

MATUTE'S SHORT FICTION: METAPHORICAL JOURNALS OF TRAUMA

by

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ABSTRACT

Renowned Spanish author, Ana María Matute, lived through the violent and uncertain years of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) that followed. Her writing is a reflection of the dysfunctional society that was left in the wake of decades of social upheaval and it serves as a greater metaphor for the national identity crisis Spain experienced in the 20th Century. The intent of this study is to demonstrate how trauma and memory influence individual and national identity formation in selected short stories by Matute. Little study has been done on the role of trauma and memory in this type of narrative despite the frequent presence of trauma in Spanish literature. Further, insufficient academic attention has been given to Matute's short fiction relative to her novels.

The characters in Matute's short fiction are dominated by violent and antisocial behavior that results from living in severely fragmented environments where both physical and mental cruelty and the absence of the nuclear family are commonplace. Matute's characters that suffer from traumatic events frequently fail to recover their former identity and remain in posttraumatic states, inhibiting healthy personal development and involvement with others in society. The memory of traumatic events dominates their persona and the characters are unable to distinguish the past from the present, causing a crisis of identity. In addition, Matute's characters can rarely rely on the community at large or family for support; this further propels them into isolation and negatively impacts their sense of self. Although Matute's literature is fictional, one can infer the toll of the Civil War and the dictatorship on the Spanish nation and its identity.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Issues of identity have taken center stage in social theory and Stuart Hall, among others, has observed that the modern individual's identity is not as stable as it was centuries ago. Hall claims that the modern individual is suffering from a "crisis of identity;" or that modern individuals possess fragmented identities. One of the many contributing factors to this "crisis of identity" is the changing social and political idea of the nation. People's identity is directly linked to the environment in which individuals live, the family or tribe they belong to and the nation or state to which they belong. Those experiencing intense political turmoil may tend to have more difficulty developing a strong sense of identity. Crises such as war and genocide are contributing factors that tend to disrupt the communal stability on which individuals rely. The more change individuals are forced to endure, especially when the change is brought upon by an outside source, the more challenging it is for them to adjust or restore a stable sense of identity. One such cataclysmic event was the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and the decades long resulting military dictatorship. As with most dictatorships, many Spaniards were forced to live without any sense of control or certainty in their lives. Fear, the threat of violence, financial and social hardships were just a few of the destabilizing consequences they had to endure.

One of Spain's most critically acclaimed authors, Ana María Matute, lived through these times of great strife, turmoil and despair and her writing is mediated by this experience. Matute has produced a large body of narrative and essays. Many of her stories take place during the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship time period

and demonstrate how the environment in which her characters reside skews individual and interpersonal development, in turn provoking alienation, cruelty, violence, physical and mental abuse, trauma related issues, and separation. My thesis offers an analysis of Matute's work through the lens of identity and how trauma related events effect identity formation thus allowing for a re-reading of her body of short fiction. Each chapter of this dissertation will focus on characters that share similar types of dysfunctional behavior that are arguably a result of a crisis of identity sparked by traumatic experiences. The chapters concentrate on the themes of social isolation, the absence of the nuclear family, violence, trauma and memory, and they deploy recent critical and theoretical contributions in these areas to better explain the author's short fiction.

Review of Selected Criticism

Alienation, the loss of innocence/childhood, female characters defying traditional roles, sibling rivalry (Cain and Abel), fairy tales, stylistic elements, the mother figure, betrayal, the effects of the Civil War and the dictatorship are major themes associated with Matute's fiction have captured the attention of scholars. Most of the interest her work has received has focused on her novels, rather than short fiction. The most recurrent research investigates varying aspects of the semi-autobiographical trilogy, *Los mercaderes*, which includes *Primera memoria* (1960), *Los soldados lloran de noche* (1964) and *La trampa* (1969). Matute has published nine collections of short stories to date and there has been little research conducted on these interesting fictional creations, thus resulting in the need for the type of study at hand. In addition, little investigation has been done in regard to identity and/or crisis of identity in Matute's work in general. More

specifically, there is a need for research on identity in combination with the themes of family, violence, trauma, and memory and how they interplay in the formation and/or alteration of individual identity.

Gonzalo Sobejano who has studied contemporary Spanish literature, classifies Matute's novels as "novelas sociales". He explains that even though the authors that form part of the social novel come from varying backgrounds, they all have a common point of interest, "...todos defienden, atacan y descifran estados sociales con la misma intención central y constante: la justicia" (522). Sobejano touches on the themes that dominate this literature and writes, "Temas capitales de las obras de estos novelistas son: la infructuosidad, la soledad social y la guerra como recuerdo y en sus consecuencias" (523). The ideas of Sobejano regarding the novel can also be used in the analysis of Matute's short stories as these themes are present in her short stories. The memory of the Civil War and its consequences play a central part in Matute's ideology and fiction, and the author utilizes this topic as a form of protest to combat the injustices that arose from the Civil War.

Robert Spires includes Matute in his book, and in the introduction he states that he chooses to analyze particular novels and their structure to explain his classification of novels, rather than choosing the author to represent his classification. Spires selects Matute's novel, *Fiesta al noroeste* (1953), categorized as one of "la década de los cincuenta" and explains:

La novela que más caracteriza la segunda década de la posguerra española toma la forma del llamado neo-realismo u objetivismo. En lugar de un

examen interior del individuo en lucha con su sociedad –*Pascual y Nada*– en la nueva novelística se opta por una presentación exterior del hombre-masa... (75-6)

Spires's insight into the Spanish novel can be applied to Matute's short stories, as with Sobejano, for her characters are indeed universal and depict the Spanish reality of the time.

Ana María Matute has been the subject of numerous studies conducted by Margaret E. W. Jones. Starting in the 1960s Jones published *Religious Motifs and Biblical Allusions in the Works of Ana María Matute* (1968) and subsequently published *The Literary World of Ana María Matute* (1970), *Temporal Patterns in the Works of Ana María Matute* (1971) and *Deciphering Silence in the Works of Ana María Matute* (1993). *The Literary World of Ana María Matute* is an overview of Matute's major works and themes that offers a general analysis of her writing style and studies themes such as alienation, loss of innocence, sibling rivalry and the civil war. Although Jones includes an analysis of several short stories, there is a need for a more detailed study of Matute's characters in Matute's short fiction. Jones research does in fact speak of alienation, the relationship between adults and children, the role of animals and dolls which are all pertinent to this study, specifically Chapters Two and Three.

Elizabeth Ordóñez also uses of the term "alienation" in her article and explains that Matute's novel, *La trampa* (1969), is characterized by, "an isolation between the self and others; between the self and itself; pervasive solitude; separation caused by death, divorce and faulty communication" (180). As in other cases, her research on this

particular novel by Matute can be related to her short stories such as “El Polizón del ‘Ulises’,” “El hermoso amanecer,” “El tiempo,” and “Los niños buenos”. Ordóñez’s ideas regarding separation caused by death and faulty communication are especially important to this study as one of the leading reasons for the crises of identity in Matute’s characters in her short stories. The suffering and isolated individual is unable to overcome loss and effectively loses the ability to communicate with others. The protagonists tend to remain in a state of isolation and endure extreme solitude.

The question of identity is indirectly raised in Raquel Flores-Jenkins’ study, thus her research is of interest to this study. Flores-Jenkins notes that Matute’s characters possess the need for evasion, which can be tied to multiple identities or fractured identities. She writes, “La necesidad de evasión se resuelve a veces en el tema tan típico en nuestra autora, de las máscaras, el titiritero o el circo, en fin una ficción mediante la cual el niño se escapa de un ‘yo’ infeliz para cobijarse en uno feliz e inmune al dolor” (186-87). Although Flores-Jenkins is one of the few that analyzes identity in Matute’s short stories, her research only includes a few short stories and there is a need for a broader study.

Sara E. Schyfter writes about the emergence of female authors in post Civil War Spain and how these authors’ perceptions regarding this time period are revealed in their novels. Schyfter includes Matute’s *Primera memoria* in her article and comments on the post war family saying, “...the fragmented family repeatedly appears as the symbol and metaphor of a ruptured society” (23). She includes analysis on the difficulty women face in the formation of their identities due to a lack of role models while simultaneously

living in a predominantly patriarchal society. Schyfter also explains that the stability traditional roles once provided is diminishing, “The old order has been demasked. Religion, family pride, class tradition and sexual roles are all now seen as withered remnants of a lost past” (23). Schyfter’s ideas regarding the family and its role in identity formation can also be applied to Matute’s short fiction as well.

Phyllis Zatlin Boring writes that one of the notable characteristics of the Spanish novel of the post Civil War is the inclusion of the world of childhood and in her study she analyzes four novelists including Matute. Boring emphasizes the importance of the authors’ personal experience in the Civil War and that their memories contribute to their writing. Although her study just touches on some of the central themes in Matute, Boring does comment on alienation and cruelty and children which are of interest to this study. Matute’s fiction is affected by her personal experience of the Civil War and the author creatively includes her experiences in her short stories through her characters and story lines.

Many of Matute’s characters in both her novels and short stories suffer from loneliness, alienation and cruelty and James Townsend Shelby explores these themes in his dissertation. Although Shelby studies Matute’s novels, several of his ideas can be applied to identity and alienation in Matute’s short stories. Shelby explains that Matute’s characters in *La trampa* and *La torre vigía* rarely succeed in communicating with others and thus remain in a state of isolation. He writes, “Each one experiences the disintegration of his primary social group, or community, and each one attempts to resolve his communication problem with evasive actions. Ultimately, however, each of

them fails, and the result is a novelistic society that is characterized in its entirety by fragmented, inadequate social institutions and lonely human beings” (13). In addition, in *Primera Memoria* Shelby notes the role of dolls can be linked to several short stories including “La rama seca”.

Scott Macdonald Frame analyzes one of Matute’s most studied characters in *Primera memoria* (1960) and *La trampa* (1969), Matia. His article investigates the trauma portrayed in Matia in aspiration of offering “reasons behind the incorporation of her character’s fictional traumatography” (127). Even though Frame’s research is based on Matute’s novels, his ideas can be utilized in my analysis of her short stories.

Ana María Matute has made herself available to the public and has participated in numerous interviews that have been published in various newspapers, magazines and literary journals. These interviews are another area that offers insight to Matute’s literary work. Since her work has been characterized, at times, as being autobiographical, her interviews shed light on her writings. Matute frequently dodges literary questions that pertain to her interpretation of her work and emphasizes her preference to leave it up to the readers to form their own conclusions. These interviews are invaluable and allow her readers and critics to learn the difficult and intricate experiences she had growing up and surviving the Spanish Civil War, the Franco years, and the transition into democracy.

In 1996 and 1998 Juan Manuel de Prada published two interviews with Matute that address her childhood, the civil war and her writing. Rosa Montero also interviewed Matute in 1996 about her experience as a writer and touched on the later years of her life. In addition, this article discusses what Matute claims to be her best and most recent

literary production ever, her novel, *Olvidado el Rey Gudú* (1996). Pat Farrington spoke with Matute in 2000 in hopes of “deepening his understanding of how social exclusion in Spanish society between 1936 and the 1990s - a period of dramatic social and political change - was represented in her fiction...” (75). Lastly, a dialogue between Matute and Camilo José Cela regarding the standard of today’s writing and its decline offers additional insight into Matute. Many other interviews have been conducted and offer insight into various aspects of the author’s personal life and/or information about specific novels or short stories written by Matute. These interviews serve as great value into understanding the literary world of Matute and the actions and feelings of her characters.

Short Story Selection

Chapter Two opens with a discussion of identity at the individual and national level. Modern times have illustrated that the stability of identities has been compromised and that national as well as individual identities have been affected by the changes that have accompanied modernity. Traditional roles formerly occupied by the family, tribe, or nation have shifted and are not viable sources for identity formation as they once were, forcing groups, nations, families, and individuals to form new identities. Nations and individuals attempt to identify with sources that are incompatible and unsatisfying thus leaving them with a fractured identity or a crisis of identity (Hall 596). The instability and violence caused by the Civil War and dictatorship led to the destruction of one of the oldest and most fundamental sources of identity formation, the family, throwing Spain into a lengthy period of national identity crisis.

Ana María Matute repeatedly presents fractured families in her short stories as well as her novels. The second chapter of this thesis examines the identity crisis and related problems that Matute's characters face as a result of coming from fractured families in her short fiction. It is pertinent to study this aspect in her work seeing that it is a dominant theme and can be linked to the formation of identity. This chapter illustrates how her characters suffer from alienation and loneliness and demonstrate why one of the primary causes for this sad emotional state is the lack of family support and role models. Due to their alienation and inability to rely on their family, her characters attempt to connect, interact and befriend others in society, however, the majority of these attempts end in failure, leaving them to stand on their own. Matute demonstrates that some of her characters can only identify with objects such as dolls or animals, which are the only source of companionship and complacency. The short stories to be analyzed are: "El tiempo," "El polizón del 'Ulises,'" "Paulina," "Los niños buenos," "Fausto," "El amigo," "El corderito pascual," "Cuaderno para cuentas," "Bernardino," and "La rama seca". Ideas and definitions regarding identity and family come from Stuart Hall, Anthony Giddens, Ernesto Laclau, Roger Scruton, Ernest Gellner, Jo Labanyi, Jacques Derrida, and Elisa Medhus. For centuries, the family has been the building block of societies and individuals, yet its presence is gravely absent in 20th Century Spain.

Matute presents her characters as frustrated individuals lacking a social support network. The protagonists are ill-equipped at communication or simply have no one to interact with and, as a result, when forced to interact with others at school or in the community, they quickly become agitated and aggressive or targets of violence. Their

inability to use rational thought and dialogue triggers acts of violence and innocent victims quickly become the target of unwarranted violation. The primary targets of such unjust violence and cruelty in Matute's short fiction are animals, insects, and peers that tend to have issues with alienation. The author includes bullying and sibling rivalry, often triggered by jealousy or revenge, as a form of violence in her short fiction. Confrontation between adults and children is also present in her work and it demonstrates the challenges in communication between the generations. Matute concedes in interviews that the world of children and adults are separate and neither adults nor children understand each other. In times of misunderstanding, both children and adults use violence as a coping mechanism to resolve problems and/or to facilitate communication.

There are different types of violence and cruelty portrayed in Matute's short stories and the third chapter of this dissertation specifically analyzes three different types of violence: children's violence towards animals, violence between children, and violence between children and adults. Ideas and definitions regarding violence are taken from Frank Ascione, The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, The Humane Society of the United States, Linda Merz-Perez, Kathleen Heide, Alan R. Felthous, Stephen R. Kellert, Arnold Arluke, Dan Olweus, and James H.S. Bossard. The short stories to be studied in this section are: "Los murciélagos," "Moro," "Bernardino," "Cuaderno para cuentas," "Fausto," "Noticia del joven K," "El río," "Pecado de omisión," and "El precio de la soledad".

Chapter Four argues that trauma and memory are significant factors that shape a person's identity and directly affect a person's well being. Spain is a nation that has been plagued with trauma due to the bellicose years of the Civil War and the dictatorship. The citizens of Spain suffered the loss of family members and loved ones and were left with the memory of the deceased and exiled. Traumatic memory can severely alter and/or deform a person's identity. Depending on the form of trauma endured, some individuals are unable to recover from their experience and they remain in a posttraumatic state. This contributes to social isolation and weakened sense of self as the individual has lost their sense of safety, their trust in others, and in their environment. Matute includes this aspect of Spanish reality in her fiction and this study illustrates that these aspects of the Spanish Civil War are depicted in the following short stories: "Fausto'," "El hermoso amanecer," and "De ninguna parte".

Other forms of psychological trauma, such as the loss of a child and/or parent and sexual abuse, are presented in Matute's short stories as well. Matute's characters that suffer from such trauma are deeply affected by the memory of the event and are more often than not unable to overcome their personal trauma. Following the traumatic event, the protagonists' lives are dominated by a self-imposed form of isolation and they consistently do not receive any form of support from their families and/or communities. The combination of the psychological trauma endured by the protagonists and the acute lacking a sense of belonging to a larger group or community inhibit the characters from recovering from their trauma and, ultimately, this alters their sense of self and sense of

stability. The selected short stories chosen for analysis, “El tiempo,” “La felicidad,” and “El maestro”, portray these types of psychological trauma.

“Noticia del joven K,” and “Bernardino” demonstrate how the psychological trauma of physical abuse can alter and/or deform a person’s identity, especially under circumstances when the victim suffers from chronic trauma. This chapter primarily includes theories and definitions of memory and trauma from Judith Herman, Sigmund Freud, The National Institute of Mental Health, Susan Brison, The American Psychiatric Association, Jenny Edkins, The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, John Briere, Joseph Davis, Kathleen Kendall-Tackett, and Daniel Schacter.

The thesis closes with conclusions regarding the themes of identity, violence, memory and trauma present in Ana María Matute’s short stories and how her literature portrays the modern individual in Spain as one that is subject to possessing a fragmented identity or being the victim of an identity crisis. In 20th Century Spain, identity issues are not only seen at the individual level but its national identity is put into question as well due to the changing political time period. Matute’s literature can be seen as a greater metaphor for the social issues plaguing Spain and her literature warrants a re-reading through the lens of identity.

CHAPTER TWO: FAMILY AND IDENTITY IN MATUTE

The characters depicted in Ana María Matute's short fiction tend to be individuals struggling to overcome some type of short coming in their life such as social isolation, a physical handicap or illness, rejection or abuse by their family/community or a form of psychological trauma. Despite the characters' best intentions to overcome or embrace their personal difficulties the author consistently demonstrates that the circumstances of their short coming are overwhelming and prohibit the characters from bettering their situation. Due to the characters' inability to alter their circumstances in conjunction with the emotional stress their short coming creates the characters' personal identities are jeopardized and leave the characters in a state of identity confusion or identity crisis. This chapter focuses on the importance of a sense of belonging in positive identity formation.

The chapter opens with a general discussion of key elements that contribute to identity formation at the individual and national level. The focus then turns specifically to the importance of the nuclear family in fostering strong personal identity. The chapter closes with an analysis of selected short stories that portray how the role of the nuclear family contribute negatively or positively to identity in the fictional characters in Matute's short fiction.

Individual Identity

At first glance, one might think that identity is simply something that we are born with. While the inner core of an individual contributes to identity formation, every individual is subject to outside factors that affect and contribute to the development of their persona. The construction of identity is a complex notion that consists of different

contributing elements, such as origin, language, economic and social status, education, literature, history, politics, health, etc. These elements are codependent in terms of their influence on a person's identity and are constantly being transformed by the demands and trends of modern society.

Stuart Hall explains that social changes brought on by modern times are replacing old identity structures that stabilized the social world for centuries (596). The vanishing social structures served as the foundation for individual identity formation while the modern social landscape offers less and less structure for individuals to draw upon in identity formation. This social shift from having consistent social structures to having dynamic or even ephemeral social structures is problematic in that it tends to lead to a "crisis of identity" or individuals with fragmented identities. Hall refers to this phenomenon as the dislocation or de-centering of the subject:

A distinctive type of structural change is transforming modern societies in the late twentieth century. This is fragmenting the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and nationality which gave us firm locations as social individuals. These transformations are also shifting our personal identities, undermining our sense of ourselves as integrated subjects. This loss of a stable "sense of self" is sometimes called the dislocation or de-centering of the subject. This set of double displacements – de-centering individuals both from their place in the social and cultural world, and

from themselves-constitutes a “crisis of identity” for the individual.

(596)

Anthony Giddens’ ideas of modern times shadow Hall’s thinking, “The modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order in quite unprecedented fashion” (21).

In a similar fashion, Ernesto Laclau speaks of the complications of identity formation in modern times and speaks of the individual as being “displaced”. Hall conveys:

A dislocated structure is one whose center is displaced and not replaced by another...Late-modern societies are characterized by “difference”; they are cut through by different social divisions and social antagonisms which produce a variety of different “subject positions”- i.e. identities – for individuals. (599-60)

Matute’s protagonists, especially children and adolescents, commonly display characteristics in line with the “de-centered” or “displaced” individual as described by Hall and Laclau. Her characters typically live in an unstable environment, resulting in the quest of a stable identity.

Matute’s short fiction, a product of modern times, is reflective of the problems associated with identity formation. When examining character identity in Matute’s short fiction, it is crucial to recognize the qualities of the environment or society in which the individual exists. Hall refers to the modern subject as a sociological subject and asserts, “...identity is formed in the ‘interaction’ between self and society. The subject still has

an inner core or essence that is ‘the real me,’ but this is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds ‘outside’ and the identities which they offer” (598). The stories being analyzed were written during a time of great upheaval in Spain and it is fair to say that, on many levels, Spanish society was in poor health, as can be measured by the broken families, murder, exile, etc. The heavily fractured society in which Matute’s characters live, evidently, has a significant impact on the types of identities that are formed.

The relationship between self and society is key to the formation of one’s identity as Roger Scruton explains, “The condition of man [sic] requires that the individual, while he exists and acts as an autonomous being, does so only because he can first identify himself as something greater—as a member of a society, group, class, state, or nation...” (Donald 156). The importance of an individual’s interaction and acceptance by others in society cannot be underestimated when studying personal identity. When an individual has disagreeable interactions in society, as many Matute characters experience during this dysfunctional time period, the individual is more likely to be steered into social isolation which prohibits bonding, a necessary element in identifying oneself as a member of society.

Self perception is another contributing feature to identity formation. Hall refers to Sigmund Freud’s ideas and relays, “Identity arises, not so much from the fullness of identity which is already inside us as individuals, but from a *lack* of wholeness which is ‘filled’ from *outside us*, by the ways we imagine ourselves to be seen by others.” (608). One of the predominant character traits throughout Matute’s short fiction is alienation.

The characters become alienated by a combination of neglect, verbal abuse, and violence from others. When it comes to viewing this through Freud's lens of identity formation, it is safe to say that the alienated do not tend to have a healthy view of themselves based on the feedback they receive from others.

National Identity

- "The idea of a man [sic] without a nation seems to impose a [great] strain on the modern imagination. A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears" (Gellner 6).

The formation of individual identity is a dynamic process that depends on the complicated relationship between the individual's essence and the society in which they exist. A general sense of belonging to a larger group is an integral factor in the establishment of strong individual identity formation. While it is essential to examine how the larger groups of the family and local community impact individual identity formation, they all fall under the influence of the much larger umbrella that is national identity. This section analyzes the concepts of national identity, sociological problems associated with the concepts of national identity, and how Matute's short fiction can be seen as a metaphor for Spain's national identity crisis.

Just as with individual identity, the elements that once defined a community's identity in the past have changed and critics explain that there are new elements that characterize modern communities. The idea of a national culture is considered to be a distinctly modern development as Hall explains, "The allegiance and identification which, in a pre-modern age or in more traditional societies, were given to tribe, people,

religion, and region, came gradually in western societies to be transferred to the *national culture*” (612). The influences of modernity have changed the scope of human interaction in that modern people can easily interact with others in ways and at distances that were once unimaginable. This modern move towards globalization changed the way groups interacted with each other and, subsequently, changed the way they identified themselves in this larger community of groups.

It is arguable that the idea of belonging to a national culture is an idea of imagination and representation. Schwarz describes the nation as a symbolic community and it is this which accounts for its “power to generate a sense of identity and allegiance” (Donald 106). Just as with individual identities, a person’s national identity is not simply given at birth, rather a national identity is developed over time through a sense of belonging to a group or community that shares common characteristics. Hall explains:

...national identities are not things that we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to *representation*. We only know what it is to be English because of the way “Englishness” has come to be represented, as a set of meanings, by English nation culture. It follows that a nation is not only a political entity but something which produces meanings – *a system of cultural representation*. (612)

The imagination necessary in belonging to a national culture presents a series of problems. Jo Labanyi sees national identity in the following manner and refers to Hobsbawn’s ideas and states, “The consolidation of the modern nation-state-which for the first time in history introduces the idea that the nation is based on ‘one race, one

language, one culture' (that of the bourgeoisie) rather than being a heterogeneous mix (Hobsbawn 1990) – took place in Spain in the mid- to late nineteenth century..." (4).

This definition exposes the inherent problems associated with the formation of modern day national identities. Labanyi feels that the idea of national identity is often a gross misrepresentation because the defined cultural identity is not necessarily representative of the entire culture. It is only representative of a select group or portion of the culture, that of the bourgeois, and thus excludes subaltern groups.

This theory can be easily applied to illustrate how the societal turmoil in Spain had an impact on Matute's writings. In recognizing that Catalan, Gallic, Castilian, and Andaluz, and a variety of other dialects are widely spoken in Spain, the variety of language alone ensures that numerous groups will not be fairly represented in what would become the mono-cultural national identity established by the Franco influenced ruling class. In fact, Labanyi refers to this very issue saying, "As should also be clear, all identities – Catalan, Galician, Basque, *madrileño*, gypsy, immigrant, emigrant, female, gay-are inextricably entwined with each other; with 'unmarked' identities-male, white, bourgeois, Spanish –..." (13). Inevitably, numerous social groups would be forced to re-create how they project their national identity.

Labanyi refers to those left out of national culture as the losers or ghosts of society and that it is the winners of society that create the rules and regulations for how the society will define itself (6-7). If an individual does not fit in or cannot relate to the culture of the society, they essentially lose out on the benefits of belonging to the group at large. The loser will have either no sense of national identity at all or a fractured sense

of identity. Individuals who fall into the membership of these subaltern groups naturally tend to experience a sense of alienation and identity confusion.

As Labanyi suggests, it is critical to examine the ruling segment of society and how it dictates their cultural definition in the terms of a national identity. It is often the case that the elite are the dominant segment of society and the subaltern groups are rarely represented in this national definition. This forces the subaltern groups to identify and survive via the customs of a group that is foreign to them. This directly affects identity formation at the individual level in subaltern groups. In attempting to form their own proper identity, modern individuals often have multiple identities and/or fractured identities because they must rely on several different representations of identity, that of the subaltern group of which they are a member and the larger national identity that is imposed on them.

In many respects, this dynamic leaves the individuals of the subaltern groups in a form of limbo. They are present in society, yet they are not “seen” by society on many essential levels. Derrida shares this idea with Labanyi and states, “Ghosts are the traces of those who were not allowed to leave a trace; that is, the victims of history and in particular subaltern groups, whose stories-those of the losers- are excluded from the dominant narratives of the victors; particularly under capitalist modernity with its competitive, market-led equation of value with success” (1-2). This line of thinking ties in with Matute’s writing and her characters for they can be classified as the losers in society.

Matute's protagonists can generally be classified as the losers of society as they come from groups that do not assimilate with the national identity ideals set by the established dominant class. Matute helps create the literature of the losers for she bases the majority of her stories on members of the subaltern group and thus she is assisting in bringing forth alternative identities that exist in Spain. She offers identities for those other than the mainstream bourgeois identity that only a select group can relate to. Matute stated in an interview with Pat Farrington, "Hombre, yo no tengo esa pretensión tan grande, pero me gustaría ser la voz de los que no tienen voz" (78) and "Por ejemplo, cuando íbamos a Mansilla, a la finca de mi madre, yo veía lo que pasaba a aquella gente, y hay que ser idiota, o hay que tener un corazón de piedra para no reaccionar contra eso. Yo reaccioné y lo hice como pude" (2).

For Matute, writing is a form of social protest; it is what she can do on her part to contribute to society. Farrington's interview shows that her literature offers additional points of view for the under-represented. Matute favors the loser, "En toda la literatura. La gran literatura, la verdad, es que no es optimista. Yo siempre digo, y lo reafirmo, que escribir es una forma de protesta. Entonces, claro, si se quiere protestar de algo no se puede ser muy optimista" (79). This again brings home the idea that Matute's short fiction is ready for a re-reading as it records the voices of the subaltern groups, assuring their stories are not lost to history .

Importance of Family in Identity Formation

- Timothy Brennan reminds us that the word *nation* refers “both to the modern nation-state and to something more ancient and nebulous-the nation- a local community, domicile, family, condition of belonging” (Bhabha 45).

It is imperative to this study to establish that the general feeling of belonging is at the root of identity formation. As has been previously discussed in this work, sense of belonging is one of the principal contributing factors to both individual and national identity formation. One of the first occasions presented to individuals to establish a sense of belonging is at birth where the individual may have the opportunity to join a family. This does not occur in all cases; however, the family is one of the oldest and most fundamental forms of representation in society.

The family has the ability to provide both positive and negative impacts on individual development. If an individual is accepted and respected in their family, this will obviously help promote a strong sense of belonging which in turn can lead to positive identity formation. If an individual is rejected, separated, or mistreated by their family, this is likely to promote a weak sense of belonging, potentially leading to negative identity formation. Therefore, individuals that have a strong relationship and a sense of belonging with their family will have a better chance to develop positive identity formation.

Interactions within the family unit will play a major role in the adolescent’s personality or self-concept formation. The type of interaction within the family unit of Matute’s fictional characters presents problems for the characters; there is a consistent lack of interaction between parents and siblings as well as among siblings. In most cases,

the families in Matute's short stories serve as a source of further alienation. The greatest source of strength for them, their families, is often their greatest source of anxiety and disappointment. Elizabeth Ordóñez describes Matute's fictional families in a negative light, "With Faulknerian-Buñuelesque imagery, Matute describes (in words of José Domingo) "una familia en ruinas,...una sociedad en descomposición" (183).

The family structure is the first place where an individual learns how to belong to a larger group. The identity of the family as a group also influences the individual. Elisa Medhus in The Importance of a Strong Family Identity, explains:

Creating a family identity is an effective way to instill our children with a sense of permanence, belonging and stability, paving the road for raising confident, independent, moral children. Since the family is our children's first "pack," it's important to do all we can to satisfy that intense pack animal urge to belong—to feel accepted by others... The stronger that identity is, the more comfortable our children will be in their own skins, because they are a unique part of a strong group—a group that accepts them as they are.

Unfortunately for the majority of Matute's characters, especially children and adolescents, the family does not instill any of the qualities proposed by Medhus that assist in creating a family identity thus leaving the members unsure of themselves and unaccepted by others in society.

In short, the feeling of belonging or lack thereof, is a key aspect to consider in the analysis of Matute's short fiction. It assists in the comprehension of the attitudes and

actions of her characters. Alienation is a repeated theme in her work and plagues the majority of her characters. Matute's works offers insight into Spanish society in the 20th Century and reveals her perceptions of the Spanish nuclear family in a grim light.

The contemporary Spanish family has been challenged and fragmented due to social and political events and it is important to consider specifically how the Spanish Civil War and the Franco years affected the family unit. Many families were destroyed from the consequences of the war itself. It has been said that more than a million people died in 1936-1939 while others were exiled, some simply disappeared and naturally some were murdered (Sobejano 23). This left families fractured and countless children were left to face the world without their parents and siblings. The guidance and security of the home was ruptured and large gaps were created by the absence of role models for children. The surviving relatives may have not been in a proper state of mind or financially prepared to care for other family members. They may have been emotionally traumatized and depressed from having lost their own parents, siblings or friends and were unwilling or unable to provide for anyone. It may have been challenging enough just to care for oneself. This left children in marginal situations and were left to search outside of the home to find themselves and as Medhus writes The Importance of a Strong Family Identity, "Sadly, children whose families have weak identities often seek guidance from less pristine influences to achieve a sense of belonging that they haven't been able to gain within the confines of their homes". Matute writes about these very children in her literature and offers a portrayal of what it was like for the alienated child that came from a broken home during this difficult transitional time period.

Short Story Analysis: The Role of Family and Alienation in Identity Formation

The short stories chosen for analysis demonstrate the importance and role of the nuclear family in identity formation. Matute shows that the family is commonly not a valid source of support for her protagonists leaving children and adolescents victims of alienation. One of the consequences of alienation is the arousal of the desire to search for an outlet to channel one's angst. Matute's characters that are suffering from a lack of love from family and society search for companionship to fill their void of loneliness.

The type of camaraderie the characters seek can be divided into three categories: friendship with other humans, companionship with animals, and company with dolls. To their dismay, they often fail in their attempt to encounter companionship because either the single companion they have dies or is killed or the character simply is not able to find someone who is willing to befriend them. Frequently the characters are treated in a hostile or violent manner propelling them into a deeper state of depression and isolation.

The first short story to be analyzed is "El tiempo" from Matute's collection of short stories entitled *El tiempo* (1957). The tale is a tragic love story between Pedro and Paula, two young outcasts in society that have found each other and decide to flee in hope of spending the rest of their lives in peace far away from the community in which they live and despise. Pedro lives with his ailing mother who rarely shows any affection for her son. He is dissatisfied with his life and sees no purpose in life other than working in order to eat and have shelter. He is saddened by the gruesome loss of his father in a boating accident and abandons school because he feels unwelcome and different than the other children. Once his mother dies he is left to live alone while working for a basic

salary and enters into a state of depression and total social isolation. His luck and attitude changes when a young orphaned girl named Paula comes to town to live with her two aunts that physically and verbally abuse her. Paula is as unhappy as Pedro and dreads the life of insults and near slavery she lives under the roof of her bitter and overly-critical aunts. Paula only has the loving memory of her mother to keep her going until she meets Pedro. The young couple has a long and secretive courtship and finally decides to escape and abandon their wretched lives. Their plan to spend the rest of their lives together runs short for they are tragically run over by a train in the midst of escaping.

