CHAPTER 8

Infertility, Desire for Motherhood and Surrogacy in Miguel de Unamuno's *Dos madres*

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One way of overcoming non-motherhood and fulfilling the desire to be a mother is through surrogacy. While commercial and medicalised surrogacy has gained traction as a way to deal with infertility during recent decades, surrogate motherhood is not a new practice, though it has not received much scholarly attention. This chapter will explore non-motherhood and surrogacy in a century-old text, Miguel de Unamuno's

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Spanish novella-play[1] *Dos madres* ('Two Mothers'), included in his work *Tres novelas ejemplares y un prólogo* ('Three Exemplary Novels and a Prologue', 1920). As one of the most recognised Spanish writers, Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) may seem like an odd choice for exploring surrogacy, as the extensive scholarship on his work has mostly been concerned with literary, philosophical, theological and psychoanalytical perspectives (see, for instance, Portilla Durand 2019; Stenstrom 2007; Sáenz de Zaitegui 2006; Cifo González 1996; Franz 1994). However, some of Unamuno's work does indeed deal with motherhood and non-motherhood,[2] as researchers have acknowledged (see, for instance, Estébanez Calderón 2015; Sáenz de Zaitegui 2006; Lázaro Carreter 1956).

This chapter explores non-motherhood and how the desire to become a mother is dealt with and given a solution through surrogacy in *Dos madres*. As it analyses a literary text from the 1920s, this chapter contributes a historical perspective to the volume. At first glance, the novella-play seems to confirm and reproduce some of the stereotypes about infertile women, but, as I will argue, *Dos madres* ends up subverting those stereotypes. Surrogacy is represented as something beyond a cure for infertility since it produces more than a baby; it makes possible queer desires, subverted gender roles, and new ways of imagining family formations.

As such the novella-play can be said to reflect and respond to some of the developments in post–World War I Spain. *Dos madres* was written in the early twentieth century, a period of forward-thinking changes in Spanish history. The 1920s was a vibrant period in Spain in many areas (Serrano and Salaün 2006), but this chapter focuses on two important aspects: (1) the general social changes regarding women's rights, their role in society and changing paradigms of femininity and masculinity in Spain; and (2) the specific Basque Country idiosyncrasy concerning the so-called *matriarchy myth*.[3]

In Spain, the first decades of the twentieth century were a period of social change that particularly involved women's rights. In contrast to the established gender roles, different feminist movements proposed several theoretical approaches with the aim of promoting work and educational

[1] A *novella-play* is a short story with long dialogue that uses the visual structure of a drama script, little action and a text that invites reflection.

[2] *Soledad* ('Solitude', 1920), *Raquel encadenada* ('Rachel Bound', 1920) and *La tía Tula* ('Aunt Tula', 1921).

[3] Unamuno's intrinsic and academic connection to the Basque Country might indicate that his cosmovision and his female character's literary—and philosophical—conception was deeply influenced by the Basque culture and folklore.

rights for women as well as legal and political equality, especially regarding women's suffrage (Aguado 2010, 132, 145). Finally, the right to vote for women was approved in 1931 (Montero 2011, 86).[4] Another relevant social change in Spain was the dilution of traditional gender identities. Despite the neutral position of Spain in the First World War, the war had strong economic and social consequences in the country. One of these consequences was the destabilisation of the masculine and feminine established roles.[5] The young Spanish women were influenced by the English and American *flappers* and the French *garçonnes*. The result was an archetype of a modern woman, gendered ambiguously and defiant in the face of the traditional gender feminine assumptions (Aresti 2012, 2–3).

In parallel to the changing Spanish society, there was the specific case of the Basque Country, with its own particularities concerning feminine roles. Feminine supremacy is at the heart of Basque mythology. In traditional Basque folklore women were a substantial cultural, religious, and social symbol, mainly displayed as a *woman-mother* totem (Boguszewicz and Gajewska 2020, 37). Starting in the nineteenth century, a feminine model based on women's procreative function had gained importance (Sabadell Nieto 2011, 44–45), and this is well reflected in Unamuno's literary works. In addition, women in the Basque Country were much more educated than the average Spanish women (Montero 2009, 138).

