4. The Philippines: a pleasant exile?

In order to understand Gil de Biedma's identity and its relation to the Philippines, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the concept of the exile of Spanish intellectuals during Franco's times. Henry Kamen, in his seminal work about Spanish exile culture, states that Spanish exiles have, throughout history, been "a major thrust of their country's culture" (Kamen, 2007, p. xii). In the time surrounding the Spanish Civil War, this was linked to what was called the "intellectual class" (Kamen, 2007, p. 267). Writers such as Luis Cernuda, Pedro Salinas, María Zambrano, amongst many other artists, philosophers and scientists, were forced, during, before and after the Spanish Civil War, to leave the country to live and work elsewhere, at the very least if they wanted to be able to speak freely, at worst to escape prison or even death at the hands of the Nationalists. A few of them returned to or remained in Spain, such as Vicente Aleixandre, but they had to keep a low profile to avoid being targeted by Franco's regime. Gil de Biedma had strong relationships with some of these authors, whom he even visited abroad, like María Zambrano in Rome or Aleixandre, with whom Gil de Biedma had a relatively close relationship. Indeed, we must consider María Zambrano's influence on Gil de Biedma's ideas about exile. Balibrea *et al.* argue that "Zambrano declared the exilic condition to be the seed of a new cosmopolitanism, a universalism freed from allegiances to particular homelands" (2018, p. 839). Literature is fertile ground for Gil de Biedma, his early experiences with European literature mapped out above serving as a rich substrate to the seed, that is his situation as foreigner in Philippines, and which will evolve into a new idea of cosmopolitanism throughout his life.

The concept of exile is prominent in the Spanish cultural world, especially when talking about Franco's era, and it brings to mind a strong political commitment: there is a political division, a different view of the world, between those who leave the country and those who remain in it (Kamen, 2007). González-Allende defines exile as the process of leaving one's country, when it is forced or abrupt, and often characterised by having a political and ideological context that causes

the person to leave their country (González-Allende, 2018, p. 6). An exile cannot easily return to their country while whatever government that pushed them away remains and there is often a feeling of nostalgia about their country of origin (González-Allende, 2018, p. 6). On the other hand, emigration has to do with economic reasons, often to find better work conditions; the destination is usually seen in such an instance as a place full of potential and, in addition, the emigrant can (at least theoretically) return whenever they please.

However, despite these superficial differences, as González-Allende (2018) argues, there are many commonalities to the emigrant and the exile. Indeed, they are somewhat fluid identities that are subject to a range of contingencies: the ability of the person to return to their original country may be determined by their economic capacity; even if the political environment may be conducive to a positive return, the economic situation might push some people to travel and live in other countries in what could be interpreted as both a forced exile (the economy pushing people away) and emigration. Balibrea's definition of the origins of exile as "origin[ating] in the separation from spatio-temporal coordinates that are perceived as constituting a home, and liv[ing] in the often difficult and traumatic adaptation to other spatio-temporal coordinate established in an undesired elsewhere" (Balibrea, 2006, p. 6) defines that forced economic migration. The spatio-temporal dimension is in turn interacting with the idea of a somewhat traumatic or hard adaptation and the lack of desire for the new place. Those three elements are going to play a key role in the author's identity as explored below.

Gil de Biedma is definitely at the border between emigration and exile: on the one hand, he is an economic migrant, going to Manila for business reasons and regularly returning to Spain, and living there for most of his life. He falls into a category that Kamen terms "internal exiles" (2007, p. xiv), who often did not really have any issues living or returning to Spain. For exile is not always a matter of expulsion, but a question of alienation (Kamen, 2007, p. xiv). Gil de Biedma is politically situated within this (internal) exile category: for instance, his political affinities, especially in his youth; his contacts with other exiled people such as María Zambrano, as discussed above; and, importantly, his own ideas about nationality and belonging to a certain nation state.

Gil de Biedma's political commitment made him consider the prospect of exile seriously: "he sentido seriamente la tentación de exilarme [...] bastaría quedarme aquí" (2017a, p. 129). Thus, there is a strong correlation in Gil de Biedma's thought and action between the political and

the personal. As it may be common in emigrants, he admits idealising Spain (2017a, p. 129), but he straight away realises how problematic the Spanish political situation is — and he is committed to putting an end to it (2017a, p. 130). By contrast, on occasion, the author indulges in rough generalisations about Filipino people. For example, when he describes how they smell differently (2017a, p. 166) or when he agrees with his friend Larry saying “en Filipinas [...] *not everybody is gay but everybody is game*” (2017a, p. 117). These assertions, rather problematic from a modern point of view, since they involve a rough, racial generalisation, emphasise the author’s romantic view of the Philippines, to the point where he cannot see but the positives of the country. This is a feature of the emigration process, which reaches a conclusion when Gil de Biedma declares that he has detached himself completely from his Spanish life (2017a, p.151). “No siento nostalgia de aquello como tampoco ningún deseo de seguir aquí” (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 151); the author’s identity now belongs to a liminal place, neither Spain nor the Philippines. In the creation of his self through writing, Gil de Biedma is trying to exert a certain degree of control on himself, as we discussed in Chapter One — writing a diary for him started as a literary exercise and developed into a tool to impose moral categories on his life (2017a, p. 153), a sort of written super ego. Hence, his reflections on national detachment can be interpreted as the author’s own attempt at enacting a worldly, cosmopolitan sense of belonging to the world; an act of imposing cosmopolitan, internationally minded beliefs on to his own identity. The migratory act to the Philippines, be it considered exile or migration, as expressed through writing has created the necessary space for Gil de Biedma to pull together different strands of his identity into a cosmopolitan, queer, intellectual self that cannot just be analysed within the realm of nation states, but that rather belongs to the international level.

Thus, whether it is considered exile or migration, or indeed, as González-Allende explains following Ugarte “emixilio”, a combination of both (González-Allende, 2018, p. 9), the process led to deep changes in Gil de Biedma’s personal identity. Indeed, whilst his political commitment, especially in his first diary, is paramount, Gil de Biedma definitely enjoyed his stay in Manila, from a hedonistic point of view. Such enjoyment was coupled with a period of sexual experimentation and discovery, analysed in Chapter One. Most importantly, the freedom and joy he felt while in Manila was significant in Gil de Biedma’s identity, as it had an impact on his vision of himself and the world and his tendency to a cosmopolitan outlook. Next it will be ascertained how this vision of himself, this active development of the author’s identity through writing, is

constructed in opposition or adherence to the colonial Other in different spheres of life: economic, cultural and political.

2.5. The different facets of cosmopolitanism in the diaries (economic, cultural, political)

In the processes of exile and emigration, the individual faces the relationship between the “I” and the Other (González-Allende, 2018, p. 16). This has an impact on many different spheres of the individual’s identity, including their conception of gender, culture and their political ideas.

The reason for Gil de Biedma to travel and live in the Philippines was economic, at least to some extent. Although his first plan was to become a diplomat, he failed the entrance exam to the Spanish foreign office, more specifically the paper on Spanish culture and composition, apparently on two grounds: his friendship with Vicente Aleixandre, who was barely tolerated by Franco’s regime, and his prose composition exercise on the town of Arévalo, deemed too vulgar by the snobbish examiners in the foreign office (Dalmau, 2004, p. 55). This brought the young author’s dream of living abroad to a halt. He then attempted to join the University of Barcelona, hoping to find a similar atmosphere to the one he encountered in Oxford, but that did not work out, due to his political views and his father’s reticence on the matter (Dalmau, 2004). All of this coincided with a fairly buoyant time at the familial company, the Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas, where he started working as a lawyer in July 1955 (Gil de Biedma, 2010, p. 107). Gil de Biedma was not keen on the job; what he really wanted was an occupation that would give him time to write. A few months later, in January 1956, the author was commissioned to travel to the Philippines. His job was to research and study the Philippine law and to collaborate in the renovation of the company’s branch led by Fernando Garí (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 184).

Thus, the author’s arrival to the archipelago was not that of an exile or any common emigrant of the times. He enjoyed a high position, economically and socially. However, on the first days in Manila, he writes to his friend Carlos Barral: “heme aquí, antipodizado y sin memoria: no sé quién soy” (2017a, p. 83). He does not know who he is, because he has no memory and he sees himself upside down. From an identity point of view, it is interesting that he has no memories. Gil de Biedma is no longer himself, there is a gap, a literal ocean, between his old self and the person in the Philippines. The author sees himself upside down, as if reflected by a distorting mirror. In a first version of his poem “Las afueras”, noted in his diary in the first few weeks after

his arrival to Manila, we can find the following line: “si por lo menos alguien recordara” (2017a, p. 87). About this line, Gil de Biedma notes: “el recuerdo no nos lleva más allá de nosotros” (2017a, p. 88). The wish for nostalgia leads to the realisation that remembering will not help overcome our identity, bring together a new life. Instead of remembering there arises a need for adaption and reinvention. Svetlana Boym, in her analysis of nostalgic autobiographical narratives, states that “[t]here is no place like home, but home itself has been displaced and deliberately reimagined” (Boym, 2001, p. 258). The act of displacement of the memory leads to the author’s loss of memory on his arrival to the island. Nostalgia, and the process of reimagining and retelling one’s one past, is central in Gil de Biedma’s poetry (cf. “*Barcelona ja no és bona, o mi paseo solitario en primavera*” 2017b). It is also prominent in his diaries, especially as he finds it necessary in order to adapt, to take in the new foreign influences and reach a synthesis in his identity. Nostalgia functions here as a type of defence mechanism, against an accelerated rhythm of life and a period of personal upheaval (Boym, 2001, p. xiv). This process, as mentioned in the previous section, allows Gil de Biedma to find both narrative and personal space: an important concept in the development of his identity. His exclusively European cosmopolitan outlook must be temporarily forgotten, and Gil de Biedma embraces soon after his new life in the Philippines, from a sexual point of view, as we discussed in the first chapter, but also politically.

