

ABSTRACT

A New Look at the Role of the Female in Twentieth Century Spain: Understanding Maternal Love in the Works of Miguel de Unamuno

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During the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, the idealization of the domestic woman as “el ángel del hogar” (the angel of the home), circulated in Spain and throughout the world. The Spanish author, Miguel de Unamuno, lived during this era. Many of his essays and fictional works reflect his view of the inherent quality of maternal love possessed by women. Unamuno believed maternal love to be beautiful, necessary, and empowering. This thesis examines Unamuno’s view of women in both his essays and two of his fictional works, “Dos madres” (“Two Mothers”) and *La tía Tula* (*Aunt Tula*), to better understand women’s role in society in relation to the socio-historical context and the problems associated with distortions to this role.

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A NEW LOOK AT THE ROLE OF THE FEMALE IN TWENTIETH
CENTURY SPAIN: UNDERSTANDING MATERNAL LOVE IN THE
WORKS OF MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Miguel de Unamuno's View of Women	8
Chapter Three: Motherhood as a Twisted Obsession in "Dos madres"	19
Chapter Four: Shared Motherhood in <i>La tía Tula</i>	29
Conclusion	39
Bibliography	42

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All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.
—Abraham Lincoln

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) was a Spanish educator, philosopher, politician, and author. He is well known for his novel *San Manuel Bueno, mártir* (*Saint Manuel the Good, Martyr*), a story about a small-town priest who lacks true faith, and his philosophical work *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* (*The Tragic Sense of Life*), an exposition on immortality. Unamuno was also very involved in the political sphere of Spain. He expressed liberal ideals and was unafraid to speak his political opinions. Unamuno used his writing as a means to communicate his thoughts about philosophy, politics, religion and other disciplines. He was a Spanish patriot and attempted to play a major role in the prosperity of his country. Many of his works reflect criticism of the politicians of early 20th century Spain and the need to maintain a sense of traditional Spanish culture and values during a time when Spain was being influenced from the outside.

This thesis will explore Miguel de Unamuno's view of women revealed in his essays, as well as two of his fictional works. The study of Unamuno's view of women provides a snapshot of women's inequality and its implications during this specific time period. His works that contain strong-willed female characters, including *La tía Tula* (*Aunt Tula*) and "Dos madres" ("Two Mothers"), give us multiple angles of understanding the problems Unamuno saw with the biases of society with regard to the role of women. It is important to first become familiarized with the depth of Unamuno as a person in order to better understand his view of women.

The early years of Miguel de Unamuno's life were formative and shaped the man he would eventually become. Unamuno had access to his father's library and discovered a love for language after listening to his father speak French with a visitor. His father died when Unamuno was only six years old, leaving him to be raised by his mother and grandmother. Both women were devout Catholics and imprinted their religious beliefs on him early in his life. He attended Catholic mass regularly as a child. During his college years, he began to question church doctrine and contemplate his faith and the practice of religion. The love of his life, Concha de Lizárraga, who would later become his wife, was his rock during difficult times in his life. He thought of her as his refuge and source of consolation, and she helped him with his struggle with faith. Unamuno writes, "¿Tiene algo de extraño que yo después de haber guardado puercos en la piara positivista vuelva como el hijo pródigo a la casa de que salí? [...] La felicidad consiste en gran parte en saber creer; esto me lo ha enseñado una mujer" (Rabaté y Rabaté 106). ("Doesn't it seem strange that I, after having kept the pigs in the swineherd of positivists, have returned like the prodigal son to the home from which I left? [...] Happiness consists in great part in knowing how to believe; this a woman has taught me.") Unamuno learned from Concha and saw her as an intelligent woman even though she never had a formal education. Unamuno's relationships with the women in his life instilled in him a deep respect for women. It also gave light to a perspective he would later make a theme in his writing: maternal love that is characteristic of women.

Unamuno attended the University of Madrid where he studied literature and philosophy. During this time in Spanish history, a formal education was limited to those who would become leaders of the nation or the elite. Afterwards, he stayed in academia

and taught various subjects like Latin and Greek. He was rector of the University of Salamanca two different times, however he lost his position both times due to political reasons. He inserted himself in political discourse, which resulted in his being sent into exile by the Spanish dictator General Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1924.

On returning to his home country after six years in exile, Unamuno was elected for a local position as part of the Republican/Socialist party and was shortly after reinstated as rector of the University of Salamanca. He pushed for various social reforms in hopes of reviving Spain from the prior control of a dictatorship. In his attempt to live out his faith alongside this movement of political change, and encourage others to do so as well, Unamuno exclaimed, “Trabajar es orar. El que da con el mazo ruega a Dios. Y Dios le oye. Asentemos una República de hombres libres, responsables y disciplinados, y como decía Cristo, hágase la luz, para que podamos encaminar al fin a esta España por un camino de gloria” (Qtd. in Evans 121). (“To work is to pray. He who strikes with a mallet pleads with God. And God hears him. Let us put into place a Republic of free, responsible, disciplined men and as Christ said, be light, so that we can guide Spain to the end through a road of glory.”) Ultimately, he viewed the democratic Republic as a means to bring freedom and equality to Spain and the only way to achieve this goal was through diligent work by a united people.

The military revolt led by the Spanish dictator Francisco Franco beginning in 1936 brought about disturbances in Spain’s progress as a nation and prompted the start of the Spanish Civil War. At first Unamuno supported this movement, as he believed it necessary to help Spain realign its values after the Second Republic instated a liberal form of government that separated Church and State. His support for Franco’s regime

quickly changed once he realized the radical nature of Franco's agenda. On October 12, 1936, Unamuno spoke out against the Nationalist party headed by Franco. This was a great risk for Unamuno, but it revealed his eagerness to stand up for his beliefs and the good of his country. On this day he took part in a public dispute with General Millán-Astray, which resulted in the loss of his position as rector at the University of Salamanca once again. He was placed under house arrest and passed away shortly after.

Unamuno's writing articulates his philosophy of the human condition. He experienced a lifelong struggle with the intersection of faith and reason. Arguably his most famous work, *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*, published in 1912, communicates the tension between faith and reason. Unamuno was plagued by the uncertainty of faith, yet refused to reject faith all together. He understood that if no afterlife existed, then this life would be completely meaningless. What comes of his intense anguish are "novels [that] are intensely psychological depictions of agonized characters who illustrate and give voice to his own philosophical ideas" (Britannica). He questioned Catholic dogma and criticized the unquestioning faith of the uneducated. He believed that doubt and the questioning of faith would edify believers and give them a stronger, purer faith. This being said, Unamuno understood faith as a struggle, but also as the only way to live a meaningful, sincere life.

Unamuno challenges his readers to question social norms and standards, and to avoid following them blindly at all costs. Because of this perspective, many of his works are very profound and critique society in order to invoke thought within the reader. According to Angel del Rio in the introductory chapter of *Three Exemplary Novels*, Unamuno "was primarily a nonconformist, a spiritual rebel in the tradition of the great

heretics: a searcher for a truth that was not rational, but of that living sort which man has to find within himself” (14). Angel del Rio further says of Unamuno’s works in *Three*

Exemplary Novels:

No matter how alien they may seem superficially to the prevailing taste, be it inclined toward violent naturalism or toward complex psychological probing, they still obviously deal with elemental forces of human personality, and they still convey, with their extreme, deceitful simplicity, the same sense of power that emanates from all of Miguel de Unamuno’s works. (13)

This description of Unamuno’s work will be understood in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, where we will examine “Dos madres” and *La tía Tula*, respectively.