At the beginning of the story Pedro is a content child that feels loved and protected by his family. He does not have identity issues or problems with alienation. However, once his family begins to fray, first his father dying in an accident, and second his mother suffering a fatal heart attack, Pedro begins to feel the stress of living alone and starts to question his existence. He becomes lost without his family, especially since he has an idealized idea of his parent's relationship. He is proud to be his father's son and enjoys seeing his parents together. Their life as a family is "perfect" when they are all together and Pedro is happier when his father is home. His father's job requires him to leave home from ten to fifteen days at a time to complete his job at sea. Pedro feels complete when he sees his parents together, "Pedro sintió una alegría intensa, viva, como cuando el sol penetraba en el vino y lo encendía. Era una felicidad completa verlos juntos...Silenciosamente, volvió a su cama, y sin saberlo de un modo concreto, sintiéndose fuerte por haber nacido de ellos" (Matute 3: 11). The safety and stability Pedro's family provides nurtures Pedro and contributes to his personal identity in a

positive manner. Pedro knows who he is and is proud of his family. This is a rare moment for a Matute character.

Conversely, once this family bond is broken, Pedro breaks down as a person and becomes depressed. He does not have a social network he can rely on; he does not have friends at school and his relationship with his mother; his only living relative, becomes estranged. Pedro knows other boys in the town that he could attempt to befriend but feels this would be useless. The narrative voice reveals, “En ninguno de ellos buscó Pedro ningún amigo, como si de antemano supiera que no había de hallarlo” (Matute 3: 23).

Pedro begins to live his life in isolation and drops out of school. He slowly begins to lose himself and feels there is no purpose in life other than basic survival. His alienation contaminates his present as well as his future. He is unable to dream of a future that might include changing professions or starting a family. However, when Paula, a newcomer to town arrives, Pedro’s outlook on life begins to change and he begins to reach out to her to fill his void of loneliness and alienation. He begins to redevelop his self confidence. Paula brings companionship curbing his isolation and rekindles his sense of emotion. He envisions a life with her and most importantly he sees himself as a person with Paula as the narrative voice explains:

Una gran paz le invadía ahora, junto a la niña. Una paz luminosa, totalmente desconocida, y que de pronto se le antojaba como la justificación a sus días tristes y áridos en la oficina...Entonces, como un balazo, le atravesó un deseo: se casaría con ella. Se casarían y la llevaría

muy lejos...Un gran deseo de llevarse a Paula, de llevarla lejos, le aguijoneaba. (Matute 3: 40-44)

Pedro feels he can re-establish the feeling of belonging that was washed away with the loss of his family. The narrative voice explains how Pedro is comforted by Paula's presence, "Junto a Paula, todas las cosas eran nuevas, estaban llenas de sangre, de fe...Comprendió de pronto el porqué de las cosas, el porqué de los hombres" (Matute 3: 59). His interactions with Paula reinforce his happiness and make him realize that he wishes to spend his future with Paula. Now that Pedro has regained his sense of identity and place in life he is ready to run away with Paula in order to start his life with her.

Paula's life is even more miserable than Pedro's because she lives in a hostile home where she is not welcome. Paula's aunts take her in out of obligation after the death of Paula's mother and never let their niece forget the favor they are doing for her. A healthy and loving family would embrace the child and feel empathetic for her after losing her mother. Rather than wanting to help the child adapt and survive in the harsh and cruel world without the guidance of a mother, the aunts prefer to berate and insult the child privately and publically. This hinders proper self development, triggers identity crisis and alienates Paula from all others in society. The idea of family simply does not exist for Paula and therefore she will not be able to reap the benefits that families can offer. Medhus asserts in The Importance of a Strong Family Identity:

...a strong family identity is like a coat of armor protecting our children from the often cold, harsh world beyond the confines of that white picket fence. It insulates them from those outside influences that would otherwise

rob them of their self-esteem, weaken their concept of self, and thwart their attempts to rebound from their mistakes and failures. Most importantly it safeguards them from all that would sabotage the sacred trust they must have in their own inner voice—their ability to inwardly make choices because they are right rather than rely on external beacons to make their choices contingent upon outside approval and acceptance.

As for Paula, her family is actually the primary source of her alienation. Her aunts do not “safeguard” their niece in any way, shape or form. The aunts assure that Paula will never experience a sense of belonging. Ordóñez explains how the ancianas in Matute’s novel *La trampa* (1969) victimize the younger generation, ““Las Ancianas’...through the grotesque ugliness of their age, appearance and actions, they symbolize the repressive, cruel, devouring, obsolete and, above all, alienating socioeconomic system to which the younger men and women are prey” (185). This same type of repression and alienation that Ordóñez identifies in *La trampa* is represented by the aunts in “El tiempo”.

Additionally, she is ignored and teased at school where she is unable to make friends. It is nearly impossible for Paula to feel any sense of belonging to a family or community as she is shunned and ridiculed by all members of society. Paula’s level of frustration of living with such vicious and scathing people propels her to seek the companionship of Pedro. Paula pleads with Pedro and reveals her desire to escape saying, “-No puedo, no puedo vivir aquí...¡llévame contigo, lejos de aquí, donde no pueda encontrarnos nadie...¡Ahora ya no me puedo separar de ti!” (Matute 3: 60-61). Just as Pedro, she feels the need to escape the society in which she lives because it does not

foster any form of human kindness. Flores-Jenkins comments on the need of Matute's protagonists to escape, "Asimismo sucede con el impulso de evasión que experimentan sus entes de ficción. Es más, se diría que toda su obra tiene movimiento de fuga. Los niños, como los personajes adultos sienten la necesidad de escapar de su medio ambiente, de cosas que no creen, de los adultos, de su soledad" (186). The only sense of identity Pedro and Paula have is with each other. As individuals they are suffering a crisis of identity; they have no place in society and feel lost. Despite this young couple's wishes, their love is doomed. Jones explains that love and other type of friendships are rarely successful in Matute's fiction, "...youths try to break through the barrier of solitude and communicate with others: tentative experiments with love, friendship, solidarity with man, end in failure. Love, once discovered, is soon destroyed, usually through death...(The Literary World, 60).

When analyzing both Pedro and Paula it is clear that the interactions they have within the family unit affect their identity. Pedro lives with his mother who fails to show or express any type of love or appreciation for her son once her husband dies. She is cold and reserved, creating a sense of distance between the two; she is not a nurturing type of mother and therefore will not have a positive impact on his identity formation, which adds to his state of alienation. As for Paula the interaction she has with her aunts is detrimental to her development as a person. She is privately and publically humiliated and criticized by her aunts, which leads her to feel forced to escape. She is not able to have an identity of her own; in their eyes, she is identified only as an undeserving bastard child of their sister.

The story tragically ends when Pedro and Paula try to escape and are run over by a train. As Matute's fiction shows, time and time again, the efforts of her characters to combat their alienation end in failure. Jones comments on how Matute's characters fail in their attempt to escape and declares, "The melodramatic ending of several of these stories reflects a view of life in which escape from the inevitable anguish of existence is impossible. Thus the protagonists of 'El tiempo' are cut down by the very thing from which they are fleeing..." (The Literary World, 19).

In comparison to the previous story, "El polizón del 'Ulises'" (1965), offers an unusually positive outlook about a family for Matute. The central character is an orphaned boy named Jujú that grows up under the diligent care of three sisters named Etelvina, Leocadia, and Manuelita. The tale, relayed in first person by an omniscient narrator, explains how one evening in the month of May the sisters open their door to discover a basket with a little boy about one month old inside. After some investigating and inquiry, no one claims little Jujú and the women take him under their wings, legally adopt him and raise him as if he were their own. Due to the distant location of their house from a nearby city or town Jujú does not attend school. He is home schooled and as a result does not have any friends. This deeply affects the child who very much longs for a real friendship. To combat his feelings of loneliness he befriends various animals that live on the property. He spends a large portion of his time in a loft in the barn which he considers to be his playhouse and where he uses his imagination to play and entertain himself as well as read.

One day Jujú discovers an injured bandit fleeing from the police in the barn, and after some debate he decides to befriend the criminal and help him stay hidden in his play area in the barn for several months. Jujú is finally content with his new made friendship, and he is willing to do whatever it takes to keep his friend's cover including lying to his aunts and the authorities. When the bandit is healthy enough to move on, Jujú decides he is going to accompany his only real friend who is in agreement, however, Jujú does not realize that the bandit is just using him to facilitate his escape and in the process of fleeing the bandit crosses the river without Jujú leaving him behind. Jujú in a panic jumps into the river to make the crossing to faithfully follow his friend and nearly drowns in the process. It appears that this is the end of little Jujú's life, however, the bandit develops a conscience, saves the boy and returns him to his aunts.

“El polizón del ‘Ulises’” is one of the few Matute stories that portrays a loving and unified family. Not only do all of the members share a bond of belonging and genuinely care for one another, they each have an interest in satisfying the needs of each other and make a notable effort to do so. The women take the proper steps to raise the child with love and enthusiasm. They indisputably love Jujú and they verbally express this love directly to Jujú which contributes to his self confidence and feeling of belonging. The narrative voice reveals:

Por la noche, antes de acostarse, la señorita Etel besó al niño y dijo: -Me gusta porque es inteligente.

La señorita Leocadia lo besó y dijo:

-Me gusta porque es guapo.

La señorita Manuelita lo besó y dijo:

-Me gusta porque es fuerte. (Matute 5: 636)

The narrative voice explains that Jujú is also fond of his aunts and relays, “Con esto quedaba bien claro que las tres señoritas adoraban a Jujú. Y Jujú, naturalmente, quería mucho a las tres señoritas” (Matute 5: 645). This type of nurturing lays the foundation for strong self development as an individual while reenforcing the idea of family.

Turner speaks of the importance of each individual’s role in the family and how this relates to self-identity. She states:

Each member of a family has a designated or self-appointed role that requires expectations of the other members or expectations of one’s self.

In addition, relationships are naturally developed and instinctively assimilated. These factors greatly affect the development of the individual’s personality, and more specifically, self-identity. (50)

One of the contributing elements to the strong family identity that Jujú and his aunts possess is their interactive roles in the family and the success in which they satisfy each other’s expectations. The aunts eagerly accept their roles as parents and educators. They feel education is of primary importance and take on the job of providing the best education they can for Jujú inside the confines of their home. The aunts also dedicate time to play with him and read stories. The sisters’ actions, which speak as loud as their words, contribute to Jujú’s well being and stability. In turn, Jujú fulfills the aunts emotionally by providing them with a sense of happiness and love.

One of the only elements that challenges the boy and his sense of identity is his interaction with others in society outside of the home. Identity of self is formed in its relation to the society in which people live. He lives a sheltered and isolated life which makes him feel lonely. Jujú does not have the opportunity to make friends of his own age and his attempts to befriend the staff are pointless. Although he loves his aunts dearly and enjoys their company, they alone are not enough; he feels the need to develop a social network of his own. To escape this emotional state he relies on imaginary play and the creation of his own friends. Jones refers to solitude in Matute's work as "overwhelming" and deduces, "The most outstanding single characteristic of adolescence is its overwhelming solitude" (The Literary World, 59-60). Flores-Jenkins comments on the tendency of Matute's characters to live in their own imaginary world, "En efecto a través de su obra los personajes infantiles discurren por el paisaje siempre encerrados dentro de un círculo mágico creado por ellos" (185).

When the injured thief arrives at the house, Jujú seizes the opportunity of making his first friend. His desire to keep this friendship is so strong that he is willing to do things that surpass the line of acceptable and responsible behavior, which include lying to his family and the police and stealing. Jujú knows that his actions are wrong but decides to do them despite the consequences. The boy's dedication to his friend is impressive; he is even willing to injure himself to obtain medical knowledge on how to heal the infected wound of the thief. The narrative voice explains, "...cuando fui a por leña al cobertizo, vi el hacha. Y se me ocurrió una cosa. Cerré los ojos, la cogí, volví a cerrar los ojos, y... ¡zas! Me di un tajo en la pierna" (Matute 5: 704).

At times during his relationship with the thief, Jujú gets fearsome and wonders what life would be like without his aunts when the two of them escape together, however, he immediately stops thinking about his home life because he feels an obligation to his friend. The narrator reveals, “No, no podía defraudarle. Aquel hombre confiaba en él, y le trataba como a otro hombre. Como un verdadero camarada...exactamente como a Jujú le gustaba ser tratado: como un hombre a otro hombre. Como un camarada a otro camarada. Como dos amigos” (Matute 5: 714). The idea of a child that is willing to self-mutilate himself in order to maintain a friendship speaks of how strong the desire of the child is to combat his solitude. However strong Jujú’s desires are, his friendship is headed for failure. Jones comments on friendships in Matute’s short stories, “...friendships are rare, disappointing or one-sided, for one character often takes advantage of the other; an empathy with all men (an incipient social idealism characteristic of this stage) is soon frustrated as the adolescent discovers that his proffered sympathy or comradeship is completely misconceived or not returned” (The Literary World, 60). Boring also comments on the negative outcome of friendship in Matute’s fiction and states, “Friendships inevitably lead to betrayal and disillusionment and hence to an initiation into an unacceptable adult world” (472).

The story ends showing the strength of this family’s ability to function as a group. When Jujú’s relationship with the thief folds, the aunts are right there to pick him up and support him. He does not get punished or lectured about having left home with a criminal or leaving without saying goodbye to his family. The aunts feel his experience and the illness he suffered upon his return home were punishment enough. These actions

demonstrate the true sense of family and feelings of belonging and understanding among these characters. It is these types of actions and attitudes that lay the foundation for a strong family and individual identity. It can be inferred, however, that the family alone is inadequate for identity formation. There is still a need to be accepted as a greater part of society, and Matute shows that society is unable to satisfy this boys needs.

It is not surprising to note the connection between Jujú's success in life and the fact that he comes from a well to do family that loves and supports him. These elements assist in creating a solid foundation for the family and at the same time create an environment for an individual to create a strong sense of identity. He has a stable home, shelter, food, education, and positive interaction with his family. All of these elements are important in the development of a secure and healthy atmosphere that promotes a stable sense of identity.

The next story to be analyzed, "Paulina" (1960), opens with the protagonist Paulina being escorted by her caretaker Susana to live with her grandparents in the mountains. She is a parentless child without siblings and has just recovered from a yearlong illness. Paulina is relieved to be moving in with her grandparents because she is tired of Susana's negative attitude and boring personality. She is a young girl that has low self-esteem due to the way she is treated and insulted by her teachers and Susana her primary caregiver. She oddly does not mind that children insult her, but she dislikes being criticized by adults. Paulina luckily has a strong and loving relationship with her grandparents and the workers at her grandparents' house; it helps make up for the way she is treated by others in society. Shortly after her arrival, a blind ten-year- old

neighborhood boy, Nin, comes to spend the cold winter months at the grandparents' house while his parents work and prepare for the birth of their second child. Paulina and Nin, two alienated children, become instant friends and develop a true friendship. Paulina who arrived as a lost and dejected individual now feels she has a purpose in life, assisting her blind friend to learn how to read brail and play interactive games. Even though both Nin and Paulina are returning to the city in the fall to continue their education, she is content knowing that she has a true friend.

The beginning of the story is marked by Paulina's unhappiness and low sense of self-esteem. She suffers from feelings of alienation created by the death of her parents and her illness that prohibited her from leaving the house. In addition she is left to be cared for by her aunt who does nothing other than criticize her. The idea of belonging to a family at this point in the story does not exist for Paulina, she cannot identify with her aunt and says, "Pero Susana era para mí como una pared. No entendía nada de lo que yo le decía, no comprendía nada de lo que a mí me gustaba, ni se hacía cargo de cuando yo no podía hacer lo que ella quería. Susana no tenía ni oídos ni ojos, nada más que para oír y ver lo malo" (Matute 5: 391).

In addition, Paulina does not feel welcome in her society, she has no friends and school is nothing other than a place where she is teased and berated. Due to the illness she suffered she had to shave her head and has a boy-like appearance which gives her peers another reason to ridicule her. She is insulted by both her teachers and fellow students resulting in Paulina's retreat into her own world. Paulina confesses:

Siempre me habían dicho que era fea. También lo había oído decir a las niñas del colegio, y hasta una vez a una de las profesoras...Que lo dijeran las niñas no me hacía daño. Pero que lo dijera una persona mayor, sí me dolía. Tuve ganas de llorar, y como si me apretara mucho la garganta...Pero era mejor que no me viera mucha gente, y por eso me gustaba esconderme, para jugar, debajo de la escalera, o en el rincón más oscuro. (Matute 5: 400-1)

Paulina does not live in a nurturing environment inside or outside of her home and does not feel as if she belongs. In actuality she admits she prefers to remain in isolation away from those that harm her. Paulina does not have any positive interactions with others and this affects her level of confidence and opinion of herself.

Paulina's metamorphosis into a happy and confident person begins once she is rid of Susana and begins to live with her grandparents. In a short time, she develops a sense of belonging to a family. This is the stepping stone to Paulina's positive identity formation. Her grandparents make her feel welcome and verbally express their love for Paulina. They accept their granddaughter for who she is and praise her. The grandmother tells Paulina how she feels and says, "Es verdad lo que dice el abuelo...Yo también estoy muy contenta de ti" (Matute 5: 505). The praise Paulina feels is unusual and affects her in a positive way. Paulina expresses, "Era la primera vez que los abuelos me hablaban así, y sentí una emoción muy grande. Escondí la cara en el brazo de la abuela y el corazón me hacía: tap, tap, tap" (Matute 5: 505). This is an emotional moment that Paulina will remember. She is unaccustomed to being complimented and Paulina

will be able to look back on the past and be certain that her grandparents genuinely cared for her.

Now that Paulina lives in a home that is filled with love and affection she gains confidence in herself and as a result is able to communicate with others in her community. She develops a friendship that is fulfilling to her and makes her feel as if she has a purpose in life. Paulina excitedly explains:

Luego, poco a poco, fui acomodando los juegos a él y hasta resultaban mucho mejor, porque sentí una cosa que no había sentido hasta entonces: que yo era útil, que yo podía ayudar a alguien y servir par algo. Todo lo contrario de lo que siempre me estaba diciendo Susana, de que yo era un estorbo y un dolor de cabeza para todo el mundo, cosa que me ponía triste.

(Matute 5: 422)

Paulina's friendship is extremely rewarding and assists in creating her sense of identity. Not only does she serve a purpose in the life of her friend Nin, he contributes to her formation as a person. They mutually balance each other reinforcing the importance of a sense of belonging. Jones explains how friendship in Matute's fiction occurs, "The character's quest for friendship symbolizes his effort to break the limitations of his own personality. Potential friendship may arise from common bonds of loneliness or unhappiness..." (The Literary World, 64). Paulina describes the importance of Nin in her life and development as an individual:

¡Cuánto quería a Nin, Dios mío, cuanto le quería. ¡Nunca hasta aquel momento me di cuenta de lo que yo le necesitaba! Bien cierto es que yo le

había enseñado a leer. Pero bien poca cosa era, comparándolo con lo que Nin me había enseñado a mí: que ser fea y desmedradilla no era una gran desgracia...Que la vida era muchas veces injusta y cruel, y que muchos, siendo buenos, no se daban cuenta del bien que no hacían, y podían hacer.
(Matute 5: 509)

“Paulina” is one of the rare occasions where the protagonist is able to overcome her short comings. This is achieved by the encouragement and support from her grandparents and the relationship she establishes with Nin. Once her prior feelings of rejection and verbal abuse cease, Paulina is able to envision a brighter future. This story demonstrates the importance of a solid family foundation and acceptance by others in the community in identity formation. The protagonist’s transformation from an alienated and dejected child into an aspiring young adolescent proves that the environment or community she belongs to contributes to her outcome as an individual.

The final story to be analyzed in this section, “Los niños buenos” (*El tiempo* 1957), tells of the fate of a nameless seven-year-old girl that becomes estranged from her nuclear family. After an altercation with another girl at school, the protagonist is punished by her parents for being wrongly accused of insulting the principal and is sent to the mountains to live with her grandfather to serve out her punishment. The child does not understand why such a well behaved girl like herself is being reprimanded and separated from her parents and siblings. The girl has never met her grandfather and is afraid to meet him especially since she has only heard of the trouble he causes. It does not take long to lose the fear of her grandfather and the girl quickly develops a

mischievous personality that consists of game playing, stealing and lying. To her surprise she learns that her grandfather is not a loved member of the community. He is shunned by society and lives in total isolation. After committing a number of negative and deceitful acts the girl's parents come to pick her up and take her back to the city. When she returns home she is now oddly considered a "good girl" by her family and social contacts. However, she knows the truth about herself and feels that she has become a bad person. She lost her persona and innocence in the mountains and regrets the way she treated her grandfather and the way she behaved. She realizes what she could have been and meant to her grandfather and is sickened by her actions and choices. After returning to the city she never sees her grandfather again.

In most instances the protagonists in Matute's short fiction come from broken homes which is one of the leading causes of their alienation and problems with identity; however, in "Los niños buenos" the girl comes from a united family but is forced to leave her home making her become part of a ruptured nuclear family. This story questions the role of the family and its influence in the formation of individuals. While the type of family, united or fractured, is a vital component in the development of self-identity, the class of interaction within the family carries equal weight. It would seem that the structure of the family unit is as important as the quality of the interaction within it. In this case the girl does not have positive interaction with her family when she is with or without them. The girl never has a chance to have a strong sense of self, since from a very early age she is criticized and in turn ends up believing the opinions of others rather

than forming a healthy opinion of herself. Eventually she becomes the girl that everyone says she is.

At home she is considered to be a “bad girl” and is constantly being told so. The young protagonist explains, “No obstante, a los siete años yo senté plaza de mala. Todo el mundo estuvo conforme en ello, y yo misma acabé aceptándolo por algo tan natural e inevitable como la caída de los dientes o la lección de verbos irregulares” (Matute 3:103). It is not important whether the others in society in fact viewed her that way or whether it was a figment of her imagination. The truth is she feels she is viewed as a bad girl by others in society and this negative image becomes her identity--a bad girl that is not accepted by others in society.

As is the only daughter in the family and the youngest, she feels left out and is regularly excluded from game play and general interaction with her brothers. She desperately wants to be accepted by her brothers and says, “Pero ellos me excluían siempre de sus diversiones, y mi humillación no tenía límites cuando se reunían los tres a contar cuentos prohibidos y me obligaban a abandonar la habitación, tras la burlona promesa de que ‘me los contarían todos el día de mi puesta de larga’” (Matute 3: 103). Her siblings are one of the causes of her unhappiness and do not fulfill her expectations. They are a disappointment and contribute to her low self-esteem.

Her sense of identity outside of the home is also negative and further complicates her identity problems. She divulges how she is insulted by her classmates in the city, “Pero un día se quedó un buen rato mirándome fijo con sus ojillos de porcelana, y dijo inesperadamente que yo me parecía ‘al hijo del gitano’” (Matute 3: 104). In her own

defense, she writes her initials on the girl's face and is promptly sent to the school office where she ends up in more trouble for inadvertently insulting her. After the squabble with her classmate she admits her feelings by saying, "Yo sería siempre sosa y fea, desprovista de todo adorno interesante" (Matute 3: 105). She feels she is seen as a loser internally as well as externally. Boring quotes George G. Thompson in regard to the impact the family and school have on personal development, "History has repeatedly demonstrated that a society is not stronger than the personal-value system it embraces. When the home and the school fail to transmit or transmit ambiguously to young children the personal values of an established society, decadence inevitably follows" (470).

By being separated from her established family unit she becomes an even more unstable person and begins to behave like a "bad girl". Even though her grandfather is considered family, he is essentially a stranger to her and she has trouble identifying with him. He serves as a poor role model for he is as alienated as she is. He is strongly disliked in the community and ridiculed by his neighbors as the child notes: "--se permitían reírse de él, ridiculizar su andar y sus gestos" (Matute 3: 108). Her low opinion of him is obvious when she says, "El Tiempo había cavado un gran silencio entre nosotros dos, y no teníamos nada que decirnos... Aquello afirmó mi sospecha de que mi abuelo era un ser grotesco, ridículo, de quien yo debía alejarme, fuese como fuese" (Matute 3: 110-11). It is unfortunate that the grandfather is not able to make a difference in the girl's personal development, especially during these vital formative years.

Her low self-esteem is validated during her stay at the grandfather's house. The seven-year-old is received poorly by the other students at the school in the mountains as

well. She admits, “Pero por aquellos criaturas fui recibida con franca hostilidad. Mi vestido sobre todo fue objeto de las burlas generales, me lo mancharon de barro, me escupieron me dieron tirones de cabello” (Matute 3: 114). The protagonist is greeted with cruelty at the school and is made an immediate outsider by her fellow classmates. This new setting is yet another environment that will not allow the girl to establish a sense of belonging. She is left to make ends meet by herself without a support network and quickly finds herself in a state of confusion and desperation. The child develops into a rebellious person that lies and steals as part of a larger strategy to be sent back to her parents in the city. The protagonist realizes her actions wrong and does nothing to correct them. She explains, “Y yo bajaba la cabeza y no le desmentía. Porque el mal ya no era un mito para mí...No obstante, en mi alma había remordimientos y conciencia del mal. Me sabía culpable, y por las noches me cubría la cabeza con el embozo de la sábana, porque empecé a tener miedo del infierno” (Matute 3: 127). Her guilt begins to mount which makes her feel worse about herself. She no longer knows who she is and undergoes an identity crisis.

“Los niños buenos” shows the importance of the feeling of belonging and having a strong family foundation in the role of identity formation. Without the support network of her parents, siblings and relatives she feels the stress of having to make it on her own in society, a society that she cannot relate to. The authority figures in her life, which can be considered role models, do not support her in a functional manner. The principal and her parents do not make an attempt to understand the girl when she misbehaves, and they grossly overreact by banishing the child to the mountains instead of finding a positive

way to punish her so that she could also learn from the situation. Flores-Jenkins explains that adults in Matute's fiction are seen as insensitive, "Ante esta misteriosa ciencia infantil, los adultos, que perdieron la capacidad de comprenderla, se reconocen insensibles y miopes..." (185 Flores-Jenkins). Her family is not there to nurture the child and show her how to handle conflictive situations; they do not prepare her to succeed in society. The child is left to acquire coping skills on her own, which clearly she is incapable of doing and she fails miserably. She turns to lying and deceit as a coping mechanism which is, ironically, the very reason she ended up in this predicament. The society that encompasses her does not embrace her. She has no hope for success in the future and as Shelby explains:

...Ana María Matute has created a novelistic world in which her characters are estranged from one another in all aspects of their interpersonal relationships. They are aware of the pervasive nature of the alienation which affects all facets of their lives, but they are unable to communicate effectively with other human beings or to overcome their loneliness. The result of this failure is a group of fictional people whose lives are totally devoid of any hope for future success. (4)

Once she realizes the negative outcome of her actions in the mountains she falls into a deeper state of alienation and has an extremely poor image of herself. Jones explains that the child's alteration began with her lying and states, "The little girl of 'Los niños buenos' loses her childhood when she begins her career of lies" (The Literary World,

58). She has lost her innocence and has made the pre-mature transition into adolescence during her stay at her grandfather's house.

Relationships Between Animals and Humans

A subset of Matute's alienated characters establish a sense of understanding with animals. Jones explains the manner in which animals can be portrayed in Matute's literature, "Human attributes are also applied to animals: not only do these creatures react as sensitive human beings, but several are subject to the same cruelty and violence that dominate their masters (The Literary World, 45-46). The isolated children and adolescents recognize the vulnerability of animals and feel they have something in common with them.

The first short story to be examined in this section is "Fausto" (*El tiempo* 1957). The story is of an orphaned nameless girl about the age of nine. She is cared for by her sickly and bitter grandfather who is on the brink of death. The two live in extremely poor circumstances and suffer from hunger which negatively affects them psychologically. They have an odd relationship but coexist more or less while working together; they run an organ grinder in hope of raising money in order to buy food and pay the rent. Other than her grandfather the child has no living family members or friends to speak of until one day she finds a scrawny and ill cat that she befriends. She immediately names the cat Fausto and begins to care for it perhaps the way she deserves to be treated herself. Fausto brings a sense of joy, responsibility and identity to the girl; however, her new found happiness and role are criticized by her grandfather and others. The grandfather repeatedly explains to her that the cat is useless and serves no purpose in life and he is

constantly encourages her to get rid of the cat. To her chagrin and under pressure from her grandfather, she unsuccessfully attempts to find a new home for Fausto. Upon leaving a church that has denied Fausto's acceptance as a mouse catcher, the nine-year-old girl has run out of options and decides to kill her cat. She then returns to the single barren room she shares with her grandfather, informs him that she has killed her friend Fausto and tells him that she thinks his days are numbered as well. She then proceeds to go to sleep. The story ends with the grandfather frightened about his granddaughter's actions and sobbing about the loss of poor old Fausto.

This story depicts the difficulties that children as well as adults are faced with in times of economic and emotional stress. The protagonist suffers psychologically from the death of both of her parents and her concurrent social and economic status. The child is aware that she lives in a world where no one understands her as the narrative voice reveals, "Nadie lo comprendería nunca...(Matute 3: 152). She accepts this fact and does not expect anyone to comprehend her, her actions, or her alienation. Jones explains the mutual lack of understanding between adults and children in Matute's literature, "Most people are incapable of understanding the child's chimerical world... These young protagonists sense their separateness and do not expect others to understand them; inversely, they cannot grasp the sentiments and motivations of others..." (The Literary World, 41). The support system that friends and family can provide is nonexistent in this child's world and affects her ability to develop a sense of belonging. She is forced to seek companionship elsewhere to overcome or suppress her alienation and finds solace in Fausto. The narrative voice describes the connection between the two, "... nadie

comprendía su cariño hacia Fausto, tan feo y poca cosa. Desde aquel día el gato no se separó de la niña. Ella lo llevaba siempre, enfermizo y tristón, bajo su brazo. Lo cuidaba mucho, y además le buscaba de comer” (Matute 3: 152). This nurturing friendship is satisfying to the girl and provides her with a sense of acceptance and belonging.

Matute’s characters are aware of their alienation as Shelby observes:

Alienation, as it appears in the works of Matute, is almost always presented as a negative concept. Her characters, though they never employ the word, are extremely aware of their separation from others, and they constantly strive to overcome their alienation or to suppress their consciousness of it. (10)

The girl’s new found happiness is short lived because everyone around her criticizes her relationship with the cat. The community thinks the cat is a waste of time because it serves no useful purpose. It simply is not practical. The adults cannot understand that the most valuable thing the cat is providing is a sense of friendship and that it serves as an outlet to foster identity forming feelings such as companionship, love and a sense of belonging. The child needs to love something and needs to feel loved in return. The cat is the only thing in her world that offers her these feelings. Jones explains equality exists between the girl and the animal and says, “Matute provides a clear equation of between cats and humans in ‘Fausto’ (The Literary World, 46). Flores-Jenkins additionally comments on the presence of cats in Matute’s work, “Sigue en importancia simbólica el gato. Para Matute este animal tiene una característica especial de silencioso reflejo del hombre” (189).

The cat helps establish a sense of importance and identity to the girl. Her deceased parents are not there to care for her and the grandfather is too old and sick to do the same. The importance of Fausto in the child's life is underestimated by the grandfather and neighbors. The grandfather detests the cat and screams, "¡Eso es lo más inútil y zángano que he visto! (Matute 3:152). The grandfather is not the only one who feels this way, the neighbors, a priest, and various workers voice the same opinion and discourage the relationship.

The girl fails when she first tries to complete her grandfather's wishes to lose the cat and becomes emotionally upset when she abandons Fausto. She is worried about his chances of survival, "Seguramente no sabría qué hacer, abandonado, solo, sin fuerzas para vivir. Volvió a tener ganas de llorar" (Matue 3: 158). She is genuinely interested in providing for the cat and wants to prepare him for life on his own. She understands all too well that one cannot rely on society for assistance. At age nine the girl knows that one needs to know how to take care of oneself because there is not going to be someone there to care for you. The narrative voice describes the society that the girl lives in, "Todos los de la calle tenían lástima de ellos. Pero cada uno tenía sus preocupaciones, y hasta sus enfermos" (Matute 3: 150). Even though the neighbors realize the poor state in which the girl and grandfather live and their need of assistance, they are more concerned about themselves to lend them a helping hand. Shelby also notes this trend in Matute's literature and states, "All of them realize that they face an infernal future in which each one must fend for himself, and that no one will be able to rely upon his past or his fellow

human beings for comfort or for help” (170). This speaks poorly of the notion of belonging to a community or a nation.

Now that she is the caretaker and role model she attempts to teach her cat to survive on its own the way she learned how to survive, that is alone without assistance from the family or community. She says in the story, “Entra ahí. Yo no puedo ir siempre ayudántote. Tú tienes que aprender a ir solo” (Matute 3: 159). The girl’s actions continue the cycle of having to survive on your own. The idea of community is not part of the child’s world and therefore it is an idea that is unavailable for her to pass on even to an animal. This demonstrates the challenges for Spain in this time period to reestablish a sense of belonging and willingness to participate in a community. Jones comments on this “all for one attitude” in Matute’s work and states, “Her people are frustrated, in part, because of a lack of social goals and institutions which might help to guide their actions” (The Literary World, 10).