On a day trip around the island, Gil de Biedma identifies a mountain in the middle of the Philippine plains, where the *huks*, the Hukbalahap, a military group who rebelled first against the Japanese occupation of the islands in the 1940s and, later, against the first presidency of the Philippines, would defend themselves from the invaders. The mountain is the mount Arayat, which the author identifies as symbolic, out of reach, a place where no white person is allowed (2017a, p. 100). Using a rather classic device, probably out of his wide knowledge of English literature, Gil de Biedma follows a common tendency in Victorian and romantic travel literature of describing a mountain, promontory or similar landmark (Pratt, 2007, p. 198). The fact that the mount Arayat is out of bounds for white people has a powerful effect in the author: “mi experiencia de Filipinas multiplicada por mil” (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 100). His use of the term “experience” is key, since it implies that he does not interpret the event happening in Philippines as his normal life, rather as some sort of special instance. Gil de Biedma’s discovery is a way of “converting local knowledges (discourses) into [Spanish] knowledges, associated with European forms and relations of power” (Pratt, 2007, p.198).

Adapting Pratt's framework to interpret Gil de Biedma's description and to contextualise it in the colonialist writing experience (Pratt, 2007, p. 200), there are three main discovery rhetorical devices in the description of mount Arayat. First of all, pleasure: granted Gil de Biedma's diary writing is unlike the way the English romantic poets used to write, he describes the mount using hyperboles such as "un pilón casi perfecto" (2017a, p. 100), "el monte encantado". Unlike in Pratt's analysis (2007), it is not so much the aesthetic pleasure of the geographical feature in this case (admittedly, Gil de Biedma describes the plains surrounding the mount as inducing "malestar"); it is more the symbolic aspect of the mountain that enhances the author's experience, which, in his own words, is "multiplicada por mil" (2017a, p. 100). However, the density of meaning that Pratt's attributes to the Victorian discovery writing (2007, p. 200) is key to the understanding of this passage: the historical symbolism of the mountain, a strategic landmark of great importance for the Philippine rebels, is essential and becomes "an obsession" (2017a, p. 200). This has clear political undertones: Gil de Biedma was, at the time, interested in communism, and the Huk Rebellion, of a communist nature, was certainly an inspiration for him. Finally, the relationship of mastery in the text, a relation between the seer and the seen in Pratt's words (2007, p. 200) is ongoing throughout Gil de Biedma's account of his stay in the islands — "the power if not to possess, to evaluate this scene" (Pratt, 2007, p. 201). Gil de Biedma is continuously evaluating the country and his people, both natives and foreigners. However, as discussed in Chapter One as well as in the previous section when talking about pleasure, the aesthetic inclinations of the author, at the time much more concerned about experimentation and a decadent attitude to life, are more attuned with the lower classes and a down-to-earth bourgeois sensitivity. For instance, Gil de Biedma describes the workers' dwellings as "un amontonamiento de polvo" (2017a, p. 100), right below the description of mount Arayat. Nonetheless, he is still exercising that evaluative power, and finding some sort of (bourgeois) satisfaction in the description of those poor living conditions. The passage finishes with the author and his friends driving in a jeep through dark San Miguel, no electric power there, in a fresh, clear evening: "da gusto ir en el jeep abierto" (2017a, p. 101).

In spite of the fact that there are some colonialist features in Gil de Biedma's writing, perhaps necessary characteristics given his relation to the Philippines at first is one of unequivocal colonialist venture, he engages actively with the history of the Philippines and compares it to European literary equivalents such as Kafka's *The Castle*. The author's mention of the prohibition

for white people to enter the Arayat mountain is essential: it puts him, a white man, in the rare position of not being allowed in a certain area. That interpretation is a sign of Gil de Biedma's adaptive attitude, his aforementioned chameleon like disposition, whereby he is able to bring to a synthesis disparate element of different cultures and make them his own. This is an essential part of his cosmopolitan outlook, and this particular example is one of the first where we can see a widening of his European horizons: Gil de Biedma is integrating the Far Eastern culture of the Philippines into his traditional, Spanish, French and English background. This was already foreshadowed by, for example, his buying a *barong tagalog*, a traditional Philippine shirt used as part of a black-tie attire in the Philippines (2017a, p. 93). Overall, Gil de Biedma's identity has moved from memory loss and an upside-down identity, to an integration of the other's features as his own. This is part of the influence of travelling on the author's cultural identity.

In this section, Gil de Biedma's identity has been analysed against the backdrop of geographical movement. The importance of his early cosmopolitan outlook and its origins have been discussed, together with their impact on Gil de Biedma's arrival to the Philippines and how all of this is reflected on his diaries. In the next section, the author's ideas about Spanish and Philippine people will be examined, in order to explore the intersection between Gil de Biedma's own identity and the identity of others.

2.6. Friendships and lovers: Filipino and Spanish people in Gil de Biedma's diary

“Las oportunidades de hablar con europeos agradables son escasas aquí” was one of Gil de Biedma's comments about the numerous, mainly Spanish and British, expatriates in the Philippines in the late 50s (2017a, p. 95). Throughout the author's narrative, it is evident that he did not really enjoy the Western company he found on the island. Although there are several references to specific Western men he slept with, in general Gil de Biedma professes a dislike for the European and American businessmen he deals with. He keeps a cordial relationship with them though, while managing to find time to escape out for drinks and meetings with other non-European men. His desire swings, as shown in Chapter One, from the need for solitude to the need for others. What is most interesting, however, is that the author expresses what Stoler considers one of the basic, most powerful premises of colonialist rule: “the notion that Europeans in the colonies made up an easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity—a ‘natural’

community of common class interests, racial attributes, political affinities, and superior culture” (Stoler, 2002, p. 42).

This division is evident throughout the narration: formal, public occasions, such as meetings, dinners, and trips happen mostly in the company of other Spaniards, such as Mené Rocha or Fernando Garí; on the other hand, Filipino men mostly appear as sexual partners, for example, Jay or Chris. The latter take a secondary role in the diary: their narrative role is that of the objects of Gil de Biedma’s sexual drive. The division between Europeans and Filipinos, the former uninteresting but socially important, the latter exotic but without any social relevance other than sexual, is at the convergence of class and race. Gil de Biedma’s dislike for Europeans can be interpreted thus as stemming from his abhorrence for his office job and all that surrounded it, mainly European upper-class executives going to dinners and meetings. His interest for Filipino people is rooted in their exoticism, sexual and social; it is based on their being the colonial Other to which Gil de Biedma is attracted in his penchant at the time for the underworld, his *malditismo*, which has been addressed in Chapter One. The colonial Other for Gil de Biedma lies in what he expresses in his poetry as “esta zona de luz apenas, entre la oficina y la noche que viene” (2017b, p. 68). They are not part of the higher rank office world, instead belonging to the lowly world of night and sex.

The author’s interest in that world of the slums also has echoes of a nineteenth century literary trend known as slumming, partly consisting of presenting a local population, generally from a minority background, to a general audience. This is directly related with the idea of *malditismo* that was elaborated in Chapter One. While in Chapter One *malditismo* was directly linked with sexuality, the practice of writing about the slums of the world conflates both sex, space and social background. Scott Herring, in his work about queer slumming in the USA, points at how this type of literature conflates sexual subcultures and the so called “secrets of the city” (Herring, 2007, p. 11). Likewise, Gil de Biedma attempts to discover the secrets of the “mysterious” Philippines.

In essence, what we are discussing here is how those stereotypes Gil de Biedma expresses in his diaries about European people, which at first sight may seem to cast a positive light onto Filipino people, are actually based on colonial ideas of class and race. Those ideas involve a vision of society where white European people are in positions of power, carrying out jobs that involve

high level influence and seen as the right people to be with. On the other hand, Filipino men are considered by the author as those who bring the exotic to his life. Yet, they never have an important status, hence they always belong to the out of the office environment. The question now is, to what extent are these stereotypes at the core of Gil de Biedma's identity? Does he challenge them at any point? Is it possible to ignore such deeply, socially embedded stereotypes consciously to avoid them seeping into one's identity?

Gil de Biedma is, by his own definition, on the side of the coloniser, as it corresponds to a white, bourgeois and Spanish man in a former colony, yet he seems to make an effort to empathise with the Filipino people and their struggle. This time he deploys (from a personal narrative point of view rather than a poetic one) his famous double identity, on the one hand *Hijo de Dios*, son of God, son of the ruling, Spanish bourgeoisie, imbued in privilege; on the other hand, the *Hijo de Vecino*, the common person, one among many others, capable of seeing any other human being as an equal. Gil de Biedma held this poetic belief throughout his life (Pérez Escobedo, 2015, p. 247). This is a narrative framework upon which the author was able to make sense of his ambivalent reality in terms of social class and sexuality.