A popular phrase referring to women as “el ángel del hogar” (“the angel of the home”) circulated not only throughout Spain, but also throughout the entire world during the mid-nineteenth century (Jagoe 14). According to Catherine Jagoe in her book *Ambiguous Angels*, feminist groups appeared during the 1840s; however, they quickly disappeared as this new view of female domesticity dominated mainstream thought. Jagoe explains the reason for the dissolution of these feminist groups: “Many writers invoked the angel as a counter to the threat of socialism and feminism. Proponents of the ideology of domesticity consciously counterpoised the image of the angel in virtuous opposition to the emancipated female” (Jagoe 29). The gender inequality of this time was a product of millennia of patriarchal societies. Women were limited to the duties of caring for the home and children, while their husbands involved themselves in social, political, and religious matters beyond the home. Basically, women had the choice between becoming mothers or nuns. In *Mujer y sociedad (Woman and Society)*, Lidia Falcón paints an image of women during this period: “La mujer de la época es gorda, blanca, envuelta en telas, dedicada a coser y a tener hijos, de los que apenas superviven la

mitad, analfabeta, sucia y embrutecida. Empleada en la crítica y la maledicencia y en educar a sus hijas en los mismos métodos” (195). (“The woman of the time is fat, white, wrapped in fabrics, dedicated to sewing and having children, of those half barely survive, illiterate, dirty and stupefied. Employed in criticizing and cursing and in educating her daughters in the same ways.”) Women were prevented from becoming prominent, independent figures in society because of restrictions created by society that kept them within the home. What came as the result of the polarity of gender roles was a civilization created and dominated by males, where the voice of the female is left unheard. The social organization of this period in Spain proved to be an obstacle for the pursuits of women as they struggled to gain social independence and freedom in a man’s world.

Miguel de Unamuno lived with the purpose of challenging his readers and their beliefs. He states, “Pero es que mi obra—iba a decir mi misión—es quebrantar la fe de unos y de otros y de los terceros, la fe en la afirmación, la fe en la negación y la fe en la abstención y esto por fe en la fe misma; es combatir a todos los que se resignan, sea al catolicismo, sea al racionalismo, sea al agnosticismo; es hacer que vivan todos inquietos y anhelantes” (*Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* 7: 297-98). (“But it is the fact that my work, I was going to say my mission, is to break the faith of some, and of others, and of still more, faith in the affirmation, faith in the negation, faith in abstention from faith, and this for the sake of faith in faith itself; it is to combat all those who resign themselves to anything, be it Catholicism, rationalism, or agnosticism; it is to make all people live in longing and disquiet.”) His life and writing prove to be examples of how we should continually assess and challenge our beliefs and values. Moving forward, we will look further into Miguel de Unamuno’s view of women (Chapter 2), which will provide a

framework for the analysis of two of his fictional works, “Dos madres” (Chapter 3) and *La tía Tula* (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER TWO

Miguel de Unamuno's View of Women

The twentieth century looked more promising for women. In 1907, the feminist movement reemerged and produced works of literature seeking to unveil the unequal treatment of women and provide inspiration for the movement (Martínez 255). Miguel de Unamuno lived during the rise of this movement in Spain. He joined the fight for freedom and justice for all. He revered women for their commitment and will to love and nurture. Although Unamuno's view of women as mother may seem to contradict his feminist ideologies, this chapter argues that these two views actually strengthen one another. Unamuno understood the difficulties that lay ahead for women's equality and criticized aspects of the feminist movement, yet he believed women should have equal rights. This chapter will explicate Unamuno's view of women and may serve as a tool to empower the women of today to embrace their femininity as Unamuno viewed it. Miguel de Unamuno's writing and ideas are very much applicable to society today and allow us to better understand the vital role of females in society.

Unamuno viewed women as the embodiment of sacrificial, unconditional love. This love, he believed, is a kind of love inherent in women and necessary for the welfare of society. Unamuno defined maternal love as "compasión al débil, al desvalido, al pobre niño inerme que necesita de la leche y del regazo de la madre" ("compassion to the weak, to the helpless, to the poor unarmed child who needs milk and his mother's lap"), and he continues, "En la mujer todo amor es maternal" (*Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* 7:190). ("In the woman all love is maternal.") Unamuno's philosophy that woman and

mother are synonymous was a traditional view during this time period. Yet, Unamuno expanded this view of women and believed it to be something that women should embrace. Unamuno gives insight into the sacrificial nature of maternal love when he compares the loyalty of men vs. women: “Un hombre no se sacrifica por sus hijos lo mismo que una mujer, pero una mujer no se sacrifica por la patria lo mismo que un hombre” (“A una aspirante a escritora” 3:483). (“A man does not sacrifice for his children the same way a woman does, but a woman does not sacrifice for her homeland the same way a man does.”) Maternal love is a quality rooted in the female that allows her to extend her love and care to both children and men and sometimes she must make a sacrifice to do so. In the same way, a man is willing to risk his life to protect his country.

More than 20 years later after writing his essay “A una aspirante a escritora,” Unamuno showed his support for women’s voting rights, which women had just acquired in 1931. He exclaimed, “¡Que nos ayudéis, que seáis verdaderas madres de la patria! Así lo espero. Creo que contribuiréis a hacer con nosotros esta España que nace” (“Discurso en los Juegos Florales celebrados en Murcia el 27 de marzo de 1932” 9:421). (May you help us, may you be true mothers of the country! I hope so. I think you will contribute to helping us with this new Spain.) Even while Unamuno supported women’s right to vote, he still saw them as mothers to the country. Unamuno believed that women’s suffrage would result in what he goes on to describe as the “flowering” of Spain.

In Unamuno’s essays and fiction, he expresses many sentiments of the ability of women to soothe and nurture. He understands maternal love as necessary to society and human existence, and without it the world would be a harsher place. Unamuno believed that a woman’s identity in motherhood is empowering for her and allows her to be her

most authentic self; something very different from what we see today. His writing allows women to see for themselves the power and importance of who they are as individuals who instinctively nurture those around them.

Unamuno's wife, Concepción "Concha" de Lizárraga, was probably the most influential person in shaping his philosophy of maternal love. The two met as children and later married in 1891. Together they conceived nine children and faced the tragic death of one child to meningitis. Concha was his refuge in times of dismay and anguish. During an existential life crisis, it is said that Unamuno suffered from palpitations and chest pain, as well as severe mental stress caused by the pressures of his new professorship in Salamanca. Colette and Jean-Claude Rebaté explain how Concha reacted to his distress: "Concha, asustada, vence el miedo que le da el estado de su esposo, lo tranquiliza abrazándole, acariciándole y diciéndole: '¡Hijo mío!'" (Rebaté and Rebaté 161). (Concha, scared, overcomes the fear that her husband's state gives her, calms him by embracing him, caressing him and saying: 'My son!') Unamuno attributes the calm and comfort he felt from this embrace to the motherly love exemplified in the strength of his wife Concha. Concha was able to overcome her own fear in order to ease his fear and suffering. This moment highlights the natural instinct of women to nurture and love in order to protect their family. The simple touch and words of affection were enough to show Unamuno the depth and meaning of maternal love and save him from his afflictions.

Unamuno described the event with Concha in his own words: "Y sé de un hombre que no acabó de descubrir la intensidad y la profundidad toda con que su mujer le quería hasta una vez en que, presa de una sofocante congoja espiritual, le abrió aquélla sus

brazos al verle llorar exclamando: ¡hijo mío! En este grito es donde descubrió, dice él, toda la profundidad del amor” (Qtd. in Sedwick 311). (“And I know of a man who did not discover the intensity and depth of all that his wife loved him until one time, in the grip of a suffocating spiritual distress, she opened her arms to him when she saw him crying, exclaiming: my son! This cry is where he discovered, he says, all the depth of love.”)