The story comes to a screeching halt when the girl realizes that she cannot find a place for Fausto to live. She is out of options; even the church, a place of total acceptance, rejects Fausto. Upon exiting the church she impulsively kills Fausto and kills off any remaining tenderness and feeling as a human being in herself. She is a child with no identity of any kind. She does not have a family identity, she does not belong to the community and she has killed her only friend. In an interview with Pat Farrington Matute explains that the life of children is very difficult and says, “La vida para muchos muchachos, muchos adolescentes de este país, para casi todos, es muy dura. Los adolescentes sufren mucho. La adolescencia es quizá la etapa más crucial, más dura, más

importante, más definitiva de nuestra vida”... (3). The outlook for the child’s future appears to be destined for failure seeing that one of the most definitive stages of personal development occurs in childhood and adolescence. The child’s misery is a result of her circumstances and the inability of her society to comprehend her as Janet Pérez explains, “Members of the older generation are characteristically defeated, hurt, disillusioned, and sterile, while the younger generation, which embodies humanity’s brightest and best promise, is ultimately frustrated by the crushing weight of tradition, inertia, and circumstance” (104).

Another short story written by Matute that demonstrates how alienated characters find comfort in animals is “El amigo” from the short story collection *El tiempo* (1957). The protagonist’s mother is deceased and the boy is raised primarily by his aunt whom he strongly dislikes. The child suffers emotionally not only from the loss of his mother but by the fact that he has no friends. In addition, both his aunt and father criticize him by making derogatory remarks regarding his physical appearance. They forbid him to go to school which eliminates the possibility of establishing friendships outside of the home. His luck changes one day when his father brings him a lamb as a gift that the boy names Tabú. He enjoys the company of this new friend so much that he comments on how nice it is to have a true friend that does not insult him. This leads him to transform into a happier child with a strong outlook on life now that he has someone to share things with. Unfortunately this friendship ends prematurely because Tabú is slaughtered and eaten for Easter dinner. When the boy realizes his friend’s fate he leaves the dinner table and runs

to the outside patio of the kitchen and stares at Tabu's corpse on the chopping table in a state of shock.

The child in this story lives in his own exclusive world for he has no contact with others outside of his family and the interaction he has with his aunt and father is detrimental to the child's identity as a person. He is constantly insulted by his family and feels saddened by them. The aunt repeatedly comments on his weight and calls him names, for example, she refers to him as, "Gordo, regordo, barril de cerveza...Barrigón, globo reventón" (Matute 3: 154). Clearly, referring to the child in this manner can only bring a negative concept of self and weaken any ties of feeling of belonging to this family unit. The narrative voice reveals his feelings towards his aunt, "La tía Eulalia era para él como la madre para los otros chicos...La tía Eulalia era horrible" (Matute 3: 152-3). The boy cannot and does not wish to identify with his aunt thus further deepening his feelings of alienation. Jones explains how the physical appearance of Matute's fictional children contribute to their isolation, "The unique physical and mental characteristics of the special child segregate him from others in a loneliness heightened by the indifference or hostility of both adults and peers" (The Literary World, 40).

The child's life outside of the home is even more depressing as he has no friends and feels it is impossible to make friends. The child admits he wishes he could listen to his own heart and perhaps turn his organ into a friend as the narrative voice explains, "A veces le gustaría poder escucharse el corazón, coger la cabeza entre las manos y acercarla para oír: tap, tap, tap. A lo mejor, parecería su amigo mismo. Su amigo. No tenía amigos. Era imposible tener amigos" (Matute 3: 153). This imaginative game play is an

attempt to suppress his loneliness and serves as an outlet to release his sadness. His father is well aware of the current negative emotional state of his son and decides to assist by providing him with a friend. He cheerfully explains to his son:

-Esta tarde tendrás una sorpresa.

-¿Qué sorpresa, papá?

Al fin se dijo:

-Te van a traer un amigo.

Se quedó mudo. Un amigo. Un amigo. ¡Qué raro! Un amigo que no insulte porque uno está gordo y lleva vestidos limpios y zapatos. Un amigo. Para esas cosas están los amigos...

-Un amigo... ¿para jugar con él?

-Natural. Para pasear con él, por las montañas. (Matute 3: 159)

Now, with a friend in his life, things are looking up for the boy. He loves his little white lamb and spends all of his time with him. The narrative voice describes his feelings of elation, “Así fue. De pronto, los días se volvieron distintos...El cordero era su amigo...no había en el mundo ningún amigo como *Tabú*... Todo el mundo quería mucho a *Tabú*. La vida había cambiado con él (Matute 3: 158-59). This generous offering of the boy’s father changes his life in a very positive manner.

Medhus explains that strong personal identity is linked to strong family identity and comments that one of the ways to foster strong family identity is through family traditions such as an annual celebration, inside jokes that belong only to the family, etc. She writes Importance of a Strong Family Identity , “Family traditions and rituals,

whether they accompany holidays or not, are something to which our children look forward”. The protagonist in the story has finally made a friend and is content. He is starting to identify himself with the lamb and develops a sense of purpose in life. The gesture of the father producing a friend for his son reinforces the family bond that is lacking in the family. Now, with Easter approaching the family has an opportunity to strengthen family identity by celebrating an annual tradition. To the boy’s dismay this annual celebration winds up severing any sense of bonding or unity within the family seeing that his father and aunt serve and eat Tabú for supper. The narrative voice describes the scene, “Los dientes de papá, afilados, crueles, se clavaron en un trozo de carne. Papá se manchaba la barbilla de grasa cuando comía” (Matute 3: 160). Nervously the boy runs to the kitchen to confirm his suspicion that his one and only friend is being served for Easter dinner. Again the narrative voice explains, “Fue a la cocina. Empujó la puerta...En el antepecho de la ventana, la cabeza desollada, los ojos redondos, muertos, tristes, de Tabú le miraban mansamente” (Matute 3: 160-61).

A loving parent that truly cares for the overall general well being and happiness of their child would not commit such an act. It is not the fact that the family eats the lamb for dinner on Easter, a common practice among people especially in rural areas; the issue is that the lamb is presented and given to the child as a friend. The father directly explains that the lamb is to be played with, cared for and to fulfill the role of a friend. The giving and taking of the lamb in such an inhumane manner can only cause harm to the child leaving him with a deeper sense of isolation and sadness. This is not an act that will foster a strong family relationship. Another form of support would better benefit the

child and assist with proper identity formation to lessen the blow of the transition from childhood to adolescence.

In regard to Medhus' ideas pertaining to family traditions one must ask if this episode, that of his friend being served for dinner at an annual celebration, has a profound affect on his family identity. If his family knows that the animal brings such joy to the boy it is cruel to slaughter this particular lamb for Easter and not another. The purpose of the lamb is to serve as a friend as the father clearly explains to his son; it is odd to introduce the lamb as a pet rather than livestock. The child's hopes were raised with the arrival of his friend and those hopes were obliterated when he saw and heard his father eating his lamb. This Easter celebration will be forever marked in his mind and is detrimental to his persona and his relationship with his family.

"El corderito pascual" from the short story collection *Los niños tontos* (1956) follows a similar story line to "El amigo". The tale is about how an overweight boy who is teased and insulted by all the other kids in his village makes and loses his only friend. He is given a lamb as a present to play with to combat his social isolation and instantly develops a connection with the animal. He spends his time playing with the lamb, walking through the fields with his friend and enjoying the fact that his lamb does not call him names or treat him cruelly. Celebrating Easter dinner with his family, he suddenly becomes panicked by the vision of his dad eating a leg of lamb. He leaves the table and rushes to the kitchen to find his one and only friend decapitated lying on the table.

Jones explains how the physique can be a feature that separates and marginalizes Matute's fictional children, "The physical appearance of the young characters also

differentiates them from other children. One is extremely fat; some are thin or quite ugly...The emphasis placed on this feature also groups these children in a special class” (The Literary World, 39). It is unfortunate that the child’s physical appearance of being an overweight boy contributes to his social isolation and that he is not judged by society for his personality. When the lamb arrives, it changes the boy’s emotional state in a very positive manner. He can do things with his friend that fills the social void he had with his family and community at large. The narrative voice describes the bond between the boy and his lamb, “El niño gordo del ropavejero besaba las orejillas del cordero pascual, del amigo que no le llamaba cerdo, cebón, barril de cerveza” (Matute 3: 243). This type of interaction is satisfying to the child and strengthens his persona. Unfortunately the boy’s happiness is terminated when his friend is killed and served for dinner. The impact of losing something so cherished alters the boy in a negative way and sends him into an even deeper state of alienation.

“Cuaderno para cuentas” (*Algunos muchachos* 1964) is a story narrated through journal entries written by an adolescent girl named Celestina who spends her life being sent to live in different homes. The journal serves as an outlet to record events that occur in each place since she does not have ties with any family members or friends. Initially she lives with her aunt who passes away and is then sent to live with her mother who abandoned her at birth. The orphan thinks of herself as nothing and is emotionally detached from others. Her mother is working as help in the house of a rich man who is married with children. Shortly after her arrival Celestina learns that she is one of many bastard children of her mother’s boss. During her stay at the house, Celestina comes to

know her father and has visits with him from time to time. He appears to enjoy the girl's company and decides to include his illegitimate daughter and her mother in his will. Once the legitimate daughters learn of Celestina's interaction with their father and that she is to be a beneficiary they are enraged. The older daughter calls the protagonist names and takes out her vengeance by killing her cat. Livid by the gruesome death of her cat, Celestina attacks her half sister leaving her beaten up. Before long her father dies and the protagonist is sent away and forbidden to see her mother whom she has developed a relationship with now and desires to see. She stops writing in her journal because she says it is too difficult to write about her life.

One somber element of this story is how the child has lived her entire life without any sense of praise or positive interaction with another human being. She is constantly scolded by her caretakers that are mostly concerned with her ability to live by their set of rules. Naturally these rules differ from person to person and none of them take the time to explain the rules to her. They expect her to simply know them. It is important to remember that she is still a child that is learning and developing. Celestina is forced to change residences frequently and must abide by the different rules in each home. This is confusing for the girl and does not provide an enriching or stable environment in which to develop into a young woman.

The main character has no dialogue with any human beings and floats around like a ghost that is transparent to the world. In addition, Celestina is constantly being badgered by her caretakers. The only thing her family offers her on a temporary basis is a roof over her head and food. She has no family or personal identity and makes

statements in her journal that demonstrate the severity of her identity issues, for example she describes the first time she meets her mother in her cuaderno saying, "...yo no había visto nunca a mi madre, sólo ahora la he visto, y el primer día me pareció sucia y fea y cuando me dio un beso puse las manos duras para apartarla, entonces dijo qué mala hija, pero no lloró como hacen todas, lo decía por decir, ya sabía que ni mala hija ni nada era yo, no era nada" (Matute 5: 299). The initial encounter between the mother and the daughter demonstrates the lack of sensitivity of the mother and the child's instinct is to push her away. Instead of understanding that it might be difficult for her daughter to see her for the first time and have patience with her, the mother combats her own feelings of rejection by Celestina with a quick tongue and scolds and insults her daughter. This is clearly not an act of love and understanding and sets the tone for her new environment, one of obedience and criticism. Flores-Jenkins explains that the mothers in Matute's fiction are unable to have an impact in their children, "La figura maternal tampoco penetra el mundo del niño. Su condición de adulto se alza entre ella y el hijo, sin que se logre la comunicación. Puede existir, sí, emoción pero ésta no disipa la soledad en que siempre permanece el niño..." (186).

This is not the only occasion where the mother uses words of dismay and insult with Celestina. At other times in the story she calls her "ingrata, cacho ingrata". Shelby states:

Frequently the parents of Ana María Matute's fictional children are living with their offspring, but their conduct is such that it discourages filial respect and emulation. Examples of parents whose activities are counterproductive include persons who are unable to verbalize their

concerns to others; other characters whose licentious actions are abhorrent to the younger generation; and individuals who continually express negative opinions about their children. (19)

Celestina comments in her notebook about the difficulty of behaving like a good girl and living by the rules. She writes, “Pero yo sé lo que es portarse bien, es portarse como quiere él que lo dice, y para unos es una cosa y para otros, otra...” (Matute 5: 301). She has little chance of developing properly by having no consistent set of standards from which to make decisions. She does not have the opportunity to acquire self confidence because her family life is unstable. She knows she will be criticized and punished for her actions from one house to the next. She is forced to live on the edge and try to make decisions based on each and every situation.

The protagonist’s life of almost total reclusion limits her chances of making friends and being able to properly function in society. The protagonist makes a note in her notebook about her access to the outside world and the frequency she permitted to leave the house, “A los qué sé yo cuántos días de estar aquí en la cocina y en el cuarto, sin salir para nada más que ir a la misa...” (Matute 5: 302). Celestina’s daily routine consists of staying indoors and completing chores around the house. From time to time she is permitted to go to the market with other workers to buy food and supplies and that is the only time she is allowed to go out other than going to mass. She does not attend school or participate in any form of social activity. This extreme type of isolation is detrimental to her formation as a person.

Celestina's aunt gave her the notebook for the purpose of practicing her math skills. She accepts the notebook, but decides that it would be better served to record life because she has no one to talk to. Celestina writes, "...pero no voy a hacer cuentas, para qué sirven, para nada, mejor cuento la vida, a quién se lo voy a contar, a nadie, no se puede hablar con nadie nunca" (Matute 5: 300). The main character is aware of her isolated state and has a difficult time co-existing with her mother and the other workers in the house. Celestina mentions in her journal, "...pero aquí no hablo con nadie, a nadie le digo nada..." (Matute 5: 305). Shelby describes the tribulations of Matute's characters that come from loveless homes:

Few of Matute's young people are loved by their parents, who seldom understand or communicate with their children. The children, in turn, feel that they have been cheated by the generation that precedes theirs. The world that they have inherited from their elders provides them with a difficult, loveless existence, and these children are not adequately prepared for survival within it. (62)

The hostile environment that Celestina has inherited is overwhelming. She is not only insulted and ignored by her mother she is also criticized by the other workers and her half sisters. At one point in the story Celestina and her mother are insulted by a legitimate daughter, "...a este hijo no le van a quitar lo que es suyo unas puercas como tú y tu hija, apestadas, que sois dos apestadas..." (Matute 5: 312). Celestina is repeatedly degraded by every one and this directly affects her self-esteem. Another legitimate

daughter calls Celestina, “bruja, bastarda” (Matute 5: 314). A fellow employee calls her, “desgraciada, cacho bruta” (Matute 5: 316).

Celestina realizes that she is unable to identify with humans and is thus forced to seek companionship from another source. She befriends the household cat and claims her as her own. This relationship represents happiness and provides a sense of belonging and purpose in Celestina’s life. The main character is traumatized when her cat is brutally killed by her half sister. She writes in her journal, “Y ahora he cogido el cuaderno otra vez, porque me muero por dentro... (Matute 5: 315). The child is forced to write about her sadness in a diary because she has no one to share her feelings with.

Another example in the story that demonstrates Celestina’s tendency to identify with animals, rather than humans, is when she compares herself to chickens, cats and dogs. “Pero ahora ya lo sé casi todo, las cosas de la gente, y de la vida, y todo, que no es eso como antes me creía yo, porque para eso somos como las gallinas, o los gatos y perros, que ni se casan ni nada, no se necesita” (Matute 5: 305). This journal entry also portrays Celestina’s negative attitude towards life and her lack of sense of identity. She explains that she has learned that she does not people in her life. She is completely detached from society and does not feel as if she belongs in a community.

Celestina’s life is dominated by a large number of negative elements that causes her to suffer from identity issues. It is difficult for her to overcome the obstacles that confront her: no interaction with others in society, no friends, coming from a broken home, living by a set of confusing rules, having to report to different authority figures that fail to offer any form of nurturing, not having any role models to properly identify

with and learn from, being repeatedly insulted and criticized, living a life of poverty, not possessing an education, and living with the constant threat of being abandoned by her caretakers. Now Celestina is truly alone without any contact with her biological family. Even though her contact with her family was not ideal, it still provided a small connection with which to identify.

The last short story to be analyzed in this section is “Bernardino” from the collection *Historias de la Artámila* (1961). Bernardino is a child with no friends that lives in the countryside with his parents, sisters, and beloved dog Chu. Chu is loved by everyone and many of the kids that live in the area wish that he were their dog. One day Bernardino cannot find his dog and in searching for his dear friend he runs into two brothers that live in the vicinity who help him find the dog. Deep in the forest they find the dog being held hostage by the town bullies ready to be thrown in a fire. The bullies barter with Bernardino and explain that in order to get his dog back unharmed he has to take Chu’s place and allow the bully kids to beat him up. He accepts and never once complains or screams for all he cares about is protecting Chu. The two brothers witnessing the scene are scared and caught in a no win situation. They feel bad for Bernardino and the dog and want the bullies to stop, yet they do not want to help him and risk being on the “outside” like Bernardino. They opt to do nothing to stop the beating and feel embarrassed. After many kicks and punches the bullies finally draw blood and take off leaving Bernardino, Chu and the brothers in the forest. Bernardino and Chu embrace and walk away together while glaring at the boys who did nothing to help.

Shelby addresses the issue of alienation and the problem it poses for Matute's characters and writes, "...they are, therefore, unable to act within their societies, and must either remain in near-complete isolation or devise new ways to avoid their alienation" (80). "Bernardino" presents another character suffering from isolation that must devise a way to cope with his alienation. The protagonist does so by forming a bond with a dog. Jones explains that dogs hold a special place in the heart of Matute's characters, "...dogs are closest to the children and often echo their sentiments" (The Literary World, 46).

Bernardino does not possess the means or skills to deal with other people and this is reflected when he is confronted by the bullies. He simply accepts whatever it is that they want because his weak sense of identity leaves him lacking the confidence to stand up for himself. The boy sacrifices himself because he cannot imagine his life without his dog. Bernardino is only able to establish a sense of belonging with Chu and would be completely lost without him.

Bernardino does not only suffer from social isolation, he is subject to verbal insults by his peers. Other children describe him in a negative light, "Ese chico está muy mimado...No se puede contar con él" (Matute 3: 333). During the incident in the forest the bullies only address Bernardino in the third person as a form of disrespect. They enjoy publically humiliating him in front of the brothers. After being severely beaten they call him "Puerco" (Matute 3: 339).

All of the characters in this short story appear to have confused identities.

The two brothers that witness the mistreatment of Bernardino are not self confident individuals and have issues with identity. They are easily influenced by others and are not willing to take a stand for themselves. They know the cruel and violent action of the bullies is wrong, yet they do not attempt to stop the beating or free the dog. They even admit that they feel guilty. As Medhus explains in Importance of a Strong Family Identity, “Children whose families have weak identities often seek guidance from less pristine influences to achieve a sense of belonging that they haven’t been able to gain within the confines of their homes”. If these boys possessed a strong sense of self and were confident with their status in society they would not need to rely on the acceptance of the bullies in their group. The boys are unable to overcome the pressure and need to feel like they belong.

Animals serve an important role in the lives of Matute’s alienated characters. The animals offer unconditional love and companionship for her characters that are unable to accomplish with humans. Animals provide an escape from their isolated life and offer a sense of purpose. Unfortunately, this bond with animals is only a temporary solution for the characters because the relationship will be severed due to varying circumstances.

“La rama seca” from *Histórias de la Artámila* (1961) is the final story to be analyzed in Chapter Two. The story is about a sad childless woman named Doña Clementina that becomes obsessively concerned about the wishes of a very young and sickly neighborhood girl. Doña Clementina discovers that the girl has lost her favorite toy, a doll named Pipa. In reality, Pipa is a little twig that the girl keeps wrapped up in a little red cloth. She takes Pipa everywhere she goes and plays with her every minute she

is awake. There is nothing more important in the world for this six-year-old than Pipa. She has no friends or hope of surviving her illness. The girl has little contact if any with the outside world and does not attend school because she must remain indoors the majority of the time due to her illness. If it were not for her brother, who took and hid her Pipa, she would be a happy little girl despite being so ill. Doña Clementina is determined to find her another Pipa. She travels to another city to buy her a beautiful new doll that the girl rejects saying that it is not her Pipa. After countless attempts to find another Pipa, Doña Clementina is forced to understand that there is only one Pipa and that she cannot be replaced by another. One day, months later when the snow has melted, Doña Clementina finds a twig wrapped in a faded red cloth in the orchard and discovers the real Pipa. It was not until that moment that the woman understands the girl. She is in agreement; there is no other doll as pretty as this little twig. Unfortunately Doña Clementina is unable to return the doll to her owner for she died earlier in the fall.

There are several important factors in this story that contribute to this child's need to regress into a world of fantasy and depend on a doll to combat her extreme isolation because the relationship with her family is not satisfactory. The girl has minimal contact with her mother and brother and does not have a father. The protagonist is terminally ill and does not receive proper physical or emotional care from her mother who is absent from the home during the day and is thus forced to seek companionship outside of the nuclear family. In this case, the girl creates an imaginary world in which she plays and coexists with her doll. Jones comments on this characteristic in Matute's fiction and says, "Ana María Matute makes it clear that imagination is a necessary factor in life, it alone

can temper man's unhappiness...Fancy permits the special child to accept a plane of life detached from everyday existence; his innocence and imaginative powers save him from his unhappiness and solitude" (The Literary World, 44)

The relationship with her brother is equally disappointing and taxing on the girl for he plays cruel childish games with his sister. It is normal for siblings to play deceptive games with each other; however, this is an extreme situation due to the status of her health and the brother knows how important this doll is to his sister. He selfishly satisfies his own desires and disregards the needs of his sister. The protagonist is terminally ill and the role that her doll plays in her life is colossal. The only interaction the girl has is with Pipa and this relationship is her only source of joy. The fact that her brother has taken and disposed of the doll is detrimental to her mental health and contributes to the girl's isolation. With Pipa missing the child has no inspiration in life or purpose. The narrative voice describes how the girl feels without her doll:

La niña empezó a llorar de un modo suave y silencioso...El llanto levantaba el pecho de la niña, le llenaba la cara de lágrimas, que caían despacio hasta la manta...Dejó caer de nuevo la cabeza en la almohada y empezó a llorar despacio y silenciosamente, como acostumbrada. (Matute 3: 369)

The protagonist does not have the opportunity to create friendships outside of the home with neighbors or classmates because she is too sickly to leave the house. Her world only consists of the imaginative and creative play with the doll. The narrative voice describes the interaction between the girl and Pipa:

La niña hablaba infatigablemente con “Pipa”... Cuando llegaba la hora de comer la niña cogía el plato que su madre le dejó tapado, al arrimo de las ascuas. Lo llevaba a la ventana y comía despacito, con su cuchara de hueso. Tenía a “Pipa” en las rodillas, y la hacía participar de su comida. (Matute 3: 367)

It is unclear whether the girl is unwilling or unable to communicate with real people (Jones, *The Literary World* 43); regardless, it is clear that girl is completely engrossed in her interaction with the doll and feels a sense of satisfaction and purpose having the doll in her life. She cares for the doll the way she should be cared for by her mother. The doll is the only stable element in her life and when the doll is missing the girl crumbles. Jones comments on the role of dolls and animals in Matute’s fiction and states:

Fictional beings who are insecure in their relationships with others may use dolls as the receivers of their solicitude. Some individuals regard their small representations of human beings as the only stable elements in their lives...A doll can never reject the attention of its possessor; thus, it will never become a challenge to the person who uses it. (*The Literary World*, 45)

Unfortunately for the girl, she is never reunited with her doll as she passes away before the neighbor finds Pipa and is able to return the doll to her devoted owner. The girl dies without ever feeling comprehended by a human being; it is only the doll that she can relate to. This sad situation and tragic ending are characteristic of Matute’s fiction as Jones explains:

The children follow a specific pattern: they are solitary, misunderstood creatures lost in a hostile world of adults. Innocence and imagination help them escape reality into a partially or totally fantastic world. The author's obviously pessimistic outlook, does not permit the child to remain in this state: the inevitable intrusion of reality destroys his world. Childhood must end, with death or with maturity. (The Literary World, 55)

Raquel G. Flores-Jenkins also comments on the necessity of Matute's characters to create a fantastic world as a coping mechanism to deal with their suffering, "Los niños de ficción de Matute viven inmersos en un mundo hechura de su fantasía que los protege y aísla de la realidad temida" (185). This story demonstrates that dolls can serve as vehicles to combat alienation in Matute's short fiction and provide a sense of belonging to her characters. The basic building block of support and identity that friends and family can offer an individual is absent in this story and directly affects the protagonist in this story in a negative manner.

This chapter demonstrates that Matute's fictional characters often belong to a broken family, affecting their personal development in a negative manner. One of the consistent outcomes of belonging to a ruptured family in Matute's short fiction is the feeling of alienation. In turn, this directly affects an individual's sense of identity in an unconstructive way, leaving the characters in a state of identity crisis or with a fractured identity (Hall 598). Shelby describes Matute's depiction of the family as unreliable, "The family has ceased to exist as a viable social institution within the novelistic world of Ana

María Matute. Neither parents, nor children, nor siblings are able to initiate and maintain close relationships that will give stability to their social existence.” (63).

In order to combat their feelings of alienation the characters reach out to others. Unfortunately, most of the time their efforts are either fruitless or a complete failure. The characters learn that the society they belong to, just like their family, is unable or unwilling to assist them in their quest to gain a sense of belonging which could promote positive identity formation. Some characters choose to resign or escape from society and create their own imaginative world in an attempt to feel comfortable. Other characters turn to animals or dolls to fill their void and battle their isolation from society. They do not possess the skills or desire to interact with other humans.

Matute’s short fiction demonstrates a crisis of identity in her characters which can infer that the Spanish national identity is also in question and in danger of crisis. The traditional forms of stable family and community support are in decline and modern society struggles to foster a sense of community or belonging for its members. As Jones points out, Matute’s short stories are not success stories with happy endings. Her work reflects the Spanish reality, the reality as she has personally witnessed during her childhood, adolescence and adulthood (The Literary World, 55). Matute offers a grim portrait of the Spanish family to her readers and demonstrates how the Civil War and the years of the dictatorship altered the family unit.

CHAPTER 3: VIOLENCE IN MATUTE'S SHORT FICTION

Spaniards that lived through the Spanish Civil War and the post-war dictatorship were exposed to and were victims of wide ranging forms of violence. This invariably had an impact on their outlook on life and day to day behavior. Not surprisingly, the normalization of exposure to violence amongst children directly led to a pattern of unhealthy identity formation for Spain's youth. As Janet Pérez says, "A civil war is a war without winners, but the special losers are the children..." (106). Matute's short fiction depicts both sides, the aggressors and the victims, and her work demonstrates the detrimental effects a violent society has on its citizens.

Matute's fiction is known to be influenced by personal experience and it reflects her life experiences. Having lived through the civil war and the following years of the dictatorship, both time periods marked with abundant violence, it is fair to say that violence has always been a part of her life and it is not surprising to routinely encounter violence in her work. Pérez speaks of the violence Matute and her family were exposed to:

Unable to leave Barcelona, the family lived through months of terrorism and politically motivated assassinations, including the burning of convents and churches and killings of priests and members of religious orders.

Matute has frequently alluded to the bewilderment of the family's children when officially "good" people suddenly, inexplicably became "bad," when priests and nuns-their teachers-went into hiding and no longer dared to wear religious habits. She has often evoked the atmosphere of fear as

bodies appeared daily in the streets and vacant lots, the tension experienced as she, her siblings, and cousins crouched behind drawn shutters during bombardments or listened to the gunfire outside. (96)

Violence is a predominant theme in the Matute's literature and Chapter Three focuses on its presence in her short fiction and the manner in which violence effects identity. This study analyzes three specific forms of violence or acts of cruelty committed by children: children against animals, children against other children, and children against adults. The chapter commences with a general discussion about violence and its role in modern society and closes with conclusions regarding the theme of violence and acts of cruelty depicted in the short fiction of Ana María Matute.

In response to the growth and pervasiveness of violence in recent decades increased research has been dedicated to its study. The reasons why individuals commit violent acts is, at times predictable, however, in many instances there are no explanations as to why they rely on brute force as their *modus operandi*. Matute's short fiction demonstrates that acts of violence and cruelty are enmeshed as a part of the Spanish social fabric in the 20th century and they serve as an outlet for her troubled fictitious characters to express themselves and attempt to identify with others in society. The violence portrayed in Matute's short fiction is related to identity issue problems and the sense of belonging her characters lack in their lives. The author's work shows that the more troubled and isolated individuals are, the more likely they fall victim to acts of violence and/or commit acts of violence themselves. A significant amount of violence in society is committed by youth and this holds true in Matute's short fiction as well. A

report on youth violence from the US Surgeon General states, “Most violence begins in the second decade of life” (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>). Ascione comments on the importance of identification especially among youth and its relation to violence and states:

Identification, empathy, respect-Dr. Pagani considers these characteristics to be essential in the prevention and amelioration of violence. And she is in good company since, over the past 30 years, developmental psychology and related disciplines have focused on the importance of our sense of belonging to family and community, our increasingly refined ability to connect with the emotional life of others, and respect for, or at least toleration of, others even others who are very different from us. (64)

Animal Violence and Violence Among Children

The first type of violence to be studied in Matute’s selected short stories is cruelty and violence committed by children against animals and other children. The use of violence in general is not an acceptable form of behavior by modern societal standards and this can readily be seen by the way that societies create laws that ban violent acts. Individuals living as alienated members of society, by definition, do not operate by the standards prescribed by the society at large and their behavior is thus less likely to be bound by social norms. As Chapter Two demonstrates, Matute’s characters suffer from a lack of strong identity and feelings of alienation; they rarely possess a strong sense of belonging to a group and/or other individuals. While acts of violence are committed

across all social strata for a variety of reasons, it is worth considering why Matute's alienated characters are prone to violent behavior.

It is important to first define animal cruelty before going on to the analysis section. Interest in animal welfare has existed for centuries and has been the root for the creation of organizations that protect animals and their rights. In 1866 The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was founded and ranks as the first humane organization created in the Western Hemisphere for the sole purpose of animal welfare (<http://www.asPCA.org>). The organization states, "The society was formed to alleviate the injustices animals faced then, and we continue to battle cruelty today...we work toward the day in which no animal will live in pain or fear" (<http://www.asPCA.org>).

Another well known organization that fights for the well being and protection of animals is The Humane Society of the United States established in 1954. This society is considered the nation's largest and most effective animal protection organization. They strive for, "...a humane and sustainable world for all animals-a world that will also benefit people" (<http://www.hsus.org/>). These are just a few among the numerous organizations and associations that exist on behalf of animal welfare in the United States and in other countries around the world.

These types of organizations help promote proper care and treatment of animals. Through educational programs and legislation, these organizations help better define animal abuse in the hopes of stigmatizing violence against animals at the societal level. Mahatma Gandhi spoke out about the importance of the humane treatment of animals and

its relation to the effectiveness of a nation and stated, “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated” (<http://www.aspca.org>).

Not all members of society are interested in the protection of animals. For some, animals are easy targets and become victims of acts of aggression and of cruel forms of entertainment. What one person may consider an act of cruelty does not necessarily apply to another and this is why organizations such as the Humane Society are important, they assist in setting guidelines and standards for society to follow. A wide spectrum of types of violence and/or acts of cruelty against animals exists and at times it can be difficult to assess if certain acts are considered cruel and violent.

Linda Merz-Perez and Kathleen M. Heide offer a definition of animal cruelty created by Hellman and Blackman in 1966, “...they defined animal cruelty as the killing or torturing of dogs, cats, pets or baby animals” (7). Although this definition is valid, it is exclusive to small number of species and it is too limited in its definition of the types of cruelty. Over the years, new and more inclusive versions of definitions of animal cruelty and violence have evolved. As it stands today, a precise and universal definition of animal cruelty and violence does not exist. The matter is addressed and defined individually by each country and each state. Unfortunately, not all countries promote animal welfare, for example, as of 2006 there were no laws in China governing acts of cruelty to animals. (<http://losangeles.china-consulate.org/eng/news/topnews/t127829.htm>) There is a wide variation in the interpretation, coverage and explanation of the laws as well.

According to The Humane Society of the United States cruelty to animals falls into two categories: neglect and direct violence. The association states, “...animals suffer and die from neglect when they are denied proper food, water or shelter, causing them to slowly starve to death or die from exposure to freezing cold or sweltering hot temperatures”. In regard to direct violence the Humane Society explains, “The types of direct violence that animals suffer every day at the hands of people include being beaten, mutilated, shot, set on fire or otherwise tortured. The intentional suffering inflicted on these animals can result in severe injury or death” (<http://www.hsus.org/>). The ASPCA provides similar definitions of animal cruelty and claims, “Animal cruelty occurs when someone intentionally injures or harms an animal or when a person willfully deprives an animal of food, water or necessary medical care” (<http://www.asPCA.org>). The ASPCA explains that there are two types of animal neglect, “... simple neglect and gross, willful, cruel or malicious neglect” (<http://www.asPCA.org>). The online database maintained by the ASPCA Government Affairs and Public Policy Department provides information relating to animal cruelty laws for all fifty states and has more than 550 animal cruelty laws. In addition, the site provides a cruelty glossary to help people determine if an act of cruelty is occurring and should be reported to the proper authority (<http://www.asPCA.org>). These definitions as well as others will be referred to when analyzing the violence portrayed in selected short stories written by Matute later in the chapter.