Dos madres

The *Dos madres* plot starts from the same core leitmotiv as the biblical passage it is inspired by, the story of Rachel and Jacob (Gn. 30: 1–6).[6] There are three main characters: Raquel, don Juan, and Berta. Raquel is a widow

[4] This right was removed as a consequence of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and the subsequent Francoist dictatorship (1939–1975). It was approved again with the Spanish Constitution of 1978 (Ramos 1988; Cuenca Gómez 2008).

[5] Due to WWI women had to take on traditional masculine jobs, as the men had to assume military obligations. Also, women had to contribute to these military tasks.

[6] "When Rachel saw that she failed to bear children to Jacob, she became envious of her sister. She said to Jacob, 'Give me children or I shall die!' In anger Jacob retorted, 'Can I take the place of God, who has denied you the fruit of the womb?' She replied, 'Here is my maidservant Bilhah. Have intercourse with her, and let her give birth on my knees, so that I too may have offspring, at least through her'. So she gave him her maidservant Bilhah as a consort, and Jacob had intercourse with her. When Bilhah conceived and bore a son, Rachel said 'God has vindicated me; indeed, he has heeded my plea and given me a son'. Therefore, she named him Dan" (Gn. 30: 1–6). The punctuation of this passage has been adapted by the author from the original text of *The New American Bible* (2002).

who could neither have a child with her husband nor with her younger lover, don Juan. Raquel is desperate to become a mother and makes a plan to achieve her goal. She encourages don Juan to marry a young woman, Berta—who is supposed to be fertile—and have a child with her but then give the child to Raquel, who will raise the baby as her own. Indeed, Berta and don Juan get married and conceive a child. When the child is born, Raquel becomes the godmother, an important figure for the child in Catholic and Spanish culture.[7] Soon Raquel moves in with don Juan and Berta, taking charge of the house and the baby, and the three of them form a household. One day, while Berta and Raquel are arguing about who really is the baby's mother, don Juan escapes and drives to the mountains, where he is involved in a car accident and subsequently dies.

Suddenly, Berta finds herself in a situation of helplessness. As a widow she should inherit her husband's fortune and have a good income, but she discovers that Juan has left his fortune to Raquel before dying. Berta comes to the conclusion that the only solution for her and her family is to let Raquel support them financially and, in exchange, give the baby to her. Ultimately, Berta loses the battle for the baby's motherhood, and Raquel accomplishes her profound desire to become a mother. However, as a final plot twist, it is revealed that Berta is pregnant again, and she will give birth to don Juan's posthumous child. Raquel decides to support this child and provide for Berta's future.

The Good Fertile Woman and the Bad Infertile Woman

Initially, *Dos madres* seems to reproduce conventional stereotypes about women through the juxtaposition of the two main female characters: Raquel, who represents the *bad* infertile woman, and Berta, who represents the *good* fertile woman. Both characters are inspired by two biblical figures: Rachel, Jacob's spouse, and Bilhah their maidservant. Raquel and her biblical namesake are both women who are driven to desperation by their non-motherhood and find in surrogacy a balm for their pain. Berta seems to be inspired by Bilhah since Berta gives birth to a child, conceived with Raquel's lover, who would be raised by Raquel. Nonetheless, despite this apparently conservative textual foundation, Unamuno provides

[7] Especially before Spain became a secular state in 1978.

Raquel with a mindset that allows her to break the traditional gender structures.[8]

Forming a family and having children could be considered adulthood rites of passage (Archetti 2019, 176; Feasey 2019, 2). Accordingly, Raquel is the *incomplete* non-normative woman, as opposed to Berta, who is the fully developed archetypal mother/woman. Traditionally, Western culture has produced more depictions of women as mothers than as childless (Benninghaus 2014, 2). In addition, there is a tendency to create representations of childless women as linked to disordered life (Archetti 2019, 182). Raquel is not an exception to this tendency. She is don Juan's lover, and because of this, she is contravening one of the most crucial rules of Catholic doctrine: having sex without the sacred mission of forming a traditional family under the blessed sacrament of marriage. She is completely aware of this, which inflicts additional pain to her barrenness:

> Raquel: What's the point of being married by the Church and the Civil Law? Marriage was established, as we learned in catechism, for being married, blessing the married couple, and to provide children for heaven.
> With these words, her voice was faltering and in her lashes liquid pearls were trembling, where the bottomless blackness of her pupils was reflected. (De Unamuno 1920, 32)[9]