Unamuno used this real life episode in his fiction to link his female characters together through their most defining quality: maternal love. The same two words spoken by his wife Concha, “Hijo mío,” are spoken by many of his female characters, two of whom we will become acquainted with later on: Raquel in “Dos madres” (Chapter 3) and Tula in *La tía Tula* (Chapter 4). In both of these stories, the female characters address their male lovers as their child, which underscores the impact these two words had on Unamuno when his wife spoke them during a vulnerable time. This strong view of woman as mother exemplified by Concha is a central theme throughout many of his works, also known as “la esposa-madre” (Blanco Aguinaga 121-122). (“The wife-mother.”) As stated by Renée B. Horowitz in her article “Unamuno’s View of Women,” “In the end, Unamuno’s view of woman as mother has eclipsed any other image of her” (60). For Unamuno, being a wife is synonymous with being a mother.

Other women in Unamuno’s life also helped shape his view towards women in society. His mother and grandmother raised him after his father died when he was only six years old. Both women were devout Catholics and practiced the sacraments of confession and communion in the Catholic Church (Evans 9). Unamuno grew up attending mass regularly and practiced these same sacraments. In the same year that his

grandmother passed away, he attended the University of Madrid through means of her modest wealth (Evans 11). It is natural that Unamuno developed an understanding of the female role early on in his life since women dominated his household.

Unamuno described his mother as “una señora tan severa en el cuerpo como en el espíritu, alta, seca, de ternura envuelta en dureza, y la ausencia de manifestaciones efusivas de amor maternal es posible que contribuyese a mantenerme de niño en cierto modo ausente y alejado de la feminidad” (Qtd. in Ullán 29). (“A woman as severe in the body as in the spirit, tall, dry, with tenderness wrapped in hardness, and the absence of effusive manifestations of maternal love, possibly contributed to keeping me as a child absent and alienated from femininity.”) According to this description, his mother lacked maternal love, which he believed was central to the female identity. The absence of maternal love left him with a sense of isolation as a child. Unamuno further described his childhood and family life: “Yo me he creado en una familia de puritanos, sequedad y formula, así es que mis afectos son afectos profundos pero secos” (*Cuadernillo de juventud* 92). (“I have been raised in a family of Puritans, dryness and formula, so my affections are profound affections, but dry affections.”) As a child, Unamuno lacked the parental affection that gives children a sense of security and belonging during the early stages of life. This personal experience made him aware of the important role maternal love plays in raising a child.

Unamuno recognized the indelible role women play in both the family and society. This role emerges from a woman’s ability to care and love in a way that men cannot, or at least fall short. Many of his works deal with the archetype of women possessing maternal love. He explains, “la mujer es ante todo y sobre todo madre” (“A

una aspirante a escritora” 3:483). (“A woman is before everything and over everything mother.”) To Unamuno, motherhood is the essence of the female. He believes that woman’s preeminent contribution to human existence is her capacity to love and care for others. Unamuno did not see this quality as limiting, but rather as empowering.

The characters in some of his fictional works exhibit the strong view of woman as mother. Philip Williams explains in his article, “Beyond Don Quixote: Rethinking the ‘Problem of Personality’ in Light of Changing Gender Roles in Unamuno’s ‘Saint Emmanuel the Good, Martyr,’” the theme of motherhood in Unamuno’s works:

Women in the fiction of Unamuno possess a privileged status that sets them apart from men. They rarely fabricate words, they seldom become famous, but because they have the potential, through their role as mothers, for creating life physically and spiritually, women most often develop a sense of identity and find a kind of personal salvation de facto through maternity. The meaning of "maternity" in Unamuno's novels does not remain static, to be sure. The concept expands from the limited, and sometimes limiting, female role of childbearing and child rearing to the embrace, in *Saint Emmanuel*, by both sexes, of the universal Christian concept of *caritas*, which involves a kind of spiritual maternity, the playing of the part of the mother to any suffering person. (347)

In Unamuno’s novel *San Manuel Bueno, mártir* (*Saint Manuel the Good, Martyr*), which is referenced above, the priest of the town fills the traditional role of women and cares for the physical and spiritual needs of the town. The feminine identity is portrayed as something powerful through the character of Saint Manuel, as well as through the female character, Angela. Unamuno saw beyond the limiting nature of motherhood and believed that women should take pride in their female identity.

A common characteristic of women during the latter half of the nineteenth century was their ability to “suffer and be still” (Qtd. in Jagoe 26). Frank Sedwick further elaborates on the self-abnegating nature of women in his article “Unamuno and Womanhood: His Theater”: “Unamuno repeatedly asserts that women’s love is simply

compassion, that her surrender to the lover is through sympathy or self-identification with his suffering” (309). The embodiment of compassion requires strength and suffering at times. Unamuno understood this martyr-like trait and held a deep respect for women because they had the bravery to love and care for others. Unamuno writes, “El amor es en la mujer compasión y en el hombre orgullo, pero si se mira bien es en éste la necesidad de ser amparado y protegido (sic) y en aquélla la necesidad de amparar y proteger (sic)” (“A una aspirante a escritora” 3:483). (“The love in a woman is compassion and in a man pride, but if one looks closely it is the man who needs to be protected and the woman who needs to help and protect.”) This observation reflects the absolute opposite of societal expectations and serves to show women’s desire to fiercely care for others.

The beginning of the 20th century saw a combative movement led by women that capitalized on the slow-growing acceptance of gender equality in Spanish society. Amid the social upheaval of the feminism movement, Unamuno maintained a sober view of its spread. He had his reservations on the discourse of feminism pertaining to the origin of the social issue. The problem for Unamuno was in the way women fought for their rights. He states, “¿Feminismo? No comprendo el feminismo sino de una manera y es que la mujer lucha porque se la considere como hombre, no como varón, como hombre en el sentido que he expuesto ya que sus problemas son los problemas comunes del género humano” (“Literatura de modistería” 7:875). (“Feminism? I do not understand feminism but in only one way and that is that a woman fights because she considers herself like man, not like a male, but like man in the sense that I have set forth already that her problems are common problems of the human race.”) Unamuno recognized and advocated that the biological differences between male and female were not a valid

reason to oppress women, since both males and females are considered part of the human race. He saw women as being different from men, yet he also saw them as independent human beings.

The view that women were inferior to men because of biological differences was solely due to imposed beliefs constructed by a patriarchal society. Catherine Jagoe explains in her book, *Ambiguous Angels*, the view of biological differences during the late nineteenth century: “It was now argued that women’s difference from men—their mental and muscular fragility as well as their emotional sensitivity and the primacy of their reproductive system, designed them for the private sphere, domesticity and childbearing” (22). Unamuno believed that women should acknowledge their biological differences and fight for their rights as human beings while still maintaining their female identity. Alejandro Martínez explains Unamuno’s commitment to his vision of the feminist movement:

Al indicarle a la mujer las desventajas que la civilización masculina ha impuesto sobre ella, Unamuno patentiza su compromiso feminista al mostrar cómo la sociedad ha limitado sus horizontes y estrechado sus oportunidades, pues lo que pensó como limitaciones biológicas y defectos personales en la mujer han sido exclusivamente patrones y normas impuestos socialmente. (256) (By indicating to women the disadvantages that masculine civilization has imposed on her, Unamuno makes evident his feminist commitment by showing how society has limited her horizons and narrowed her opportunities, because what she thought of as biological limitations and personal defects in women have been exclusively socially imposed patterns and norms.)

Unamuno saw how the masculine society caused women to think of themselves as inferior to men. The oppression women faced was based on biological differences according to patriarchal societies. Because males dominated society, women believed that they must become more like males in order to have power. Unamuno shatters this idea and calls for women to embrace their femininity while fighting for equal rights.