Merz-Perez and Heide have offered an even more detailed and extensive definition of animal cruelty in an attempt to establish distinct conceptual parameters by stating:

1. *Passive cruelty*: the observation of a cruel act in which the observer neither participates nor intervenes.
2. *Participatory cruelty*: the active participation by one or more individuals in a cruel act.
3. *Perfunctory cruelty*: a cruel act most often committed by a child either alone or with same-age peers in which the targeted animal(s) is perceived to be a literal target, inanimate and devoid of sentience.
4. *Parochial cruelty*: animal cruelty that is regionally or culturally generated. These acts are often not considered cruel by the participants.
5. *Partitive cruelty*: animal cruelty that results from conceptual compartmentalizations applied to animals. This type of cruelty reduces animals to convenient labels and legitimizes cruelty by implementing arbitrary paradigms.
6. *Psychological cruelty*: animal cruelty that results from the particularities of the human mind and its conscious, subconscious, unconscious, psychic, cognitive, intellectual, emotional, and/or pathological manifestations.

7. *Predatory cruelty*: animal cruelty that is purposeful, planned, and often sequential in execution. (156-57)

The forms of animal cruelty as proposed by Merz-Perez and Heide can be seen throughout the short fiction of Matute and the connection between characters with identity issues and their propensity to commit violent acts against animals will be examined in the analysis portion of this chapter.

When an act of violence or cruelty is committed against an animal, it is worth considering what caused the individual to commit such an act. Kellert and Felthous have addressed the causal issues associated with a human committing a violent act against an animal and in 1985 they described nine motives for cruelty to animals:

1. to control an animal
2. to retaliate against an animal
3. to satisfy a prejudice against a species or breed
4. to express aggression through an animal
5. to enhance one's own aggression
6. to shock people for amusement
7. to retaliate against another person
8. displacement of hostility from a person to an animal
9. nonspecific sadism. (Merz-Perez and Heide 14)

Most of these elements can be seen in Matute's short fiction and are discussed in the short story analysis. Kellert and Felthous' motives have served as the foundation for other theories that have been postulated in regard to the potential motivation of animal

cruelty such as a negative and dysfunctional home environment, parental loss/rejection/abandonment, antisocial personality disorders, peer reinforcement, emotional abuse, impulsive character development, and lack of empathy (Ascione 6). It is clear to see the cause-effect relationship in Matute's characters that abuse animals as they exhibit personalities and backgrounds as described by Ascione and trigger the motives described by Kellert and Felthous.

The home environment is an important factor in the study of animal cruelty in Matute's short fiction. As expected, turbulent and violent home environments tend to produce children and adolescents that are the more likely to abuse animals and other humans both in and outside of the home. Living with the emotional stress in a home where violence is prevalent also tends to lead to long lasting psychological disturbances in the child. As seen in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the ruptured nuclear family is a constant theme in Matute's short stories and more often than not the absence of a parent negatively impacts her young characters. Duncan and Miller witnessed the importance of paternal availability as one among other of contributing factors to aggressive behavior in children towards animals in their study. Their research presented, "an association between a dysfunctional and negative home environment, childhood animal cruelty, and adult violence" (371).

The loss or rejection of a parent can have profound affects on children and their mental stability. Matute's characters that come from ruptured homes constantly demonstrate their difficulties of surviving and functioning in society and act aggressively toward other individuals and animals as a coping mechanism. Merz-Perez and Heide

indicate the impact parental absence can have on a child by citing Hellman and Blackman, "...a strong relationship exists between parental loss or rejection and the evolution of personality disorders and mental illness. They maintained that the loss of, or rejection by, a parent causes not only primary separation anxiety but also aggression, whose function is to achieve reunion" (7).

Today's youth is marked by the trend of being less able to empathize with others in society and this is yet another contributing element to the rise in adolescent violence. It has been shown through research and case studies that modern children feel less empathy than in the past or simply do not experience empathy at all and, as a result, are more likely to commit acts of violence and cruelty against others including animals. Children that have been traumatized or neglected are not ideal candidates to practice empathy because it is not a benefit that has been extended to them. They experience a type of a disassociation in which they cannot make the connection between their feelings, the feelings of others and committing violent acts. Children may commit acts of violence or may even kill an individual and feel no remorse because the concept of empathy is foreign to them (Ascione 78). Most of the aggressive, violent and cruel characters found in Matute's short stories are detached individuals and they do not feel empathy or remorse towards their victims.

Short Story Analysis: Violence Committed by Children Against Animals and Children

The children and adolescents found in Matute's short fiction have problems communicating and fostering nurturing and rewarding relationships. More often than not, the characters live a life of solitude, have very few friends, if any, and have an

unhealthy home life. This lack of feeling of belonging to a group negatively affects the child or adolescent in a way that leaves them vulnerable for other individuals to abuse or it creates feelings of aggression that spark irrational and compulsive behavior that leads to violence. Animals and other children are often on the receiving end of the violence and become victims in Matute's stories. This section analyzes selected short stories that contain examples of acts of violence and cruelty committed against animals and other children by children and adolescents.

All of the short stories in this section contain acts of violence and cruelty. Some of the violent acts are gruesome to the point of challenging the imagination while other acts may not even appear as a form of violence or cruelty to the reader. The violence and cruelty committed by Matute's characters against animals can be categorized within the seven motives and the nine types of violence as outlined by Kellert and Felthous. The violence and cruelty against children can almost always be tied to the relationship between fractured families, alienation, and identity formation issues. The first short story to be analyzed is "Los murciélagos"

"Los murciélagos" (*El río* 1963) is narrated by a nine year old girl that remembers the trauma she experienced by witnessing acts of violence committed by a group of boys against bats. The boys would frequent a cave, carrying long sticks and hit the top of the cave walls in search of bats. Once a bat was captured the boys would torture the animal in different ways such as burning, verbal insults, and puncturing. One evening, the girl personally witnesses this event and feels remorse and sadness by what she sees. Once the group of boys disperses, the protagonist unpins the violated bat from the tree and gently

lays the bat in the damp grass to die in peace. The story ends with the girl abandoning the scene of the crime, running away to cry.

This type of animal treatment clearly violates the animal's rights and can be classified as animal cruelty under the definitions offered by the CPSCA, the Humane Society, Kellert and Felthous, Merz-Perez and Heide, Blackman and Hellman and more. Following Kellert and Felthous' nine motives for cruelty to animals, the group of boys in "Los murciélagos" violate the following acts: 1. to control an animal, 3. to satisfy a prejudice against a species or breed, 4. to express aggression through an animal, 5. to enhance one's own aggression, and 9. nonspecific sadism. The boys' behavior is not accidental or experimental; it is done with ritualistic regularity as an outward expression of their group identity.

Adolescent animal abusers often rationalize this violence as a type of play, influenced by peer pressure from being in a group setting. Arluke explains that violence committed by groups can be a form of bonding:

... abuse of animals was a ritual of inclusion, an event for including those deemed closest. When students recalled their former abuse as fun because it was done as a group activity with their playmates, it was clear as they spoke that this companionship was more important to them than the abuse of the animals. (69)

Ascione argues that this type of group behavior fosters companionship:

Animal abuse may be motivated by the *peer reinforcement* young people receive for such behavior. A group of children may behave in ways very

different from the way each member of the group might behave if they were alone. Children may be challenged or ‘dared’ to act in ways that hurt animals and in some cases this may actually be a part of a group ritual.

(58)

Even though torturing the bat is obviously wrong, the ritual creates a sense of belonging for the boys.

The narrative voice’s inner feelings regarding this event are revealed in the story and she decides to assist the bat. Unlike her siblings and friends, the nine year old feels sympathy for the bat. Matute writes:

Al fin, lo dejaron, y se fueron. Alguien venía, o alguien los llamó. El animal quedó frente a mí, clavado en el tronco del chopo, con las alas abiertas, vivo aún. Y súbitamente, desapareció el miedo, la curiosidad malsana, el pequeño odio convencional que me llamaba. Algo se rompió dentro de mí: ideas aceptadas sin saber cómo ni por qué, palabras como carteles, hablando del mal, del bien, de la justicia; de lo que debe o no debe suceder. Y sentí algo oscuro y vivo como un torrente, que me hizo gritar y desclavar al murciélago, venciendo el asco, el miedo y la propia compasión. Lo dejé tendido sobre la hierba húmeda y me fui a llorar lejos de allí, aunque no supiera exactamente por qué. (Matute 5: 190)

This child knows that the manner in which the bat was treated was wrong and feels grief for the innocent animal. The girl is not alone in knowing that their treatment of the bat is different than ordinary play.

Studies show that the people who commit acts of torture against animals know that what they are doing is not considered normal play, like playing with a ball. Arnold Arluke speaks out on this type of behavior by referring to Jay Mechling:

As students explored their memories in the context of the interview's quickening rapport, however, it became clear that they did not regard their abuse as ordinary play. They remembered their animal abuse as having a serious edge that distinguished it from everyday play in general or normal play with animals. (62)

It would seem impossible to put equal entertainment value on playing a game of soccer and the treatment of the bat. This description of the boys' play demonstrates the cruelty of their acts, "Los muchachos traían un murciélago suspendido del extremo de las alas, abierto como un abanico. Eran un grupo de seis o más, y los seguí, fascinada. Con un cigarrillo encendido, le obligaron a fumar, lo quemaban, y le insultaban con gran odio" (Matute 5: 190). Matute depicts how violence can become a characteristic of identity. The boys are aware that they are known for their cruel behavior in the town and actually take pleasure in routinely torturing bats. Their sadistic tendencies create a sense of belonging for the boys thus strengthening their identities as aggressors.

The protagonist of "Moro" (*El río* 1963) is a large black dog that is a victim of undeserved violence and cruelty. Moro does not have a specific owner and lives on the streets until he is taken in and cared for by a family that visits the rural town from time to time to escape city life. According to the narrative voice, the animal has a wonderful disposition and spirit and serves as a best friend to her son, "Moro" tomó la costumbre de

venir a nuestra casa. Agradecía con sonrisas perrunas, ladridos saltos, cuanto se le daba, y era el amigo entrañable de mi hijo” (Matute 5: 125). The locals, on the other hand, feel that the dog is useless because he does not herd, hunt or guard homes and is considered, by their standards, to be lazy. The locals act cruelly towards the animal even though they have not been provoked or mistreated. Moro frequently endures different forms of maltreatment such as hitting, kicking and being stabbed. The animal feels loved and at ease with the visiting family and wishes to stay with them permanently. Unfortunately for Moro, he is left to fend for himself when the family leaves the countryside to return to the city. The fate of Moro looks grim as the locals are anxiously awaiting the departure of the family armed with sticks ready to attack Moro.

It is puzzling to understand the motives of the locals that take such a strong interest in the dog and why they desire to unjustly maltreat the innocent animal. Moro is not causing them any harm and they repeatedly and actively pursue the dog with the deliberate intent of physical and verbal abuse. It is also perplexing to comprehend the reasons why the family takes such an interest in Moro when they are in the country and not when they are in the city. Clearly they love the animal and realize what joy the dog brings to them and particularly to their son. It is not known if the family is able to care for the dog in the city. Regardless of the family’s ability to rescue the dog, it is disturbing to see an innocent animal suffer in such a way without the family making an attempt to help the dog in their absence from the town. They do not speak to the locals to correct or understand their unjust behavior. Nor does the family take Moro with them to care for him themselves or try to find another family that is willing to take him in. This is another

attempt by Matute to demonstrate the Spanish society she knows, a society lacking empathy that tends towards aggressive and violent behavior.

The behavior of the locals is quite astounding for it seems to be abnormally aggressive and persistent. They have attacked and injured Moro on more than one occasion. Matute writes:

Pero los muchachos del pueblo no quieren a “Moro”. En varias ocasiones llegó a nuestra puerta herido por pedradas, por palos. Parece ser que la alegría, la despreocupación, el simple gozo de vivir tienen su precio. Una vez “Moro” trajo en el morro una herida larga, sangrante, parecida a una cuchillada...Pero “Moro” cura de sus heridas siempre. “Moro” sale siempre intacto de todas las asechanzas, ataques, de toda la inquina y mala voluntad. (Matute 5: 125)

Their negative attitude towards the dog heightens as the friendly family leaves. They actively and anxiously hunt the dog with the sole purpose of hurting the dog. Matute writes:

El último día, “Moro” ladró lastimeramente a nuestro alrededor. Los muchachitos del pueblo le amenazaban: -¡Ahora verás, ahora verás, que se te marchan los defensores!...Allí quedaron-fue mi última visión- los muchachitos burlados: con estacas en alto, con piedras, con la boca llena de una extraña rabia, entre gozosa y resentida. Y gritaban: -¡Ya verás ahora, ya verás! (Matute 5: 126-27)

This type of purposeful and planned animal cruelty is entitled “Predatory cruelty” by Merz-Perez and Heide, “...This goal differs from the goals associated with legitimate hunting, the acquisition of meat (food) and/or trophy (sport).]” (157). The actions of the locals can also be considered “Participatory cruelty” as defined by Merz-Perez and Heide (156).

Once again, Matute portrays a closed society where individuals or groups that are perceived to be “outside” the community are excluded and targeted with violence or cruelty, directly or indirectly, to cement their status as outsiders. The family is not welcomed by the locals and communication between the family and the locals is not existent. This leaves the family isolated with no sense of belonging to the local community. The locals’ violent behavior to the dog indirectly emphasizes the family’s “outsider” status. This empowers the locals and motivates them even more to continue mistreating the dog. They are using the violence against the dog as a means to target the family as well as to continue forming their own sense of identity, that of being aggressors. Arluke explains how maltreatment of animals can affect identity and writes:

Mistreating animals, however, can play a more vital role for the self when people base their entire identity on such harm. It is not a memory of a random event, a lapse in judgment, or “going crazy” but the essence of who they are as people. They use cruelty-or how they redefine it-to build their sense of self, define their purpose in life, and most important, console themselves that what others see as loathsome if not criminal, mentally ill,

or pathetic is no such thing. They tell themselves and others that they are decent and kind. (85)

The locals feel no remorse for their actions and enjoy mistreating Moro. The individual members of the family do not possess a strong sense of identity or confidence in this temporary home. If they were recognized by the locals and had any form of standing in the community, they could have found a better solution than abandoning the dog and leaving Moro to his potentially torturous death. They did not feel confident to face the town nor remove the dog from danger, thus, allowing them to be bullied by the locals. By avoiding conflict, the example the parents set for their child is more likely to repeat itself. The child has learned to ignore and accept cruel and violent injustice against an animal. Matute's short fiction demonstrates the struggle of Spanish society to construct positive and interactive behavior among its citizens and how the country's morals and ethics are challenged and questioned. The author reveals the self-centered attitude created by the political situation of 20th century Spain.

The next story of analysis, "Bernardino" (*Historias de la Artámila* 1961), tells the tale of a boy that is subjected to extreme forms of both psychological and physical violence. He sacrifices himself to the town bullies in exchange for his beloved dog, Chu, his only friend. For a complete synopsis, see Chapter Two.

This short story portrays the difficulties adolescent boys have fostering healthy relationships and how youth relies on peer victimization as a means of controlling others. Matute illustrates in "Bernardino" that bullying is another contributing element to the development of individual identity in both the bully and the victim. Susan P. Limber

defines bullying as, “Bullying is most commonly defined as kicking, taunting, malicious teasing, name calling or indirect (e.g., rumor-spreading, social exclusion, friendship manipulation, cyber-bullying)” (Dowd, Singer, and Wilson 313). The peer victimization witnessed in this short story is even more severe than the definition offered by Limber. The bullies use the threat of excessive violence against Chu to taunt their victim and then offer Chu’s freedom in exchange for Bernardino allowing himself to be beaten. Limber explains that research has shown that children who have been exposed to constant and excessive bullying are at greater risk of suffering from depression and further social isolation as adults (Dowd, Singer, and Wilson 320).

Bernardino is the type of bully victim that Olweus refers to as “passive victims” (Dowd, Singer, and Wilson 318). Limber explains that passive victims of bullying are described as, “...being distanced from and submissive to their peers...teachers rated victims of bullying as being unpopular, and their peers rated them as having very low social status. Frequently, victims of bullying are socially isolated from their peers and report feeling lonely” (Dowd, Singer, and Wilson 318). Bernardino falls into this category for he is a lonely and isolated child and is seen as unpopular by his peers. Bernardino’s isolation and rejection from his peers affects his identity, as he prefers to spend his time with his dog rather than humans. He does not have confidence or trust in others. This only increases his probability of experiencing peer victimization because he is seen as an easy target due to his lack of self-confidence. In reality, Bernardino’s identity is tied to the dog and without Chu, he would be lost. Freud explains how children depend on animals, “The child unhesitatingly attributes full equality to animals; he

probably feels himself more closely related to the animal than to the undoubtedly mysterious adult, in the freedom with which he acknowledges his needs” (The Basic Writings, 905).

The role a pet can play in a child’s life is significant. James H. S. Bossard suggests the positive benefits a dog can have on children, “Dogs provide an outlet for our affection and need for companionship” (408). Bernardino is aware that the other children in the community intentionally exclude him from their play and this does not bother him because he has Chu. His only concern is his dog, which is why the situation is so grave when he cannot find him. He is desperate to find Chu and even reaches out to the brothers, who are not his friends, to assist him. This desperate act, in and of itself, demonstrates the desire for Bernardino to be reunited with his dog. He is willing to interact with the brothers, an act he would ordinarily avoid. When Bernardino sees his cherished dog, tied up and ready to be thrown into the fire, he is devastated. Ascione refers to Freud’s ideas regarding the importance animals can have on children and says, “Sigmund Freud noted that children identify strongly with animals and this may be valuable if animals are treated kindly in a child’s world but terrorizing if animals are abused” (70). This situation in fact becomes terrorizing to Bernardino and he prefers to be beaten rather than to see Chu abused. Further, Ascione states, “The abuse of animals as a form of psychological maltreatment may be more common than we know. And children who have the strongest attachments to their pets may be those most devastated by their injury or death” (108). Unfortunately for Bernardino, the bullies realize how powerful the attachment is between the dog and the boy and they intentionally

incorporate Chu into their plot to terrorize Bernardino. A traumatic event of this sort can leave permanent damage on an innocent child and affect the development of healthy self identity.

The dog poses multiple problems for the children in the town. Chu is well liked by everyone and the loving relationship between Chu and Bernardino creates feelings of envy and anger. The brothers that witness the incident in the forest admit that they wish that Chu was theirs and feel that Bernardino is not deserving of such a prize by saying, “Bernardino tenía un perro que se llamaba “Chu”. El perro debía de querer mucho a Bernardino...nosotros le encontrábamos mil, por lo inteligente y simpático que era. Seguía nuestros juegos con mucho tacto y se hacía querer en seguida” (Matute 3: 334-35). The older brother admits, “Este Bernardino es un pez. No le da a ‘Chu’ ni una palmada en la cabeza. ¡No sé cómo ‘Chu’ le quiere tanto!” (Matute 3: 335). The narrative voice later demonstrates the brothers’ failed attempt to steal the dog, “Ojalá que ‘Chu’ fuera mío...a ‘Chu’ le adorábamos todos, y confieso que alguna vez, con muy mala intención, al salir de ‘Los Lúpulos’ intentamos atraerlo con pedazos de pastel o terrones de azúcar, por ver si se venía con nosotros...” (Matute 3: 335). In addition the brothers have a false impression of the relationship between Chu and Bernardino and create a different image in their mind of the relationship to justify their jealousy about the intimacy between the dog and Bernardino. The brothers infer that Bernardino does not care for the dog when that could not be further from the truth.

The dog is not the only problem for the brothers. They have preconceived and tainted ideas of Bernardino as an individual and make no attempt to get to know him

personally or include him in their circle of friends. They are curious about Bernardino and wonder why he is an estranged child. They ask their grandfather why Bernardino is “un ser extraño, distinto” (Matute 3: 333) and become influenced by their grandfather’s negative opinion of him. The granddad replies by saying, “Bernardino es un niño mimado” (Matute 3: 333). Bernardino is never given a chance and is disliked solely upon observation and his social status and not interaction. This is a poor example set by the grandfather who assists in the isolation of Bernardino. Rather than embracing or including the lonely child in society and making him feel like he belongs, the grandfather prefers to criticize Bernardino and offer a low opinion of him. The grandfather could suggest befriending the child in order for them to form their own opinion of Bernardino.

The pressure for the brothers to feel accepted by the popular group is more important to them than the well being of Bernardino and Chu. This demonstrates their lack of confidence in themselves and hints to the fact that these boys do not have a strong sense of identity. They feel the need to be liked by the popular kids even though they are bullies. The boys admit their desire to be liked by the popular group by confessing, “Nosotros no odiábamos a Bernardino, pero no queríamos perder la amistad con los de la aldea...las escapadas con los de la aldea eran una de las cosas más atractivas de la vida en las montañas” (Matute 3: 334). If they were self confident they would not need to be associated with this type of group and would do something to stop the beating or at least make an attempt to help defend the innocent child. Instead the brothers watch the cruel and violent conduct of the bullies and do nothing to stop it. They are guilty of being

“supporters” or “possible defenders”. Limber explains that Olweus identified and defined six roles that children may play in severe bullying situations:

...bullies (who initiate the bullying), followers (who may take an active part in the bullying but do not initiate it), supporters (who support the bullying but do not take an active role), passive supporters (who like the bullying but do not show open support), disengaged onlookers, possible defenders (who dislike the bullying but do not take action to help), defenders (who try to help the child being bullied), and victims. (Dowd, Singer, and Wilson 322)

The brothers know what is happening in the forest is incorrect and opt to watch rather than help which makes them just as guilty. Once the bullies leave Bernardino blankly stares at the brothers and does not want to have anything to do with them. He prefers the company of his dog, his true friend. His apprehension towards the brothers is even more solidified now after the incident in the forest. He knows their popularity and acceptance into the popular group of kids is more important than his safety and well being and that of Chu as well. Matute shows how desperate individuals long to have a sense of belonging and she portrays a society that accepts violence and cruelty in exchange for personal gain.

The bullies are guilty of committing two types of cruelty in this short story: cruelty towards animals and cruelty towards humans. They use both cruelty and violence as controlling devices to manipulate and to instill fear in their targeted subjects. These boys are known as the town bullies and in fact this status as violent, cruel and manipulative people is a fundamental part of their identity (Arluke 85).

Bernardino is an easy target for the bullies. He is a friendless and shy child that keeps to himself. Gregory Moffatt explains the type of individuals bullies chose to target, “Since some victims are already insecure and vulnerable, they make easy targets. Bullies can pick on them at will with no risk of retaliation” (160). Besides being an easy target, the bullies are jealous of the close relationship between Bernardino and Chu and realize the significance of the dog to Bernardino. The bullies use the animal as a lure to get their desired results. The bullies enjoy this type of psychological mistreatment and value the fact that they can use violence against the dog and/or the child. Either way, they are satisfying their urge to control, frighten and terrorize both humans and animals.

The boys take pleasure in abusing Bernardino and like seeing the look of terror in his eyes. The Sadistic Theory explains why individuals enjoy violating others and states:

The Sadistic Theory posits that individuals hurt animals and people because they find these activities pleasurable in themselves and/or they enjoy the shocked, terrified, or horrified reactions of the victims or other audiences. The theory is extrapolated from the remaining two of the seven motives presented by Kellert and Felthous that are believed to be relevant to the correlation. (Merz-Perez and Heide 63-64)

It is disturbing to see how far the boys are willing to go to manipulate their target. They are ready to burn and murder the dog. There are many types of animal maltreatment and these actions are amongst the gravest offenses. Kellert and Felthous categorize these actions as severe and infer that individuals that are capable of this level of violence are considered more dangerous to others. Kellert and Felthous developed The Displaced

Aggression Theory which explains the motives of individuals that opt to abuse animals as the bullies have in this case. The theory posits:

...individuals hurt animals and people to demonstrate control and to express anger that is removed, or 'displaced,' from its original source. This theory is constructed from four of the seven motives presented by Kellert and Felthous (1985) that are deemed to be significant with respect to the correlation between childhood animal cruelty and subsequent human violence. These four motives are:

1. To control an animal.
2. To express aggression through an animal.
3. To retaliate against another person.
4. Displacement of hostility from a person to an animal. (Merz-Perez and Heide 61).

What is shocking in this story as well as is how children at such a young age are capable of committing such acts of torture and brute force on innocent animals and humans to resolve their inner feelings. Personal identity and self-confidence issues are at the core of individuals that rely on habitual violent behavior. Other ways exist to manifest feelings of jealousy, frustration and rage; violence is not the only answer. Matute's short fiction illustrates a society in which violence and abuse is used as a means of communication and identification. Due to the lack of role models, negligent parents and social isolation, Matute's fictional characters suffer from weak personal identities and become victims or instigators of violence.

“Cuaderno para cuentas” (*Algunos muchachos* 1964) is the short story of the trials and tribulations of the life of the protagonist, Celestina, a distressed young girl. After recently having moved in with her estranged mother who works in a home as help for a wealthy man, Celestina discovers that her mother’s boss is also her biological father. The girl develops an amicable relationship with her father that sparks a confrontational relationship between Celestina and her biological father’s two legitimate daughters. The three girls take their anger and jealousy out on each other in an aggressive, abusive and violent manner. One of the legitimate daughters kills Celestina’s cat by feeding it shards of glass and in retaliation the main character uses physical violence to get back at her half sister. In the end, Celestina is kicked out of the home and sent away to live on her own without her mother. For a complete synopsis of the story please refer to Chapter Two.

Acts of violence can begin when a person is not complacent with a situation and the use of violence becomes a means of communicating their feelings. Individuals that rely on violence, rather than reason, are often those that have not acquired proper communication and problem solving skills. Matute demonstrates how the emotion of jealousy sparks irrational and violent behavior in the characters in “Cuaderno para cuentas”.

Celestina is a victim of social isolation. She has no friends and comes from a ruptured home. She is abandoned by her mother at birth, which marks the beginning of a lifetime of abandonment and rejection by adults. Now that the aunt that raised her has died, Celestina is sent to live with her mother and must adapt to a new environment, failing miserably. In the new home she is not entitled to move about freely. She must

complete her chores, is not permitted to study, and must remain in the confines of the home. She is only allowed to leave the premises to go to the market to purchase food. This type of imprisonment forbids contact with the outside world, leaving Celestina friendless and more isolated than ever. She is not exposed to others with whom she may be able to develop social skills and develop a sense of belong to a community. In addition, she learns that she is living under the roof of her biological father; another individual that once abandoned her. The only things that bring her joy and permit a sense of belonging are writing in her journal and her cat.

A conflictive relationship erupts between Celestina and two of her biological father's legitimate daughters. The legitimate daughters are jealous of the new found relationship between Celestina and their father and are outraged that their father has included Celestina and her mother in his will. The daughters use deceitful and aggressive methods to remedy the situation. One daughter uses verbal cruelty to express her disgust towards her half sister. She calls Celestina "bruja, bastarda, bruja, bastarda" (Matute 5: 314). The girl makes no effort to try and befriend this new found family member and shuts her out of the family. This reaction shows that the girl favors conflict and cruelty over amicable conversation to convey her feelings towards Celestina. It also demonstrates that she is not confident in her relationship with her father and she would not feel the need to verbally attack her half sister. Although this type of behavior is not commendable, it is a far cry from the actions of her sister.

Celestina's other half sister decides to handle the situation in a much more violent fashion. She deceitfully pretends to take a genuine interest in Celestina by chatting with

her. Naturally the half sister has an ulterior motive and pretends to befriend Celestina only in hope of obtaining information to use against her. The legitimate daughter learns that Celestina is fond of a cat that lives in the building and she asks if the cat is Celestina's. The narrative voice reveals their conversation:

Conque a los pocos días me vio con el gato, y se acercó, y me dijo, qué bonito gato, ¿es tuyo?, sí, le dije, porque me había dicho mi madre que no era de nadie, que un día entró y ella le daba las sobras, pero que ser, lo que se dice ser, no era de nadie, así que me lo quedé. Déjamelos, dijo la flonflona, y le dije, bueno, porque no podía decir que no, y me quedó zozobra cuando la vi que se lo llevaba. (Matute 5: 314-15)

This conversation shows how Celestina is weak and naïve. Celestina is unable to tell her half sister to leave her and her cat alone. She is a child with no self-confidence that suffers the consequences of not being able to defend herself and the things that are important to her.

Shortly after their conversation, Celestina's cat suffers a painful death at the hands of her jealous half sister and Celestina feels saddened by her loss. The cat was the only living thing she could relate to and now she is left alone again to survive in a world that has shut her out. She turns to her journal to express her feelings of sadness because she has no one with whom she can speak. She writes, "Y ahora he cogido el cuaderno otra vez, porque me muero por dentro, que la flonflona le ha dado una bola de carne al gato, con cristales rotos mezclados, y el gato se me ha muerto ayer, en las rodillas, retorcido y con la boca llena de espuma colorada" (Matute 5: 315). The actions of the

half sister are a violation of the animal's rights and demonstrate her inability to handle the situation in a civil manner. She relies on violence as a tool to convey her feelings.

It is disturbing enough that a child would kill an innocent animal for her own benefit, but what makes this case especially disturbing is how grotesquely the legitimate daughter kills the cat. She does not just give the cat a single blow, killing it instantly so it would not have to suffer. Feeding the cat shards of glass makes the cat suffer a painful death. She uses the cat as a means to antagonize Celestina and to make her suffer. She feels abandoned and betrayed by her father for showing kindness and generosity to Celestina. According to Kellert and Felthous' motives for committing cruelty against animals, her motivation for killing the cat includes expressing aggression through the cat, to enhance her own aggression, to retaliate against Celestina, and to displace her hostility from Celestina to the cat (Merz-Perez and Heide 14). She does not want to share her father and sends a clear message what will happen if Celestina attempts to spend time with her father again. She wants to sever all ties with her illegitimate family and does not want Celestina or her mother to be the beneficiaries of her father's estate. Ascione explains how animals can serve a form of emotional abuse towards others and states, "Abusing animals may be a way of emotionally abusing others. Vernon R. Wiehe (1990) has described how siblings may psychologically abuse their brother or sister by torturing or killing the pets these children hold dear" (59). Displaced Aggression Theory can be applied in this case as well for the sister clearly wishes to express aggression through an animal in an attempt to retaliate against another person (Merz-Perez and Heide 61).

Celestina also resorts to using violence to express herself. She has no role models to guide her in this situation or friends to that she can turn to for advice. After having suffered the loss of her cat she retaliates against her half sister and beats her up. Celestina explains:

...y he hecho lo que ella, me he escondido debajo de la escalera, y cuando bajaba cantando, he salido y la he tirado al suelo, qué piernotas tiene, la tía, la tía, ahora sé por qué la Ernestina llama tíos a los que no quiere. Cómo me gustaba arrearle, montada encima de ella, a la flonflona, y decirle, so tía, so tía, la he dejado morada. Con que luego salí arreando, me escondí en el lavadero, allí nadie me encuentra, y oía los gritos.

(Matute 5: 315).

It may not be surprising that the legitimate daughter also ends up being a victim of violence. Merz-Perez and Heide comment on the correlation between those that commit acts of cruelty to animals and how they are treated by others, “Cruelty to animals can be a viable indicator not only of individuals at risk of committing violence but also of individuals who are at risk of having violence committed against them” (158).

Neither girl knows how to handle their feelings of anger and jealousy, resulting in aggressive behavior in lieu of logical decision making to explore other options. There is no dialogue between the girls and they chose to handle the situation through violence. Actually killing something, and in such a gruesome way, is the sign of a troubled person that does not have a strong sense of identity and does not have the reasoning skills to come up with a better solution. Studies have shown that children that experience

rejection may lead to aggressive behavior as Davis explains about his study of Jeffrey Dahmer, the notorious serial killer and animal abuser, “Throughout much of his life, Dahmer reportedly felt alienated and rejected and longed to be noticed and accepted by his parents (Merz-Perez and Heide 62). According to Hellman and Black (1966), the rejection of a parent is a very significant and painful experience that might lead to aggression” (Merz-Perez and Heide 62). The only common bond between the three sisters is the feeling of abandonment and rejection by their father. The girls do not live in a nurturing environment that fosters strong personal development. Their damaged sense of personal identity is revealed by their irrational and violent behavior. Animal abuse can be a gauge to measure character, “Contemporary observers of violence in the development of children continue to highlight animal abuse as an indicator of development gone astray” (Ascione 17).

Matute’s literature portrays violence being used as a form of communication and expression. Her characters are emotionally troubled and are frequently rejected or abandoned by their parents, thus, directly affecting the development of their personal identity. The violence seen in this short story is a direct result of the inability of the characters to function in society.

The following short story to be analyzed is “Fausto” (*El tiempo* 1957) which narrates the tale of a friendship between an orphaned nine year old girl and a sickly cat she names “Fausto”. After several unsuccessful attempts to find a home for the cat she feels she is out of options and decides to kill her only friend.

The nameless protagonist in “Fausto” is a sad character that is forced to take on the responsibilities of an adult at a very young age. She is hungry, in poor health, uneducated and friendless. She does not attend school and as a result, does not have the means to make friendships with children her own age. She lives in isolation and suffers from the psychological trauma of having lost her parents. She and her grandfather work together pushing an organ in hope of earning tips with which to buy food. Their financial situation is bleak and the two suffer both emotionally and physically due to their unfortunate circumstances. Ascione speaks of possible consequences of imposing unsuitable responsibilities on children and states, “One other relevant form of psychological maltreatment is *exploiting and corrupting* a child. These forms of abuse include modeling and encouraging antisocial behavior and forcing developmentally inappropriate responsibilities on a child” (108). In this case the grandfather is not necessarily intentionally forcing inappropriate responsibilities on his granddaughter. The grandfather is obliged to treat his granddaughter in this manner as a result of living in extreme poverty and not having other family members to assist him to more adequately care for her. The grandfather is old and sickly and can barely take care of himself. The child is forced to behave as an adult when she is simply not ready. Nonetheless, the girl must take on responsibilities greater than someone her age can manage and as a result, she suffers psychologically.