In this respect, Raquel's widowhood and non-motherhood (as a result of infertility) are depicted as inherently negative. In fact, in *Dos madres* there is a correlation between infertility, death, and passion: "In love? Was he, don Juan, in love with Raquel? No, he was absorbed by her, submerged in her, lost in the woman and in her widowhood. Because Raquel was, don Juan thought, first and foremost, the widow, the childless widow. […] Her love was furious, with a taste of death. […] And don Juan felt dragged by her to someplace deeper than the ground. 'This woman will kill me!'" (31)

From the beginning, Raquel is referred to as a 'childless widow', and these two words define her. She brings with her two main features: infertility and death. These two features are closely connected: she is a woman

[8] The equilibrium between traditional values and progressive ideas is one of the most particular characteristics of Unamuno's thinking, which is reflected in his works (Delgado 1988, 9; Guy 1988).

[9] All the translations from Spanish to English by the author. Ángel Flores's (1956) translation into English (edited by Ángel de Río) has been consulted.

unable to bring life, and she bears with her the unconceived children and the dead husband. Hence, there is a dichotomy between the ideal woman who should represent life and fertility—especially in the first half of the twentieth century in Spain—and Raquel, who represents infertility and death. Indeed, she brings a terrible fate with her, marked by don Juan's prophetic words: "This woman will kill me!" In contrast, Berta serves as Raquel's counterpoint. Miss Berta Lapeira is the perfect young virgin woman, who will become the perfect mother after marriage: "RAQUEL: I have already found a woman for you… I have already found the future mother of our child… No one searched more carefully for a wet nurse than I did for this mother" (35).

Since don Juan knew Berta since childhood, her virtue is assured. Moreover, according to Raquel, Berta might be truly in love with don Juan: "Berta is in love with you, hopelessly in love with you! And Berta, who has the heroic heart of a virgin in love, will accept the role of redeemer, she will redeem me, for I am, according to her, your damnation and hell" (36). Berta represents all the valuable features of a canonical woman that Raquel lacks. She has a 'heroic heart', she is 'a virgin in love', and her purity is so radiant that she even will be able to redeem Raquel's sins with don Juan. On the contrary, Raquel embodies damnation; she has the power to carry don Juan with her to hell. Raquel's is a devastating unstoppable force; Berta has the grace of healing. The text presents goodness confronting devilishness, the *good woman* against the *bad woman*.

When Berta marries don Juan and, in fact, has a baby, Raquel's alterity is reinforced. As Gayle Letherby (2002, 10) argues, women without children represent 'the other' in societies that value motherhood. Unamuno points directly to this matter when Raquel proposes to Berta: "Should I give my Quelina[10] to you, so that you can make of herself another like you, another Berta Lapeira? Another like you, an honest wife?" (De Unamuno 1920, 77). This passage emphasises the juxtaposition between the 'honest wife', the category to which Berta belongs, and 'the other' Raquel, the unconventional woman who contravenes the law and sacred rules. In this respect, an inner tension can be found in Raquel's portrayal. She rejects the Spanish social conventions and decides not to be a decent married woman. In opposition to this, she needs to be a mother to feel fulfilled and have a meaningful existence. This suggests an iconoclastic image of a

[10]The newborn is named after Raquel, "Quelina" is the diminutive for "Raquel" and implies affection. At times, don Juan refers to Raquel as "Quelina".

woman that above all wants to be a mother, but she does not need—nor want—a husband to accomplish her purpose. Instead, she finds her way to surrogate motherhood, where don Juan is only a procreative tool, objectified by Raquel. The representation of Raquel as a woman who defies norms of respectable femininity but still, eventually, reaches her goal to become a mother subverts the stereotype of the infertile woman as linked to death. Therefore, Raquel breaks this connection between infertility and death, becoming a mother through surrogacy and consequently a carer, linked to life.

Surrogacy as a Way to Overcome Non-Motherhood

The representation of Raquel also subverts the stereotype of the infertile woman as incomplete. At first sight, Raquel seems to fulfil this stereotype as she suffers with deep emotional pain from not being a mother; she feels unfulfilled, and her relationship with don Juan cannot be completely meaningful as she is not able to have children. Raquel is at a point in her life, after being married and widowed, where she does not believe in marriage anymore, at least for herself, though she says, "[t]here are very sincere pretences and marriage is a good school for learning them" (De Unamuno 1920, 60). This alterity of being a non-married woman but a lover defines her (De Boer et al. 2022, 14). Despite this, Raquel is not going to let this stop her from motherhood. She does not want marriage but needs to be a mother—otherwise she feels incomplete.