Unamuno recognized the problems of men to be the same for women. The masculine language of society ostracized women and prevented women from understanding that the problems of men were also their own. Unamuno criticized the authors who perpetuated this division: “Un escritor que escribe para mujeres y de tal modo que excluye los grandes problemas humanos o los supedita a los de la sexualidad, no puede tener estilo porque no es hombre. Y la cosa en sí tampoco puede tenerla” (“Literatura de modistería” 7:876). (“A writer who writes for women and in such a way that excludes large human problems or subjects them to sexuality, cannot have style because he is not a man. And the thing itself can't have it either.”) Unamuno believed that women and men are a part of the same collective audience since they share the same problems and are part of the human race. He then speaks to women directly about the issue: “Y yo pienso siempre en vosotras como en madres. Y para una madre no hay problema alguno que le preocupe a un padre que no le deba preocupar a ella” (7: 877). (“And I always think of you as mothers. And for a mother there is no problem that worries a father that should not worry her.”) Mothers worry for their children, and wives worry for their husbands. It seems as though this view of women as mothers connects them to the preoccupations of humanity since they are integral to the functioning of the family.

Unamuno did not fail to recognize the abilities and potential within the female. He is aware of the uniqueness women bring to literature. The collective understanding and knowledge of the human experience was to be considered incomplete because of the restrictions and difficulties that impeded female authors from expressing their true sentiments. Women were disadvantaged because masculinity created a language that in

turn influenced all aspects of society. Alejandro Martínez expresses this thought in his article, “La ideología patriarcal y el estado de la mujer en la obra de Unamuno” (“The Patriarchal Ideology and the State of the Woman in the Works of Unamuno”), where he states, “En la respuesta de Unamuno a la aspirante a escritora, queda manifiesta la dificultad para la mujer de traducir sus problemas e inquietudes por las limitaciones de orden social y cultural al tener que escribir ‘más para los hombres que no para las demás mujeres’” (255). (“In Unamuno’s response to an aspiring female author, the difficulty for women to translate their problems and concerns due to social and cultural limitations is manifested by having to write ‘more for men than not for other women.’”) As stated previously, women lived in a man’s world and thus were required to match the timber of a male-dominated society if they wanted their voice to be heard and respected as a female author. This meant adapting their writing to actually meet the male expectations, and the consequence becomes a lack of literature relatable to the female experience.

Unamuno empathized with women in their fight for equality. For a man living in 20th century Spain, he took a radical stance to help women overcome their years of oppression and finally make a place for themselves in society. Unamuno’s hope for “la mujer de mañana” (“the future woman”) is that she “sienta que su único modo de reinar bien estriba en la íntima convivencia espiritual con el hombre, en comunión de libertad, de igualdad y fraternidad con él, en fe, esperanza y amor mutuos” (“Discurso en los Juegos Florales de Almería, el 27 de agosto de 1903” 9:120). (“She feel that her only way to prevail well lies in the intimate spiritual coexistence with man, in communion of freedom, equality and fraternity with him, in mutual faith, hope and love.”) Unamuno

hoped for a harmonious society, which would only be possible if men and women could coexist and share the same freedom and rights.

CHAPTER THREE

Motherhood as a Twisted Obsession in “Dos madres”

The previous chapter, “Miguel de Unamuno’s View of Women,” provides a framework for the analysis of two of his fictional works. This chapter will investigate Unamuno’s view of women in his short story, “Dos madres,” published in the collection *Tres novelas ejemplares y un prólogo* in 1920.

“Dos madres” addresses questions regarding women’s identity and role as mother, such as, if society tells women that all they can and should be are mothers, then what happens when a woman is unable to conceive a child of her own? Does society then see her as a failure and insignificant? What happens when women take their role as mother too far? Society trapped women into this role as mother, and Unamuno elucidates the effects of this in his narrative. We will investigate potential answers to these questions as we examine the characters of the story.

Society idealized motherhood in the nineteenth century (Smith 351). The aim of the idealization of domestic life and values was to keep women content with their role within the home. Bridget Aldaraca references a quote from the journal *El Correo de la moda* in her book *El ángel del hogar: Galdós and the Ideology of Domesticity in Spain*: “Women are generally much better than they are judged to be; they are angels created by God in order to share our suffering, to wipe away our tears and to produce for us the only happiness that exists on this earth: love and the family” (25). This idealization of motherhood limited a woman’s power to the walls of her home. In “Dos madres,” Unamuno highlights the repercussions of restricting a woman to her role as a mother.

This story of Raquel's obsession to have a child of her own reveals how society could potentially create monsters in women, since being a mother is where women find their identity and self-worth.

Unamuno draws attention to the idealization of motherhood and the belief that all a woman could be was a mother (Smith 351). Unamuno shows how this belief is capable of dehumanizing women by reducing their identity to one specific role, as seen through the character of Raquel. Judith Kirkpatrick writes in her article, “¿La lengua pantalónica?: Unamuno and Women's Relationship to the Literary Text,” that Unamuno's female characters “exercise frightening maternal power while functioning in an inexplicable dream state alien to the world inhabited by men” (2). Unamuno creates these female characters whose dominance originates from their maternal desire. Unamuno sees childbearing as a powerful trait and something that women should consider with great care.

Written in 1920, “Dos madres” begins in the middle of a conversation between Raquel, a widow unable to conceive a child, and Don Juan, her lover. Raquel wants to have a child. However, because of her infertility she asks Don Juan to marry another woman, Berta, who is in love with him, and have a child with her instead. Raquel manipulates Don Juan into her scheme so that Berta can essentially become the surrogate mother to Raquel's child. Don Juan is controlled by Raquel and her desire to become a mother. She treats him more as a son than as a husband. In this chapter, we will examine the relationship between Don Juan, Raquel, and Berta, and see how Unamuno twists woman's desire for motherhood into an obsessive desire for personal fulfillment of this identity in motherhood.

The characters in “Dos madres” reveal how “Unamuno’s readers become familiar with his predilection for intense, agonistic, struggling characters and his defense of them as creatures of fiction” (Sedwick 309). As we will see in this chapter and the following chapter, Unamuno “often overintensifies them to the extent that they lack some of the other complexities of the feminine point of view. He appears even to be ill at ease with them and to join his reader in studying them. Many become stereotyped in their obsessive aspiration to motherhood, or if that state is unattainable, to a simulation of motherhood or a substitute for it” (Sedwick 309).

Understanding Unamuno’s view of woman as mother allows us to analyze the character of Raquel in his short story “Dos madres” with a clearer lens. This story centers on a fractured desire for motherhood. This fractured desire comes from “ruthless self-determination and parasitic relationships” (Kirkpatrick 3). Clearly, Raquel is obsessed with the idea of becoming a mother and she will do anything to achieve this desire, even at the expense of others.

Don Juan, the male protagonist of the story and Raquel’s lover, has no control in his relationships with women and represents the opposite of the famous literary character (Kirkpatrick 4). This Don Juan lacks power and control. The inversion of Don Juan is important to consider while analyzing the story alongside Unamuno’s view of women as mothers. Don Juan is the name of the main character in various Spanish literature works, including *El burlador de Sevilla (The Trickster of Sevilla)* (1630) by Tirso de Molina and *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844) by José Zorrilla. He is known as a womanizer and a powerful villain in the world of Spanish literature. Therefore, there is significance in the use of his name within the story of “Dos madres.” Normally, Don Juan plays a cunning anti-hero

who uses women to satisfy his need for power and then discards them, all the while flouting the laws of God and man. However, in “Dos madres” Don Juan has no will and is controlled by Raquel and her desire to become a mother. Don Juan is portrayed as weak in this story, compared to his strong-willed nature in other stories. On the other hand, Raquel is obsessed with “playing the most powerful role for women of the nineteenth century. The idealization of the mother gives Raquel the notion that she as a mother can forever dominate her son/lover Juan” (Smith 351).