This double act of identity is clearly seen in the following excerpt of Gil de Biedma's diaries, in which he is reflecting on his relationship with Chris de Vera, his Filipino lover during his first stay in Manila in 1956:

Tan pronto estamos lo bastante bebidos nos lanzamos a una disquisición apasionada acerca de la imposibilidad de toda amistad sólida entre nosotros, se lamenta él de haber nacido esclavo, me desespero yo de haber nacido tirano y de trabajar en una sociedad que es un símbolo de tiranía, doy viento al sentimiento de culpabilidad racial que he adquirido desde que estoy aquí, él declara que mi simpatía no es otra cosa que una actitud protectora, le devuelvo yo la impertinencia, cada cual decide no ver más al otro y cuando la situación es ya imposible nos confesamos que ha sido una noche maravillosa y que somos hermanos — lo cual, por mi parte, es absolutamente cierto: le quiero mucho —; una vez llegados a la *catharsis*, nos despedimos hasta la próxima vez. (2017a, p. 102)

Gil de Biedma condenses in this paragraph the relationship of an educated, privileged bourgeoisie with the colonised working class. He admits this feeling of “racial guilt” is a recent one, developed since his arrival in the country. The dialectic movements towards what the author

terms a catharsis is very suggestive: from the feelings of estrangement, a tyrant against a slave, through the theme of guilt joining the coloniser and the colonised and finally arriving at brotherhood. “I love him very much” says a smitten Gil de Biedma who, nonetheless, is not naive about the impossibility of truly being with the Other: “each other decides not to see the other”. Demonstrating his sharp eye for the human soul, Gil de Biedma presents here an insightful analysis of racial relations in Philippines in the 1950s. Although perhaps his vision was modulated by other encounters throughout his life (one ought not to forget that Gil de Biedma prepared the edition of this diary in the late 80s, which probably triggered the late development of some of these ideas), the author shows a nuanced approach to the issue of colonialism and race. He accepts that the encounter with race and oppression is not just about feeling guilty or even making repairs: it is about declaring a brotherhood of men.

A similar encounter occurred when Gil de Biedma met James Baldwin. As mentioned above, it was short and intense, although the exact details are not entirely clear (Dalmau, 2004). However, there seemed to be a love triangle between Jaime Gil de Biedma, James Baldwin and Jorge Vicuña, who said that there was again a display of the dialectic process, a repetition of the same encounter albeit with different actors. “Baldwin behaved like the humiliated and Gil de Biedma was lacerating himself in front of him [...] looking at Baldwin as if corroded by guilt” (Dalmau, 2004, p. 298). This is reflected on the poem *Una despedida*, which is part of the book *Moralidades*. In his *Diario de Moralidades*, Gil de Biedma confesses the difficulty of remembering details from this event, due to the amount of alcohol the participants had drunk, but he makes clear that “this is the moment to reach a series of conclusions to clearly see my moral and intellectual life in the last twelve months” (2017a, p.475). He develops his analysis to the point of accepting he was “fleeing away from something or from myself [...] I ignore it. Perhaps from a moral decision” (2017a, p. 475-476). In these examples, Gil de Biedma is actively crafting his identity through writing his life, imposing the moral categories he thinks desirable, ethically correct, on to his self. It is also possible to plot the importance of movement in the change and adaptation of identity; the act of escaping is key in the author’s analysis. Ultimately, this relationship with the Other shows the difficulty of Gil de Biedma to assume his privileged position, how the encounter with the racial Other had him reconsider his moral approach to life. Whichever the mask he chooses to wear, whether he is *Hijo de Dios* or *hijo de vecino*, Gil de Biedma is faced with the

impossibility of becoming either. This episode of the author's life is able to portray, indeed in the process of life writing, the author's struggle to combine those two masks into his own identity.

Throughout this chapter we have explored the concepts of cosmopolitanism and colonialism in Gil de Biedma's diaries. The origins of his cosmopolitan outlook have been identified and contextualised. Furthermore, the tensions arising from his encounter with the colonial Other have been identified and studied in the light of postcolonial theory. Finally, specific examples about Gil de Biedma's relation with Philippino people in Manila have been analysed. Thus, we have pieced together the ways in which the author, through life writing, has created his own identity, imposing certain moral categories on to it whilst engaging in a struggle with privilege, colonialism and racism. Gil de Biedma shows his most acute vision of the issues surrounding these themes. Nevertheless, his feeling of guilt is a recurrent source of pain the author is working through during his life.

Chapter Three: Gil de Biedma: queerly ill and bourgeois

Jaime Gil de Biedma's diaries present an author's struggle to define his identity through the writing of his own life. In Chapter One, the relationship between the diaristic genre and the author's sexual identity has been examined, through an analysis of his adherence to different strategies of resistance in his life-writing. This analysis led us to consider the link between sexuality, social class, and privilege, which are in turn linked to cosmopolitan attitudes in the author's work. Indeed, Gil de Biedma was a firm believer in universalistic ideals, even if he was haunted by a feeling of colonial guilt, due to his work in the Philippines and his feelings of privilege, which have been explored in Chapter Two. Bridging the notions of class, privilege and sexuality and ubiquitous throughout his personal diaries is the theme of illness. This chapter will look at Gil de Biedma's diary entries on illness, examining how the author conceptualises his own illnesses, including tuberculosis and AIDS. This chapter will also delve into the implications of illness and queerness in Gil de Biedma's diaries and the impact of illness in the construction of identity by Gil de Biedma. Illness in the works of Jaime Gil de Biedma, and its strong link with ageing and the passing of time, gather together the strands of analysis opened in chapters one and two: Gil de Biedma's sexuality, social class and relationship to the colonial other are intertwined in his notions and feelings around his often-ill body and mind.

Already on his return flight to Europe, Gil de Biedma expresses how the movement between countries produces that impact on the subject, which he describes as a certain malaise (cf. Chapter Two). The author has a changing, ambivalent approach to the return to his country of birth, ranging from his description of the closely urban character of what he calls Latin cities, such as Barcelona or Madrid, at whose borders one encounters emptiness and, thus, anguish, to the "surprising happiness" (2017a, p. 218) when he sees for the first time after his stay in Manila the mount Tibidabo in Barcelona. The elaborate description mirrors the one where he described mount Arayat in the Philippines, which we analysed in Chapter Two. Moreover, such ambivalence already points to a constant in the author's diaries: the struggle to reconcile the public and the private: his family's wishes and expectations with his own, personal desires.

Soon after Gil de Biedma's arrival home, a row with his parents ensues, and a subsequent feeling of dissatisfaction. It is as though the emotions he encounters upon arriving home foreshadow his future illness. His mental health becomes more fragile and his drinking habits

problematic, to the point where Gil de Biedma crashed his father's car into a van, a night when the author was taking an "anonymous" lover home. As he summarises in that diary entry "la invencibilidad dura muy poco" (2017a, p. 235).

Indeed, it did not last long, for soon after his arrival Gil de Biedma decided to go to the doctor for a check-up and he was found to have a lung lesion, a consequence of tuberculosis. This illness, romanticised throughout history and suffered by a number of writers such as Anton Chekhov or Katherine Mansfield, affects the respiratory system and, although already fully curable in Gil de Biedma's times, it did (and still does nowadays) require a long period resting in bed. The author was not particularly worried — the only thing he wanted was "[quedar] en libertad para escribir" (2017a, p. 240), to be free to write. The suggested treatment was going to take up three months. The combination of not being able to go to the Philippines and having to avoid any sexual contact irritates Gil de Biedma in the beginning, where he writes "la enfermedad me irrita lo mismo que un insulto. Además no creo en ella" (2017a, p. 241). In anger, the author states he does not believe in the illness; such a strong refusal constitutes a declaration in the Lacanian sense, whereby by saying that illness does not exist the author is trying to erase the notion of illness in his body, of course to no avail. He sees himself immersed in "esa noria de médicos, enfermeras, radiografías y parientes" (2017a, p. 240), which constitutes an impediment to his desired freedom.

At some point, on further examination, the author's doctor, Jacint Reventós, a friend of the family, realises that tuberculosis may have been affecting Gil de Biedma since before the 1950s. He had already been diagnosed with the illness by one doctor, but said diagnosis was rejected by another physician: the nicotine from heavy smoking made it difficult for the medics to see symptoms of tuberculosis in the author's lungs. At that point, Gil de Biedma observes how, ironically, despite his rather unhealthy lifestyle, it was necessary to travel to Philippines to be "ravagé par les fièvres de l'Extrême Orient" (2017a, p. 312), quoting a poem by Henry Jean-Marie Levet. It is worth noting the colonialist undertone of that quote, showing that for the author there is a connection between travel, migration and illness. Indeed, Gil de Biedma states, "he vivido en Barcelona, en Orense, en Oxford y en París, sitios positivamente húmedos e insanos, sin advertir jamás una sola grieta en mi salud" (2017a, p. 312).

Here is a summary of his quite extensive journey throughout the world — only upon his return to the origin did he fall ill. Never before did the author feel a single crack in his health. Travelling

and movement are thus portrayed as positive activities, where the body holds up and keeps up with the frenetic activity, effectively barring sickness. The symptoms only occur once Gil de Biedma is back home, having returned to his roots. Those symptoms include tuberculosis but also worsening mental health. One cannot help but wonder to what extent the negative impact on the author's mental health is caused by the return to his family; how much those symptoms are “a cipher of some repressed meaning” (Žižek, 2008a, p. 226). In this chapter, a distinction will be made between Gil de Biedma's physical illness and his interpretation thereof, on the one hand, and his struggle with depression and its relationship to both physical illness and the author's surroundings.