At first, don Juan comes up with a different solution: he suggests that they should take one of Raquel's sister's children and raise him/her as her own. As don Juan and Raquel are wealthy, he thinks that her sister will certainly give to them one of her children, as the child would have a good life and a prosperous future. It is worth mentioning the fact that for a substantial part of the twentieth century, adoption was not a transparent, nor a legal, process in Spain (Ingenschay 2021); therefore, the option that don Juan suggested was viable in the epoch the novella-play was written. However, Raquel is not happy with don Juan's solution. She associates motherhood with suffering and thinks that without it, motherhood is not real and worthy: "Oh, I can't give birth! I can't give birth! And die in

labour!" (De Unamuno 1920, 33).[11] Furthermore, she thinks that an adoptive child—even if he/she would be her sister's child with a biological connection to Raquel—will never be a real son/daughter for her: "An adopted child, adoptive, will always be an orphan" (33). In this sense, in the novella-play 'real motherhood' is linked to an embodied motherhood, which implies physical pain. Raquel professes that other forms of motherhood that do not involve giving birth are 'not real'.

Breaking with ideals of passive femininity, Raquel rejects don Juan's ideas and takes charge of the process, suggesting a different kind of surrogacy arrangement. Raquel would consider as her own a child conceived by her lover don Juan and another woman, in this case, Berta. This option is connected with the Rachel and Jacob biblical passage (Gn. 30, 3) and the Hebrew ritual through which the adoptive mother achieved the parental rights and the biological—surrogate mother—lost all the rights regarding the baby (Cantera Burgos and González 1979, 34). The biblical connection is made explicit when Raquel explains to don Juan: "I almost made your Berta, our Berta, give birth upon my knees, as it was said in the Holy Scriptures" (De Unamuno 1920, 75). The use of the possessive in reference to Berta ('our Berta') has ambivalent meanings and interpretations: it could imply the 'real' possession of Berta, like the Hebrew mistress with their slaves/servants; and it could connote the passionate and emotional link between the three of them.

Raquel does not dare to make Berta give birth on her knees, but she accomplishes two other rituals to take ownership of the motherhood and establish some rights over the baby. Raquel's first performed ritual is to name the baby after her. When the baby is born and is proclaimed a girl, Raquel shouts: "Her name will be Raquel!" (68). With this action, through the power of words, Raquel assumes the motherhood of the newborn. This can also be explained as in line with traditional Spanish practices common until the twenty-first century that the first-born of a family used to take the name of their father or mother (depending on the sex of the baby). Raquel's second ritual is becoming Quelina's godmother. With this action, Raquel becomes the sacramental mother of the child and a sort of

[11] This idea of motherhood closely linked with physical pain also appears in one of the most representative Spanish literary works about infertility: Federico García Lorca's *Yerma* (1972, act. I, sc. 1), premiered in 1934; possibly, the strong Catholic Spanish background has a great influence on this association of ideas regarding motherhood: "I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing; in pain shall you bring forth children" (Gn. 3:16).

co-mother. This situation allows Raquel to share parenthood with Berta and don Juan.

Berta does not really take part in this decision consciously. She accepts it after a difficult birth, exhausted after having lost a lot of blood, and she seems unable to oppose it: "As you wish!" (70). In fact, she is not acknowledged in Raquel's plan from the beginning; she just keeps accepting Raquel's wishes. Thus, Raquel has planned a *forced surrogacy*. Raquel does not care about the future surrogate mother or her emotions; she only thinks about her unrestrained desire for motherhood. She expresses clearly to don Juan that her infertility is like hell for her:

> Raquel: Do you know what heaven is? Do you know what hell is? Do you know where hell is?
> Don Juan: In the center of the earth, they say.
> Raquel: Or maybe in the center of a sterile womb. (35)

At first, when Raquel moves to Berta and don Juan's home, Berta thinks that Raquel is only trying to help. Soon Raquel takes charge of the house and the baby. She even finds a wet nurse for her, arguing that it will be the best for Berta and the baby. However, this can also contribute to breaking the mother-daughter connection established by breastfeeding (Krol and Grossmann 2018). When Berta realises that Raquel's true plans are to separate her from her baby, a confrontation between the two women begins:

> Raquel: I'm the real mother, me! […]
> Berta: But no! I'm the mother, me, me… […] Give me my daughter, return my daughter to me!
> Raquel: What daughter?
> Berta: My… my… my…
> The name was burning her lips. (De Unamuno 1920, 77)

The two women claim the motherhood of the baby for different reasons. Raquel claims it because the baby's birth has been carefully planned by her; therefore, the baby was born because of her will. In addition, she has been taking care of Berta's pregnancy and the baby during recent months. On the other hand, Berta is sure she has maternal rights over the baby, as she is the biological—and also the legal—mother. This dispute is solved with don Juan's death and the need to find a new household model.

Surrogacy and a Queer Family Model

In *Dos madres*, non-motherhood and surrogacy are closely linked to alternative ways of making a family, as they facilitate a kind of queer family model. The queer family model is made possible through a love triangle between the protagonists and through the death of don Juan. In order to delve into how the relationship between the three protagonists operates, two additional aspects need to be analysed: the gender role subversion in Raquel and don Juan's characters and the lesbian desire between Berta and Raquel. These relationships create an inversion of the classical love triangles in literature. The love triangle is a common trope used to schematise erotic relations in Western intellectual tradition (Kosofsky Sedgwick 2016, 21). However, while traditional love triangles are formed by two male characters who share a desire for a female character, in Unamuno's novella-play there are two female characters, Raquel and Berta, who desire a male character, don Juan, which also creates an erotic bond between the two women.

Therefore, despite the fact that it was common to employ the erotic triangle in different cultural expressions from the end of the nineteenth century (Lönngren 2012, 207), it is rarely used to depict love triangles involving homosocial female desire; the most common is the display of male homosocial desire (Kosofsky Sedgwick 2016). Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that there is a continuum between male homosocial desire and male homosexual desire (1). In this sense, the same continuum can be found between female homosocial and homosexual desire and, accordingly, in the relationship between Raquel and Berta. In addition, as stated by René Girard (1961, 7–28), in any erotic rivalry between the two active members of an erotic triangle, the bond that links the two rivals is as powerful as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved, as rivalry and love in many cases are equivalent (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 21).

Therefore, in this case Raquel and Berta are bonded not only by rivalry—first for don Juan's love, but then for Quelina's motherhood, a more intense and potent love—but also by lesbian desire. In this sense, the attraction between the two women destabilises the love triangle, making it collapse and overshadowing don Juan (Castle 1993, 83). When Berta gets pregnant, it seems clear that don Juan does not want to get involved in family arrangements and that the future newborn will be only a matter for the two mothers. From the beginning, the idea of the wedding, which involved starting a family, appals him: "The arrangement of the wedding

with Berta poisoned the foundations of poor don Juan's soul" (De Unamuno 1920, 49).

Thus, a queer family model is made possible through Raquel's struggle for motherhood, the subsequent surrogacy, and the triangular relationship of the protagonists. The key actors in the novella-play are Raquel and Berta, while don Juan seems only to be alive in the novella in order to allow Raquel and Berta to be mothers. He has no clear will and, most certainly, does not have an inherent desire to become a father: "But he hadn't any hunger of parenthood…! Why would he bring someone like him into the world?" (41). This reflects how traditionally the desire of having children and parenting was associated with female roles.

A point of departure for understanding how this love triangle and queer family model works in *Dos madres* is in the way Raquel and don Juan exchange traditional gender roles. While Berta meets the feminine standards throughout the novella-play, performing the virgin/mother role, Raquel possesses some inherent features traditionally associated with male characters. And while Unamuno's don Juan is a clear allusion to the popular Spanish literary character and archetype of a womanising man, this character is the antithesis of what his name suggests.

While at first it might seem that in *Dos madres* don Juan is a seducer, as he is pursuing romantic and sexual relationships with two women at the same time, he is actually pushed into this situation by Raquel's desire to become a mother, even though it is not a desirable situation for him. In fact, don Juan gets overwhelmed by this triangular relationship and anguished with the idea of marriage and parenthood. He perceives his wife and his lover as two chains that hold him prisoner and feels he has lost his free will. He did not even want to get married in the first place: "When finally, one autumn morning, Berta announced to her husband that he would become a father, he felt over the flesh of his tortured soul the painful brush of the two chains that were grabbing him. And he began to feel the sorrow of his dead will" (63).