Don Juan confesses his helplessness to Raquel when he says: “Pero dime, Quelina, dime—y al decirlo le lloraba la voz—, ¿por qué te enamoraste de mí? ¿Por qué me arrebataste? ¿Por qué me has sorbido el tuétano de la voluntad? ¿Por qué me has dejado como un pelele? ¿Por qué no me dejaste en la vida que llevaba?” (986). (“But tell me, Quelina, tell me—and he spoke with sobs in his voice—, why did you fall in love with me? Why did you take me? Why have you sucked the marrow of my will? Why have you left me as a puppet? Why did you not leave me in the life I was living?”) Don Juan has lost his autonomy and will because of Raquel’s desire to become a mother. The relationship between Don Juan and Raquel is not romantic, but rather one of dominance where the female possesses all the power, and thus a complete inversion of the mythical character of Don Juan.

The character of Raquel represents a woman “con la tormenta de no tener hijos en el corazón del alma” (“Dos madres” 978). (“With the torture of not being able to have children at the heart of the soul.”) Her one and only desire is to have a child of her own, which is impossible due to her infertility. Since she is so fixated on this one desire, she is willing to do anything to attain it. Raquel sees Don Juan as an instrument to get what she

wants, and that is a child she can call her own. Like the mythical Don Juan, Raquel is unconcerned about whom she hurts or whom she uses in her quest to gain her ultimate goal.

Catholicism has played an integral part in Spanish history and society. Modern Spain was founded by Catholic rulers, who wanted religion to infiltrate all aspects of life in Spain and unite the country. Catholic doctrine and dogma appeared systematically in Spain's political and social sectors. It was important for one to live righteously according to the Catholic Church, more to avoid being chastised by society than for proclaiming true faith. One problem with this attitude, which is seen in "Dos madres," is that Catholic doctrine ordained marriage for procreation. According to church doctrine, Raquel believed that she should not marry since she lacks the gift of childbirth. She explains, "El matrimonio se instituyó, según nos enseñaron en el Catecismo, para casar, dar gracia a los casados y que críen hijos para el cielo [...] ni a ti ni a mí nos dan ya gracia con bendiciones. ¡Criar hijos para el cielo ... criar hijos para el cielo!" (978). ("Marriage was instituted, as we were taught in Catechism, to marry, give grace to the wedded couple and to raise children for the Kingdom [...] neither you nor I can receive grace with blessings. To raise children for the Kingdom ... to raise children for the Kingdom!") Unamuno criticized society for blind belief and for not questioning faith. This he called "la fe de carbonero" (*Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* 7:181). ("The faith of the coal deliverer.") He believed that doctrine and dogma should be challenged. Raquel represents someone who blindly followed what doctrine said. According to this specific doctrine, Raquel believed she could not marry Don Juan because of her infertility. Since marriage was instituted for the purpose of procreation, women found their purpose in becoming

mothers. Therefore, doctrine and dogma also imprisoned women to only one role: the role of mother. Unamuno believed that women should take pride in motherhood and exude maternal love, but that they are also much more than mothers. They are an asset to society just like men.

Raquel seems to figure out a solution to her problem. She tells Don Juan: “Pero tu puedes darme un hijo. ¿Cómo? Engendrándolo en otra mujer, hijo tuyo, y entregándomelo luego. ¡Y quiéralo [Berta] o no lo quiera, que lo quiero yo y basta!” (979). (“But you can give me a son. How? Begetting him in another woman, your son, and delivering him to me after. And whether [Berta] wants it or not, I want it and that’s enough!”) Raquel asserts her solution and will have it no other way. Not even adoption is an option. No one else has a say in the matter, which underscores Unamuno’s goal to exaggerate Raquel’s desire for a child. Raquel’s identity is cemented in motherhood. Her conduct and harsh attitude come from the fact that she is unable to bear children of her own.

Unamuno portrays Raquel as extreme, devious, and manipulative. According to one critic, “El poderío de Raquel es tan avasallador que hace pensar en fuerzas más allá de lo humano” (Morales galan 110). (“The power of Raquel is so overwhelming that it makes one think of forces beyond the human.”) Raquel asks Don Juan: “¿Sabes dónde está el infierno? [...] en el centro de un vientre estéril acaso” (980). (“Do you know where Hell is? [...] in the center of a sterile womb perhaps.”) Raquel’s wickedness comes from her inability to bear a child. She represents the sterile mother who fails to produce offspring of her own blood. Through the character of Raquel, Unamuno reveals the distortions in motherhood that arise from women’s belief that their only worth is in

bearing children. Society has created a monster in Raquel, which other characters call out as demonic. Berta confesses to Don Juan: “Esa mujer es un demonio ... un demonio que te tiene fascinado” (991). (“That woman is a demon ... a demon who has fascinated you.”) Ironically, Unamuno links the woman in this story, rather than the mythical Don Juan, with the demonic, which is a further inversion of the tradition.

Unamuno creates an idea of the archetypal mother in his story. Raquel is the archetypal mother, and Berta looks to her as an example. Don Juan tells Raquel: “Sí, te imita en cuanto puede: en el vestir, en el peinado, en los ademanes, en el aire” (988). (“Yes, she imitates you whenever possible: in her dress, in her hair, in her gestures, in her appearance.”) Although in the previous paragraph Berta calls Raquel a demon, here Berta views Raquel as a powerful woman and someone whom she wishes to be. Berta recognizes Raquel as obsessive, however it seems that Berta herself has come under Raquel’s “spell.”

To Raquel, becoming a mother is the solution to all problems. Berta says to Raquel of Juan: “Que no le encuentro la voluntad” (990). (“I cannot find will in him.”) Raquel responds with her advice as to how to control Don Juan’s will: “¡A ser madre! Esa es su obligación. ¡Ya que yo no he podido serlo, séalo usted!” (990). (“Become a mother! This is your obligation. I have not been able to be one, so you must!”) All Raquel is capable of thinking about is becoming a mother.

Although “Dos madres” portrays a negative view of motherhood through obsessive maternal desire, Unamuno still connects his female characters to the maternal love he saw in his wife Concha. Raquel consoles Don Juan with the same words spoken by Concha. She embraces him and whispers: “¡Hijo mío, hijo mío, hijo mío!” (986).

(“My child, my child, my child!”) Berta also demonstrates Unamuno’s view of women through the usage of these symbolic words. After a conversation with Raquel, Berta is overcome with pity for Don Juan and runs to console him. The narrator writes: “Lo que sintió entonces Berta fué encendérsele en el pecho una devoradora compasión de su hombre, de su pobre Juan [...] Y como una de estas veces la esposa madre gimiese: ‘¡Hijo mío! ¡Hijo mío...! ¡Hijo mío...!’”, quedóse luego como muerta de terror al ver la congoja de muerte que crispó, enjalbegándola la cara de su Juan” (995). (“What Berta felt then was a burning, devouring compassion in her heart for her man, her poor Juan [...] And one of these times the wife-mother groaned: ‘My child! My child...! My child...!’, she was left dead of terror upon seeing the anguish of death washing over the wincing face of her Juan.”) These two words represent the embodiment of maternal love in Unamuno’s female characters.

The two mothers in the story, Raquel and Berta, allude to the biblical story of King Solomon and the two mothers. Don Juan represents the son in the biblical story. Unamuno writes of Don Juan being torn between the two women, “Entre una y otra le estaban desgarrando. Sentíase como aquel niño que ante Salomón se disputaban las dos madres, sólo que no sabía cuál de ellas, si Raquel o Berta, le quería entero para la otra y cuál quería partirlo a muerte” (983). (“Between the two they were tearing him apart. He felt like the child being disputed by the two mothers before Solomon, only he did not know which one, Raquel or Berta, wished to keep him whole and which one wanted him torn apart to death.”) Just as Raquel and Berta see Don Juan as a child, he comes to see himself as one too (Horowitz 56). Raquel and Berta fight over Don Juan but are both willing to give him up to prove they are the true “mother.”