However, despite the irritation about his own medicalisation, Gil de Biedma quickly takes a positive spin on the whole situation: “eso acelerará mi libro [...] lo importante es creer firmemente en la vastedad del tiempo” (2017a, p. 313). The link between time, literature and illness is paramount in Gil de Biedma's works, both his diaries and poems, and this quote condenses his desire of being in control of time. In that same page, he tells how he has started to write his diary in his spare time at work — this leads sometimes to him being caught in a “different duration of time” (2017a, p. 313). “Envejecer, morir,/es el único argumento de la obra” (Gil de Biedma, 2017b, p. 177) — indeed, for the author, growing old is one of the main preoccupations. Time is the agent of this process, being key to his understanding of illness and writing.

3.1. Physical illness and writing: tuberculosis, poetry and the young Proustian bourgeois

“Echaba de menos la completa ociosidad de la clínica” (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 568)

At the very beginning of his illness, Jaime Gil de Biedma writes in the third part of his first diary titled “Regreso a Ítaca”, about his physical appearance. On a car trip to Nava de la Asunción with his mother the author states: “Debo de ofrecer la viva imagen del odioso burguesito proustiano. Me siento tibio por dentro y vagamente feliz” (2017a, p. 248). This comical note reveals the author's intellectual aspirations — even though “odiosa”, hateful, this image makes him feel lukewarm and happy. The connection with Marcel Proust is not unusual at all, since the French author also suffered a respiratory disease (in his case, asthma) that led to long periods in bed, which were central to his most famous work *In Search of Lost Time*. In fact, the main theme in the famous novel, as its title suggests, is the passage of time, which is at the core of Gil de

Biedma's literary and personal preoccupations. To complete the portrayal of a young bourgeois, Proust's work, as Gil de Biedma's diaries, belongs to the life-writing genre, albeit to what we would call nowadays autofiction in the former case, diaries in the latter. Nonetheless, the similarities are striking, and they point towards a productive recreation or reflection by Gil de Biedma on stereotypes in connection with social class. In this section, we will examine the connection between Gil de Biedma's tuberculosis, his identity and the representation of social class in his diaries.

Tuberculosis, also called consumption, has a strong, long-established connection with creativity, as Susan Sontag points out in her essay *Illness as Metaphor* (1991). A myth has traditionally existed around the illness that "supplied an important model of bohemian life" (Sontag, 1991, p. 33). Tuberculosis provided vindication as an artist; it was considered befitting of an artist to be prone to the disease (Sontag, 1991). In spite of this romantic view of yore, Gil de Biedma's attitude towards the recently diagnosed disease is rather pessimistic at first. To his physician's comment that Gil de Biedma may be able to carry on with his work, he writes: "si me quitan la diversión, que me quiten el trabajo, al menos quedaré en libertad para escribir [...] ni siquiera tendré la suerte de estar grave" (2017a, p. 240). Gil de Biedma suggests that he would rather be seriously ill than carry on working, in a rather bohemian way of thinking. In an insightful comment about social class, Gil de Biedma realises that "la salud y el tiempo [están] en proporción inversa" — the healthier one is, the less time one has to do as desired. In these reflections it is possible to identify a criticism of capitalistic ideas about labour, in line with the communist sympathies of the author's youth. Gil de Biedma is relishing the idea of having plenty of time, of not having to work, whilst regretting his lack of liberty in Nava de la Asunción, the small village where he had to spend his convalescence with his mother. The author is subverting the traditional metaphors around tuberculosis that Sontag describes (1991): whilst he longs for a bohemian life where he can dedicate himself to writing, thus eschewing the familial injunction to work, Gil de Biedma does not fall for the traditional European stereotypes about the relationship between tuberculosis and art. It is not that he was not aware of those notions; indeed, soon after his diagnosis he writes in his diary a quote from Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*: "*Petit bourgeois a la tache humide!*" (2017a, p.242), a description of one of the characters suffering from tuberculosis, ironically directed to Gil de Biedma himself. Yet, despite his active engagement with other literary ideas and stereotypes, as examined in Chapter One, for example, about Mira's models of sexual

resistance and their relationship to Gil de Biedma, the author keeps a matter-of-fact attitude about his tuberculosis. He does not see anything particularly romantic there, nor does he argue for a connection between the illness and artistry. Instead, Gil de Biedma shows a philosophical, existential interest on the relationship of his malady with time.

Gil de Biedma's interest in his illness is closely linked to time and its impact on life. He feels as if he has reached bottom in terms of his health and, although optimistic about the outcome, he fears he might become permanently apprehensive (2017a, p. 242). Gil de Biedma recognises that illness has become an essential part of his own self, how it has started to change him for good. Arthur Frank talks about illness as an epiphany which is "at the core of any illness narrative" (Frank, 1993, p. 41), and which can be defined as "the recognition that illness has *always* been the medium of the self" (Frank, 1993, p. 46). Indeed, for Gil de Biedma, tuberculosis will just be the obvious start to a life where he will see his self -mediated through the disease. The first impact of this epiphany is obvious to the author: "la sensación de estar corto de tiempo [...] es un modo que tengo de ser aprensivo" (2017a, p. 244). What Gil de Biedma is describing here is, to put it in Lacanian terms, "a lack [that] is no longer lacking" (Zevnik, 2017, p. 240): the onset of his anxiety about life. Time is acting in this case as the *objet petit a*, that surplus *jouissance*, also understood in French as sexual climax, threatening to complete the self, closing the void and, therefore, annihilate the subject (Žižek, 2008b). The author's relationship to time and its lack is constantly mediated through that anxiety, leading at certain points of his life to what we would nowadays term depression.

In addition to the paradoxically positive mental health implications, which are readily apparent, tuberculosis also acts as a trigger for physical changes that the author reflects about in his diaries. These changes involve new habits, such as not going to work and living in Nava de la Asunción, which lead the author to a very special, unique take on his illness. It all starts by Gil de Biedma deciding to let his beard grow, to his mother's outrage: "Ayer le dije [a mi madre] que pensaba dejarme barba y — a los dos o tres pases de la discusión — rompió a llorar" (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 245). Soon after, the author compares his life to that of an "eunuco" (2017a, p. 247), as he has put on quite some weight. After two weeks he walks "bamboleándo[se], como quien atraca después de una navegación" (2017a, p.248). Yet, even if the physical impact of the illness may be negative, at the time Gil de Biedma manages to keep his good humour — the house maids,

Gregoria and Modesta, reproach the author for his joking about his own illness, which they take as if it were their own. What worries the author the most is his mother's mental state, as we saw above when she cried, for Gil de Biedma's mother was struggling with her son's illness.

By contrast, tuberculosis itself seems to Gil de Biedma as the best excuse for staying home and dedicating time to his writing and reading, which he talks about at length in his diaries. It is around this time that he sends the poem "Las afueras" to Carlos Barral; a poem that does not make any clear reference to tuberculosis, but that goes deep into the themes of nostalgia, the passing of time and the relationship between the city and the village. Eventually, the tuberculosis lesions in Gil de Biedma's lungs improve: "Las fotografías confirman luego que he reducido en dos tercios mi lesión. Si sigo así, me quedo sin proyectos literarios" (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 248). However, the author still worries about his literature, rather than his medical fitness: he will not be able to carry on working on his literary projects. Of course, it ought to be acknowledged that tuberculosis in the 50s in Spain, especially for a wealthy family who could afford good healthcare, was not lethal, rather somewhat irksome, but not particularly serious.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the author's perspective is remarkable, in that he apparently puts his literature above his physical health. This position is not unique to Gil de Biedma, though, and it could be found already in nineteenth century authors. Indeed, as Sander Gilman explains in his book *Disease and Representation* (1988), the dyad between the observer as healthy and the Other as diseased is rather complex. The nineteenth-century artistic stance, described in Chapter One as the *malditista* model, glorified the art of the mentally ill, thus turning the roles: the ill became the positive side as opposed to the healthy, considered the negative, bourgeois, conformist side" (Gilman, 1988, p. 8). This position takes on a political view of the illness, taking place in the dichotomy of bourgeois versus working class. Gil de Biedma did not feel comfortable as a bourgeois, as we saw above: illness, tuberculosis in this case, even if far from romanticised in his writings, enables the author to become opposed to his healthy, bourgeois family who, critically, struggle with the disease more than Gil de Biedma himself.

It is possible to find such a political undertone expressed in his diaries: what the author wanted to do, but did not quite manage to throughout his life, was to dedicate himself to literature, effectively abandoning his job. Furthermore, this political idea also seeps into the realm of poetry and philosophy: Gil de Biedma's daily work as a lawyer can be interpreted here as his physical

health: “la salud y el tiempo [están] en proporción inversa” (2017a, p. 242) — more health (or work) less time; less health (or work) more time. The feeling that time was passing and was not in Gil de Biedma’s control haunted his poetry and diaries and had a clear link to his mental health, which was good during his bout of tuberculosis but which starts to decrease as the author recovers his health and has to go back to work. As Gil de Biedma returns to what he considers the realm of the bourgeoisie, sex and alcohol become necessary to put distance between himself and his family who, at the time, were pushing the twenty-seven-year-old to get married (2017a, p. 310).