Another issue to take into account is that in the 1920s the don Juan masculine model was obsolete and considered weak and effeminate (Aresti 2012, 4–6) and this is reflected in the way in which Unamuno's don Juan is represented as lacking in virility. Indeed, at some points, Raquel behaves like a maternal figure for him: "My son…my son…my son… I saw you

searching for what can't be found…I was looking for a son…And I thought I found him in you" (De Unamuno 1920, 52).[12]

For her part, Raquel is the pivotal point in the threesome relationship. She is always desired by the other two. Thus, she is not a passive object of desire; she is a natural seductress, and she always achieves what she wants from the infatuated don Juan and Berta. In this sense, Raquel breaks the rules of the feminine standards: she is an empowered and not a submissive woman. Hence, she performs the new *masculine women* model of the 1920 and also is a paradigmatic cliché of the strong independent Basque woman.[13] Indeed, Raquel becomes a 'father' for Berta's children; Raquel does not intervene in the gestation process or giving birth but becomes the provider of the household.

The marriage, which makes possible the future of shared motherhood between the two women, only brought joy to Raquel and Berta. And although don Juan is an intermediary between them both, Berta and Raquel have a clear attraction between them. A priori, it would seem that Berta's attraction to Raquel is more evident than Raquel's to Berta. Berta's love for Raquel begins before she is married: "The person with whom Berta was hopelessly in love was Raquel. Raquel was her idol" (De Unamuno 1920, 43). After the wedding, Berta and don Juan start visiting Raquel. During these visits, Berta's love and admiration for Raquel goes further:

> Raquel: Yes, when you came to visit me the first time, with that almost ceremonial visit, I observed she was analysing me…
> […]
> Don Juan: She is infatuated with you; you captivate her…
> Raquel bowed her face to the floor, which was suddenly intensely pale and she raised her hands to her breast, pierced by a breathless stab. (56)

Raquel's reaction to don Juan's words reveals that the attraction seems to be mutual. In addition, Raquel chooses Berta as the perfect woman with the perfect attributes to be the surrogate mother for her future child,

[12] Don Juan is an orphan and lived in a state of loneliness since he was very young (De Unamuno 1920, 39). This situation could have contributed to his maternal dependence on Raquel. For this reason, Sáenz de Zaitegui (2006, 98) compares Raquel to Iocasta, Oedipus's mother.

[13] Unamuno's Raquel also can be linked with some classical literary paradigms of 'bad' non-submissive women with 'masculine' features (Lewis 2011; Lefkowitz 1986; Pomeroy 1975).

demonstrating her admiration—which could be considered one of the main principles of romantic love—for Berta. Even before the three of them live together, they start to become a sort of household, and the two women share some intimacy though conversations about their emotions, their 'new family' and their man in common. Gradually, a certain process of symbiosis between the two future mothers develops: "And it was true that Berta was preceiving from Raquel the way to win over her husband and, at the same time, the way to win over herself, to be her, to be a woman. And so she allowed herself to be absorbed by Juan's master and she was discovering herself through the other [woman]" (59).

For that matter, Berta's choices and actions are always subordinate to Raquel's desires. This is not a relationship of servitude, as is the case in Rachel and Jacob's biblical passage, but there is an emotional submission, for Berta is in love, with the deepest admiration for Raquel. Therefore, in part, Raquel is in a role of power in relation to Berta. Additionally, what seems clear is that Berta and Quelina complete Raquel and don Juan's relationship, and the four of them form a real family: "And that lonely home, outside of the law, was like a cell of a couple in love in a monastery" (31). Their home was a 'lonely home' because there were no children. It was like a "cell […] in a monastery", they lived isolated 'outside of the law', as they were not married. Berta and Quelina completed the family with children under the institution of marriage.