Near the end of the story, Raquel claims to be the real “mother” of Don Juan. She establishes herself not only as the mother of Don Juan and Berta’s daughter, whom Raquel named after herself, but also as the mother of her lover, Don Juan. Unamuno stresses Raquel’s obsession with motherhood by her self-identification as the mother of both Don Juan and his daughter. Raquel says, “Pues que a mí me ha hecho ya madre, que te haga madre a ti [...] Ya sabrás la historia de las dos madres que se presentaron a Salomón reclamando un mismo niño. Aquí está el niño, el... ¡don Juan de antaño! No quiero que lo partamos en dos, que sería matarle como él dice. Tómallo todo entero [...] ‘Yo soy aquí la madre verdad, yo!’” (996). (“He already made me a mother, let him make you a mother [...] You already know the story of the two mothers who claimed the same child before Solomon. Here is the child... the former Don Juan! I do not want him to be parted in two, for that will kill him. Take him whole [...] ‘I am the real mother, I!’”)

Raquel is relentless in seeking maternal status and claims that she is the real mother since she wants Berta to now have Don Juan. Don Juan ends up running away to escape both women and dies by mysteriously falling off a cliff. What further serves to highlight the tunnel-vision both women have for motherhood is that the narrator does not write about any mourning for the loss of Don Juan. All the women care about now is who will have custody of the child.

Unamuno presents a problem at the end of “Dos madres.” The narrator asks: “Pero ¿cómo se criaría esta desdichada criatura?” (997). (“But, how was this wretched creature going to be brought up?”) The child is left with an overly possessive, psychotic mother and no father, and clearly the welfare of the child is in question. Maternal love, as

understood by Unamuno, is the embodiment of unconditional love. However, Raquel twists this view and exhibits an extreme form of maternal love, which borders insanity.

Maternal love is something that allows women to care for others, not only children. The distorted view of motherhood held by Raquel is one that Unamuno wished to correct by exposing it in this short story. Raquel's character shows how everyone is affected by the desires of one person. The story of "Dos madres" "demonstrates the mimetic power of the idealization of motherhood through Berta's mirroring of Raquel as an omnipotent mother. It shows the stages of decline and inevitable sacrifice of a man whose mother refuses to see him as more than a son" (Smith 360). Unamuno viewed motherhood as something beautiful and powerful, but through the study of this work we may also see the possibility of the devastating consequences of a distorted and perverse understanding of motherhood developed in a patriarchal society that limits women's options to this one possibility for usefulness.

CHAPTER FOUR

Shared Motherhood in *La tía Tula*

The story of *La tía Tula* centers on the life of two sisters, Tula and Rosa. Tula represents the spiritual mother, while Rosa represents the physical mother. From the beginning of the story, it is clear that Tula plays the role of the overpowering matriarch. Rosa has a suitor, Ramiro, and Tula pressures Rosa into marrying him so she can become an aunt. Tula chooses to withdraw from any relations with men and instead devotes her life to caring for her sister's children. Tula assumes the role as the boss and everyone complies with her orders. When Rosa dies in her third childbirth, Tula promises that she will take over the care of the children as their mother and will not let them have a stepmother. When Ramiro tries to get Tula to marry him because it was what Rosa wanted, she refuses. Later, Tula forces Ramiro to marry Manuela, the maid-servant, after Tula found out about their affair.

The idealization of motherhood was discussed in the previous chapter. This idealization “is perhaps the fundamental process in reproducing male dominance” (Jagger 260). The popularity of motherhood kept women in the home and out of the political and social spheres. Motherhood was seen as the “ultimate female profession” (Hynes 47). Again, we see in this story that if society forces women to only be mothers and stay in the home, then that role risks being abused because of the lack of freedom and autonomy. In other words, Unamuno creates situations in his fiction to show what can go wrong and what women are capable of if this role becomes distorted. His works also reveal how

society imposed an identity of motherhood on women, and how women who fail to become mothers feel a diminished sense of self-worth.

The character of Tula is important to consider in relation to the time period and how other women viewed themselves in society. Tula is atypical because she resists subordination. In comparison to Raquel in “Dos madres,” Tula demonstrates “some of the basic principles of contemporary radical feminism, which give her character a remarkable innovative twist” (Hynes 45). She indeed craves motherhood just like other characters of Unamuno’s fictional works, including Raquel and Berta; however, her character aligns more with feministic ideologies.

Tula resists patriarchal domination by refusing to marry or submit to men. She is described as “tan intangible como la luna” (*La tía Tula* 1076). (“As intangible as the moon.”) After going to confession with the town priest, Father Alvarez, she says in response to his guidance, “¡No, no me entiende—se decía—no me entiende! ¡Hombre al fin!” (1080). (“No, he does not understand me at all! He’s only a man!”) However, despite her resistance to the patriarchy, Tula still exhibits maternal love and a desire for motherhood. The character of Tula is complex and contradictory of her own values. However, this is exactly the complex style of Unamuno, which we will explore more in this chapter. Laura Hynes, author of ““La tía Tula’: Forerunner of Radical Feminism,” states, “On the surface, Tula’s rabid fixation with maternity seems to contradict a radical feminist reading of her character” (Hynes 50). Tula wants to be a mother, but she wants to do so without dependence on a man.

Tula’s resistance to men could originate from her childhood and upbringing. Unamuno reveals in the novel that Tula and Rosa lived with their maternal uncle, a priest.

Their uncle, Don Primitivo, gave them good counsel and provided meals for them. The narrator explains, “Los buenos consejos eran consejos de libros, los mismos que le servían a don Primitivo para formar sus escasos sermones” (1047). (“His good counsel was from books, the same which he used for his few sermons.”) Besides this counsel, the two sisters were left to govern themselves. Don Primitivo stayed out of their private lives and did not talk to them about their feelings.

Tula also confesses to Ramiro what caused her resistance to men. She tells him, “Acaso he tenido una idea inhumana de la virtud. Pero cuando lo primero, cuando te dirigiste a mi hermana, yo hice lo que debía hacer. Además, te lo confieso, el hombre, todo hombre, hasta tú, Ramiro, hasta tú, me ha dado miedo siempre; no he podido ver en él sino el bruto. Los niños, sí; pero el hombre ... He huído del hombre” (1088). (“Perhaps I have had an inhuman idea of virtue. But at first, when you chose my sister, I did what I needed to do. Further, I confess to you, men until you, and even you Ramiro, frightened me always; I can only see the brute in him. Not in children, but in man ... I have run away from men.”) Tula feared all men except children, yet she still pushed her sister and Manuela into relationships with men. The cause of this fear is never revealed, so the readers can interpret for themselves what may have resulted in this fear towards men. What is important to note is that Tula briefly considers marriage with Ramiro since he has proven himself trustworthy.

In a conversation between Tula and Father Alvarez during confession, Father Alvarez suggests that Tula marry Ramiro because it would be “un remedio contra la sensualidad” (1079). (“A remedy for sensuality.”) Tula responds furiously: “¡Pues no, padre, no, no y no! ¡Yo no puedo ser remedio contra nada! ¿Qué es eso de considerarme

remedio? ¡Y remedio ... contra eso! No, me estimo en más.” (1080). (“No, father, no, no and no! I am not a remedy for anything! What is this that you consider me a remedy? And a remedy ... against this! No, I am more than that.”) Tula refuses to give in to the belief that marriage is for women to be remedies for their husband’s desires and temptations. She demonstrates confidence in herself as a woman that she amounts to more than a remedy and that it is an abomination that Father Alvarez would say such a thing.