Social pressure is key in the author’s life and work, yet time *is* the symbol that condenses all of Gil de Biedma’s desires. The perceived lack of time, even when just thinking about his job, and which, as pointed out above, is a feature of bourgeois society, constantly busy with work and without time for creative endeavours, brings his writing to a standstill: “Acostumbrado a la idea de que el tiempo es vasto y está disponible, trabajé bien hasta el lunes pasado [...] cuando terminé, caí en la cuenta de los poquísimos días aquí que me quedaban, y eso me dejó sin ganas de escribir, aunque fuese en este diario” (2017a, p. 301). It is the vastness of time, or the “firm belief in the vastness of time” (2017a, p. 313), that help Gil de Biedma feel at ease to write. Yet, that goes right against the core ideas of the bourgeoisie. Interestingly, Gil de Biedma’s recovery is punctuated by a variety of relapses, colds, fevers, etc., all of which seem to encourage his literary endeavours. Once recovered from tuberculosis, the author’s return to Barcelona and to the whirlwind of both bourgeois work and *malditista* sex (which had stopped altogether whilst in Nava de la Asunción) has an impact on his writing — “la idea de escribir me abruma” (2017a, p. 330) says Gil de Biedma, towards the end of the year 1956, reflecting on the year that has just passed: “Fin de año, fin de un tiempo” (2017a p. 331). The end of a time, or perhaps even the end of time keeps coming up in the author’s writings. The end of his time, however, will not come for the author until much later in his life, when he contracts HIV and develops AIDS. Gil de Biedma narrated part of that period of his life in his latest diary, which will be explored in the next section.

3.2. AIDS: the end of the plot

“How do readers and writers situate themselves with respect to texts that communicate sickness?” (Epps, 1996, p. 359)

The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the ways Gil de Biedma’s representation of illness in general, and tuberculosis and AIDS specifically, are related to issues of class and

sexuality. Illness in this context may be considered a misnomer — since AIDS itself is not an illness as such but a “spectrum of illnesses” (Sontag, 1991, p. 102) that are consequence of the spread of HIV in the body. Gil de Biedma’s “Diario de 1985” contains a scarce sixteen pages describing his first course of treatment at the Claude Bernard hospital in Paris (Gil de Biedma, 2017, p. 61). They are written in somewhat formulaic chronological order, unlike his other diaries, following on a day by day basis his activities, thoughts and treatment from 21st October until 1st November. Each entry starts with the date and sums up a recollection of the day’s activities, unlike previous diaries where the author chose to follow a free style. The content of this latest diary is lean and monotonous, yet still showing the poet’s characteristic use of irony. It is also very medically oriented, describing specific medication and treatment as well as his fears — there is a lack of poetic references (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 62) and an abundance of anguish. This diary represents a unique testimony of a Spanish poet’s first encounter with the treatment of AIDS. This section will explore the strategies of representation of AIDS in Gil de Biedma’s diary, linking them to the author’s life and thought and to the notions of social class, politics and aesthetics already addressed in previous chapters.

3.2.1. THE ORDER OF THE AIDS DISCOURSE

The “Diario de 1985” is a short, sober and laconic depiction of Gil de Biedma’s first month in a hospital in Paris receiving treatment for Kaposi’s sarcoma, a common consequence of AIDS. Andreu Jaume in his introduction to the author’s diaries wonders whether Gil de Biedma might have intended to keep on writing this diary in the following years, although he eventually gave up (2017a, p. 62). What is clear is that the feeling that death is getting closer is apparent throughout this diary, despite the fact that it would not happen until five years later. It is a diary full of anguish.

This subsection will analyse Gil de Biedma’s writing about his illness, in connection with issues of identity, subjectivity, diary writing, sexuality and social class. As Robert Richmond Ellis argued, “AIDS is the overdetermining condition of the homo-act and of all homos, both sero-positive and sero-negative, precisely because the positive/negative binary has itself been collapsed through a social discourse that conflates the gay male and AIDS bodies in an effort to reconfigure the traditional homograph” (1994, p. 15). In other words, AIDS and homosexuality, regardless of the true status of the person behind these terms, become part of the same discourse by virtue of

their association. Indeed, HIV-AIDS was considered by some the rightful punishment for sinners, such as gay people and prostitutes.

The aim of this subsection is to ascertain to what extent Gil de Biedma's ideas and feelings about illness follow or reject this idea of a conflation of homosexuality and AIDS. It is essential to note that AIDS in 1985 in Spain was still very recent — the first case having appeared in 1981, remained undiagnosed until 1983 after that person's death (Miguel, 1991). In addition, in the 80s up to a 63% of Spanish cases were drug addicts, as opposed to a 17% of homosexuals and a small 3% of both homosexual and drug addicts (Miguel, 1991, p. 78). Of course, it would be interesting to know how those categories were assigned to people and what degree of privacy they had when reporting their sexuality and drug consumption habits. Nevertheless, it seems as if AIDS in Spain in the 80s appeared in connection with drug users, the consumption of intravenous heroine being an issue throughout the 80s and 90s in Spain. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the discourse of AIDS in Spain, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, did not necessarily exhaust the reference to male homosexuality, as Lee Edelman already posited in the following excerpt:

'AIDS', then, resists our attempts to inscribe it as a manageable subject of writing — exceeding and eluding the medical, sociological, political, or literary discourses that variously attempt to confront or engage it — to the extent that as an historical phenomenon in the so-called Western democracies it has itself taken shape — has been given shape— as that which writes or articulates another subject altogether: a subject whose content is suggested but not exhausted by reference to 'male homosexuality'. (Edelman, 1994, p. 94).

In other words, AIDS in Gil de Biedma's diary of 1985 cannot just be interpreted as the discourse of the sero-positive male homosexual, for such a discourse was not fully operant in the Spanish society yet. Moreover, AIDS was an extremely unknown condition, both at a medical and popular level, whose prognosis, treatment, spread and origin were subject to the wildest speculations – from divine punishment to state-created biological weapon against homosexuals. Therefore, Gil de Biedma's discourse (or perhaps its lack) about AIDS has to be analysed in the

light of a more general discussion about identity, illness and social class. This is not to say that there is no connection between the treatment of homosexuality and AIDS in the writings of Gil de Biedma — secrecy being paramount for both as argued in the subsection above — but rather that this subsection will look at the wider array of discourses that conform the author’s ideas and experience of AIDS in the social, political and historical context of 1985. This approach is predicated on Lee Edelman’s notion that AIDS cannot “function as the subject of our writing since ‘AIDS’ is ideologically constructed as a form of writing itself: as an inscription of difference whose ‘subject’ is always the subject of ideology” (Edelman, 1994, p. 93). The question that this subsection will answer is: what ideology is Gil de Biedma the subject of? How does that ideology inform his literary and existential engagement with AIDS, as opposed to his experience of tuberculosis?

The diary of 1985 starts in Paris, on 21 October, the first night Gil de Biedma spends at the hospital Bichat-Claude Bernat. He is looking out of the window at a dark, grey and windy city — far from his earlier colourful descriptions of Manila or Barcelona, Paris remains in the rainy darkness of the autumnal days. Indeed, this diary will not look at the city life at all, for the author was not able to enjoy it in his hospital internment. Once he is settled in hospital, he narrates an example of his feared “noria de médicos, enfermeras, radiografías y parientes” (2017a, p. 240), which he wrote about when he was first diagnosed of tuberculosis in 1956 (cf. previous section):

“Entra [Jean-Pierre] Coulaud a saludarme un momento. Vuelve al cabo de un rato rodeado de ayudantes e internos. Habla del tratamiento a seguir aquí —diez o catorce días— y en Barcelona. [...] Sucesivamente van viniendo luego enfermeras e internos a tomarme sangre y a pincharme para hacer reacciones” (2017a, p. 626).

When one compares those two quotes, one cannot help but notice the repetitious nature of human experience. There is a fatal quality to both quotes, whose connection points at a foreshadowing of destiny in life writing. The idea of time and destiny is central to Gil de Biedma’s process to create his identity. In their respective studies on the poet’s subjectivity in his *Diario del artista en 1956* (2017a), David Vilaseca (2003) and Robert Richmond Ellis (1997) already highlighted the paradoxical nature of destiny with regards to the author’s status as a poet, the latter saying “to be true to himself [Gil de Biedma] must become what he already is” (Richmond Ellis, 1997, p. 58). In a similar vein, to stay true to his illness, and ultimately to himself, Gil de Biedma

had to go again through the big wheel of the medical system. In this diary of 1985, the description of the medical environment, treatment and their effects on the author's health and subjectivity are explored, as opposed to a more literary inclination found in earlier diaries.