The pessimistic tone of the story briefly changes for the better when the girl befriends a cat that she immediately names “Fausto”. The cat serves as a source of happiness for the child; she enjoys its company and adores caring for the cat. She notices

the cat is frail and injured and does everything in her power to provide for her new friend. Being able to identify with the cat enables the child to experience a sense of belonging which is foreign to her. The narrative voice divulges, “Desde aquel día el gato no separó de la niña. Ella lo llevaba siempre, enfermizo y tristón, bajo su brazo. Lo cuidaba mucho, y además le buscaba de comer” (Matute 3: 138).

The relationship between the girl and her cat is immediately criticized by her grandfather and others in society. They are unable to see the positive benefits that this cat is providing for the child, such as an outlet for affection and companionship or how caring for an animal can teach responsibility and facilitate contact with other human beings (Ascione 5). All they see is a sickly cat that is a waste of time. They have greater responsibilities to tackle and they consider the child’s behavior as foolish. The narrative voice describes the scene when the grandfather sees Fausto for the first time:

El abuelo, al verlo, se enfadó mucho.

-¡Fuera con eso!...

¡Eso es lo más inútil y zángano que he visto! No se atreve a nada, y, como tú lo tienes tan mal acostumbrado que le traes los bocados a la boca y lo llevas siempre en brazos, está hecho un enteco. (Matute 3: 137-38)

The neighbor describes the cat as “asqueroso” (Matute 3: 138). The child feels further alienated by her grandfather and neighbors because they disapprove of her new found friendship. She feels that she is never understood by anyone and must rely only on herself to survive. The narrative voice reveals how the neighbors are sympathetic towards the odd pair; however, they are not willing to take action to assist them and the narrator

reveals, “Todos los de la calle tenía lástima de ellos. Pero cada uno tenía sus preocupaciones, y hasta sus enfermos” (Matute 3: 136). Not belonging to a group affects her ability to acquire a strong sense of self. The child explains how both she and her relationship with the cat is misunderstood, “Nadie lo comprendería nunca, como nadie comprendía su cariño hacia *Fausto*, tan feo y tan poca cosa” (Matute 3: 138). Muscari explains the importance of feeling support and states, “Your child needs to share his joys, fears, and frustrations. It’s crucial for him to experience a secure parent-child relationship. This along with a sense of worth and loveableness, serves as a foundation for effective coping” (105). This child cannot rely on her family or community to experience support.

After having been warned by her grandfather that she is to get rid of the cat, he catches her with the animal and becomes outraged and kicks the cat with all of his strength to make it clear to his granddaughter that he does not approve of their relationship. The narrative voice describes the incident, “Entonces el Viejo tuvo un arranque de rabia. Se acercó al gato y le dio una soberbia patada” (Matute 3: 141). The girl could barely stand to listen or watch as Fausto flew through the air. She assisted her grandfather by hurriedly pushing the organillo and quickly leaving Fausto behind so as not to get into further trouble. Astonishingly, she does not cry and she leaves the scene. She thought the cat, her only friend, was dead. The grandfather sets an example that it is acceptable behavior to mistreat a harmless animal and that acts of violence or cruelty are methods to facilitate problem solving (Ascione 60). It is painful for a child to watch an

animal they love be mistreated in general, however, it is even worse to see an animal suffer at the hands of a respected family member.

The girl demonstrates unusual control to not display her emotions. She knows that she is not to reveal her inner thoughts and emotions. This type of behavior it is not tolerated in her society. The narrative voice explains, “La niña sabía que no es bueno hacer grandes demostraciones, excepto durante el trabajo” (Matute 3: 140). It is not healthy to bottle up emotions and can lead to irrational and emotional outbreaks. Moreover, the child does not have an intimate relationship with anyone and cannot lean on anyone for moral and/or emotional support.

Fausto survives the incident with the grandfather and the girl makes a final attempt to resolve her problem and fails. The last straw is when the church does not accept Fausto and the girl is forced to come up with her own solution. She has no one else to turn to and has exhausted all of the options. A man that works in the church offers his opinion to the girl, “-Lo mejor que puedes hacer es ahogarlo. No sirve para maldita la cosa. Ni siquiera es bonito. Mátalo, y dejará de sufrir, porque está muy enfermo...Llévatelo de aquí. Si no, yo lo mataré” (Matute 3: 149). Just as her grandfather taught her when he kicked the cat, she uses violence as a means to solve a problem.

Upon exiting the church she kills her cat and leaves it lying in the street in a pool of blood. The narrative voice explains, “La niña cogió a *Fausto* por las patas de atrás y le golpeó la cabeza contra el bordillo de la acera. *Fausto* tosió por última vez. Y, ésta, sí parecía un hombre. Lo dejó cuidadosamente tendido en el charquito rojo, que, poco a poco, se agrandaba bajo su cabeza rota. Los ojos de *Fausto* se apagaron” (Matute 3: 149-

50). It is shocking to consider that the nine year old child decides to terminate the cat's life in such an atrocious manner and it is not just any cat that she kills, it is her cat that she loves and has cared for so intimately. The ease with which the girl leaves the scene with Fausto laying in a pool of blood is astonishing. She never turns back, never sheds a tear and goes on with her "detached from society" life. It is emotionally challenging to kill an animal, especially if it holds a special place in one's heart. The girl's act of violence is a result of belonging to a community that offers no assistance. The grandfather is not the only one that recommends she gets rid of the cat, the neighbors and the church concur. Her entire society encourages her to sever her relationship with the cat which only leads to further alienation of the child. She knows she will be criticized if she does not abandon the cat; therefore, her act of violence is more accepted by society than her acts of nurturing.

The story reaches a new height when she returns home and tells her grandfather that he was right. Fausto "no servía para nada" (Matute 3: 150) and then adds that she bets he is going to die soon. Her actions are continually astonishing as well as her ability to remain detached from feeling emotions. Jones comments:

The contrast found within the character of the "black sheep" herself is repeated in other works: the more striking examples include the introduction of the child's personality and world. The child may become an innocent monster who unwittingly commits horrible acts as if they were perfectly natural...the horror is even greater as she compares the cat with

her grandfather and states that he, too, will die soon. (The Literary World, 52)

The grandfather is deeply saddened by the news of Fausto as he realizes that his granddaughter has lost her innocence. She has given up hope for dreaming and optimism. He might be saddened by the fact that she has given up on him as well. She has proven that she is no longer a child.

This short story depicts the somber and pessimistic tone that marked Spain during the 20th century as well as illustrates the lack of nationhood and community. Jones explains that the astonishing endings in Matute's work is intentional and states, "As in the earlier collections of stories, these surprise endings are not happy; their purpose is to reinforce the tone of pessimism which is evident in even the most fantastic stories" (The Literary World, 28). Matute's short fiction depicts how violence is used as a coping mechanism for problems that have no solution.

The nameless protagonist in "Noticia del joven K" (*Algunos muchachos* 1964) is a victim of social isolation that turns to violence as a coping mechanism. He is a bastard child being reared by his maternal grandfather that physically abuses him and offers no emotional support. His biological father has no contact with the protagonist and only focuses his attention on his other son, the protagonist's half brother. While the isolated boy feels rejected at home, he also feels equally rejected at school and despises his half brother who repeatedly tries to befriend him. He is behind in school and must study with younger children. This causes feelings of jealousy and embarrassment for the protagonist and this propels his desire to be alone at all times leaving the boy confused by his own

identity. The only person that the boy feels any sense of closeness with is Don Ángel, his school teacher. The teacher attempts to help the boy from time to time because he was friends with the boy's mother. The protagonist beats his half brother to death and he ends up in jail. The story closes with the boy begging don Ángel to stay by his side once he is released from prison because he cannot take his isolation any longer.

Every possible outlet the protagonist has to make him feel like a functioning member of society does just the opposite. At home he is physically beaten by his grandfather and at school he is ridiculed. These are places that should provide a nurturing environment for children and adolescents but serve as the sources of the protagonist's frustration, anger and bitterness. The abusive relationship with his grandfather especially contributes to the child's poor self-esteem. The boy describes his rapport with his grandfather to his teacher, “-¿Y qué? ¿Don Jeo es bueno para mí, acaso? Me tiene asco, porque mi madre me trajo soltera al mundo... ¿me ha visto cómo tengo la espalda, llena de vergajazos? Eso hace don Jeo conmigo” (Matute 5: 349). Abuse and neglect can result in violent behavior and place individuals at risk for adult delinquency and violent criminal activity. Merz-Perez and Heide explain, “Similar to the study by Sendi and Blomgren (1975), a fifth study, by Lewis, Shanok, Grant, and Ritvo (1983) , found that domestic violence, specifically that imposed upon the family by a violent father, was the most important factor in predicting violence” (42). The grandfather serves as a father figure in this story and his habitual beatings can only contribute to the boy's aggressive behavior. Unfortunately, this holds true in this story; the boy ends up killing his half brother.

It is easier for the protagonist to be alone because he is aware of his social status and how he is negatively perceived by others in society including his own family. He also realizes that he has a tendency towards violence and tries to combat his aggressiveness by isolating himself. However, he fails in the process because he has not developed the emotional tools to undertake such a task and lacks sincere support from his family and society. The protagonist explains, "...que ya todos lo saben que yo he de estar solo, no quiero hablar con ninguno; porque a mí este curso no me corresponde, que no soy de su edad, y si he tenido que repetir curso...ni amigos quiero" (Matute 5: 348). The isolation of this boy is so severe that he does not even want to talk to others. He has no outlet for his emotions, not even a pet, as is seen in other Matute stories. This is a reason why his violent behavior leads him to kill, the gravest outcome of a violent act. Physical aggression is the only way he knows how to express himself. The importance of socialization should not be underestimated in its contribution to healthy identity formation in individuals.

The relationship between the child and his teacher is conflictive and turbulent, yet don Ángel is the child's only source of partial support, and he turns to him in times of need. The teacher does not provide him with consistent constructive support and speaks to him harshly at times. For example, there are instances when don Ángel threatens to kick him out of school. These mixed messages lead to erratic and aggressive behavior by the boy. Don Ángel encourages the protagonist to accept the wishes of his half brother to

become friends. The child dreads the idea and refuses to have any contact with his half brother. Don Ángel becomes angry and yells at him, “-¡Si no callas esa bocazo te expulso! ¿me oyes? ¡Te expulso! Y ya sabes lo que dice tu abuelo, que si te expulso te mata o te envía a arar al campo” (Matute 5: 349). This type of behavior does not assist the child with his problems; it only aggravates the situation. Don Ángel opts to threaten the boy rather than have sympathy and compassion for his situation. The teacher does not discuss the situation with the boy in an attempt to clarify his feelings and find non-violent ways to channel his frustration. Not only does Don Ángel not respect the boy’s decision to refrain from having any type of relationship with his half brother, he actually praises the half brother, the source of the boy’s angst. Don Ángel asserts, “Y no me desvíes la conversación y dime, ¿qué te ha hecho el pobre?, acaso te molesta porque es el más joven, el más inteligente, el más bueno...” (Matute 5: 349).

The protagonist attempts to control his anger and jealousy towards his half brother but his numerous attempts to befriend the angry child makes this too challenging. The half brother seeks his brother’s friendship and approaches him frequently and says, “Y él va y me dice: es que quiero ser amigo tuyo” (Matute 5: 348). The protagonist wants to have absolutely nothing to do with him and continually warns the half brother to leave him alone by saying, “Le he dicho varias veces: mira, no te pongas en mi camino, mejor será, no te me pongas delante, ya sabes cómo soy y mis cosas, no te me enredes entre los pies, no me colmes la paciencia” (Matute 5: 347). The half brother does not heed his warning and ends up beaten to death. Matute explained her thoughts about children who kill other children in an interview with Victor-M. Varela and states, “Me da pena, porque

significa que no hemos avanzado nada. Siempre ha habido niños que han matado. Estamos como en el siglo X” (<http://www.clubcultura.com>). The protagonist is incapable of interacting with others in society; he never acquired the proper social skills to control his behavior. Due to his inability to understand his emotions and role in society, he feels confused by his own identity and states, “...pero yo no soy un niño, yo soy un hombre. Y si no soy un hombre, mejor, soy otra cosa distinta a todo el mundo, a mí nadie se me ponga delante, le hundo el cráneo, tengo los puños más grandes de toda la Escuela...” (Matute 5: 350). Although he does not know who he is, he does realize he is going to use violence to resolve the situation with that anyone crosses his path.

When the protagonist reaches his all time low after being released from jail, he reaches out to don Ángel in desperation and is once again rejected. The boy pleads for his acceptance and says, “¿Por qué me abandona don Ángel, por qué se va... Voy corriendo, aún le alcanzo, si quiero le alcanzo...No. No me deje, tengo miedo, ya no puedo huir, dése cuenta: estoy solo” (Matute 5: 355). Don Ángel is willing to help him to a certain extent but never completely takes him under his wing. This story demonstrates how a fractured family, parental abuse and neglect, and social isolation affect identity and contribute to violent behavior.

Short Story Analysis: Children’s Violence Against Adults

In Matute’s short fiction, adults are also the target of unjust cruelty and violence. The second portion of this chapter is dedicated to the analysis of acts of violence and cruelty committed by children against adults. A multitude of factors influence the causes of violence committed by children and adolescents. The leading causes are socio-

economic status and the family environment. Both the absence of a parent in the home and the presence of an aggressive and/or abusive parent in the home, especially the father figure, are key factors linked to violence and abuse. Matute's short stories support the idea that ruptured families are a contributing factor to the acts of violence. Also, she portrays how the socially isolated child is at greater risk of committing violence against others and also being the victims of violent acts.

The short story "El río" (*Historias de la Artámila* 1961) is narrated by a little girl that spends part of the year with her family in a rural area and the rest of the time in the city. She and her brother befriend two local brothers and learn how to survive in the countryside through the brothers' local knowledge. The younger brother, Donato, has a bigger impact on the girl because she finds him, as well as his stories, fascinating. The children from the city quickly learn from Donato that the local teacher, don Germán, is a drunk that physically and verbally abuses the children in the classroom. In fact, there is a rumor that don Germán previously killed one of his students. One day Donato is expelled from school after being beaten and publically humiliated by don Germán in the classroom. Donato is angry and tells his city friends about the events that transpired at school that day. About a week later, don Germán is found dead due to pneumonia. Some time after the teacher's funeral Donato's young body is found floating in the river. He left a suicide note begging forgiveness from God for having poisoned don Germán.

Don Germán is an authority figure and rather than providing a nurturing environment in which to instill good morals and proper education, he abuses his power and victimizes his students. The inappropriate relationship between the teacher and his

students causes unpredictable and reactive behavior from the students. Children react to fear in different manners and some can handle the pressure better than others. Fear can be perceived as a threat and children must learn to handle their emotional reactions caused by fear. Donato sees his situation at school as threatening and explains to his friends that the teacher is at school to kill them and states, "...está él, allí dentro, en la escuela, para matarnos" (Matute 3: 286). This was not Donato's first physically abusive altercation with the teacher. He already had reason to fear don Germán prior to being publically humiliated by being physically beaten and then expelled from school.

The repetitive violent altercations Donato experiences with the teacher affect his self image and contribute to his feelings of aggressiveness and hostility. He first discusses the matter with his friends and reveals his true feelings about the teacher. He then acts out his aggression by pretending to smash his skull with a stick. The narrative voice reveals, "-Esta es la cabeza de don Germán-dijo-. ¿Ves tú? Ésta es la sesera, y se la dejo como engrudo..." (Matute 3: 286). These attempts to cope with his fear of the teacher fail and Donato still feels that he is in danger. Donato swears to his friend that the teacher is going to pay for his actions and states, "Miraba al suelo y tenía los párpados oscuros y extraños, como untados de barro-. Me las pagará, me las pagará..., ¿sabéis? Me pegó con la vara: me dio así y así..." (Matute 3: 285). Donato is unable to cope or adapt to the violent situation at school and his resentment towards don Germán becomes all encompassing. Just as his teacher has taught him, Donato turns to violence to solve his problems and decides to poison him. Sheila Melzac explains there is a need for children to adapt to violent experiences and states, "Children must adapt in some way to violent experiences

and integrate them in order to move forward. Clearly, developmental harm arises when risk factors accumulate and overwhelm a child's capacity for coping" (Varma 16).

The anguish Donato feels in regard to the sudden death of don Germán is overpowering and he decides to commit suicide to alleviate his misery and guilt. The child is convinced that his teacher did not die of pneumonia and is certain that his mix of poisonous and magical flowers he secretly planted in don Germán's wine is the true culprit. Whether or not the poisonous concoction of flowers was truly lethal is unimportant. The boy thought he intentionally poisoned the teacher with the sole purpose of killing him. In Donato's mind, these flowers were lethal. The narrative voice reveals the content of his suicide note, "...Le maté yo a don Germán, le mezclé en el vino la flor encarnada de la fiebre dura, la flor amarilla de las llagas y la flor de la dormida eterna. Adiós, padre, que tengo remordimiento. Me perdone Dios, que soy el asesino" (Matute 3: 288). The combination of the boy's weakened sense of self and the inability to cope with his feelings of fear contributed to his demise.

Violence is used as a mechanism to combat personal confrontation and fear in the short story "El río". The author depicts challenges youth can face in the classroom and how authority figures can abuse their power. Her story serves as social criticism and demonstrates how violence negatively alters personal identity and propels further violence.

The main character of "Pecado de omisión" (*Historias de la Artámila* 1961), Lope, is age thirteen when he starts to experience great misfortune. His mother passes away, leaving him orphaned and under the care of a rich and selfish cousin of his father

named Emeterio Ruiz Heredia. The boy is not warmly welcomed by Emeterio or his immediate family and he is forced to sleep in the barn with the animals upon his arrival. Lope is abruptly awakened the next day and informed that he is no longer to attend school; he is to work as a shepherd. He spends the next five years working in the hills with a developmentally disabled man triple his age that rarely speaks. The odd pair sleep in the bushes to protect themselves from the elements. One evening while Lope is receiving a routine check up from a doctor at Emeterio's house, an old classmate of Lope's passes by and greets him. Lope feels uncomfortable and extremely irritable. Seeing his classmate as a successful young lawyer makes him realize what his life could have been if his father had not passed away or if his cousin treated him with fairness and respect and as a welcome member of the family. Lope impulsively picks up a rock, smashes Emeterio's head and leaves him to die. Lope is crying as he is being handcuffed and taken away. The locals exclaim that young Lope would have starved to death if he had not been taken in by Emeterio.

Extreme circumstances are the true demise of Lope and the cause of his fit of violence. The first traumatic event he has to overcome is the death of his parents. His mother was his last immediate family member and Lope was forced to be taken in by Emeterio. The new family does not show any affection or sympathy for this child that lost his parents. Lope is left to face the emotional challenges of the death of his parents alone. The decision to make Lope work as a shepherd in the hills essentially banishes him from society. This marks the beginning of his extreme isolation. Lope and his coworker only come to town once a year for the town festival and for medical care. They do not even

have a need to go to town to purchase food; all of their provisions are sent to them. Lope does not have the opportunity to develop social skills, interact with others or acquire a reliable coping mechanism to deal with stress and emotions. It is just a question of time before Lope snaps. All that is lacking is a trigger to an emotional breakdown. Jones notes, “The increasing disgust which the character feels toward society, certain individuals, or distasteful situations causes his revolt” (The Literary World,75) in Matute’s fiction.

Emeterio is a rich and powerful man that idealizes his family and enjoys his status as the town mayor. He is clearly not empathetic to Lope’s situation and sees him as a burden. Emeterio did not get along with his cousin and takes out his dislike on the innocent child. He could have made an attempt to get to know Lope as an individual; he may have had an entirely different personality than his father. He does not give Lope a chance to prove himself as a capable individual. The narrative voice reveals Emeterio’s attitude towards Lope and his family, “Emeterio Ruiz no se llevaba bien con aquel primo lejano, y a su viuda, por cumplir, la ayudó buscándole jornales extraordinarios. Luego, al chico, aunque lo recogió una vez huérfano, sin herencia ni oficio, no le miró a derechas. Y como él los de su casa” (Matute 3: 276).

Lope’s best interests are not a concern for Emeterio and this is seen in his conversation with the local priest. The priest comments that it was a shame seeing Lope head off into the hills to work as a shepherd because he is a good student with potential. Emeterio becomes enraged and defensive about the situation:

-Lo malo- dijo don Lorenzo, rascándose la oreja con su uña larga y amarillenta- es que el chico vale. Si tuviera medios podría sacarse partido de él. Es listo. Muy listo. En la escuela...

Emeterio le cortó, con la mano frente a los ojos:

-¡Bueno, bueno! Yo no digo que no. Pero hay que ganarse el currusco. La vida está peor cada día que pasa. (Matute 3: 277-78)

Emeterio is aware of Lope's potential but does nothing to promote his success. He is a wealthy man with connections that could find more constructive options for Lope; however, out of shrewdness and selfishness, he chooses not to help him.

Emeterio has a large home with plenty of room to accommodate a temporary guest. The cousin, a supposed role model, never engages in dialogue with Lope and only gives him orders. The disappointment and hatred the child must feel is overwhelming and damaging to his self worth. To Lope's dismay, he has no other options and must accept this type of maltreatment. Muscari explains how low self-esteem, among other things, can contribute to violent behavior and states, "Problematic aggressive behaviors occur when children show disregard for the feelings, physical safety, rights, or property of others....Violence does not occur in a vacuum. It involves multiple factors, and feelings of anger, shame, poor self-esteem, and powerlessness that underlie violent behaviors" (1).

The final straw for Lope is when he sees the amenities and comfortable lifestyles of people around him; he realizes he has been forced into a deprived life. As he is finishing his checkup with the doctor at Emeterio's house, he sees Emeterio's wife, daughter and grandchildren happily playing together and enjoying their time together as a

blissful unified family. Then a fellow classmate from school stops by and Lope feels inferior in his presence. He notices how his former classmate appears so fresh and young. Lope's years of hardship working outside has aged him physically and emotionally. Lope's anger begins to build and build. He feels rage in his veins as he is unable to express himself and feels outraged by his circumstances. Children may become aggressive in tough predicaments and must decide how to respond. Youth that do not possess effective problem-management techniques can either withdraw or become aggressive. Violence is the answer for Lope. He is isolated, friendless and feels no sense of belonging. The scenario at Emeterio's house made him realize what his life would have been like if he had the same opportunities. When Emeterio rudely tells Lope to leave his house and go back to work Lope cracks. Emeterio's orders, "-Anda, muchacho, vuelve a Sagrado, que ya es hora..." (Matute 3: 280). Not even on a Sunday afternoon does Emeterio embrace Lope. He does not want him to interact with his family and the presence of Lope near his close knit unit disgusts him.

The coldness of Emeterio triggers an emotional breakdown and Lope turns to violence to express his anger and resentment toward this cruel man. The narrative voice describes the grotesque killing of Emeterio revealing his pure hatred of his situation and relative:

En la plaza había una piedra cuadrada, rojiza. Una de esas piedras grandes como melones que los muchachos transportan desde alguna pared derruida. Lentamente, Lope la cogió entre sus manos. Emeterio le miraba, reposado, con una leve curiosidad. Tenía la mano derecha metida

entre la faja y el estómago. Ni siquiera le dio tiempo de sacarla: el golpe sordo, el salpicar de su propia sangre en el pecho, la muerte y la sorpresa, como dos hermanas, subieron hasta él, así sin más. (Matute 3: 280-81)

This quote demonstrates the harm and damage that feelings of isolation and rejection can create. Individuals that suffer from a constant lack of sense of belonging are extremely emotionally taxed and tend to have poor coping skills. Lope felt abandoned and rejected by the family as his dad's cousin never treated him the same as the rest of his family. He was always treated as an outsider and this affected his well being and outlook of himself. With the arrival of his classmate, these differences became even more apparent and were too much for the abandoned child to take. He had spent years in near seclusion only with the presence of another man many years his age. The sight of his classmate as a young, healthy and successful man and his cousins living the life of a rich family pushed him over the edge. These factors in combination with the tragic loss of his parents, his extreme social isolation and the bleak forecast of his future cause him to turn to violence as a coping mechanism.

“El precio de la soledad” (*El río* 1963), the final story of analysis, opens with a female narrative voice remembering her feelings of fascination regarding vagabonds in her youth. Ever since she was a child, she was enthralled by these roaming men that she considered to be interesting, despite the communities' negative feelings and opinions of them. She remembers many instances from her childhood in which she witnessed the mistreatment of vagabonds, but she particularly remembers one evening when the local boys took extreme pleasure in mistreating a vagabond that arrived in town for their own

self benefit and amusement. This poor man's needs and pleas were ignored, ridiculed and completely disregarded.

“El precio de la soledad” demonstrates how a group dynamic can alter sensible behavior and lead to dangerous consequences. The adolescents in this story know that their comportment is inappropriate and life threatening; however, they discount this cruelty and abuse this man for sheer pleasure. The narrative voice explains:

Pocas veces he visto tanta alegría en aquellos muchachos, por lo común de aire melancólico y cerrado. Celebraban con risotadas la angustia del mendigo, que intentaba torpemente imitar su alegría. Sus labios temblaron en una falsa sonrisa...Al final el mendigo se tambaleaba, lloriqueaba.

(Matute 5: 135)

Children at a very early age know the difference between right and wrong and are able to experience feelings of empathy towards others. They are also aware of the consequences of their actions and that they are capable of hurting others. Muscari explains that even school-age children are aware of the harm they can commit and states, “School-age children begin to understand the consequences of injury and the finality of death. They know they can hurt and even kill someone. Considering this knowledge level, planned aggressive acts (carrying a weapon, deliberately destroying property) are very worrisome” (13). There is no excuse for the actions of the older children in this short story. They are aware of their actions and act recklessly out of selfishness.

A different emotional and psychological dynamic exists when people are alone or in a group. Individuals can act irrationally or in a manner they normally would not when

they are present in a group situation. Peer groups effect individuals and can unfortunately cause delinquent behavior. Muscari explains the difference in the way people respond to individual and group situations:

Peer groups become harmful when they lead your teen into delinquent behavior because of the pressure to conform and his need to fit in. He may participate in alcohol and drug abuse, sexual activity, and violent acts, not because he wants to or because he enjoys them, but because he wants to prove himself, vent aggression, or gain superior position on younger members of the group. (139)

Group situations can provoke behavior that individuals normally would not entertain. The adolescents demonstrate their lack of decency as humans as they laugh and celebrate the man's physical and mental suffering.

This is not the first time they have targeted a vagabond with type of disregard, the narrative voice explains, "No hace mucho, en un pueblo llano, los mozos mantearon a un mendigo, que se estrelló contra el suelo. Apenas hace unos meses, otros muchachos atraparon a un mendigo y le rociaron el cabello con petróleo para prendérselo. Suerte tuvo del cura, que llegó a tiempo de impedirlo" (Matute 5: 135). The social stigma that accompanies a vagabond plays an important role in the behavior of these adolescents as this society frowns upon vagrants and encourages their abuse. This is demonstrated by the fact that no one other than the priest does anything to stop the maltreatment. There were numerous instances when a member of the community could have tried to put a stop to the abuse of the vagabond the night the boys went from bar to bar making the vagrant

drink excessively. At the very least, someone could have verbally complained about their behavior, yet no one expressed disgust or disapproval of the situation. This alludes to the fact the individuals in Matute's fictional society take a greater interest in their persona than those around them. Her characters are unwilling to take the risk of concerning themselves with the well being of others because their own lives are bogged down with problems and cannot and/or will not take on social responsibilities outside of their realm.

One of the more deceitful aspects of the adolescent's group behavior is the manner in which the boys present a false sense of friendliness to their victim. Naturally, they do not have a true interest in making a new friend; they only act amicably at first in order to draw in their victim. This technique enables them to overpower their prey and later control his emotions. The vagabond turns into a helpless victim that has no chance of escape that must wait out the duration of their cruel and intentional actions. The narrative voice speaks out about this false sense of friendship and states:

Pero todas estas cosas, con ser crueles y brutales, no me impresionaron tanto como esa circunstancia en que el mendigo se convierte en, por decirlo así, "camarada" de un grupo de hombre jóvenes y algo bebidos. Entonces el mendigo es arrebatado por ellos y obligado, con voz dura y palabras falsamente amistosos, a seguirles en sus celebraciones dominicales o nocturnas. (Matute 5: 135)

The boys abuse the vagrant physically as well as psychologically. The amount of alcohol the vagabond is forced to drink is excessive and life threatening. He is unable to stand on his own and when he begs to leave him be; they deny the request and bring him to his

feet. He becomes a marionette and is controlled and lied to by the adolescents. The vagabond's worthless pleas are what bring extreme pleasure to this abusive group and spark further maltreatment. After offering him his first drink that he readily accepts he asks for something to eat and the boys tell him, “-¡Luego vendrá!” (Matute 5: 135). They already know they have no intention of feeding him; it is all part of their game. The boys continue to play with his emotions when they tease and taunt him by eating food directly in front of him. His multiple requests for nourishment have been denied throughout the evening and the adolescents intentionally eat to further taunt this individual. The narrative voice demonstrates the lack of empathy of the boys towards the vagrant and their maliciousness:

Pedía algo de comer mientras ellos engullían ostentadamente aceitunas, pan atún en aceite. A él le daban vino, sólo vino y aguardiente. Recuerdo con un estremecimiento, la voz plañidera del mendigo, que clamaba: - Dejadme, dejadme... Toda la noche, de taberna en taberna, empujándole, levantándole del suelo cuando se caía, le obligaron a beber... Cuando apuntaba el sol escapó. Aún le persiguió el higo del herrero con un caso que le arrojó al fin como una piedra estrellándose contra las rocas del camino. (Matute 5: 135-6)

This excessive bullying demonstrates how individuals may tend to act in ways they normally might not when in a group. When an individual asks for help as the vagabond repeatedly does it is hard to deny assistance to someone who is in need. This was not the case in “El precio de la soledad” as the boys preferred to satisfy their own needs and

respond to group pressure. There is complete disregard for the mental and physical health of the vagabond. His weakness and vulnerability are the ammunition the boys need to engage in their cruel, violent, and selfish behavior.

Matute's short fiction illustrates a correlation between acts of violence and cruelty and identity issues. Violence plays a versatile role in her fiction; it can be used as a controlling mechanism or a means of self expression. Regardless of the role violence plays in the lives of her characters, the character's need to use violence in any capacity reveals their instability and depicts how violence interplays with their identity and sense of self. Penelope Trickett explains, "Researchers have placed particular emphasis on stress, poverty, and social isolation; studies indicate that these factors play a critical role in violence perpetration and victimization..." (204). Matute's short fiction consistently portrays that a lack of sense of belonging is a fundamental problem for her characters and research has shown that social isolation is a leading contributor to acts of violence.

The society Matute presents in her fictional world is one of selfishness and individual concern. Group dynamics are generally dysfunctional and communal support is non-existent. Her characters are left to face the world on their own and are thus unable to experience a sense of belonging inside or outside of the home which directly affects their personal development and well-being. Matute's characters are more than frustrated and, as a result, turn to violence as a coping mechanism or fall victim to violence. In both scenarios violence becomes a part of their identity and further complicates their view of what is considered moral and acceptable behavior for themselves and society.

CHAPTER FOUR: TRAUMA AND MEMORY

The society Matute portrays in her short fiction is one of hardship and suffering that is incapable of supporting itself and its members in a cohesive fashion. Individuals are left to stand alone to face the tribulations of life and often fail in their attempts to coexist in a world that does not embrace them nor encourage them to survive. Matute's protagonists frequently endure some form of trauma and these situations negatively impact their persona. Many of her characters are unable to overcome their personal tragedies and, as a result, are faced with identity problems that force them to live their lives in isolation, further contributing to their problematic sense of personal well being.

This chapter discusses different types of psychological, physical and sexual trauma suffered by Matute's characters in selected short stories as well as the interdependent relationship between trauma and memory. The chapter opens with a general discussion of trauma and memory, offering definitions and a brief history of the research and development of selected trauma and memory theories. A brief synopsis and analysis of the selected short stories chosen for study follows the introduction. The chapter closes with conclusions regarding the detrimental impact of trauma and traumatic memory on personal identity in Matute's short fiction.

Trauma and Memory: General Discussion

What is commonly known today as posttraumatic stress disorder was certainly not fully recognized nor adequately defined in the late 19th century and most of the 20th century. In fact, it took decades to properly understand how to diagnose the disorder and recognize how far-reaching it can be. It required the research and investigation of

uncountable scholars, doctors and victims of trauma throughout the world to formalize the disorder and to be officially included in the American Psychiatric Association's manual. Its entry into the manual in 1980 was a long fought battle and a day of victory for all those who have suffered from varying forms of posttraumatic stress over the years due to a traumatic event that irrevocably changed their lives. Posttraumatic stress disorder is a dynamic term that will continue to evolve and modify as long as trauma and abuse are a part of everyday life.