By negating all emotional ties to men, Tula is able to focus all her energy on caring for the children. Tula’s fear to have any relations with a man is likely “rooted in her knowledge that men have power over women that is socially sanctioned in marriage and religion” (Hynes 50). Tula is afraid to lose her autonomy as a woman and therefore avoids relationships at all costs. Her fear is evident when she considers marrying Ramiro and having children: “Y esto de los hijos de la carne hacía palpitar de sagrado terror el tuétano de los huesos del alma de Gertrudis, que era toda maternidad, pero maternidad de espíritu” (1073). (“And this thought of children of the flesh made the marrow of the bones in the soul of Gertrudis, who was all motherhood, but motherhood of the spirit, throb with sacred terror.”)

Although Tula attempts to reject men altogether and suppress her feelings, she is not perfect in doing so. While Ramiro lay dying, he confesses to Tula that he really loved her and not Rosa, and the two embrace. Tula lets her guard down and reveals the hidden feelings she has for Ramiro. In this fleeting moment, the two show their love for one another. However, Tula quickly reacts and “le dió un beso en la frente como se le da a un niño—y un niño era entonces para ella—y se fué” (1088). (“She gave him a kiss on the

forehead as one would do for a child—and a child he was to her—and she left.”) Tula escapes this vulnerable moment in front of a man by changing her view of him from a man to a child. This allows Tula to cover up any feelings she revealed in front of Ramiro. It also highlights Unamuno’s theme of maternal love. Another instance is when Ramiro finds a secret letter that Tula sent to his cousin Ricardo, rejecting his advances to her. Ramiro confronts Tula about the letter and she confesses its truth. Tula calls off her relationship with Ricardo because she must devote her time and energy to caring for her sister’s children. She sees it as her duty to choose the children over a man, and she believes a man would only distract her from caring for the children.

Don Primitivo gives the reader more insight into Tula’s intimidating character. He explains, “¡Y luego, me mete un miedo esa Tulilla!... Delante de ella no me atrevo ..., no me atrevo ... ¡Tiene unas preguntas la mocita! ¡Y cuando me mira tan seria, tan seria ... con esos ojazos tristes! –los de mi hermana, los de mi madre, ¡Dios las tenga en su santa gloria!” (1047). (“That Tulilla scares me!... In front of her I don’t dare say anything, I don’t dare ... The questions she asks! And she looks at me so seriously, so seriously ... with those sad eyes! –those of my sister and my mother, may God keep them in His glory!”) He then goes on to say that Tula, just like his sister and mother, thought of his sermons as “bobadas de hombres” (1048). (“Silly man talk.”)

Don Primitivo greatly admired Tula for her strength and intelligence, and he saw that the women in his life possessed wisdom and intelligence. The narrator writes that Don Primitivo “tenía el sentimiento de que la sabiduría iba en su linaje por vía femenina, que su madre había sido la providencia inteligente de la casa en que se crió, que su hermana lo había sido en la suya, tan breve. Y en cuanto a su otra sobrina, a Rosa, le

bastaba para protección y guía con su hermana” (1048). (“He felt that wisdom was in the female lineage, that his mother had been the intelligent providence of the house where he grew up, that his sister had been the same in her house. And for his niece Rosa, she was protected and guided by her sister.”)

Tula embodies the characteristics of a caretaker and mother, and she represents the “virgin mother.” She tells her uncle, “Toda mujer nace madre, tío” (1055). (“All women are born mothers, uncle.”) This is an echo of Unamuno’s view of women and connects her view of women to that of Unamuno’s. During Rosa’s labor, the narrator describes the knowledge that Tula had to be that of “una veterana en asistir a trances tales” (1054). (“A veteran in attending such difficult situations.”) On the other hand, radical feminists “believe that patriarchal ideology unjustly forces women into roles based on their procreative abilities. Since women are biologically equipped to reproduce, society deems it ‘natural’ for them to give birth and raise children” (Hynes 46). Unamuno sees the qualities of motherhood in women as natural, however the view of radical feminism believes it is a social construct. Tula is very passionate about being a mother and does not seem to find this role as limiting, but rather empowering.

Laura Hynes argues in her article that Tula’s character represents this idea of radical feminism. According to Andrea Dworkin, what constitutes a radical feminist is a woman who resists “those institutions which are by definition sexist—marriage, the nuclear family, religions built on the myth of feminine evil” (192). Tula’s character represents the idea of the radical feminist because she will not get married and will not submit to dominant male figures. Tula finds freedom in remaining unmarried so she can control her own life. She resists the institution of marriage because she does not want to

face oppression like other women have done before her. Tula stands up against societal expectations and existing gender roles, at least in marrying, while at the same time she embraces her motherhood. It should be noted that although Hynes argues that Tula depicts a radical feminist, radical feminism affirms a woman's sexuality and sexual desire. Instead, Tula completely rejects her own sexuality and sees it as sinful.

Tula tells Rosa of the two fates of women during this time period. Tula states, "Parézcenos bien o mal, nuestra carrera es el matrimonio o el convento" (1047). ("Whether it is good or bad for us, our fate is marriage or a convent.") Tula believes that God created Rosa for marriage. Tula tells Rosa, "tú no tienes vocación de monja: Dios te hizo para el mundo y el hogar; vamos, para madre de familia" (1047). ("You are not called to be a nun; God made you for the home, to have a family and be a mother.") Tula pushes Rosa to say yes to marrying Ramiro because it is her destiny and purpose in this world. Rosa is concerned that she will be seen as desperate if she accepts Ramiro's hand in marriage too quickly. Tula, on the other hand, insists that Rosa tell Ramiro yes as quickly as possible. This moment reveals Tula's desire to be a spiritual mother to Rosa's children. She lets it slip that she desires to be the aunt to her sister's children, while Rosa responds with astonishment that Tula would already be thinking of such a thing.

Tula reiterates the purpose for marriage according to Catholic doctrine multiple times throughout the novel. She states, "El matrimonio se instituyó para casar, dar gracia a los casados y que críen hijos para el cielo" (1063). ("Marriage was instituted to become wedded, give grace to the married, and to create children for Heaven.") This is Tula's logic as she pushes Rosa and Manuela to keep having more children even though they are clearly too weak to do so.

Rosa is the carnal, physical mother of the children. In the two sisters, Unamuno creates the figure of “la madre dividida” (Stenstrom 37). (“The divided mother.”) In her article, “Acercamiento al pensamiento de Unamuno: *La Tía Tula* y la lucha entre fe y razón,” (“Approach to Unamuno's thought: *Aunt Tula* and the fight between faith and reason”) Monika Stenstrom says, “Rosa personifica la dimensión natural, el cuerpo, el amor físico que produce niños; por eso, su hermana la incita a querer mucho a su marido. [Tula] en cambio simboliza el alma, el amor espiritual y casto, cuyas raíces llegan a la Virgen Madre, la que dio a luz no habiéndose manchado” (37). (“Rosa represents the natural dimension, the body, physical love that produces children; therefore, her sister incites her to love her husband. [Tula] in turn symbolizes the soul, spiritual and chaste love, whose roots are from the Virgin Mother, the one who gave birth without the stain of sin.”) Tula is the spiritual mother. Once Rosa has her first child, she is weak and unable to care for her children. Therefore, Tula takes the place of the spiritual mother and nurtures her nieces and nephews for her sister. After Rosa dies during her third childbirth, Ramiro sees Rosa live on in Tula. He refers to the sight of Tula as “la muerta inmortal” (1066). (“The immortal dead.”) This further highlights the character of Tula as spiritual mother. Together, Tula and Rosa represent the total mother. Unamuno strategically breaks up the two salient characteristics of mothers, childbearing and nurturing, to highlight the aspects of motherhood.