When don Juan dies, the family model they have constructed changes dramatically. Berta is left without financial resources. It should be recalled that in 1920s Spain—and for much of the twentieth century—a decent woman, especially after marriage, should not have a job; the man had to provide for the family. However, Raquel becomes the head of the family, taking care of Berta and the children—the one who is already born and the one with whom Berta is pregnant. She even assumes a paternal role with regard to Berta, offering a dowry in case she would like to marry again: "Raquel: If you get married again—Raquel said to Berta—I will give you a dowry. Think it over. It is not a good situation to be a widow" (80). At the same time, at the end of the novella-play, there are no suitors in sight, and Raquel and Berta are in a relationship that resembles 'conventional' lesbian relationships (Cook et al. 2013, 163; Levitt and Hiestand 2005), based on two roles: masculine/active (Raquel) and feminine/passive (Berta). They have a daughter whom they both mother, and they are expecting another child. In *Dos madres*, non-motherhood and the

surrogacy Raquel initiates thus produces more than just a baby; it produces queer desires, subversions of gender roles and traditional stereotypes about infertile women, as well as new ways of imagining family formations.

Conclusion

Unamuno's *Dos madres* raises an uncommon and complex discussion about non-motherhood and surrogate motherhood, using literature as a basis to present an accurate and bold social analysis. The author puts on display the tension between certain conservative ideals, rooted in Spanish society, versus more radical dimensions, which denote the progressive cultural and sociopolitical era the country was experimenting with in the 1920s. The point of departure for this novella-play is a biblical passage from *Genesis*, the story of Rachel and Jacob, which could be seen as an obsolete text. Nonetheless, Unamuno takes the universal core of the text and adapts it to his contemporaneous time, performing within his novella-play surrogate motherhood—or 'delegated motherhood'—*avant la lettre*. At first glance, *Dos madres* seems to reproduce stereotypes around women and infertility, such as the connection to death and the woman as incomplete. However, Unamuno's work reveals forward-thinking ideas regarding surrogacy and new family models.

The most important way this text pushes against conventions is undoubtedly the path by which surrogate motherhood is achieved: a love triangle, where don Juan and Berta are subordinated to Raquel's will. Therefore, their arrangement is not supported by religious law that allows surrogacy as there is the Hebrew biblical text, nor is there even a socio-medical context that could assist with surrogate motherhood. In addition, there is no economical transaction with which a woman—or a couple—in a wealthier position could take advantage of a woman with lower income. It is don Juan's and Berta's emotional dependence on Raquel that allows her to become a mother. For that matter, surrogacy goes beyond being a remedy for infertility and creates an unconventional family formation.

A dichotomy between motherhood and non-motherhood is the backbone of the drama. The two female protagonists are constructed in relation to the polarisation of the *good fertile mother*—Berta, the virgin, the wife, the Christian woman paradigm—and *the bad infertile woman*—Raquel, the lover, the Machiavellian widow, the sinner. The strong Spanish Catholic influence is always present but not as an unbreakable prerogative.

On the contrary, Unamuno shows the desire of motherhood in a disruptive way; it is an unstoppable passion that drives all Raquel's actions. Consequently, motherhood is not represented as the result and the central piece of a heteronormative and Christian family. It is represented as individual and intimate desire, which leads to a queer household structure.

Finally, the subversion of gender roles that takes place in the novella-play can be highlighted as a reflection of the changing gender roles in Spain in the 1920s. Raquel displays ambivalence regarding gender expectations. On the one hand, she is anchored partially to the traditional female role: she must be a mother, and she will devote all her resources to achieve this goal. On the other hand, she has features that are traditionally coded as masculine: she does not give up on her desires, she imposes her will on others, and she fascinates and subjugates the other two protagonists. Furthermore, there is an exchange of gender roles between Raquel and don Juan. She is revealed as the true don Juan, and she becomes the paterfamilias who provides for the woman and the children of her household. In contrast, don Juan is ultimately shown as a weak man, almost superfluous in the story, who only is valuable for his reproductive capacity. For her part, Berta represents the traditional feminine archetype throughout the story, submissive and dependent. Even so, she breaks the established social gender expectations when she gradually changes her subordination from don Juan to Raquel.

Consequently, this change of paradigms allows the formation of a non-heteronormative family by Raquel and Berta, whereby Raquel can find a solution to her non-motherhood. In this sense, the *Dos madres* surrogacy not only facilitates motherhood for a barren woman but also brings about new outcomes and kinship perspectives. Consequently, in Unamuno's novella-play, surrogacy is more than a remedy for infertility; it becomes a pathway into an unconventional queer family model, disrupting gender role expectations.

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