The study and history of psychological trauma has been erratic. The Harvard Medical School psychiatrist and professor Judith Herman asserts that the study of psychological trauma has had periods of active investigation and periods of oblivion, explaining the reason for this abandonment and rediscovery is due to politics:

Three times over the past century, a particular form of psychological trauma has surfaced into public consciousness. Each time, the investigation of that trauma has flourished in affiliation with a political movement...Our contemporary understanding of psychological trauma is built upon a synthesis of these three separate lines of investigation. (9)

The political movements Herman refers to are the anticlerical political movement in France in the late 1800s, the wars of the 20th century which include World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War and lastly the feminist movement in Western Europe and North America. The three forms of psychological trauma she speaks of are hysteria, shell shock or combat neurosis, and sexual and domestic violence. Each of these political movements indeed furthered the interest and study of psychological trauma and shifted

the perspective from the victim to the actual traumatic event itself as the culprit in the disorder. This discovery was a huge step forward in treating victims to overcome their plagued memory of their terrifying event(s) allowing them to begin to recover.

The work of the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière asylum in Paris paved the way for Sigmund Freud, Pierre Janet and William James to commence their interest and study of neurological and psychological trauma. Charcot and his followers studied distressed women who had suffered from a traumatic event or repeated trauma in their lifetime. Charcot referred to their damaged state as The Great Neurosis, otherwise known as hysteria, and concluded that all of the women were tormented by the memory of their trauma or the absence of memory of the event. In all cases the women were unable to resume normal lives for they were tormented by their symptoms and could not overcome the traumatic event they endured. Charcot's research emphasized careful observation, description and classification of the disorder. This was not sufficient for Janet and Freud who desired to surpass Charcot's work by demonstrating the cause of hysteria (Micale 501). In the 1890s it was shown that symptoms could be improved when traumatic memories were recuperated and put into words. This occurred roughly at the same time both Janet and Freud discovered that hysteria was a state caused by psychological trauma.

Although Janet and Freud made strong advancements in the study of psychological trauma, their interest on the topic wavered. The need to reconstruct the patient's history opened the door to their patient's sexual history and allowed Freud to make the connection between sexual trauma and hysterical symptoms:

I therefore put forward the thesis that at the bottom of every case of hysteria there are *one or more occurrences of premature sexual experience*, occurrences which belong to the earliest years of childhood, but which can be reproduced through the work of psycho-analysis in spite of the intervening decades. I believe this is an important finding...

(http://www.pbs.org/youngdrfreud/pages/theories_seduction.htm)

Shortly after his publication “The Aetiology of Hysteria” in 1896, Freud withdrew his findings and the study of psychological trauma came to a halt until World War I. Despite the abandonment of Charcot, Janet, and Freud in the study of psychological trauma their findings laid the foundation for the modern day definition and classification of posttraumatic stress disorder (Herman 18).

Interest in psychological trauma resurfaced with the start of World War I. The soldiers that survived endured gruesome scenarios and witnessed the mutilation and death of their fellow soldiers and innocent civilians. The survivors were troubled from their exposure to trench warfare and the disturbing sounds associated with battle. The soldiers began to show similar symptoms of Freud’s “hysterical” women such as screaming, uncontrollable weeping, becoming mute and unresponsive and suffered a loss of their memory and ability to feel. British psychologist Charles Myers credited their behavior to what he considered to be a physical condition and named the disorder “shell shock” (Herman 20). Myers thought the symptoms were caused by concussions to the brain due to exploding shells. Myers questioned the integrity of the soldiers diagnosed with shell shock and he labeled these soldiers as inferior. It was felt that these weak or inferior

soldiers were more likely to fall victim to shell shock than superior and honorable soldiers. The inferior soldiers were treated poorly and subjected to electric shock therapy. Many were court marshaled. One of the positive results of Myer's discovery was the acknowledgement that the symptoms of shell shock were attributed to psychological trauma itself. It was not until later that the medical field altered Myers perspective as Herman explains, "Progressive medical authorities argued, on the contrary, that combat neurosis was a bona fide psychological condition that could occur in soldiers of high moral character. They advocated humane treatment based upon psychoanalytic principles" (Herman 21). As World War I closed, the curiosity and study of psychological trauma ended as well and would not be rekindled until World War II and again later with the commencement of the Vietnam War.

With each war, doctors and researchers were coming closer to discovering how to treat combat neurosis. The diligent work of Abram Kardiner and John Spiegel among others, greatly contributed to this discovery. Hypnosis had long been a utilized technique in the recovery of memories of traumatic events but the recovery of memory alone was not enough to cure troubled patients. It became clear that a verbal conscious follow up was necessary for the healing process to be successful. Herman explains that the verbal integration of therapy had earlier been called the "talking cure" by one of Joseph Breuer's disturbed patients. Herman explains:

The psychiatrists who pioneered these techniques understood that unburdening traumatic memories was not in itself sufficient to effect a lasting cure. Kardiner and Spiegel warned that although hypnosis could

expedite the retrieval of traumatic memories, a simple cathartic experience by itself was useless. (25-26)

Unfortunately these warnings were largely ignored until the onset of the Vietnam War.

The true source of inspiration for the examination of long term psychological effects of trauma was the motivation of the Vietnam soldiers. The Vietnam Veterans Against the War, in collaboration with psychiatrists Robert Jay Lifton and Chaim Shatan, organized “rap groups” that permitted soldiers to attend intimate meetings with their peers and they were finally encouraged to retell and relive their traumatic war stories and memories. Due to the success of the “rap groups” and continued pressure from the anti-war movement and its veterans, a legal mandate for a psychological treatment program emerged in 1970 known as Operation Outreach (Nicosia 364). A decade later the American Psychiatric Association for the first time included “posttraumatic stress disorder”, a new category, in its official manual of mental disorders. The combination of the diagnosis of the mental disorder in conjunction with the verbal integration of therapy finally paved the way to recovery for victims of psychological trauma.

The formal admittance of posttraumatic stress disorder in the American Psychiatric Association manual in 1980 was a great advancement in psychological analysis; however, it excluded the principal group most victimized by posttraumatic disorders, women. For centuries women have suffered from violence and abuse and they have been left alone to overcome their psychological trauma. Society has shunned women from speaking out about violence and rape as these topics have been considered private affairs. It was not until the women’s liberation movement of the 1970s that the

table started to turn for women suffering from psychological trauma. A series of important events occurred in a chain reaction that led to the inclusion of women and children in psychological assessment and classification and revealed that women were indeed the principal group victimized by posttraumatic disorders.

Women have traditionally led hidden lives covering up their abuse and a need arose for women to join together to speak out in confidence about their devastating misfortunes. Betty Friedan acknowledged this need and organized “conscious raising tasks” (<http://www.pbs.org/fmc/interviews/friedan.htm>) a form of open discussion groups for women suffering from psychological trauma that resembled the veterans “rap groups”. This was one of the initial progressive steps for the treatment and recovery of traumatized women. The year 1971 marks the first public speaking on rape and a legislative rape reform followed which then began to explore sexual assault as a contributing cause to psychological trauma. This year also marks the opening of the first rape crisis center. In 1975 a center for rape research was created within the National Institution of Mental Health and it was shown that Freud’s findings from nearly a century ago were correct that sexual assault against women and children were shown to be pervasive and endemic in our culture (<http://www.ovcttac.gov>). The definition of rape was reformulated by feminists and is now considered a crime of violence as opposed to a sexual act.

The chain reaction of events did not stop there. Original research conducted on rape committed by a stranger led researchers to begin studying rape in personal or intimate relationships. These new studies further changed the definition and scope of

rape. Acquaintance rape, date rape and rape in marriage were all previously considered private sexual matters. They are now considered a violent crime. It additionally led to the study of domestic battery in adults and was linked to the rediscovery of sexual abuse in children. This sequence of events demonstrated how the psychological trauma suffered by women paralleled the psychological trauma of combat neurosis as Herman states, “Only after 1980, when the efforts of combat veterans had legitimated the concept of posttraumatic stress disorder, did it become clear that the psychological syndrome seen in survivors of rape, domestic battery, and incest was essentially the same syndrome seen in survivors of war” (32).

The road to understanding, classifying and defining psychological trauma has been long and may never be defined definitively for cruelty and abuse are still a part of everyday life. Today’s methods for treating patients who suffer from psychological trauma are more humane and respectful to the victim. This alone is a significant achievement and improvement for the victims of psychological trauma. The women’s liberation movement significantly altered and improved the study and treatment of psychological trauma and has given women and children the right and opportunity to heal.

Matute’s short fiction has consistently shown that her characters are afflicted by varying forms of psychological trauma and it is important to understand and define trauma to comprehend the psychological and emotional challenges Matute’s characters face during and after the occurrence of the traumatic event. There is no single standing definition of trauma, therefore, several definitions will be provided in this work.

According to the Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary trauma is defined as, "1.a. a body wound or shock produced by sudden physical injury, as from violence or accident. 1.b. the condition produced by this; traumatism. 2.a. An experience that produces psychological injury or pain. 2.b. the psychological injury so caused" (1289). This chapter focuses on the physical injury and how Matute's depiction of trauma negatively impacts the emotional status of the victim and how the victim becomes possessed by their psychological injury. Matute's characters are unable to process and control their trauma primarily due to their social isolation. Research has proven that there is a need for trauma victims to narrate their trauma in order to recover from their trauma (Davis 170). Matute's victims also suffer from alienation. They are forced to attempt to recover alone and the result is that most remain in a posttraumatic state.

Dartmouth professor Susan Brison offers a more complex definition of trauma that is partially based on her own traumatic experience. Brison, who survived a nearly fatal sexual assault and attempted murder in the early 1990s, states:

A traumatic event is one in which a person feels utterly helpless in the face of a force that is perceived to be life-threatening. The immediate psychological responses to such trauma include terror, loss of control, and intense fear of annihilation. Long-term effects include the physiological responses of hypervigilance, heightened startle response, sleep disorders, and the more psychological, yet still involuntary, responses of depression, inability to concentrate, lack of interest in activities that used to give life meaning, and a sense of a foreshortened future. (39-40)

This definition accurately describes the circumstances of the trauma incurred by Matute's characters as well as her characters' responses to their traumatic event. The events depicted by Matute such as, war, physical and sexual abuse and bullying are life threatening to her characters and cause psychological responses like terror, loss of control, depression and isolation. Matute depicts the realities of her society and demonstrates the challenging circumstances that children and adolescents face in making the transition into adulthood. At the same time, the author shows the damaging effects of trauma on personal identity.

A large portion of Matute's characters remain in a posttraumatic state and are unable to recover from their unfortunate traumatic experience. Matute thus demonstrates the reality in which the Spanish citizens were left in as a result of the political strife endured in the 20th Century. Their trauma is an event that causes problems in their normal existence and causes disruption of the family and their persona. The American Psychiatric Association defines posttraumatic stress disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition* as:

The essential feature of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury

experienced by a family member or other close associate (Criterion A1).

The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior) (Criterion A2).

(<http://www.psychiatryonline.com/content.aspx?aID=3357&searchStr=post-traumatic+stress+disorder>)

Overcoming an event that involves actual or threatened death is most challenging even for the most mentally stable and socially supported victim. In Matute's short fiction, this type of individual rarely exists; most of her characters face some form of personal challenge prior to the traumatic event such as a physical handicap, deceased parents or social isolation making their recovery even more difficult. Memories associated with the trauma haunt Matute's characters, denying them healthy personal development and a promising future. The nagging memory of the trauma becomes a hindrance that the characters are unable to overcome and form a part of the characters' identity.

Weiner and Kurpius explain that trauma and memory are terms that are interdependent. Once a victim experiences a traumatic event, the event is immediately recorded in the mind and they state, "...When a person experiences a traumatic event, the memory of that event is stored both physically and emotionally in the body. Any association to the original trauma can trigger the memory emerging either as a bodily reaction (body memory) or an emotional reaction" (136). Memories associated with trauma can be either positive or negative and they form a part of the individual's identity

and sense of self once the event has passed. In the case of Matute's characters, the majority of her characters suffer severely from the memory of their trauma.

Jenny Edkins feels traumatic memory is distinct from other forms of memory and states:

However, there is another way of understanding traumatic memory, one that sees it as distinct in kind from other forms of memory precisely because it is the memory of events or human action about which no interpretation has yet been formed. They are events that resist meaning. Traumatic events are so shocking, so outside our expectations, that we do not know what happened. Traumatic events are indeterminate...when traumatic events are remembered it is not a question of remembering what we thought happened. We can only remember what we saw: there is nothing else to remember. We did not interpret what we saw at the time. We could not. (37-38)

The surprise element of a traumatic experience is what initially shocks an individual. The victim is caught off guard and the mind is unable to register what is happening and cannot find a logical reason why they are being targeted to endure such emotional stress and betrayal. This is one stage of the traumatic experience. Later victims are faced with the task of trying to comprehend the reason for their trauma through their memory. The survivors are forced to combine their present state with the memory of their past. Memory is not simple recalling of past events. It must be processed in context of the present.

In order for trauma victims to overcome their past they must reconstruct the past in the present in an attempt to accept their past and move forward. Halbwachs states, “The past is not preserved, but is reconstructed on the basis of the present” (Edkins 32). Reconstructing one’s past in the present requires survivors to re-live their trauma through dialogue and form a type of narrative such as journal writing or art. This can be a difficult task because speaking of traumatic events is painful for both the listener and the survivor and, as is the case in Matute’s fiction not all victims can find a person willing to listen. Andreas Huyssen agrees that past events are not simply recalled and states, “The past is not simply there in memory, it must be articulated to become memory” (33).

The victims in Matute’s short fiction are subjected to many forms of traumatic events that cause permanent damage to their persona and alter or deform their identity. The short story analysis begins with examples of individuals suffering from the traumatic experience of war. The characters experience the tragedies associated with war such as the loss of loved ones while fearing for their own life at the same time and seeing the death and mutilation of others. Those that survive the war are forced to learn to exist without their family in near total isolation and fight off the vivid memories associated with their trauma. Following war related trauma, this chapter explores the trauma of losing a family member and varying forms of familial maltreatment such as neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Lastly, this study will concentrate on the traumatic stress of bullying. Matute’s characters that survive traumatic experience are victims that suffer from posttraumatic stress, haunted by the memories of their experience and poorly

adapt to life once the incident has passed. Their personal identities pre-existing the trauma are shattered and they must struggle to form new identities.

Short Story Analysis: The Challenges of Traumatic Events

The first short story of analysis in this chapter, “Fausto”, belongs to the collection of short stories entitled *El tiempo* (1957). The protagonist is a nine year old girl that lives alone with her sickly grandfather because both of her parents have passed away. The girl does not attend school and does not belong to any social groups, which results in her living an isolated life lacking companionship. Both she and her grandfather suffer from poverty, hunger and poor health. The child briefly befriends a cat she names “Fausto” that she ends up killing with her own hands when she learns the cat has no purpose in life. The grandfather is also on the threshold of dying which will leave the child completely alone to support herself.

The protagonist of “Fausto” is one of Matute’s most tragic victims. The amount of tragedy and ruthless circumstances this child endures at such a young age are excessive and leave the girl in a desolate position. She has no hope for a better future or resources to aid in her personal healing. Her daily exposure to distressing situations of hunger and alienation and the death of both of her parents qualify her as a victim of child traumatic stress or posttraumatic stress disorder.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network explains that children and adolescents can experience trauma under two different sets of circumstances and state:

Some types of traumatic events involve (1) experiencing a serious injury to yourself or witnessing a serious injury to or the death of someone else,

(2) facing imminent threats of serious injury or death to yourself or others, or (3) experiencing a violation of personal physical integrity. These experiences usually call forth overwhelming feelings of terror, horror, or helplessness. Because these events occur at a particular time and place and are usually short-lived, we refer to them as *acute traumatic events*.

(http://www.nctsnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=faq_def)

Terrorist attacks, sudden or violent loss of a loved one, organized violence in the community, natural disasters, serious accidents such as car accidents and physical or sexual assault are some of the types of traumatic events that fit into the category of acute traumatic events. The other type of trauma children and adolescents can experience according to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network is chronic traumatic situations which the organization defines as the following:

In other cases, exposure to trauma can occur repeatedly over long periods of time. These experiences call forth a range of responses, including intense feelings of fear, loss of trust in others, decreased sense of personal safety, guilt, and shame. We call these kinds of trauma *chronic traumatic situations*. (http://www.nctsnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=faq_def)

Chronic traumatic situations can derive from physical abuse, repeated sexual abuse, domestic violence and varying forms of political violence such as war.

Clearly both types of trauma can severely alter the personalities of such young victims prohibiting healthy emotional and physical development. Additionally the idea of

the self is greatly affected and compromised by single traumatic events and even more so by long-standing violence and abuse. Herman speaks out on the topic and explains:

People subjected to prolonged, repeated trauma develop an insidious progressive form of post-traumatic stress disorder that invades and erodes the personality. While the victim of a single acute trauma may feel after the event that she is “not herself,” the victim of chronic trauma may feel herself to be changed irrevocably, or she may lose the sense that she has any self at all. (86)

The protagonist in “Fausto” is a child that has no personal identity. Although she lives with her grandfather, she knows that he is on the brink of dying and that soon she will be left alone to face the world at age nine. In addition, the relationship she has with her grandfather is superficial at best. The two do not engage in sincere and genuine conversations and do not possess a nurturing rapport. They merely live together in an attempt to survive their desolate socio-economic situation while attempting to escape starvation. She has no friends to speak of and goes about her daily life in total isolation. Her contact with others in society is trivial and it does not contribute to her personal development. It has been shown that a person who has no sense of belonging to a community cannot have a personal identity (Donald 156). Identity and community must accompany each other as Herman explains, “A secure sense of connection with caring people is the foundation of personality development. When this connection is shattered, the traumatized person loses her basic sense of self” (52).

The various forms of trauma the protagonist has endured is lengthy. First and foremost, she has suffered the loss of both of her parents. This alone would be enough for some children to develop symptoms of posttraumatic stress. Unfortunately, this child has suffered from both acute and chronic trauma situations. Death is a part of her reality for she knows her grandfather is soon to die and knows that others in her community have fallen victim to the Civil War and/or the hands of the Franco military dictatorship. She faces the challenge of dying of starvation and must live daily with the idea that her own death is a possibility. This is a form of extreme stress that taxes an individual's coping abilities and sense of stability. The protagonist suffers from a form of neglect on the part of her grandfather for he is unable to provide her with proper care and nurturing. Neglect is considered a form of child maltreatment and thus can be considered as a form of chronic trauma. The ramifications of repeated trauma negatively affect personality as Herman explains, "Repeated trauma in adult life erodes the structure of the personality already formed, but repeated trauma in childhood forms and deforms the personality" (96). She does not have an outlet where she can discuss her feelings and emotions, an essential necessity for trauma victims to overcome their situation. Nor does she possess the social skills to develop this type of relationship. The girl does not attend school, does not have friends and does not belong to any form of social group.

The girl goes through the motions of life like a robot and she is completely detached emotionally from events that typically warrant some form of sensation. This is seen when the child casually leaves the scene where she kills her cat, Fausto, and leaves him lying in a pool of blood on the street without shedding a tear. This is the action of an

emotionally empty child suffering from traumatic stress. It is no easy task to kill something or someone you love and have cared for. Jones explains, “The child may become an innocent monster who unwittingly commits horrible acts as if they were perfectly natural” (The Literary World, 52). A second act that demonstrates the emotional numbness of the nine year old girl is when she arrives home after killing her cat, she informs her grandfather that she killed Fausto and then looks him square in the face and tells him that she bets that he, too, will die very soon. She tells him this in the same manner one would say something as ordinary as, “Grandfather I made you a sandwich”.

Immediately after telling him his fate, she yawns and turns the other way to fall asleep on her straw mattress. Matute writes, “-Abuelo, apuesto algo a que te vas a morir muy pronto...Bostezaba y daba la vuelta hacia la pared. Casi lo decía en sueños...la niña dormía ya” (Matute 3: 150-51). At the end of the story the reader remains astonished for it seems impossible that such a young child could behave in such a manner and be so detached from any sense of feeling or emotion.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry explains how a child may behave when exposed to chronic trauma and states:

Children who experience repeated trauma may develop a kind of emotional numbing to deaden or block the pain and trauma. This is called *dissociation*. Children with PTSD avoid situations or places that remind them of the trauma. They may also become less responsive emotionally, depressed, withdrawn, and more detached from their feelings.

(<http://aacap.org/page.wv?section=Facts+for+Families&name=Posttraumatic+Stress+Disorder+%28PTSD%29>)

The actions and attitude of the child match the description offered by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry for she appears to be absolutely withdrawn from any feelings. K. E. Fletcher finds similar emotional responses from youth and children suffering from forms of trauma and explains:

Acute and chronic traumas have significant negative impacts on children and adolescents. Among children and youth, the most common emotional responses to trauma include emotional numbness, loss of interest in activities, difficulty concentrating, generalized anxiety, low self-esteem, dissociation, and feelings of guilt (Kendall-Tackett 11).

The chances of the protagonist overcoming the severe stress of her life, combined with the traumatic loss of her parents are slim, especially seeing she has no ties with others in the community. One of the fundamental aspects in the healing process from traumatic events is the reliance and support from others. Brison, a trauma survivor herself, explains that the recovery of victims does in fact depend on the community's response to victims and states:

Survivors of trauma recover to a greater or lesser extent depending on others' responses to them after the trauma. These aspects of trauma and recovery reveal the deeply social nature of one's sense of self and underscore the limits of the individual's capacity to control her own self-definition. (64)

The protagonist herself knows that she is not understood by others and somehow continues on despite her social alienation, she knows no other way. Herman sustains that traumatic events destroy bonds between individual and community, leading to isolation. According to Herman, survivors realize their self-worth through others and says, "Those who have survived learn that their sense of self, of worth, of humanity, depends upon a feeling of connection to others... Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging" (214).

It is unrealistic to think that the protagonist will live a fruitful and jovial life. She is destined to remain a victim of trauma. The child has already experienced too many losses to overcome the tragedies that suffocate her. She has lost her innocence, her childhood, and the sense of safety. The protective feelings of security parents or others in a community may provide for children are absent in this case. Matute's short story shows the damaging effects of a society ridden with political conflict and violence. The weight of the death of family members, poverty, isolation, hunger and illness is too much for this nine year old child to digest. Brison explains that the memories of life before the traumatic event are gone and that the event will influence the future and states, "Not only are one's memories of an earlier life lost, along with the ability to envision a future, but one's basic cognitive and emotional capacities are gone, or radically altered, as well. This epistemological crisis leaves the survivor with virtually no bearing to navigate by" (49-50).

It is unlikely to think that the protagonist will be able to recover her memories since she will be unable to receive proper medical care that could assist in the retrieval of

her memories. In addition, at this time in history the methods for treating psychological trauma were inferior to the techniques utilized today. She will remain in a traumatized state, her inability to process what has happened to her that will directly affect her personal identity. Research has repeatedly shown the importance of speaking out about traumatic events and turning it into a form of narrative. Brison explains, "Telling their, narrating their experiences of traumatic events, has long been considered-at least since Freud and Janet- to play a significant role in survivor's recovery from trauma" (68). In addition to verbally working out the trauma the survivor needs to attempt to form a new identity and leave the identity of "trauma victim" behind according to Davis who states, "Healing requires more than symptom improvement; it requires the client to construct a new account and a new identity. A new identity does not come quickly or easily" (168-69). As such the protagonist in "Fausto" is destined to remain in a state of identity crisis. The resources necessary for a healthy recovery, a bond with the community and proper medical attention, are unavailable and the child will be forced to live her life alone, tormented by her psychological stress.

The main character in "El hermoso amanecer" (*El arrepentido y otras narraciones* 1961) is a ten year old orphaned boy named Remo who is struggling to survive the casualties of the Spanish Civil War. He has lost both of his parents and clings to the memory and last words of his father that are written down in a letter that he carries in his pocket. Remo joins a small group of adults who try their best to protect the boy in his parents' absence. The group's efforts to defend themselves are futile for the soldiers largely outnumber them. The soldiers quickly approach, firing their weapons and the

adults begin to fall one by one. As the ditch becomes filled with more and more bloody bodies, Remo escapes by hiding behind a crumbling wall. From his hiding place Remo witnesses the soldiers gather the remaining adults from the ditch, line them up on their knees, and open fire. He watches them fall one by one to the ground. Remo knows his fate is bleak and reads the letter from his father before he is taken away by the soldiers.

A characteristic that distinguishes “El hermoso amanecer” from other short fiction produced by Matute is that the action takes place on a battlefield during the Spanish Civil War. Other stories reference certain aspects of the war, yet very few depict the atrocities associated with live combat. The reader experiences young Remo’s anxiety and fear through the eyes of the narrative voice creating a strong sense of drama and suspense. The reader cautiously reads on hoping that Remo will escape death or avoid being captured by the soldiers. The finale is open ended and it is left up to the reader to decide the fate of this orphaned child.

For some, war is seen as a responsibility, a duty and a natural part of life. It brings a sense of pride to individuals and their nation and demonstrates strength and dominance. For others however, war is seen as an atrocity and brings senseless murder and suffering to innocent civilians. Individuals that survive war are permanently marked by their personal experience and undergo an identity transformation. Naturally some never recover their persona for their experience was too severe to overcome. John Briere explains the span of occurrences individuals endure in war and states:

War involves a very wide range of violent and traumatic experiences, including immediate threat of death or disfigurement, actual physical

injury, witnessing injury or death of others, involvement in injuring or killing others (both combatants and civilians), witnessing or participating in atrocities, acts of rape, capture, and prisoner-of-war experiences such as confinement, torture, and extreme deprivation. (7)

The protagonist of “El hermoso amanecer” experiences at least half of the violent and traumatic experiences listed by Briere and, in addition, suffers from other forms of chronic psychological trauma such as hunger. Living in a constant state of fear can severely affect the formation of personal identity, especially in a child of Remo’s age. Scott and Eliav explain, “The impact of stressful and traumatic events is greater in children and adolescents than it is for adults” (Kendall-Tackett 12). The war related occurrences Remo is exposed to are not comprehensible to the boy; he is not emotionally developed enough to understand the complexities of war.

Not only does Remo experience the killing of strangers, he is also forced to suffer the death of both of his parents. He is unable to rely on them for strength and guidance in an attempt to understand the happenings of the time. He is forced to continue on alone in the world, a most challenging task even for adults. Remo can only truly count on himself and must gather up the strength to have confidence in others that might be able to assist him in this dire situation. Mustering the strength to trust others is one of the most challenging things for trauma victims as one of the symptoms they experience is losing faith in others. What victims once thought impossible, the death of a parent for example, is now their reality. Children feel a sense of betrayal and it takes time to recover from such a deeply emotional event. Remo does not have the benefit of having time or a safe

environment in which to recuperate. Remo has no real ties with anyone and is forced to survive on his own. He has no connection to the community and therefore will be unable to start his healing process. His identity is shattered.

Herman explains that traumatic events are so astonishing because they overwhelm individuals rendering them helpless. She writes:

Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence or death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe. (33)

Remo's daily life is filled with fear and terror, however, the experience he has in the ditch is truly overwhelming. He can no longer emotionally handle the horrible images and smells he is exposed to in the trench and flees. The narrative voice explains that the child is unable to comprehend the series of events he has experienced, "No entendía nada de todo lo que pasó después...La Mujer entró en la zanja; le echó al fondo, como a un pequeño muerto" (Matute 5: 43). Remo is unable to process the sounds and images associated with combat and he suffers from extreme fear. The descriptions of the scene in the trench reveal the surmounting terror invading Remo's body, "De pronto, los hombres de la zanja empezaron a caer. Iban cayendo a su lado. Remo tuvo un estrechamiento. La Muerte estaba allí, con toda su realidad...Mantuvo sus ojos abiertos desesperadamente" (Matute 5: 43).

Remo does, however, understand the reality and gravity of the situation. Death surrounds him and is knocking on his door. The realization that one's own death is staring them in the face is a moment forever marked in memory and is difficult to extract. Remo's fear continues on as the fighting becomes more intense, the narrative voice divulges, "Las brascas descargas, ya tan cercanas, golpeaban su corazón. Qué extraña sonrisa tenía la sangre. Otro disparo, otro, otro. Aquello sustituía gritos, súplicas o amenazas. Sólo hablaban los fusiles. Era el último diálogo de los vencidos" (Matute 5: 44). As the boy continues to lie in the trench along with the dead bodies, he notices a boot next to him, filling him with terror and it eventually forces him to abandon the trench. The scene is described as follows, "La bota estaba llena de sangre, que goteaba hacia él. Algo parpadeaba en el cielo. La sangre, oscuramente, se abría paso, acercándosele. ¿De quién sería aquella sangre? Vendrían los perros al otro día: los hambrientos perros de la ciudad" (Matute 5: 44). Again, this description reveals how the child understands the gravity of the situation and has become numb to the regular envisioning of his own death. He understands there will be no memorial service honoring the dead or an organized clean up crew to deal with the casualties. The bodies will remain listless, lying in the streets. With time the smell will attract hungry dogs that are suffering from the war as well and the dogs will eat the bodies. These are images that have become normal to Remo and will most likely remain in his mind throughout his life. His reality consists of horrifically disturbing images.

Remo is surrounded by corpses and personal items full of blood and the moment he realizes that his death is imminent, he decides to abandon the trench in an attempt to

save himself, “Y quería salvarse. Quería saltar fuera de la zanja, donde había entrado la Muerte a hurgar con dedos gelatinosos... Otro disparo, otro... No, no. Se iba de allí” (Matute 5: 44). The combination of the fear of dying along with witnessing the immediate death of the others in the trench overpowers Remo. Edkins explains that this is a form of trauma and states, “Witnessing violence done to others and surviving can seem to be as traumatic as suffering brutality itself” (4). The psychological stress Remo is forced to endure is inescapable.

Remo finally has an emotional breakdown after witnessing the shooting of the three remaining civilians who tried to protect him from his hiding place. The pressure is too much to handle and the boy cracks as the story reveals, “Remo, temblando, también se abandonó al suelo. Un sudor frío le pegaba la ropa al cuero. Se había acabado todo. Aquel silencio, ahora. Aquel silencio. Hasta entonces no supo lo que era llorar, y las lágrimas le brotaban hacia adentro, quemándole” (Matute 5: 45-46). He is now the sole survivor and out of options. He is completely helpless and has no where to go. This type of traumatic experience is especially heart wrenching because the nature of the trauma is caused with intent by humans rather than from a stochastic event such as a natural catastrophe. It seems impossible that humans could inflict so much pain on their own kind as Brison states:

When the trauma is of human origin and is intentionally inflicted, the kind I discuss in this book, it not only shatters one’s fundamental assumptions about the world and one’s safety in it, but it also severs the sustaining connection between the self and the rest of humanity. Victims of human-

inflicted trauma are reduced to mere objects by their tormentors: their subjectivity is rendered useless and viewed as worthless. (40)

Remo makes one last attempt to make a connection with his family; he reads the letter his father left for him. As he reads the letter he is taken by the soldiers and his future is now completely in their hands.

The next short story of analysis, “De ninguna parte” (1993), is one of Matute’s later fictional creations that tells the tragic fate of a well to do family in Spain both during and after the Civil War. In this story, Matute demonstrates that the rich are also victims of tragedy and misfortune. The majority of her short fiction focuses on the lower echelons of society. The protagonist is Tesa, an imaginative nine year old girl with a speech impediment. She lives with three siblings, mother, father, grandmother and various employees. The family possesses multiple homes and transitions between them by train throughout the year. Shortly after their latest and final family train ride, Tesa finds herself in shock crouching next to one the remaining standing walls of their family home at the break of dawn. During the night, their house was bombed in the war and Tesa is the only living survivor. Tesa, with a shattered heart, is then exiled to France to live with her cousins where she will try to survive the life of the post war and its trauma.

The protagonist endures different types of psychological trauma in “De ninguna parte” which affects the formation of her personality. The first type of trauma Tesa experiences is chronic trauma. She suffers from a speech impediment that affects her happiness, self-confidence and personal identity. This physical condition brings routine public ridicule by her classmates when she has to read out loud in the classroom. The

situation has become so dire for the child that she has created imaginary friends to handle the emotional stress of the classroom. She also relies on nature as a coping mechanism. She has conversations with plants and trees because she feels she can easily divulge her feelings and daydream with these inanimate objects without being judged or teased.

Tesa also suffers from a form of neglect in the classroom. When it is her turn to read out loud, the other students and the teacher simply skip her turn and continue on as if she is not even there. Her presence is practically non-existent at school, a detriment to her adolescent formation. The narrative voice describes how embarrassed and insignificant Tesa feels when neglected and ignored at school especially when her turn is skipped to read aloud in the classroom. She becomes frozen and is incapable of standing and participating in the reading:

La Clase de Lectura en Voz Alta se había convertido en algo mortificante, sobre todo cuando como en aquel momento, le llegaba el turno a Tesa, y Tesa no podía ponerse de pie y emitir todas aquellas descripciones, ya que Tesa, a pesar de saber tantas cosas que las demás niñas no sabían, cuando le llegaba el turno de leer en voz alta, saltaban limpiamente desde la niña de su izquierda hasta la niña de su derecha, evitándola, y Tesa se sentía, entonces, como una mella en una dentadura. (De ninguna parte, 13)

The situation in the classroom and the actions of her teacher affects her social interaction with other children and her willingness to reach out to others in the community out of fear of sounding ridiculous and being teased by other children. Proper identity formation stems from the feeling of belonging of an individual to a community. This feeling helps

promote the healthy formation of personal identity. Tesa's retreat into a fantastic world assists her to overcome her feelings of shame, embarrassment and isolation caused by being singled out by her classmates and instructor. The weight of Tesa's chronic trauma taxes her sense of self and makes her feel like an outsider.