As soon as Gil de Biedma settles down in hospital, he writes about the fact that his anxiety has disappeared. He explains that being treated for his (unnamed, cf. following section) condition has an immediately calming effect (2017a, p. 626). That relief he felt was connected to the anonymity he was enjoying during his stay in Paris. Gil de Biedma was very worried about the rumours going on in Barcelona about his health — he was adamant that he should keep his illness a secret (hence why, again, it was not even named)— and his return to Barcelona would bring about much-feared gossip. This was a delicate point for the author, as will be discussed in more detail in the next section. He had decided to keep his illness a secret under whatever circumstances, to the point that he establishes a comparison between his physical death and his death by the discovery of his secrets — “en lo uno y en lo otro, si salgo adelante será por el canto de un duro” (p. 629). This conflation of the subject's death and the actual death can be interpreted under Žižek's Lacanian notion of the subject's misrecognition, whereby “the self exists only on the basis of the misrecognition of its own conditions” (Žižek, 2008b, p. 73). In this case, Gil de Biedma's sharp, reflective eye is quick at recognising that his public persona (in the guises of the gentleman, the businessman, the intellectual), is based on keeping the secret. In reality it was not that much of a secret, as the author himself admitted to Dionisio Cañas that two different, unscrupulous journalists had published about his homosexuality as if Gil de Biedma himself had brought the topic up (Gil de Biedma, 2010, p. 446). There is a paradox here for, if the author's word is to be believed, his homosexuality had already been made public twice. Therefore, why was he so worried about this topic becoming public? The answer to this question relies on the game of misrecognition that is at the core of the self. Only by playing the part and not admitting the real kernel of his sexuality publicly could Gil de Biedma's self-created image continue existing. Indeed, not only his poetry (cf. Chapter One), but also, perhaps more importantly, his whole life is based on an ambiguous take on sexuality and desire. In 1985, suffering from AIDS, Gil de Biedma does not misrecognise the importance of the secret; instead, he is fully aware that behind the uncovering of the truth, there is nothing but the end.

The end is getting closer, while the impact of the treatment at the Parisian hospital somewhat alleviates Gil de Biedma's fear of death, which seems to give up temporarily in this first night at hospital. Gil de Biedma feels "sensually well" (2017a, p.626) — an interesting choice of words, for it would seem there is a certain sexual attraction, perhaps a *jouissance*, to his slight recovery. This will, however, not last long — he describes his state soon after as "un estado de hiperestesia en cuanto asuntos de vida y muerte" (p. 634). That state of hypersensitivity ranges from an occasional hopeful vision of his future (p. 637), to the author's wondering whether he will be able to carry on with his treatment in Barcelona (p. 639). It is remarkable that the author starts to record different timings throughout the day in this diary, often very precisely. For instance, "termino de escribir esto a las siete y media" (p. 626), "son las siete y cuarto de la tarde" (p. 627), "a las tres de la madrugada" (p.635). Gil de Biedma is trying to squeeze time, because he is too aware that it is lacking. As the author himself wrote in his poem "De senectute", the penultimate one in his last collection, (2017b, p. 197): "No es el mío, este tiempo". Neither time, nor this time, belongs to the author anymore. Instead, what it is left for Gil de Biedma is a constant worry that, at first, is directed towards his return home to Barcelona.

At this point, Gil de Biedma construes Barcelona as a place of gossip and rumours. He was surprised to learn that his future treatment will remain the same when he returns to Barcelona, rather than becoming easier (2017a, p. 629). Such a realisation fills Gil de Biedma with worry and concern to the extent that "it may consume him" (2017a, p. 629). In his diary entry of 23 October, the author is able to see the origin of his symptom: it is the fear of death, which he masks with logistical affairs to do with his return home. In Gil de Biedma's words, "mis inmediatas obsesiones de orden práctico [...] no son sino modos de esquivar —desahogándola vicariamente— la otra obsesión y el otro miedo" (2017a, p. 630). This can be read again as a reference to the poem quoted above, its two last lines being: "Ya nada temo más que mis cuidados./ De la vida me acuerdo, pero dónde está" (2017b, p. 197). Now, as in 1968 when that poem was published, Gil de Biedma's fear involves his treatment. There is a similarity between the dissolution of the secret analysed above and this idea of treatment: both involve a change in the way the Other will relate to the author. By enduring the medical cure, Gil de Biedma has to give up on his identity to become, as in 1956 with his tuberculosis, a mere castrated figure (cf. section 3.1). Back then he was able to use the space open by illness to embrace literature and writing. That is, however, not possible anymore for the writing self died with his "Poemas póstumos" (2017a, p. 163). For that reason, the chasm of time

opened by his hospital stay involves the fact that life is escaping the author: it is as though he has forgotten where life is — his old self's life being writing. Indeed, the literary craft is not part of this latest instance of Gil de Biedma's diary.

The pages of this diary are full of everyday references to sleeping, reading and medication. Interspersed with numerous day naps and sleepless nights, Gil de Biedma reads through a selection of Henry James's novels, one of his favourite authors, and the works of Schumpeter, an Austrian economist who offered a vision of capitalist societies going towards socialism (2017a, p. 631). The author does not hesitate to sing the praises of the socialist state, in a return of his beliefs of youth, this time without a trace of irony. The tone of the author in this last instance of his writing does not show any traces of his characteristic camp perspective; quite the opposite, there is a certain gravitas to the subject of the diary whose gaze turns on to the daily bits of reading and some insights on time and death. However, despite the general lack of irony, Gil de Biedma is still a savvy traveller with a flair for the analysis of cultural differences. Around the middle of his stay, he compares the Spanish and French private healthcare systems; of course, for a cosmopolitan bourgeois like him (cf. Chapter Two), there is a great deal of attraction in the foreign, the difference, France in this case. In addition, the access to this type of healthcare is a sign of Gil de Biedma's privilege. Curiously, the author remarks that the warmth and kindness of the nurses at the clinic may be due to the fact that they are from Martinique, one of France's overseas departments, an island in the Caribbean. Here, one may see straight away the colonialist conceptions of Gil de Biedma coming to the fore, reminiscing of his time in Manila and his love for the exotic Other. Thus far, it is evident that in this very short piece of life-writing, Gil de Biedma is, probably unconsciously, dealing with his different identities from throughout his life. A mature writer, he is now paradoxically invested in his career at the familial Tabacos de Filipinas ("todo esto me restará movilidad para mi trabajo en Tabacos" (2017a, p.634) he writes about his future visits to Paris, clearly worried about the impact his treatment will have on his job). He does not pay any attention to his several previous identities, to his obsession with writing. Instead, his main preoccupations are recovering his health, his treatment, his reading and his job. In a letter to Àlex Susanna in November 1985, right after his return to Barcelona, he mentions his treatment saying that it leaves him too tired, which makes it hard for him to do his usual job, but "hay que aguantarse" (2010, p. 426). The author's relationship to Josep Madern is cold and monotonous: the actor, who was also HIV positive, calls and visits frequently. Yet, Gil de Biedma does not seem

to give much importance to those visits, which are often described full of logistic details. The only moment when Josep's care is acknowledged is on 23 October, where Gil de Biedma writes "Contar con una diaria conversación con Josep es una gran cosa" (2017a, p. 629). Still, his references are opaque and dull for most of the diary. Reading it, one cannot but feel the solitude under the surface of a great intellectual.

The diary finishes on a rather strange note that seals the end of the subject that has been explored in this section thus far. This is the only time in the whole collection of diaries that Gil de Biedma talks about himself in the third person, after some instructions for administering medication, the author writes:

"JGB ha seguido un tratamiento de sarcoma cutáneo, tratado actualmente con inyección intramuscular diaria. Las precauciones a tomar en estas inyecciones son las mismas que se recomiendan para la prevención de la hepatitis B" (2107a, p. 641).

Instead of using his full name, Gil de Biedma decides to write his initials— something he had only done before when writing about his lovers in previous diaries, so that others could not recognise them. The use of the third person implies that the writing subject has finally dissolved, unable to reflect on himself anymore at this stage of his treatment. The medical structure has taken over, and now the author is but a body following treatment for a skin sarcoma. There is no AIDS discourse here, for the illness will not be named to keep the subject's integrity. Indeed, as the author himself wrote in his poem "No volveré a ser joven": "envejecer, morir, / es el único argumento de la obra" (2017b, p. 177). The plot has just become older and moribund.

3.2.2. THE ILLNESS THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME

Let us go momentarily back in time, to the end of Gil de Biedma's diary of 1978, which he finished with the following words: "Nada más triste que saber que uno sabe escribir, pero que no necesita decir nada de particular, nada en particular, ni a los demás ni a sí mismo" (2017a, p. 622). These self-pitying words portray a Gil de Biedma who was feeling hopeless about his own creation. He started his diary of 1978 wishing to get back to the art of literature. Soon after the start he realises that, no matter how hard he tries, he has changed: "yo no soy el de 1956" (2017a, p. 588). Such a change in identity, however, is not entirely completed, for the author adds: "mi identidad formal es todavía la de escritor — ante los demás y ante mí—, sin que haya sabido inventarme

otra” (2017a, p. 588). It is in the context of this tension between his identities — as mentioned in previous chapters his double act of *Hijo de Dios* and *hijo de vecino*, here transformed into the writer and the new, vague non-writer identity — where the author’s disenchantment with life came about as a result of his illness. This leads Gil de Biedma to the conclusion that would put an end to his diary writing, at least for a few years: “escribir ya no me es necesario” (2017a, p. 622). From that point, it will take the author seven years to decide to write another diary: his very last one in 1985, while he was staying in Paris to receive treatment for AIDS.