The religious view of God as the father reinforces the idea of male dominance and patriarchal societies (Hynes 48). Tula views religion as sexist and questions the church and church leadership since they do not allow her the freedom she desires as a woman. Tula criticizes Christianity for being a man’s religion. She says, “¡masculinos el Padre, el

Hijo y el Espíritu Santo!” (1092). (“All men, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!”) She complains how in the Bible, Mary is the one who asks Jesus to provide wine for the wedding, but he just rebukes her saying, “‘¿Qué tengo yo que ver contigo mujer? Aún no ha venido mi hora.’ [...] Y llamarle mujer y no madre.” (1092). (“‘What do I have to do with you woman? My time has not yet come.’ [...] And he calls her woman and not mother.”) Tula knows that these thoughts are heretical, but it bothers her greatly that Jesus called his mother “woman” and not mother.

Tula admires the Virgin Mary and aspires to live in her likeness. According to Hynes, Tula creates her own woman-centered religion that worships the Virgin Mary in place of God the father (49). Tula follows and imitates the Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mary represents the “ultimate affirmation of motherhood” (Hynes 49). This religious icon is a symbol for Tula because she not only conceived Christ who would redeem humankind, but she did so without engaging in any sexual relations with men (Hynes 49). Tula opposes the “passion” that brings a child into existence and for this she feels the need to suppress her own emotions towards men. When Rosa gives birth to her firstborn, Ramirín, Tula protects the child from “el amor de que había brotado” (“the love that brought it into being”) by placing a medal of the Virgin Mary around the child’s neck (1056). This belief of Tula’s reveals both her reverence of the Virgin Mary and her rejection of sexual passion that creates a child.

Through the characters in this short novel, Unamuno elucidates problems in society pertaining to the inferiority of women in Spanish society. Tula is repulsed by men and chooses to live as a single woman, which makes her feel like she has control. It is up to the reader to decide if this is an effective solution or not; however, Unamuno’s goal is

not to give a direct answer but allow the reader to arrive at one on their own. Unamuno gives clues that Tula desires to be with a man, however her robust exterior overpowers these emotions. In Unamuno's own life, he and his wife Concha enjoyed a fruitful, harmonious marriage, and for this reason I argue that he wrote this story hoping to show that harmony between man and woman in marriage is essential for a more just society.

Unamuno's view of women in this novel can further be seen through the character of Ramiro. The heartfelt words of Ramiro after Rosa's death reveal the multifaceted nature of a man. He deeply grieves the death of Rosa and feels that he has died with her. He feels that the love they shared was real, and he only comes to realize this after she is gone. Although Tula believes that marriage serves only to have children, Ramiro enlightens this grim belief with his honest words of the love he had for Rosa. Ramiro also confesses that his first child allowed this authentic love for Rosa to be felt. He explains this love as "amor hecho carne que vive" (1064). ("Love made living flesh.") The beauty of motherhood is that it allows for this authentic love to be felt. Unamuno saw the beauty of women as mothers and greatly respected it.

There is irony in Tula's character. She refuses to marry a man or be a remedy to their desires. However, with both her sister and Manuela, she manipulates them into marrying Ramiro. For Rosa it is to have children, and for Manuela it is a plot to get Ramiro away from her and to leave the children to her. Another ironic moment is at the end of the novel when Tula is dying and tells her girls to become someone's remedy, to save someone from their pain. The young girls all look up to Tula. She convinces them to marry in order to become mothers and have a family. Tula keeps the cycle going, although Tula refuses to be a part of it herself.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study we have explored Unamuno's view of women through the complex characters of Raquel and Tula. Both women demonstrate an innate desire to care for children and men alike. In both stories, the usurping mother ends up with the child/children, while most of the supporting characters die. These characters serve to elucidate the negative effects of motherhood if it is abused and underscore the importance of nurturing maternal love. Unamuno highlights the critical role of women as mothers by creating scenarios that reveal potential distortions of motherhood.

Unamuno sees writing as a way to create and generate scenarios that do not align with the reality that we know. He uses his writing to challenge his readers to think about their belief systems. The female characters, Tula and Raquel, in *La tía Tula* and "Dos madres," respectively, can be experiments of female dominance in society. Instead of the men controlling women, Unamuno reverses the roles and now women control men. The male characters, Ramiro and Don Juan, are subject to the female will and desire. After a surface reading of these stories, one might conclude that Unamuno believed that female dominance would destroy society and is problematic. However, if one understands Unamuno's own personal beliefs and view of women as explored in Chapter 2, then they cannot come to this conclusion so quickly.

This thesis seeks to argue for Unamuno's feminist ideologies and that Unamuno would not agree with the conclusion that female dominance is detrimental. Instead, Chapter 2 provides a framework for us to better analyze the following chapters and reach a more accurate conclusion that aligns more with Unamuno's purpose for writing these

stories in the first place. Through his essays, we see that Unamuno wanted a more just and equal Spain. He believed that women should be able to vote and that Spain would flourish as a result. The powerful, educated female did not threaten Unamuno. He writes to the aspiring female author that she is capable of becoming an author, however the masculine language of literature would prove an obstacle to her success (Martínez 255). Unamuno reveals the importance of equality among gender; no one gender should be seen as dominant or inferior. Both men and women are human beings, and this is what Unamuno saw as most important: that the inequality of women be seen as a problem of the *human race*.

In the stories of *La tía Tula* and “Dos madres”, Unamuno creates a situation where the female character is formed into a “masculine image” while still possessing maternal characteristics (Kirkpatrick 3). The masculine image is formed by the characters’ desire for “power and creation of the self” and the maternal characteristics are their desire to care for men and children (Kirkpatrick 3). The masculine and feminine traits meld together producing an extreme female character with a twisted obsession of control and of motherhood. Unamuno’s female characters in these two works reveal a piece of his overall view of women in society. Unamuno believed women were important to society; however, they should embrace their own uniqueness and not conform to the pre-existing mold of the male in their pursuit of independence.

Men and women must co-exist, and the epitome of co-existence is in marriage. According to Unamuno, the importance of not only co-existence, but also unity in marriage was crucial to creating a just society where women could have equal rights. In marriage, both husband and wife rely on each other for what the other lacks, and through

this a better understanding of acceptance of the other sex emerges. The only way to truly grasp the complements of males and females is through learning it first-hand in marriage dynamics as Martínez explains, “En el proceso de aprendizaje de los sexos, es necesario revisar las actitudes patriarcales que frenan las aspiraciones y derechos de la mujer y buscar los medios específicos para superar estas limitaciones” (257). (“In the process of learning about each gender, it is necessary to revise the patriarchal attitudes that obstruct the aspirations and rights of women, and to look for specific ways to overcome these limitations.”)

Both stories also reveal the complexity of motherhood. The stories are examples of women who are mothers to children they did not conceive themselves. This shows that a woman does not have to be a biological mother of a child in order to be a mother. Every child deserves to have a caring mother and nurturing environment.

Unamuno understood the complexities of a woman’s heart. They should not be forced into their role as mother, but rather desire it for themselves and their family. The Church and society forced women to find their identity in motherhood, and this resulted in problems when a woman physically could not conceive children or decided not to. As wives, women felt that their only worth was in providing children for their husbands and preserving the family name. In some cases, women may have been resentful towards this obligation. However, Unamuno views it differently. He believed that motherhood and maternal love should be seen as sacred and beautiful, and women should not feel limited by their biological differences. In our modern day, people may believe that feminism and motherhood clash; however, Unamuno demonstrates that both have the potential to exist harmoniously if embraced with great care.

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