The positive role of the unified family in Tesa's life is fundamental for the child's self-confidence and identity; it serves as a counterbalance to the manner in which she is treated at school. The relationships she has with her siblings, parents and grandmother bring her a sense of joy and provide a solid foundation for the child, as well as a sense of security which makes it especially difficult for Tesa later when she loses her entire immediate family in a single night. In fact, she has admiration for her family, especially her younger brother Tito. The narrative voice reveals, "Tito era un investigador nato, Tesa lo admiraba porque todo lo quería probar, todo lo quería saber" (De ninguna parte, 14). The only negative aspect of her family life is the constant transition between the family's various homes. This distresses all of the siblings and affects their ability to form long standing relationships with other children in the communities.

The regular traveling between Madrid, Barcelona and their summer home causes the children to feel as if they live separate lives in each location, they always feel like outsiders. The transience forces the siblings to go from school to school where they are forced to learn a new set of rules and make new friendships. It is difficult for them to make new acquaintances as they are not readily accepted by the local children, especially Tesa, with her speech impediment and resulting lack of confidence. The narrative voice reveals the siblings thoughts on friendship as well as their feelings of isolation, "La

amistad era algo trabajosamente hallado... Pero lo que Tesa y sus hermanos conocían era que en Barcelona eran los madrileños, que en Madrid eran los catalanes. Y lo que verdaderamente se sentían eran los niños de Ninguna Parte” (De ninguna parte, 16).

Establishing roots is fundamental in the process of identity formation; it provides security and a network for founding relationships with others in society.

The lifestyle of living out of a suitcase is stressful and makes the children feel like they are vagabonds. The only consistency they experience are the few items they are permitted to bring with them in their luggage. Their life has become a collection of mementos carried around in a suitcase rather than formative experiences shared with others outside of the family that can be remembered throughout their lifetime. The narrative voice explains the emotions the children feel when they find cherished items they had forgotten in the previous home, and how the items lose their sense of value by saying:

...y siempre había algún rinconcito donde ocultar un libro, o un muñeco, alguna colección de cromos absolutamente imprescindible... Si todas estas cosas se olvidaban en la casa de Madrid, o en la de Barcelona, o en la Casa de las Vacaciones, el reencuentro, meses más tarde, se convertía en algo triste, muerto. Ya no eran imprescindibles... (De ninguna parte, 16)

This feeling is another reminder of their transient lifestyle and facing the challenges of living multiple lives in multiple environments.

The train ride in their own little world is one of the only things the children look forward to when it is time to switch houses. Riding the train becomes a family tradition

for the children since they enjoy the closeness they experience with each other. During the voyage, the children are left unsupervised by their parents, making them feel mature and bringing special meaning to the siblings. The narrative voice explains their pleasure of taking the train:

Habían llegado, una vez más, los días del tren...Era el tren, el tren que cada tres, cuatro meses, les arrancaba de la rutina cotidiana, del colegio cotidiano, de la casa y los árboles del recreo de todos los días. Pero también de la amistad, la incipiente amistad que tanto se parece a una nuez tierna, a medio hacer. (De ninguna parte, 15)

The time spent on the train signifies real bonding for the siblings, a liberty usually denied to them because they are considered outsiders in their communities in every day life. The train represents the coming of change in the lives of the children, but also signifies the importance of friendship among the siblings.

In addition to the feelings of closeness they share, the children feel the journey on the train itself to be a form of celebration, like a party. The narrative voice depicts the scene and states, “Entonces empezaba la fiesta, la fiesta de tres o cuatro veces al año, la fiesta del encuentro de los hermanos, de la curiosidad o la esperanza, quizá de alguna amistad que todavía estaba por llegar a partir de la Estación Término” (De ninguna parte, 17-18). Even though the children are content to be together, there is still something missing from their lives and as they constantly hope that the future will bring friendships from outside of the home. The siblings realize the effort and challenge it takes to establish a true relationship as revealed in the story, “Y sabía también lo difícil que puede

resultar el inicio de una amistad, o dicho más claramente, lo difícil que ser encontrar un amigo” (De ninguna parte, 12).

The family tradition of taking the train is vital to the unification of these siblings. It is a special moment of bonding that only happens at certain times of the year and it is when the children are left alone without the direct supervision of their parents. The whole atmosphere of bonding and independence from grown ups make this occasion special and all of the siblings look forward to the “el tiempo del tren”. Family traditions foster the healthy development of personal identity and provide a solid foundation for children to thrive in as explained by Medhus in The Importance of a Strong Family Identity. Despite the feelings of alienation the constant traveling between homes creates, these siblings have a clear understanding of each other and depend on one another for emotional support and sheer enjoyment. Tesa’s fond memories of her brothers and sister and the feeling of intimacy she feels with all of her siblings is both a source of pain and a source of healing in her road to recovery from the traumatic event of losing them.

Having first hand experience of war leaves an unforgettable mark on one’s body and soul and permanently alters the sense of the world and the meaning of life. It is unlikely that these individuals can completely restore their faith and confidence in humanity as it was before the war. The survivors are forced to continue living life scarred by horrific images that haunt them even in their unconsciousness and through dreams. Some never recover from such terrifying events and they opt to live a life in reclusion. Others terminate their own life to relieve the pain and suffering endured during the war and the persistence of their undesired war memories that won’t leave their

minds. Unfortunately, many war and combat survivors as well as Holocaust survivors have been unable to overcome their war related nightmares and choose to end their lives like Primo Levi for example. Levi was unable to overcome the psychological stress and brutality he endured in a concentration camp during World War II. The psychological trauma and disgust he felt for humanity once he was released were simply too intense to surmount. Brison quotes John Rawls and Diana Meyers in her explanation of one of the many difficulties Levi faced and writes:

According to John Rawls, the possession of a ‘rational plan of life’ (1971, 561) is essential to personhood, or, at any rate, to moral personhood.

Diana Meyers argues that this ability to envisage, pursue, and carry out one’s rational plan of life is a prerequisite for self-respect (1986). But the ability to form a plan of life is lost when one loses a sense of one’s temporal being, as happened to Levi and the other prisoners of Auschwitz...(52)

When Tesa’s home is destroyed, along with her entire nuclear family, her sense of self and stability are immediately destroyed as well. If she is able to overcome this trauma, it will be a long road for her to restore the isolation and alienation she feels at the moment she realizes she is the sole survivor of the bombing. The narrative voice describes the scene:

Y lo que pasó fue que una noche la casa soltó en pedazos, y aquello que papá y mamá y la Tata y el verdulero y la portera llamaban la guerra, se hizo una realidad muy cercana. Y Tesa se encontró sola en el amanecer,

apretada contra la pared que aún quedaba en pie. Era la única criatura superviviente. (De ninguna parte, 19)

Herman comments on the feelings of abandonment traumatized individuals experience and states, “Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life” (52). Not only will Tesa feel abandoned, she will feel disempowered, rendering herself helpless and challenging her ability to prevail. Edkins notes the sense of helplessness experienced in traumatic events such as war and says:

Events that give rise to what we categorise today as symptoms of trauma generally involve force and violence. Often this is a threat to those people involved, their lives and integrity, as in rape, torture or child abuse; sometimes it also involves witnessing the horrific deaths of others, for example in wartime combat or in concentration camps. The victim of trauma feels they were helpless in their enforced encounter with death, violence and brutality. (3)

It is important to keep in mind Tesa’s age at the time of the traumatic event, she is only nine years old. This event marks the end of her childhood and will compromise the formation of the self and personal identity in her adolescence and transition into adulthood. Jones explains the transition of Matute’s characters into adolescence, “The character’s initiation into adolescence begins with the truncation of childhood, a result of the loss of innocence, a sharp clash with reality, a knowledge of death, or involvement in a situation which the ingenuous child cannot accept” (The Literary World of Matute, 58).

The night of the bombing, Tesa not only loses her family and home, she also loses some of the fundamental aspects that accompany human existence, a sense of safety. Davis divulges some of the significant losses a child or adolescent may incur as a result from trauma and states, “The most significant losses mentioned include a normal childhood, protective parents (especially but not exclusively in cases of incest), a sense of safety, innocence, trust, agency, her self before victimization, certain life assumptions, a ‘sense of possibilities’, or ‘identity (i.e., I am not the person I might have been)’” (190). Tesa’s identity is even further challenged when she is sent into exile after the explosion. Now she is forced to try and recover from this tragedy with unfamiliar people in an unknown land where a language is spoken that is foreign to her. Everything in her life that was familiar to her has disappeared in an instant. Her immediate family, the houses, the employees, the schools, the teachers, their vacations, are all gone now. An overwhelming sensation invades the body of this suffering child, rendering her helpless. The narrative voice reveals her emotional state, “A partir de aquel momento la memoria de Tesa vacilaba. Todo se convirtió en una masa confusa, estridente y brutal. Alguien la sacó de allí, y tiempo después también alguien la metió en un tren, que no tenía nada que ver con el tren de los niños, y la envió a la casa de los Primos de Francia” (De ninguna parte, 19-20).

It is unclear to what degree Tesa recovers from the tragic episode of the bombing; however, the narrative voice reveals that she is indeed able to recover some memories of her childhood and her siblings which would have been difficult if she remained in a traumatic state of dissociation. The time spent on the train with her brothers and sister is

recalled and helps soothe her pain. The sensation of the magic shared with them is still alive in her mind, “Aquella tarde-noche, en el andén y en el tren había algo especial, algo mágico y premonitorio, algo que Tesa conoció como un relámpago, y que luego, muchos años más tarde, recordó y recuperó. Algo irremediable, algo que anunciaba el fin o el principio de otras cosas o de otras vidas” (De ninguna parte, 17). Tesa is also able to remember subtle details, like the clothing they wore on the train, that bring her happiness in the aftermath of the trauma. The narrative voice describes, “...los niños, en pijama rayado de azul y blanco, apuraban la libertad – y aquel fue para Tesa, durante muchos años después, el rostro de la felicidad-” (De ninguna parte, 18).

The overpowering emotional sensations accompanied by psychological trauma can be devastating to individuals and can affect the way victims react to upsetting situations in the future. Something that once might not have caused an emotional reaction in the past, such as seeing a pair of blue and white striped pajamas, can now leave a victim in a state of despair. The open wound that trauma leaves on its victims permits continued accessibility of unwanted memories and feelings to invade the mind and body. Hopefully with time and treatment, memories that cause pain can be transformed into memories that bring a sense of joy and aide the victim to regain their sense of self and identity even though their former identity can never be fully regained. The future of Tesa and her identity are still in question; however, some of her fonder memories resurface and assist in her self perception. The narrative voice discloses:

Y regresó la carita de Tito...regresó la dulce mirada de Margarita...Tesa reconoció su propio rostro, el rostro de otra tarde de otoño, cuando se fue a

la última y larga noche de tren de los niños, y supo que aquella era la carita de una niña que no había muerto, ni estaba en ninguna parte. Que no volverían las largas noches del tren de los niños, que nunca podría reírse como entonces se reía. Y sobre todo- fue lo peor- comprendió que nunca, nunca, nunca, por muchos años que viviera, volvería a llorar como entonces lloró. (De ninguna parte, 20)

Tesa realizes that she did not die the night of the tragic episode and that her personality is permanently altered. The happiness she once enjoyed as an innocent child is gone and may never be replaced. She will be forced to continue life in a modified manner and with a different set of expectations.

The story does not divulge any memories Tesa may have regarding the night of the bombing itself. The reader does not know if she able to rid herself of the image of her destroyed home and the carnage of her family members left behind. These types of memories can be the most intrusive and detrimental to a person's identity and disrupt the vision of an improved future. Edkins explains the way combat survivors are tormented and writes:

But returning combatants tell a different tale. Survivors are subdued, even silent. Many witnessed the deaths of those around them. They cannot forget, and some are haunted by nightmares and flashbacks to scenes of unimaginable horror. In their dreams they re-live their battlefield experiences and awake again in a sweat.

(1)

Brison speaks about the manner in which flashbacks affect trauma victims and quotes Shay in her analysis:

Trauma, however, changes the nature and frequency of sensory, emotional, and physiological flashbacks. They are reminiscent of the traumatic event itself, as Shay writes, in that “[o]nce experiencing is under way, the survivor lacks authority to stop it or put it away. The helplessness associated with the original experience is replayed in the apparent helplessness to end or modify the reexperience once it has begun” (1994, 174). Traumatic flashbacks immobilize the body rendering the will as useless as it is in a nightmare in which one desperately tries to flee, but remains frozen. (45)

The narrative voice concedes that Tesa is never to know happiness as she once experienced it as a child, “Nunca después, durante mucho tiempo, supo Tesa lo que podía ser la alegría, la risa que nacía quién sabe en qué esquina ...” (*De ninguna parte*, 18). However, the narrative voice leaves room for hope that Tesa does indeed experience a different form of happiness in the future.

“El tiempo” (*El tiempo* 1957) is the tragic love story of Pedro and Paula, two individuals who find happiness in each other after years of suffering from psychological trauma. Upon the death of her mother, Paula is sent to live with her unloving and cruel aunts, Martina and Felisa. The women take the child out of obligation and treat her like a prisoner. Pedro and Paula decide to marry and escape from the town to build a new life. Their dream is short lived as they are run over by a train in the midst of fleeing.

Paula is a child that suffers from a number of causes. First and foremost, she struggles from the acute trauma of losing her mother. Paula feels the pain of her absence and tries to hold onto her through loving memories and an idealized view of her mother. In addition, Paula suffers from chronic trauma due to the manner in which she is poorly treated and neglected by her aunts. She has not had time to heal from the psychological stress of losing her mother before being thrown into an emotionally stressful environment. Paula is forced into a new situation where she is unwelcome not only by her family but from the community as well. The aunts do not aide in her recovery, quite the contrary, they further contribute to her personal sadness and stress and become a new source of trauma. Paula lives a life of reclusion and as a result suffers from an identity crisis.

She is received by the aunts with outright hostility. The aunts hold onto a grudge they had with their sister and take their feelings out on the innocent niece. Years earlier, Paula's mother left town with an actor that performed at the town's annual festival, causing a scandal. In leaving with the actor, she essentially abandoned her two sisters. Martina and Felisa are either embarrassed by the actions of their sister and/or are jealous that she was able to escape the misery of their working-class daily lives and never finding passion in their own lives. The narrative voice explains how the aunts pretend their third sister does not exist, "Martina y Felisa, sin embargo, no volvieron a hablar jamás de esta hermana, como si no hubiera nacido" (Matute 3: 27). The chip on the aunt's shoulders contaminates the life of their niece as well as their own.

Unfortunately for Paula, her remaining family is not a source of warmth and compassion that assists in her recovery of the devastating loss of her mother. The aunts physically and emotionally abuse the child while simultaneously neglecting her basic emotional needs. They refer to her in a pejorative way that contributes to Paula's low self-esteem and they physically push and shove her like a rag doll. An example that demonstrates their maltreatment is when Paula is seen standing near Pedro for the first time. At this point Paula has never even spoken to Pedro. The aunt overreacts and grabs Paula angrily:

Martina cogió por un brazo a la niña, zarandeándola y gritando. La llamaba holgazana y soberbia. Una mujer vecina, la mujer del cartero, se acercó y empezó a reírse. Martina empujó a la niña hacia la casa, de malos modos, y habló a la mujer del cartero. Le dijo tener a la niña era una carga pesada, insoportable. Que ellas tenían que cargar con los pecados ajenos. (Matute 3: 32)

This type of behavior is completely inappropriate on behalf of the aunt and is detrimental to their niece's healthy personal development. The actions of the aunt demonstrate her intolerance and tendency to rely on violence as a form of communication. In addition, her actions demonstrate her lack of empathy toward Paula and her situation and the pleasure the aunt experiences ridiculing the girl in front of the neighbors. The aunt not only embarrasses Paula on a personal level, but also humiliates and ridicules her in public. This is especially harmful to Paula's self-esteem and it is disrespectful on the part of both the aunt and the neighbor. Paula is doomed for failure; she does not have a

support network inside or outside of her so called home. Martina continues to berate her niece to the neighbor and states:

La muy tonta... ¡Todo el día lo pasa escondiéndose, escapándose! ¡Para holgazanear! No hay quien la haga trabajar en nada. No es fuerte y en lo poco que sirve, tampoco quiere cumplir. ¡Será estúpida! ...Claro, es muy cómodo que carguen con nosotros, nos mantengan y viva la alegría. ¡Ya le haré yo aprender lo que es la vida. (Matute 3: 33)

As if publicly insulting Paula is not enough to completely devastate the girl, the aunt continues on saying, “Ya no podemos más. No vale para nada. Está muy mal acostumbrada, con la cabeza llena de pájaros, por culpa de aquella desgraciada” (Matute 3: 34). These opinions should be considered private information not to be shared with neighbors or others in the community. The aunt continually demonstrates that she genuinely does not care for Paula and will not cease with her hurtfulness until fully satisfied that she has destroyed the girl and her integrity.

The aunt clearly takes out her anger or jealousy she feels toward her sister on the innocent girl. Herman explains that tales of family legends can harm innocent family members and writes:

Family legends may include stories of the harm the child caused by being born the disgrace for which she appears to be destined. A survivor describes her scapegoat role: “I was named after my mother. She had to get married because she got pregnant with me. She ran away when I was two. My father’s parents raised me. I never saw a picture of her, but they

told me I looked just like her and I'd probably turn out to be a slut and a tramp just like her. When my dad starting raping me, he said 'You've been asking for this for a long time and now you're going to get it'. (104)

Paula should not be condemned to live down the past actions of her mother, unfortunately, this is the role that has been unjustly placed upon her and it is the cause of her demise. The result of inflicted chronic trauma, in combination with the acute trauma of the death of her mother, is reflected in Paula's behavior and self-image. The girl has no self-confidence or support from the outside community and Paula is forced to accept her aunts' behavior due to her helplessness. Herman explains the toll chronic abuse takes on its victims and says, "Thus, under conditions of chronic childhood abuse, fragmentation becomes the central principle of personality organization....Fragmentation in the inner representations of the self prevents the integration of identity" (107).

It is especially disheartening that Paula's own family is a source of her trauma and Scott and Eliav explain that this truth makes it harder for the victims to overcome and state, "Most trauma is inflicted by family members or acquaintances making it harder to get over" (13 Kendall-Tackett). Paula must coexist in the same home with the aunts which allow them unlimited access to abuse and degrade her. There is never a moment of relief from her stress and this affects her emotional state and personal happiness at all times. Studies have shown that abused children have an especially difficult time living with their abusers. Some children take on the role of "bad" kid thinking that they are innately bad and are the one's responsible for their maltreatment. If they just continue to accept the ways of the abusers and gently try to live by their rules, the abusers will see

that he/she is indeed trying to be “good” and the abuse will stop. Naturally, this approach does not work because the child is not the responsible party and the abuse continues. Paula accepts her treatment without protest for she fears it will be worse if she tries to defend herself.

Unfortunately for Paula, she does not receive any support from outside of the home, and in her eyes, this validates the awful opinions the aunts assign to her. The neighbor laughs at her as the aunt explains that she is worthless. The children at school single her out and speak negatively of her as well, without even making the minimum effort to get to know her. For example, the narrative voice describes the scene at school, “A primera vista podía adivinar la hostilidad con que había sido acogida. Iba sola, la única que salía sola de la escuela. Las demás se volvían a mirarla con descarada impertinencia, y un visible deseo de mortificarla, con sus risas veladas y sus cuchicheos” (Matute 3: 28). In fact, it appears that Paula’s classmates look forward to the opportunity to tease and torment her. The mother’s infamy is general knowledge in the town and Paula’s classmates use this against her just like the aunts. Whispers circle about Paula’s physical health and her mother, even Pedro hears them and he no longer attends school. The narrative voice explains, “Entre los grupitos de las niñas llegaron hasta Pedro palabras crueles y agudas: ‘Está enferma.’ ‘Dicen las de Telégrafos que no sirve para nada.’ ‘Su madre era una mujer may mala.’ Y, luego, algo que se grabó afiladamente en su corazón: ‘Se morirá muy pronto’” (Matute 3: 28). Being treated poorly inside and outside of the home is taxing and challenges Paula’s ability to have faith in others and herself as well.

Paula is sent away to a boarding school by the aunts to learn a trade so she can work for the aunts to repay them for taking her in. After two years, Paula returns to her life of slavery and insult. Herman explains that families, just like concentration camps, can be a form of captivity and a source of chronic trauma which is true in Paula's case:

A single traumatic event can occur almost anywhere. Prolonged, repeated trauma, by contrast, occurs only in circumstances of captivity. When the victim is free to escape, she will not be abused a second time; repeated trauma occurs only when the victim is a prisoner, unable to flee, and under the control of the perpetrator. Such conditions obviously exist in prisons, concentration camps, and slave labor camps. These conditions may also exist in religious cults, in brothels and other institutions of organized exploitation, and in families. (75)

Paula prefers to live her life enclosed, without experiencing happiness for further risk of psychological injury to herself. Paula explains her situation to Pedro when they see each other for the first time after two years and says:

Tengo miedo de ellas. No me dejan, no saben que estoy aquí contigo... ¡Sería horrible si lo supieran! ...Ahora que he aprendido un oficio he de trabajar para no serles una carga y devolverles todo lo que me han dado. Lo han dicho. Y no puedo salir sin su permiso. Me vigilan porque no quieren que me parezca... (Matute 3: 56)

Paula lives the life of a prisoner and experiences constant fear of abuse and insult which is detrimental to her mental health.

It would be challenging if not impossible for Paula to live on her own as she is shunned by society and does not possess strong social skills. She has been denied the chance to form a healthy identity and a gradual transition from childhood into adolescence. It is not until Pedro informs the aunts that he is going to marry Paula that she gathers the courage to stand up for herself and abandon her captors. When Pedro tells Paula that he is going to marry her, all of her emotions spill out and the torment bottled up inside the innocent girl is articulated for the first time. She cries out to Pedro and says, “-No puedo, no puedo vivir aquí: estoy como si me ataran las manos y los pies, como si no fuera yo. He de estar todo el día al lado de ellas, trabajar para ellas, oír lo que ellas dicen de mí. ¡Vámanos! ¡Vámanos! Yo sólo quiero estar contigo” (Matute 3: 61). Pedro and Paula have found solace in each other and they now have the strength to give up the roles assigned to them and stand up for themselves.

Paula is only able to survive mentally until this point in her life through the loving memory she has of her mother. Her behavior and acceptance of the aunts is only to preserve her untarnished memory of her mother. For Paula it is preferable to live a hurtful life in isolation than to have to listen to the negative comments her aunts and classmates make about her mother. The memory of her mother is strong in her mind and Paula will do whatever she can to protect it, in effect, this is an attempt to protect her own personal identity. She does not identify with the aunts and only feels a link with her deceased mother. Jeffrey Prager, a sociology professor at University of California, Los Angeles, explains how memory itself can be isolating and claims, “Through memory, we seek to overcome alienation; yet, in experiencing remembering as exclusively subjective, we

simultaneously *produce* alienation” (103-4). It is ironic that Paula uses her memory to combat isolation which in reality further propels her alienation.

Upon meeting Pedro, Paula is wary of his presence and attention; however, she comes to realize that Pedro has authentic feelings for her and this is a foreign experience for her. She gains his trust with time, opens up and reveals her passion for her mother and the pain she feels in regard to her mother’s death. Paula says to Pedro:

–Mi madre era bailarina... ¡Si supieras qué guapa era, y qué bonito era mirarla! Cuando yo sea mayor y ya no me dé vergüenza, bailaré también... Tengo guardados unos zapatos. Eran de ella... Son los primeros que tuvo. Los guardo para ponérmelos cuando sea mayor, porque dan suerte... Pero tengo miedo de que mis pies crezcan y no pueda ponérmelos. Ella tenía unos pies pequeños. (Matute 3: 43)

She holds on to intricate detailed memories of her mother, like her shoe size because it is comforting to her. These memories bring her a sense of happiness and relieve her sorrow. The memory of her mother is a coping mechanism to deal with the horror of living with her aunts. Daniel Schacter explains victims’ recall of the past is related to one’s current level of pain and says, “Recalling past experiences of pain, for instance, is powerfully influenced by current pain level” (139). John A. Robinson concedes that memory interacts with mood regulation and state, “Remembering is important in mood regulation. Personal memories can be used to sustain a desirable mood, or to alter an undesirable one. Since mood can affect motivation and behaviour, the ability to regulate it internally through memory retrieval is a very adaptive process” (Gruneberg and Morris

242). Paula utilizes the memory of her mother to survive as she has no other resources to combat her trauma until she meets Pedro. In addition, Paula refuses to believe the lies the aunt's readily tell about her mother. Their opinions personally offend Paula and take away from her persona. Edkins speaks out about the intimacy of one's memories and states, "Memories are what we think of as most personal and subjective, as testimony to our individuality" (30).

Paula's memories of her mother provide her with a sense of hope and permit her to escape with Pedro. Additionally, the feelings she has for her mother assist in her personal and intimate relationship with Pedro. Prager explains how the past can assist the present and says, "Together we concluded that her psychoanalysis demonstrated that the past continues to serve the present: that we use what we remember of construct of the past to protect ourselves from or to give meaning to our affective needs and desires in our present relationships, especially intimate ones" (11-12). For some, traumatic memories haunt the present and make life unbearable for the survivor. In Paula's case, the memory of her mother is used as a coping mechanism to overcome the life of physical and emotional imprisonment imposed upon her by her own family.

The setting for Matute's short story "La felicidad" (*Historias de la Artámila* 1961) is a rural area that is stricken with hardship and poverty. The new doctor, don Lorenzo, arrives in town without lodging due to the lack of willingness of the locals to take on the responsibility of providing for him. Filomena is the one woman willing to allow the doctor stay with her and her only son despite the hard times. The doctor is warned by Atilano, the mayor's assistant, who greets him at the station that Filomena is

crazy but for she is a very kind woman despite her mental health issues. It is explained that they will soon find more appropriate housing for him. The doctor's first night at Filomena's goes well and he is baffled by this woman being labeled as crazy. He is convinced the others in the town are wrong. After spending the majority of the evening pleasantly chatting about Filomena's son and the pride and joy he brings to her life, don Lorenzo sadly and surprisingly learns the next morning from Atilano that her son died at least four years prior.

The loss of a beloved family member can be one of the most difficult challenges to overcome in life. The loss of a child can be especially devastating and can torment the mind as is the case in "La felicidad". The protagonist is a woman suffering from the acute trauma of not only losing her son to meningitis, but also losing her husband who passed away shortly after their marriage fourteen years ago. The narrative voice explains, "No tendría yo, según todos dicen, motivos para alegrarme mucho. Apenas casada quedé viuda. Mi marido era jornalero, y yo ningún bien tenía" (Matute 3; 273). Kalaga and Rachwal explain that surviving the death of others can be intolerable and quote Portia Coughlan in their work, "*Portia Coughlan* shows how memory may make life insupportable for an individual whose sense of identity has been damaged by surviving the death of an Other" (124). The shock of the death of Filomena's son affects the protagonist's ability to cope with reality and she has remained in a state of posttraumatic stress for more than four years. Filomena is incapable of accepting the death of her son and continues to maintain her identity of a loving and caring mother. In her mind she still possesses her prior identity even though it is a false identity.

It is difficult to assess the precise cause of Filomena's current state of confusion. She is most likely suffering from the combination of having lost two loved ones and from living in isolation without the support of her community. A variety of forms of failed memory recall exist such as transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, and bias. In this case, this suffering mother is experiencing blocking. The trauma of losing her son is so powerful that it has also affected her ability to recall the emotional event itself, and she continues to live on believing that her son is still alive. Schacter explains the difference in the severity of failing to recall someone's name as opposed to forgetting an emotionally traumatic event and states, "It is one thing to block the name of a person not encountered recently or on an infrequently used word, but quite another to block on an emotionally traumatic event that happened just minutes or hours earlier" (80). In this case the incident occurred over four years ago thus alluding to the severity of Filomena's current situation. Filomena's is experiencing a form of amnesia that Schacter describes as:

We do know, however, that retrieval inhibition on a large scale can occur in cases of "psychogenic" amnesia, where patients block out large parts of their personal pasts after various kinds of psychological stresses. Such patients usually retain the ability to form and retrieve new memories, but can remember little about their autobiographies-including their personal identities-prior to the onset of amnesia. (85)

Filomena is able to retrieve some old memories for she does realize that her husband did in fact die and she is able to make new memories as she recognizes that the others in

town believe she is crazy; however, she is unable to correctly recall her son's death. The emotional stress of losing her child overwhelms her and affects both the accuracy of her memory and her current state of personal identity.

Perhaps Filomena's amnesia is intentionally created because she does not want to forget her son and does not want to revoke her identity as a mother. Kalaga and Rachwal concede that this type of forgetting is an evasion of being and explain:

The essence of forgetting is the loss of access to the realm of being.

Forgetting means losing contact with being. If unintentional, forgetting is a mere scar to identity; if done on purpose, it becomes a form of suicide, of self-inflicted euthanasia. Forgetting is an evasion of being, an escape from being into the rush of becoming. (39)

There are numerous examples in the short story that demonstrate the troubled and confused state of Filomena. As soon as the doctor enters the home she shows him to his room and proudly explains that this is her son's room, boasting, “-Aquí duerme mi Manolo- dijo-. ¡Ya se puede usted figurar cómo cuido yo este cuarto!...Mi hijo está en la ciudad. ¡Ya verá es un cuarto muy bonito!” (Matute 3: 270-71). At this point don Lorenzo has no reason to believe that her son is not alive or that Filomena is living in an altered reality. She continues explaining that her dear Manolo is the pride and joy of her life, “-...¡Es que no tengo más que a mi Manuel en el mundo! Ya ve usted: mi pobre marido se murió cuando el niño tenía dos meses. Desde entonces...” (Matute 3: 271). The level of her denial is disturbing because Filomena fabricates information about her son. It is normal for any mother to consider a child as one of the greatest moments of joy

in their life; however, Filomena alters the truth in order to continue her role as his caring mother and as a coping mechanism to deal with the blunt trauma of losing her son. For example, Filomena informs the doctor that her son is currently working and studying in the city and explains, “-Está de aprendiz de zapatero, con unos tíos. ¡Y que es más avisado! Verá qué par de zapatos me hizo para la Navidad pasada. Ni a estrenarlos me atrevo” (Matute 3: 272). After divulging the location of her son, she shows the doctor a pair of shoes that were not crafted by her son.

It is clear that Filomena will remain in this confused state as she does not only misrepresent the present but also falsifies the future. She tells the doctor that she will continue to be a happy soul because all of her hard work and love produced the beautiful child she has created:

Sólo trabajando, trabajando, saqué adelante mi vida. Pues ya ve: sólo porque le tenía a él, a mi hijo, he sido muy feliz. Sí, señor: muy feliz. Verle a él crecer, ver sus primeros pasos, oírle cuando empezaba a hablar...Ya ve usted: por ahí dicen que estoy loca. Loca porque le he quitado del campo y le he mandado a aprender un oficio...Loca me dicen, sabe usted porque no me doy reposo, sólo con una idea: mandarle a mi Manuel dinero para pagarse la pensión en casa de los tíos...Viene a verme, a veces. Estuvo por Pascua y volverá para la Nochebuena. (Matute 3: 273)

Again, at this point the woman does not appear to be crazy at all in the doctor's mind. He enjoys her house and her company and he is touched by her love and dedication to the

boy. Don Lorenzo feels there is something pure and real about her that instills peace. Filomena explains that to the doctor that he will be able to meet Manolo at Christmas time. Her demented state will continue unless she receives proper medical care. Edkins explains how traumatic recall can possess the survivor and writes, “The person re-lives the traumatic event, in its full horror. Traumatic recall possesses the survivor, rather than being possessed by them. They cannot control the way the trauma is recalled: it is often related slowly, in real time” (41). In this case the trauma is controlling Filomena rather than Filomena controlling the trauma. She is unable to accept the reality and truth about Manolo.