The onset of AIDS in Jaime Gil de Biedma is concealed in his written production. As mentioned in the Introduction, the author stopped writing poems at some point in the 60s. He did, however, engage in new editions of his old poems and their publication in some journals and magazines throughout the following decades. The Barcelona author even agreed to some interviews, although his experience was not always positive, especially because of the topic of his sexuality being broached in some of them (Gil de Biedma, 2010). This process is fairly well recorded in Gil de Biedma’s correspondence (2010) with a plethora of writers and intellectuals who were involved. Even though his diary of 1978 shows a certain degree of apathy, a disappointment in the craft of writing, Gil de Biedma was still very engaged in the literary world of Spain. He kept an ongoing postal conversation with many friends such as Luis Antonio de Villena, María Zambrano, Luis García Montero, Jesús Aguirre, Dionisio Cañas, Àlex Susanna, James Valender and many more. The author was more than happy being treated as an intellectual whom others looked up to, as he had done in the past with, for example, Jorge Guillén (Gil de Biedma, 2010). For example, the Spanish journal *Litoral* published a special issue in 1985/1986 in homage to Jaime Gil de Biedma, in the role of “personaje literario” (García Montero, Jiménez Millán and Salvador, 1985, p. 7). Gil de Biedma actively participated in the edition of this journal, sending copies of his poems and accepting interviews such as the one with Àlex Susanna (1985), where the author discusses a range of literary topics. Susanna, writing from the point of view of Gil de Biedma, quotes the following lines of a poem called “De Vita Beata”:

No leer,
no sufrir, no escribir, no pagar cuentas,
y vivir como un noble arruinado

entre las ruinas de mi inteligencia.

(Gil de Biedma, 2017b, p. 198).

This is one of the author's latest poems, included in his book *Poemas Póstumos*, after whose publication in 1965, as he cleverly discussed in his interview with Susanna (1985), Gil de Biedma finished for good his poetic production (not so much his essays, which he carried on writing until well into the 80s). In this poem, the poetic voice presents a dire landscape, a description of what Gil de Biedma himself had gone through during his previous convalescence in 1956: a life in the ruins of his own intelligence — perhaps *because of* his own intelligence? The title of the poem suggests that it is in this grim context that *vita beata* happens — a play on Seneca's work. Seneca's reflections in his book *Vita Beata* revolve around the refusal of wealth and the focus on the use of reason to achieve happiness. In an ironic, camp view of the Stoic philosopher's work, Gil de Biedma brings up the perfect closure to his poetry, two themes that have been a constant throughout his life: social class and intellectuality. Indeed, as discussed in the first section of this chapter, the author desired consciously to prioritise the latter, although the social constraints often took precedence in his life. Therefore, the poem reaches its resolution in the ruined noble surrounded by his intelligence; in the 60s, Gil de Biedma, probably with his mask of Hijo de Dios, foreshadows his future.

Paradoxically, for the above quoted poem seems to picture a solitary life, Gil de Biedma's experience of AIDS is heavily (perhaps inexorably) intertwined with the author's social surroundings, for they will be central to his writings on AIDS. Social class will thus be central in the way Gil de Biedma explores AIDS in his very last diary. It is in June of 1985 (Dalmau, 2004), with a rise of his popularity among the younger Spanish poets, when Gil de Biedma first noticed symptoms of what was considered at the time a taboo disease. He developed Kaposi's sarcoma, a type of skin cancer that is common in people with AIDS. It was diagnosed by his personal doctor, Jacint Reventós, who quickly referred the case to a famous dermatologist-venereologist — an example of the good contacts of the bourgeoisie — who, in turn, suggested the necessary tests (Dalmau, 2004). According to Dalmau, whose sources were people close to the Gil de Biedma family, his reaction was, at first, ironic and detached, a sort of a deadpan take on the situation. Later, it became more emotional, according to some witnesses, such as Àlex Susanna or the

author's brother-in-law (Dalmau, 2004, p. 428-429). As to Gil de Biedma himself, the Barcelonan author wrote very little at the time; in June, he only sent two letters: one to Jesús Aguirre (a famous Spanish editor and writer who became Duke of Alba by marriage to Cayetana Fitz-James Stuart), about some soirée at his home. The second one, dated 28 June is slightly more telling; in a laconic note to Luis García Montero, Gil de Biedma says: "mi humor estos días me inclina poco a la versificación" (2010, p. 418). The detail is scarce, though, and from that point onwards there are only two more references to his illness in his correspondence: a veiled one about his inability to attend his cousin's wedding because of a trip to Paris (2010, p. 439); another one, in November 1989, to his cousin Santiago Gil de Biedma, head of the familial company Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas (cf. Introduction and Chapter Two), where Jaime Gil de Biedma presented his own resignation, two months before his death.

In all of Gil de Biedma's production, the reference to HIV-AIDS is, however, very secretive: nowhere is there a mention to his disease. No name was ever given to it, not in his correspondence, his essays, his poetry or even his diaries. This silence is akin to Lord Alfred Douglas's well-known line "the love that dare not speak its name"; AIDS is, for Gil de Biedma, the disease that dare not speak its name. Likewise, as was analysed in Chapter One, homosexuality for the author remained unmentioned in his poetry for, according to his own letter to Dionisio Cañas already in 1989 (Gil de Biedma, 2010, p. 445), a public admission of his sexual orientation would leave him "inerme" (2010, p. 446) before his family. The use of the word "inerme", unarmed, is rather suggestive in this context for it equates secrecy with the power of weaponry. Publicly admitting what was well-known in intellectual and literary circles, as Gil de Biedma himself conceded in said letter, would leave the author, who at this point was nearing the end of his life, considerably ill of AIDS complications, to the mercy of his family.

The parallels between Gil de Biedma's public attitude towards his AIDS and his homosexuality are both obvious and understandable. Although a part of the cultural milieu of Spain in the 80s was fairly open to sexual difference, hence why his closest, intellectual friends were aware of most of the situation, it is significant to remember that the author's family and work environment were very conservative. In addition, as mentioned above, HIV/AIDS was a very new and unknown disease at the time. The literary identity of the Barcelonan poet was considered just an oddity, a quirk, for an otherwise "burgués convencido" in the words of his very own sister (*Jaime Gil de*

Biedma, Retrato de un poeta, 00:40:00 – 00:41:00). Gil de Biedma was adept at keeping the bourgeois mask on in front of his family, something that at first sight may be at odds with his less conservative ethical, aesthetical and political views described in previous chapters. It can be said that Gil de Biedma's discourse on AIDS and homosexuality is consciously repressed in the familial and work spheres. They were not topics for discussion and, with AIDS in particular, which was not easily kept hidden given its physical consequences, the approach taken was informing everybody that it was some sort of tropical, rare disease contracted in Manila (Gil de Biedma, 2017a, p. 625). The association between HIV-AIDS and the colonial Other is at the core of the theories about the origin of the virus. Indeed, it was thought at first that AIDS was coming from Africa "on the illegal bodies of Haitian migrants" (Meruane, 2012, p. 159). Gil de Biedma's point is thus remarkable, especially in connection with the quote analysed in the first section of this chapter, "ravagé par les fièvres de l'Extrême Orient" in relation to his first diagnosis of tuberculosis. Gil de Biedma uses the same rhetoric he used for tuberculosis, publicly blaming his travels around the world, especially the Philippines, in a clear play on colonialist perceptions of the Far East. Nonetheless, even though the way the author construes his illness in his first bout of tuberculosis is, deep down, fairly positive, for it would give him the time to get away from his day job to write his poems, now the tone becomes rather more sombre. Gil de Biedma was well aware of the situation of the AIDS pandemic in America; he had travelled to New York not long before his diagnosis, at the height of the pandemic. According to Ana María Moix, Gil de Biedma thought he contracted HIV from a Spanish DJ he had sex with (Dalmau, 2004, p. 429). For this analysis, the actual reason is not so important; instead, the point is that the way the author creates his public ill persona involves using the colonial Other as the fabric that helps repress AIDS. The mysterious, tropical disease is a trope that worked well in an otherwise fairly xenophobic Spanish society, as well as in Western capitalistic ideology.

In her study of AIDS in testimonial writing, Sarah Brophy (2004) points out that the construction of AIDS discourse around ideas of tropicalness is a common strategy of displacing illness narratives. While pointing the finger at the colonial Other, positions like Gil de Biedma's aim "to locate safety here, at home, and disease as occurring 'elsewhere'" (Brophy, 2004, p. 6). Those narratives undergo a further metonymy, whereby "HIV infection and AIDS are repeatedly displaced from the home-space [...] and banished to the floating container of elsewhere" (Brophy, 2004, p. 6). The myths involving AIDS and the Other have been countered by activism and

criticism in the cultural spheres, thus providing the much-needed visibility for the collective. Nonetheless, Gil de Biedma did not participate in this type of activism. Following the analysis of strategies of sexual resistance that was developed in Chapter One, in line with the author's camp sensibilities, Gil de Biedma never engaged in homophile positions. He did not use his voice to speak in defence of the gay community, unlike other writers such as Cernuda, Gide or Gil-Albert, for example. Similarly, he never engaged in AIDS activism, instead promoting, at least in the sphere of his public life, some of those damaging tropes Brophy discusses in her work (2004). Yet what makes Gil de Biedma's diary of 1985 relevant to a history of AIDS in Spain is precisely his very personal, detached portrayal of the illness. The author did not theorise about AIDS; instead, what his testimony depicts is quite plainly the first month of a person receiving treatment for Kaposi's sarcoma, a term that does not appear in the narrative either. It is possible to argue that Gil de Biedma's fear of the potential backlash of his family was too overwhelming, hence why he chose not to name the symptom, thus, perhaps unconsciously, repressing it; the symptom being both his homosexuality and AIDS. As has been previously explored, however, Gil de Biedma did address the topic of homosexuality and illness at length in his diaries, in a seemingly comfortable manner, although always with ironic detachment. This cynicism can be interpreted under the light of camp attitudes, as was argued in Chapter One, but it is also connected with the tension, becoming more prominent in his more mature years, between his two famous literary identities: *Hijo de Dios* and *hijo de vecino*. For with the passing of time, it seems as though Gil de Biedma camp detachment transforms from a playful critique of the social rules and imperatives into a more honest assumption thereof. The key to this matter is that Gil de Biedma's familial and work image, being *Hijo de Dios*, is a mask that he dons in order to keep the bourgeois appearances. Thus, following Žižek's conceptualisation of identity, Jaime Gil de Biedma recognises the distance between that "ideological mask and the reality [yet] still find[ing] reasons to retain the mask" (Žižek, 2008b, p. 26). He is critical of the bourgeoisie and the whole political and social establishment throughout his life, but when confronted with his own gay, HIV positive identity, the author chooses to conform to the ideological apparatus of Spain in the 80s, even in his personal diaries. Of course, it must be highlighted at this point that this cynical, bourgeois frame of mind stems from a profound fear of rejection by his family and life-long colleagues: a clear example of this is the aforementioned letter sent to Dionisio Cañas to keep him from writing about Gil de Biedma's sexual life (2010, p. 445).

For Gil de Biedma, despite his interest in the exploration of sex and sexuality in his first diary (cf. Chapter One), was adamant to keep a strict control on the publicity of his sexual life. He wished for it to eventually become public, although not during his lifetime. Therefore, the author had prepared the edition of his first diary, “Diario del artista en 1956” (enriching the former “Diario del artista enfermo” published in 1974 with the plethora of sexual detail analysed in Chapter One) as well as “Diario de 1978”. Gil de Biedma’s “Diario de 1985” was, however, left unedited; it was prepared for publication posthumously by Carmen Balcells and Andreu Jaume. Therefore, the author’s diary of 1985, lacking any formal edition process by Gil de Biedma, can be deemed as being rather unadulterated, perhaps providing a candid view of how the author lived the first stage of AIDS.

Conclusion

“De la vida me acuerdo, pero dónde está.” Gil de Biedma, 2017b, p. 197.

This dissertation has explored Gil de Biedma’s self as constructed in his personal diaries through the triple lens of sexuality, colonialism and illness. The three questions this project has been built upon touched those three different spheres of identity. For each of those spheres, this thesis provides an answer to how they are each constructed by Gil de Biedma through life-writing, how they are interlinked with one another and what the connections and influences are from a socioeconomic perspective.

The insistence on the role that memory and time play in the construction of the authorial subject is central to Gil de Biedma’s life and work, and to the topic of this dissertation. Whilst trying to answer the above questions, this research has shown the different social, sexual, political and infirm sides of an intellectual’s life: a polyhedral existence. The author, in the act of writing his own life, crafts his own subjectivity, narrates his own story. Looking closely at his literary production, this dissertation has identified three main, interconnected spheres through which the authorial subject can be analysed. Being predicated on the fragmented nature of the subject, this research has examined sexuality, the colonial self and illness in Gil de Biedma’s diaristic production, arguing that these three spheres of Gil de Biedma’s self overlap and influence one another.

The gentrification of Gil de Biedma’s identity is key to understanding the ways social and historical contexts affect people’s lives. By studying life-writing, this dissertation has demonstrated the importance of life narratives as a historical and literary tool, to better comprehend the interconnections of the different spheres of identity with society, history and politics. This complicates the understanding of the gay, male self, by highlighting the effects of social class background on the writer’s identity throughout the years. Even though Gil de Biedma was openly liberal and homosentimental in his youth, despite his radical outlook on illness as defying capitalistic mores, his social background pervades his life, through the fear of being different, eventually taking the author down the path of detachment and cynicism. Gil de Biedma’s life will be forever well remembered, thanks to his diaristic work, although he could not remember where his life was.

Gil de Biedma's intellectual journey through the writing of his identity should be contextualised in the historical and social context he lived in. The ambiguity in his poetry is witness to his struggles with a social context that disapproved of many areas of his identity, from his sexuality to his politics, his "novelería" and the fact that he was prone to ill health. Sex and class underpin his narrative, as argued in Chapter One, being the origin to many of the author's later intellectual positions. For example, as seen in Chapter Three, Gil de Biedma's thoughts on illness start with a positive outlook, challenging the bourgeois, capitalistic work ethos. Thus, ill health provides the chance to exercise literature. In his youth, the author experiments tuberculosis not only as an illness, but also as a liberating event in his life that provided the time and space that were otherwise refused to a son of the bourgeoisie. In 1985, however, ill with AIDS, Gil de Biedma's life-writing evidences a change to a camp, ironic view of illness and society. In each one of this research's spheres of analysis, Gil de Biedma's trajectory goes from radical, left-wing positions to a progressive, staunch consolidation of his bourgeois self.

This research demonstrates an understanding of the authorial subject in relation to its socioeconomic and cultural context. By drawing together an array of scholarship this dissertation has for the first time provided a research framework that accounts not only for Gil de Biedma's lyrical production, but for his rather large and unique life-writing work. This dissertation has thus established the literary, political, and socioeconomic dimension of the author's self, from his homosentimental youth, through dandyism and finally a cynical, camp attitude that has echoes from and runs parallel to his political thought. For example, Gil de Biedma's political sympathies of youth, which also influenced his ideas about colonialism and the rights of workers in his early visit to the Philippines, give way in his life narrative to what could be deemed a hypocritical, cynical position whereby he would in practice support the system, even if in theory he thought that was not morally right.

Sexuality in Gil de Biedma's life experience is paramount, as it is for most human beings. Yet his concept of homosentimentality, giving prominence to feelings over sex, and his somewhat secretive demeanour point at the complexity of his ideas about sexuality. The importance of such a signifier must not be overlooked: Gil de Biedma in the 1950s had a fine understanding about his desire. He went far beyond the mere physicality of sex, at a time where divergent sexual identities were not part of mainstream society; instead, he gave primacy to feelings over gender or sex. It is

a clear nexus to which the author will come back, albeit not explicitly so, during his lifetime. Indeed, throughout his younger years, as this dissertation has proved, Gil de Biedma toyed with different approaches to sex and sexuality, from most daring and progressive, to more traditional and conservative in his older age. This research has evidenced the evolution of a gay bourgeois gentleman throughout Francoism, which is paradigmatic of Mira's history of gay men in Spain (2004). The key to understanding Gil de Biedma's evolution and attitudes lies on the socioeconomic background, providing both a degree of economic security to play about with his identity and pressure to conform to the familial expectations. This leads to a game of double identities, whereby the author, towards the end of his life, keeps an unnamed sexual identity, whilst maintaining a public bourgeois, normative persona. This dissertation establishes the importance of material conditions in the building of the different facets of the self.

In close relation to sexuality, in its origins and development, colonialism is a singular thread in the tapestry of Gil de Biedma's life. His close relationship with the Philippines, capitalistic and colonial at its core as he is a representative of his family's colonial enterprise, is modulated by the author's political affinities of youth. The poet, projecting a staunch cosmopolitan self, thanks to his sentimental education, struggles however with feelings of guilt as he faces the racial other. Analysing his encounters with Filipino people, as well as black American people such as James Baldwin, this research proves that two different, opposing selves can appear together in life-writing. On the one hand, a conflicted, ambivalent Gil de Biedma, who is never quite comfortable with his self in front of racism. On the other hand, the progressive intellectual, whose thoughts revolve very much around the unfair conditions of Filipino people in post-colonial Philippines.

Finally, the last chapter of this research analyses the ubiquitous topic of illness in Gil de Biedma's diaries. The author having suffered a number of conditions throughout his life, an important part of his life-writing process involves a reflection on the impact of illness on literature and the self. This study shows that Gil de Biedma's understanding of his own illness is intertwined with his sexual, political and literary ideas; there is no such thing as one single conception of one's ill self, but rather a continuum of self-perception, mediated by one's socioeconomical surroundings. In his youth, tuberculosis had the function in Gil de Biedma's life of providing him with the time and space to escape the familial injunction to work and be productive, thus,

paradoxically, for illness takes away certain freedoms, giving the author the necessary time and space to devote himself to literature. This positive outlook evolves in his life to a harder, perhaps more realistic, view of illness, especially when the author contracted HIV and subsequently developed AIDS. In this last diary, eschewing any metaphors whilst focussing on the daily medicalisation of his self, the author refuses to name his condition, despite the supposed privacy of his diary. This is proof of Gil de Biedma's ambivalence in his later life. This dissertation demonstrates how the author developed a cynical, detached attitude towards illness, matching the evolution of the other spheres of his self. Indeed, his journey in life-writing moves from dandy to camp, from exotic chameleon to postcolonial capital owner and from the little ill bourgeois to the willingly unnamed illness sufferer that put an end to his self. In what seems like a conservative trajectory, towards more traditionally accepted postures, there is always a glimmer of brilliance and intelligence. At the core of Gil de Biedma's life-writing is the experience of a gay intellectual who tried to live his life to his own moral standards but who suffered the pressure of a society and background that could not always understand him.

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