Filomena is in dire need of support from the community as well as medical attention to overcome this traumatic state. Perhaps her current condition would not be as severe if she had received support from her neighbors and friends following the death of Manolo. Her community is self-centered and unwilling to lend a helping hand to others as Atilano explains to don Lorenzo upon his arrival and says:

Mire usted...Ya sabe: andan malos tiempos... Dicen todos por ahí que no se pueden comprometer a dar de comer...Nosotros nos arreglamos con cualquier cosa...Pues eso: no pueden andarse preparando guisos y comidas par uno que sea de compromiso. Ya ni cocinar deben saber...Disculpe usted, don Lorenzo. La vida se ha puesto así. (Matute 3: 269)

If the members of this community cannot even prepare a meal for someone else, how are they going to be able to console a suffering woman from the tragic loss of a child and a

husband. Filomena is ignored and neglected by society. She is completely isolated and has no sense of belonging to a community thus denying her the chance of proper identity formation and leaving her in a crisis situation. In addition, neither the community nor Filomena have the resources to treat traumatic related incidents of this magnitude. There is no hope for Filomena's recovery as researchers have strong evidence that the victim must create a narrative of the traumatic event as one of the key elements to survival and recovery. Brison speaks out on the role of creating a narrative and says:

In order to construct self-narratives we need not only the words with which to tell our stories, but also an audience able and willing to hear us and to understand our words as we intend them. This aspect of remaking a self in the aftermath of trauma highlights the dependency of the self on others and helps to explain why it is so difficult for survivors to recover when others are unwilling to listen to what they endured. (51)

Filomena is an example of someone who lives their life for and through others. The only role in life she has is that of a mother and she is unwilling to let go of that identity even if that means living in a fantasy world. The trauma and memory of her son are overpowering and affect Filomena's ability to function. As Filomena herself states, "No hay cosa en el mundo como un hijo...Ya le digo yo: no hay cosa igual" (Matute 3: 272). Filomena's posttraumatic state inhibits her control to properly recall the past. Matute once again shows how Spain's societal troubles create environments that leave its citizens incapable of healing themselves. Without a healthy national or regional identity,

the members of that community will live only for themselves, ignoring their greater social responsibility.

In the short story, “El maestro” (*El arrepentido y otras narraciones* 1961), the lead character, who was sexually abused by his care taker, is faced with the challenge of overcoming his sexual abuse. Despite his traumatic childhood, el maestro keeps a positive outlook on life and dreams of making a difference in the world. He moves to a rural area to become the new teacher where he can put his good actions to work. To his dismay, this dream fades as the memories of his abuse continue to haunt and destroy him to the point of his own demise. He loses his job and resorts to alcohol to cope with the emotional stress of his past. El maestro loses his reputation as a positive influence in the town as well as his own sense of self worth. When the revolution comes to town, el maestro becomes briefly involved with a small group of revolutionaries. He joins forces with them and his feelings of making a difference in life are rekindled. The relationship is short lived as an argument breaks out between el maestro and the revolutionaries. The story closes with the arrest and shooting of the teacher for being responsible for the murder of two of the revolutionaries.

Repeated sexual abuse is one of the most difficult psychological traumas to overcome, especially when the abuser is a family member. Children are forced to coexist with their abusers, giving abusers ample access to repeat the crime. Knowing that abusers have unlimited access to their body causes severe emotional torment and causes children to live in a constant state of fear. This fear keeps children from properly developing and deforms their personality. The children feel deceived because they do not understand

why the person that is supposed to care for them violates their body, mind and rights. Schacter speaks out about the difficult situation of having to live with an abuser and says, “When a parent or other trusted caregiver perpetrates abuse, a child is still emotionally and physically dependent on that person, and thus still needs to maintain a functional relationship with the abuser” (82-83). Some children never recover from the psychological trauma of sexual abuse and those that do have an altered or fragmented identity. Davis explains the difficult situation, especially of females, of having to live with abusers and the burden childhood abuse puts on identity and says, “Childhood sexual abuse, therapists argue, can undermine the victim’s self-esteem, inhibit her from establishing clear personal boundaries, cause her to have a fragmented identity, and prevent her from developing appropriate social skills” (146). It is interesting that Matute presents a case of male sexual abuse in her fiction; a sensitive topic especially for the time period in which the short story was written. Nonetheless, any form of childhood abuse negatively marks a child and hinders healthy personal development.

The type of trauma el maestro has experienced is chronic and thus more difficult to overcome. He was deceived by those who were supposed to protect him and this disturbs him to no end. It causes him to lose faith in others and himself. El maestro recalls how happy he was as a child prior to the abuse and how special he felt when La Gran Madrina, his caretaker, singled him out as her favorite. The narrative voice reveals, “...La Gran Madrina era huesuda; su dinero, magnánimo. Él era el protegido, favorecido, agradecidísimo hijo de la lavandera)” (Matute 5: 67). Initially he did not comprehend what it meant to be her favorite and he enjoyed this status, feeling a sense of

pride. Herman explains that a child's sense of self depends on the caretaker and their interaction and refers to a girl in this quote:

The developing child's positive sense of self depends upon a caretaker's benign use of power. When a parent, who is so much more powerful than a child, nevertheless shows some regard for that child's individuality and dignity, the child feels valued and respected; she develops self-esteem. She also develops autonomy, that is, a sense of her own separateness within a relationship. She learns to control and regulate her own bodily functions and to form and express her own point of view. (52)

El maestro did indeed feel respected by La Gran Madrina until the abuse started and continued; her actions permanently destroyed him and el maestro was never able to trust again.

When children are sexually abused, they not only suffer from the sexual abuse itself, they also suffer the loss of their innocence. Additionally, their childhood, their sense of self, their trust in others, their sense of safety and their chance of living a healthy life unaffected by their abuse are compromised. The memory of the abuse distresses the mind and can be uncontrollably recalled, disabling the victim. El maestro experiences uncontrollable flashbacks that torment him as an adult, inhibiting him from overcoming the sexual abuse and living a happy and productive life. The narrative voice unveils el maestro's inner thoughts:

(Como era inteligente y estudioso, la Gran Madrina le pagó los estudios.

Le pagó los estudios y le regateó los zapatos, la comida, los trajes: le negó

las diversiones, las horas de ocio, el sueño, el amor. Luego...)...y no cabe el peso de la tierra, del hambre, de la soledad: no cabe la larga sed de la tierra, en la espalda de un niño. Ahora, sin saber cómo, llegó la ira.

(Matute 5: 74)

The teacher is a bitter man that can no longer see the value of his life or the value of other people in his posttraumatic state. Davis alludes to the variety of symptoms adults experience as abused children and states, “Again, these studies reported a wide variety of effects for some adults molested as children, including depression, anxiety, feelings of isolation and stigma, poor self-esteem, a ‘tendency toward revictimization,’ difficulty in trusting others, substance abuse, and various forms of sexual maladjustment” (112). Jones explains that Matute’s adult characters are aware of their alienation, “Unlike Matute’s children, her older characters are keenly aware of their aloneness; this realization soon evolves into a conscious estrangement during the later years of adolescence and early childhood” (*The Literary World*, 60).

El maestro initially did not completely lose his faith in mankind. He was hopeful that he could change the fate of other boys so they would not have to suffer the trauma he did as a child. The narrative voice explains, “Él llegó allí, hacía veintitantos años, lleno de credulidad. Creía que había venido al mundo para la abnegación y la eficacia, por ejemplo. Para redimir alguna cosa, acaso. Para defender alguna causa perdida, quizá” (Matute 5: 68). El maestro’s presence in the town was seen as positive and he was considered a good man. The old women would comment about him saying, “...-El maestro nuevo, qué cosa más buena” (Matute 5: 67). Unfortunately the persistent

memories of his past continued to destroy his positive outlook and alter his personality. El maestro turned to alcohol to cope with his psychological stress. It is common for trauma victims to become dependent on drugs and alcohol (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/>). Substance use and abuse can alter states of the mind and temporarily relieve the mind from thinking about the traumatic event. However, this is an inappropriate solution to the problem as it treats the symptom rather than the cause. El maestro's drinking becomes obsessive causing him to lose his job and reputation as a good man. He knows he is now considered a bad person in the town. He says to himself, "Ahora no. Ahora tenía mala leyenda. Sabía que habían pedido otro maestro, a ver si lo cambiaban" (Matute 5: 68).

The transformation of el maestro is gradual and his downward spiral into depression and self-loathing builds over twenty years. El maestro's inner thoughts reveal his tormented emotional state, "Nadie sabe cómo cambia, ni cómo crece, ni cómo envejece, ni cómo se transforma en otro ser distante. Tan lento es el cambio... El tiempo, el maldito, cochino tiempo, le había vuelto así" (Matute 5: 68). The longer el maestro lives without professional help to overcome his trauma, the longer his memories will continue to cause his persona's destruction. Schacter explains that traumatic recall alters our self perception and states, "Experiences that we remember intrusively, despite desperately wanting to banish them from our minds, are closely linked to, and sometimes threaten, our perceptions of who we are and who we would like to be" (162). El maestro is not happy with his current status in society or the way he perceives himself. He is incapable of changing his destiny and cannot form a rational goal driven life plan. He is

simply going through the motions of life without emotional or psychological commitments to others. Herman comments on the difficulties adults face in the aftermath of childhood abuse and states:

Similarly, adult survivors who have escaped from the abusive situation continue to view themselves with contempt and to take upon themselves the shame and guilt of their abusers. The profound sense of inner badness becomes the core around which the abused child's identity is formed, and persists into adult life. (105)

As with most of Matute's short fiction the society in which El maestro lives is not a viable source of support. The attitude is "every man for himself" and El maestro sinks further into his misery. He is seen as a drunken outcast and does not possess a sense of belonging to his community, a key component of healthy personal identity and of recovery from traumatic events. When he has confrontational experiences with others, his first instinct is to act aggressively. The emotional stress is overbearing and he is forced to act out of rage rather than using rational thought. He has not developed the proper skills to handle challenging situations due to the damage to his personality caused from his childhood trauma. Prager explains how a traumatic past can possess the victim permanently and says:

Those with MPD or PTSD are ever victims of their memories, haunted by the past. And that past is not of their own making: they are, if you will, victims of history. As Caruth says "the traumatized...carry an impossible

history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess". (129-30)

Another contributing element to the teacher's depressing state is the monotonous, slow life of the rural town where he lives. He is not intellectually challenged or able to interact with highly educated people. Everyone that surrounds el maestro repulses him. Jones explains these negative feelings are the culprit of rebellion, "...the increasing disgust which the character feels toward society, certain individuals, or distasteful situations causes his revolt" (The Literary World, 75). When the revolution breaks out, an opportunity arises for el maestro to contribute and fight for a cause the way he always envisioned. He is recruited to join the revolutionaries and happily accepts the offer. El maestro receives instant gratification because the men tell him that they need people like him, meaning educated and wise people. This is the first positive feedback el maestro has received in years and this is what motivates him. His involvement with the revolutionaries starts out on a positive note. He forms a bond with them and feels as if he can express himself openly. The revolutionaries make inquiries about his persona and el maestro tells them, "-¿Yo? Si quieres saber cómo respiro, has de saberlo: respiro hambre y miseria. Hambre y miseria, y sed, y humillación, y toda la injusticia de la tierra. Así respiro, todo eso. Me quema ya aquí dentro, de tanto respirarlo" (Matute 5: 76). El maestro is pleased with this interaction and reveals his disgraceful past with the revolutionaries:

¡Hacía tanto tiempo que no hablaba con nadie!-Me recogieron de niño, me pagaron los estudios...A cambio de vivir como un esclavo, ¿oyes? De

servirle a la vieja de juguete, de hacer de mí un miserable muñeco, para la puerca vieja...Le venía ahora como una náusea sus caricias pegajosas, su aliento alcohólico, las perlas sobre el arrugado escote...

-Ah, con que se cobró, ¿eh? Te tenía a ti de...-dijo Gregorio, con una sonrisa oscura, guiñando un ojo.

-Era el precio. ¿Sabes, Gregorio? ¿Comprendes lo que te digo? Pero salí de aquello, para mejorarlo todo, para que a ningún muchacho le ocurriera lo que me estaba ocurriendo a mí. Me fui de sus manos, y salí a luchar solo, con una fe..., con una fe...Le venían otra vez su deseo de venganza... Estoy podrido como un muerto. (Matute 5: 78-79)

This emotional outburst stirs up el maestro's delicate feelings of embarrassment and shame, and el maestro is forced once again to relive the trauma he experienced in his childhood. Shortly after this confession to the revolutionaries, they begin to argue about a painting that hangs on the wall in the palace they have overtaken. Ironically, this painting is entitled "El maestro" (Matute 5: 80) and has been admired by the protagonist for years because he could see it hanging on the wall of the palace from the window of his apartment. El maestro warns the revolutionaries not to destroy the painting, but they begin to ridicule el maestro and slash the painting with a knife before his eyes. This destructive action causes el maestro to snap and he grabs a gun and starts shooting. He ends up killing two of the revolutionaries he considers to be ignorant. His reaction to the situation is not necessarily surprising for those marked by chronic sexual abuse as children are more susceptible to committing acts of violence as adults (The American

Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [www.aacap.org]). El maestro abandons the scene and flees into the countryside. The narrative voice describes his departure, “En medio de un grito solitario, escapó, huyó, huyó. Como había deseado huir, desde hacía veinticinco años” (Matute 5: 81).

After two days, el maestro returns to the town knowing that the officials are waiting. He is rounded up with the remaining revolutionaries, lined up, and shot to death. El maestro could have tried to avoid his capture and death but chose not to. He willingly walked back into town, ready to face his destiny. Life was no longer bearable to him and he no longer wanted to continue living. Schacter explains the toll continual reminding of past events can have on the present and says, “Continual reminding can strengthen recall of the disturbing specifics of what happened to a point at which persistence becomes unbearable” (165).

El maestro is a unique story in the sense that Matute does not often discuss childhood sexual abuse in her short fiction. Her short story characters are frequently physically and emotionally abused, victims of varying forms of neglect and, as a result, have issues with their identity. Matute demonstrates repeatedly how children struggle to survive in post war Spain. In an interview with Victor-M. Varela Matute explains that childhood can be cruel and that childhood is an autonomous world, “La infancia no es una etapa de la vida: es un mundo completo, autónomo, poético y también cruel...” (http://www.clubcultura.com/clubliteratura/clubescritores/matute/misc_entr.htm). Jones comments on the adult character in Matute’s work and states:

The depiction of the *dolor de vivir* is the most vivid in her treatment of the adult character, who expresses feelings of disgust toward himself and his fellow man, and displays a deliberate lack of emotional involvement, a self-imposed absence of ideological or social commitment, an apathetic recognition of the unsatisfactory conditions of life, and an impression of total solitude, reinforced by an awareness of the passage of time. (The Literary World, 84)

The protagonist of “Noticia del joven K” (*Algunos muchachos* 1964) is a nameless young boy who struggles to survive in a society that does not welcome or understand him. After the death of his mother, he is left to be cared for by his grandfather who beats him and emotionally torments him. This contributes to his isolation, his struggles in school and being ridiculed by his classmates. He is eventually expelled from school and sent to work in the fields by his neglectful and abusive grandfather. After multiple altercations with his half brother, the protagonist ends up being incarcerated for physically beating his half brother to death. Upon his release he returns home and finds himself just as rejected by his community as he was before going to jail.

The protagonist’s problems unfortunately begin at birth. The child is born out of wedlock and must carry the weight of his “presumptuous” mother’s reputation for his entire lifetime. His status as a bastard child affects his relationship with his grandfather who despises him for being the result of an improper relationship. In fact, the grandfather is so disturbed by the boy’s mother that he repeatedly physically abuses and

neglects him. Rather than assume the role of a loving and caring grandparent, he chooses to ignore and abuse the innocent child leaving detrimental scars on the boy's pride and sense of self. It is worth recalling Herman's words regarding family legends, "Family legends may include stories of the harm the child caused by being born the disgrace for which she appears to be destined" (104).

The chronic abuse of the boy negatively impacts his persona. He lives in constant fear that the abuse will continue, leaving him in a state of paranoia. It also affects his ability to calmly interact with others. The boy is fond of his teacher, don Ángel, who he turns to for emotional support. Their relationship is erratic at times; don Ángel unpredictably switches between aiding the boy and condemning him for his inappropriate behavior. The boy's inner feelings are revealed in his conversations with the teacher and demonstrate the hurtfulness of his grandfather's abuse. For example, an argument breaks out at school between the boy and don Ángel over the way in which the boy treats his half brother. Rather than supporting him or assisting him in finding a better way to deal with the problem the teacher turns on him and threatens to expel him and also reminds him how he will be treated by his grandfather. The boy quickly defends himself and explains to Don Ángel that his grandfather does him no favors and he shows his teacher his back that is full of wounds from being beaten and whipped by his grandfather. The boy now feels deceived by his grandfather, his mother and his teacher who are all individuals that could ordinarily be relied on as sources of love and support. Herman explains how abused children become estranged from family members and claims, "The abused child is isolated from other family members as well as from the wider social

world. She perceives daily, not only that the most powerful adult in her intimate world is dangerous to her, but also that the other adults who are responsible for her care do not protect her” (100-101). The protagonist is saddened and disappointed that his teacher does not stand up for him and protect him to his best ability.

Trauma surrounds this child on all fronts, making his life miserable and challenging with little hope of a bright future. He also faces the possibility that his grandfather might actually kill him. Living with this type of emotional stress deforms a child’s personality, prohibiting them from being able to trust anyone. Edkins explains how one of the fundamental components of trauma is a betrayal of trust:

...to be called traumatic...It has to involve a betrayal of trust as well.

There is an extreme menace, but what is special is where the threat of violence comes from. What we call trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger. (4)

The child’s family is clearly not a source of support; instead, it is the primary cause of his trauma. He has suffered the acute trauma of having lost his mother, the chronic trauma of living in the shadow of his mother’s reputation, and the constant physical abuse of his grandfather. He additionally suffers from his inconsistent relationship with his teacher.

His estranged relationship with his father and his confrontational and violent relationship with his half brother are yet more sources of pain in the child’s life. He has

no contact with his father and must attend school with his half brother whom he loathes. His biological father's neglect does not assist with the boy's self-esteem. Brison explains the importance of the acknowledgment by others to trauma survivors and states, "For the child, not to be seen is not to exist, to be annihilated. Not to be heard means that the self the survivor has become does not exist for these others. Since the earlier self died, the surviving self needs to be known and acknowledged in order to exist" (62). The constant neglect by his family members takes a toll on the child who wants nothing more than to be accepted by someone and it sends him into a deeper state of desperation. After being kicked out of school, the boy begs his teacher to convince his grandfather to let him return:

Yo no sirvo para el campo, don Ángel, dígaselo al abuelo, que no me pegue más con el vergajo, mire cómo me ha puesto.

-Y ahora... ¿qué puedo yo hacer en tu favor? ¿Qué, pobre de mí? Ni tu abuelo quiere saber de ti.

-Así es, ya hace tiempo que no quiere ni verme, así es mejor. (Matute 5: 353)

The grandfather's neglect and physical abuse is accepted by the boy who does not know how to respond his maltreatment. He has not developed the proper skills to deal with such situations and the boy prefers to be alone rather than confront his grandfather.

Unable to modify his situation he is rendered helpless. The results produced from a case study conducted by Scott and Eliav explain how trauma leads to irresolvable conflict and state, "The potential for trauma exists both in the fear of the attack and in the impact of

the mother's betrayal of her role in keeping the child safe and protected from harm. Second, the relational context of trauma forces children and adolescents to deal with unresolvable conflict" (Kendall-Tackett 14). The combination of physical threat and betrayal in the boy's life is damaging to the formation of his identity.

The boy is not only rejected by his family but he is ridiculed and discarded at school by his classmates. This further contributes to the destruction of his identity. Brison explains, "The disintegration of the self experienced by victims of violence challenges our notions of personal identity over time..." (4). The boy has no sense of belonging to a family or to the community and is forced into alienation. An example that demonstrates the protagonist's desire to remain in isolation is seen in a conversation he has with his half brother who attempts to befriend him. The boy states, "...mira me estás colmando la paciencia, a mí no te me arrimes, ni la vista me tienes que poner encima ¿me oyes? Ni la vista" (Matute 5: 348). Jones alludes to the role of human nature in isolation:

The primary cause of the adolescent's disillusionment, however, is human nature. His extreme solitude, the hopelessness of trying to communicate with others, and especially the inevitable egotism that surrounds him make the adolescent strive to dissociate himself completely from society. (The Literary World, 72)

Later, after another altercation with his half brother the protagonist explains his feelings to his teacher. The teacher asks what happened and says, "-Pero so bestia ¿qué te ha hecho el pobrecillo? – Que le dije que no me mirara, como a todos, que ya todos lo saben que yo he de estar solo, no quiero hablar con ninguno..." (Matute 5: 348). The boy is

unable to interact with others and becomes quickly frustrated. He has never been treated kindly and his feelings of anger and rage towards others continue to mount. Scott and Eliav highlight the damage chronic relational trauma experienced in adolescence can cause: "... 'Chronic Relational Trauma in Middle Childhood,' have few opportunities to develop the social skills needed for effective negotiation of difficult interpersonal situations and for development of healthy interpersonal relationships" (Kendall-Tackett 19).

The boy's tendency to resolving conflict through violence is not surprising and can be attributed to his chronic exposure to emotional stress and physical abuse. Herman explains that this is a normal response to abusive treatment and states:

Feelings of rage and murderous revenge fantasies are normal responses to abusive treatment. Like abused adults, abused children are often rageful and sometimes aggressive. They often lack verbal and social skills for resolving conflict, and they approach problems with the expectation of hostile attack. (104)

The protagonist has never been given the opportunity to develop proper social skills and does not have any friends with whom he can share his thoughts and experience joyful moments. When he is approached by his half brother, he becomes enraged and wants to keep his distance. The protagonist has no interest in fostering a relationship with him. His brother's presence represents his father's rejection and this is a hurtful reminder.

Despite their confrontational relationship, the boy consistently turns to don Ángel to assist him. Unfortunately his teacher never fully commits to him and abandons the

child in the end. After being released from prison, he once again returns to don Ángel for his love and support but is rejected. The boy first seeks out don Ángel's presence and then upon seeing him, he begs his teacher for assistance:

¿Por qué me abandona don Ángel, por qué se va, por qué va a volverse un punto, un punto sólo otra vez, hasta desaparecer...? Voy corriendo, aún le alcanzo.

-¿Pero qué haces, por qué vuelves, por qué no te escapas...o te escondes...? ¿No te he dicho que te vayas, a tiempo?

-No. No me deje, tengo miedo, ya no puedo huir, dése cuenta: estoy solo.

(Matute 5: 355)

Herman describes this emotional state of attachment to others as a common reaction for trauma victims and states:

Trauma impels people both to withdraw from close relationships and to seek them desperately. The profound disruption in basic trust, the common feelings of shame, guilt, and inferiority, and the need to avoid reminders of the trauma that might be found in social life, all foster withdrawal from close relationships. But the terror of the traumatic event intensifies the need for protective attachments. The traumatized person therefore frequently alternates between isolation and anxious clinging to others. (56)

Despite the boy's appearance of being a tough individual that can handle situations by treating others in an aggressive and violent manner, he is actually just a

child ridden with fear. It is the fear of being abused again and the fear of having to face the world alone that gives this child an edge to his personality. Herman speaks out about fear in trauma victims and relays, “The worst fear of any traumatized person is that the moment of horror will recur, and this fear is realized in victims of chronic abuse” (86). The constant fear the boy experiences condemns him to a posttraumatic state that prohibits him from escaping his misery or bettering his future. Minow explains that in order to recover from trauma the individual must be able to regain a sense of control and states:

In order to recover, a trauma survivor needs to be able to control herself, control her environment (within reasonable limits), and be reconnected with humanity. Whether the latter two achievements occur depends, to a large extent, on other people. Living with the memory of trauma is living with a kind of disability, and whether one is able to function with a disability depends largely on how one’s social and physical environments are set up. (Brison 60)

The protagonist is unlikely to overcome his trauma because children, as well as adults, need help and guidance to recover from their experiences. The fictional world of Matute portrays the lack of unity and concern for others in society and demonstrates the need for a change in social responsibility. The road to recovery is a long-term commitment from society for intervention support (Kendall-Tackett 25).

The child has been denied a lifetime of joy, a sense of safety, and personal identity. Due to the physical and psychological abuse imposed onto him by others, he has

become detached from society with little if any chance to become re-integrated. Prager explains that childhood abuse causes dissociation and claims:

Abuse in childhood is understood as causing dissociation, for example, with no regard for the ways in which individual selves encounter the past, remember it, and constitute themselves in relation to it. Dissociation happens because of the mind's incapacity to absorb overwhelming experience: it is outside the individual's control. (138)

The child cannot control his emotional outbursts and feelings of rage. His abuse is too severe and has consumed his mind and body. He cannot function rationally and has lost the power to coexist with others in society. Davis explains how victims lose control, "Abuse disempowers the victim. Having been abused, victims no longer feel that they can affect the world, that they have strength, or that they can control their destiny" (175). The protagonist has never felt genuine warmth or caring from anyone on a consistent basis. This deforms the personality of those most vulnerable, children and adolescents.

Bullying is the form of psychological trauma suffered by the young protagonist in Matute's short story "Bernardino" (*Historias de la Artámila* 1961). One afternoon after losing his dog "Chu" Bernardino is beaten and verbally assaulted by the town bullies in exchange for his dog's life. Earlier in the day the bullies stole the dog, tied him up and are ready to throw "Chu" into a fire. After his beating the bullies run off and Bernardo recovers his dog. Without saying a word or shedding a single tear the two pals return home leaving the scene. Although both the dog and child are traumatized, they are happy to be rejoined and go about their way.

To some, bullying may not appear to be a form of psychological trauma; it is chalked up as simply being teased at school. However, the reality of bullying is that it is very present in society and includes much more than teasing. Bullying can consist of both verbal and physical abuse which both cause emotional damage. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry explains how their trauma obstructs their emotional growth and state, “Children who are bullied experience real suffering that can interfere with their social and emotional development, as well as their school performance” (http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/bullying). In the case of Bernardino, the psychological stress he endures is severe and the physical abuse suffered is life threatening. He also suffers the extreme fear that harm is going to be committed against his beloved dog. This is perhaps what distresses the boy the most.

Bullying can be an acute or chronic form of trauma which are both difficult to digest and overcome. When the trauma is acute, as is the case with Bernardino, the moment the physical abuse begins, it is marked in the mind and body and will form part of the victim’s memory. The trauma and the memory of the trauma are inseparable and will leave long term negative affects on the victim. Jean Améry explains how a victim feels from the first moment of injury and states, “...the person who is tortured, that from the moment of the first blow he loses ‘trust in the world’...” (Brison 46). Bernardino will not only lose his sense of trust in others, he will also experience a loss of innocence and safety. The fear that he experiences in the forest with the bullies will affect his personal identity weakening his sense of self. His mind will recall the experience contaminating his future sense of happiness and stability.

The idea of losing his dog or seeing “Chu” maltreated is more powerful to Bernardino than personally suffering physical abuse. He sacrifices himself in order to protect his dog. The vision of his dog being tied up and ready to be thrown in the fire is overwhelming. The narrative voice describes the scene, “Efectivamente: ellos tenían a “Chu”...Habían atado a “Chu” por las patas traseras y le habían arrollado una cuerda al cuello, con un nudo corredizo. Un escalofrío nos recorrió: ya sabíamos lo que hacían los de la aldea con los perros sarnosos y vagabundos” (Matute 3: 337). The bullies explain that they will release the dog if he volunteers to take “Chu’s” place and state, “-Si te dejas dar *de veras* tú, en vez del chucho...-Está bien. Dadme *de veras*” (Matute 3: 338). The love the boy feels for his dog is genuine and he will do whatever it takes to protect him. Bernardino is also protecting himself for he does not want to experience the trauma of seeing his dog maltreated or killed.

Individuals react differently in traumatic situations. Some attempt to engage their attacker by talking or pleading with them in hope of stopping the attack. They feel they may be able to rationalize with the abuser and change their fate. Others chose not to react or are unable to react verbally or physically for the event is overwhelming and the victim is rendered helpless. Davis refers to this coping mechanism as a silent reaction and states, “Significantly, they also argued that the coping behavior of rape victims, which could include a ‘silent reaction,’ was similar to that of individuals involved in other life-threatening situations, and they cited the line of research, including the studies of war neuroses, that appears in the histories of PTSD” (116). Research has shown that those who react silently have more difficulty in overcoming their personal trauma. After the

attack, victims experience feelings of guilt and shame because they did not try to stop the attack. Many cases have been recorded where those that chose to react silently end up seeing the abuse from afar. Trauma survivors explain that psychologically they temporarily leave their body and view the abuse as a type of observer. Herman explains this occurs when a victim feels powerless and claims:

When a person is completely powerless, and any form of resistance is futile, she may go into a state of surrender. The system of self-defense shuts down entirely. The helpless person escapes from her situation not by action in the real world but rather by altering her state of consciousness. (42)

Active and inactive reactions are both methods of coping during an abusive attack and one can never know how they will react until the situation is upon them.

Bernardino falls into the later category of coping mechanisms and chooses not to confront his attackers and remains silent. The narrative voice describes the scene:

Bernardino seguía quieto, como de piedra... Se le tiraron encima y le quitaron la blusa. La carne de Bernardino era pálida, amarillenta, y se le marcaban mucho las costillas. Se dejó hacer, quieto y flemático. Buque le sujetó las manos a la espalda... Bernardino, en cambio, cosa extraña, parecía no sentir el menor dolor. Seguía quieto, zarandeado solamente por los golpes... También sus ojos seguían impávidos, indiferentes. (Matute 3: 337-39)

Bernardino's self defense is to lie listlessly and pray that the bullies will eventually stop beating him. His goal is to survive the attack and be rejoined with his dog. It is unimaginable the fear he must have experienced before and during the attack and it is likely that this event will plague his future. His sense of personal safety and identity are compromised as a result of the attack.

Bernardino does not react emotionally to the trauma at the scene of the crime. It is not until he is alone with his dog that he permits himself to release his feelings of fear, sadness, and humiliation. The narrative voice describes his emotional breakdown and reveals, "Echado boca abajo, medio oculto entre los mimbres, Bernardino lloraba desesperadamente, abrazado a su perro" (Matute 3: 340). This scene demonstrates the power of bullying and physical abuse on individuals and their emotions. Unfortunately, the negative affects of bullying do not stop when the abuse ends. Feelings associated with bullying live long in its victims negatively impacting their personal sense of self. Scott and Eliav believe that victims of bullying are vulnerable to depression among other symptoms, "Initial work on the impact of bullying examined its effects on general emotional distress. This research established that victims of bullying are more likely to report symptoms of depression, anxiety, and distress and to display behavioral and conduct problems (Kendall-Tackett 18). Scott and Eliav also explain that the symptoms of trauma impede bullied children's ability to form relationships with others (Kendall-Tackett 19). Due to their inability to trust once traumatized, victims of bullies tend to avoid social situations and withdraw from others. Davis also comments on the long-term effects of suffering traumatic events on its victims and says, "The second group

comprises signs of a ‘numbing’ of responsiveness or interest in one’s environment, including ‘constricted affect’ and feelings of detachment or estrangement from others” (117).

Bullying is yet another form of psychological trauma presented in Matute’s short fiction and it is a contributor to her characters’ troubled sense of identity. The victims of bullying are forced to endure terrorizing moments which directly affect their sense of well-being. Ascione explains that terrorizing is a form of abuse and states, “*Terrorizing* is a form of psychological maltreatment that includes placing a child in dangerous situations, threatening the child with physical harm and/or abandonment, and threatening to harm or actually harming a child’s loved ones or objects” (107). Unfortunately for Bernardino, he experiences all of the types of trauma outlined by Ascione. He faces a difficult road to recovery especially due to his status as a socially isolated individual.

Matute’s short fiction provides a picture of the Spanish societal realities during the Civil War and the post war time period. The author regularly demonstrates through her characters that everyday people are victims of traumatic acts of crime, violence, and maltreatment. Traumatic experiences become implanted into her character’s memory and cause irrevocable damage to their persona. The society in which her characters live repeatedly demonstrates a prevalent lack of empathy for others as they are unwilling to aide the members of their community in times of need. The community’s unwillingness to accept and confront the tragic social situation of their members assists in the repression of memories of violence and victimization at the individual and greater societal level. Matute’s short fiction gives voice to the survivors and preserves the accounts of victims;

she is an advocate for those who need representation. Memories place what has been forgotten in the present; therefore, memories of past struggles can disrupt and contest power and haunt the same structures of power that are responsible for the initial infliction of trauma and abuse.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Matute's short fiction portrays characters as victims suffering from social isolation and hardship caused by various forms of injustice such as neglect, abuse, violence, and other traumatic events. Frequently these injustices are committed by the most unexpected sources, their families and members of their immediate community. These injustices cause multiple long lasting problems for the protagonists and especially affect their sense of self and personal identity formation. As a result of their damaged identities, Matute's characters struggle to survive and coexist with others in their community and they must face the world alone without the support of friends and family. The solitude and alienation of Matute's characters cause them to spiral into a crisis of identity because they are unable to feel a sense of belonging to their families and/or the community, an essential component to identity formation.

The characters inability to identify with others leaves them with a lack of role models, an essential component in positive identity formation. Hall explains that this phenomenon is due to modernization and that strong, stable identities from the past that once served as a basis for individuals to identify with no longer exist and the modern individual experiences a crisis of identity or a fragmented identity (596). Matute's characters' ability to live a fruitful life with a strong sense of self is even further limited due to the politically turbulent times in Spain in the 20th Century. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) was catastrophic and took the lives of more than a million people (Sobejano 23), leaving the nation with countless ruptured families suffering from war-related trauma. The author portrays a society destroyed by the tragedy of the civil war and the

following oppressive dictatorship. The absence of community leads to dysfunctional identity formation for individuals, leaving society illequipped to heal itself. Matute's short fiction can be seen as a greater metaphor for the crisis of identity Spain experienced as a result of its political conflicts in the 1900s. Arluke explains the difficulties a community can experience when trying to heal after tragedy strikes and how this negatively impacts the survivors of such tragedy:

Usually after tragedy destroys a community there is an outpouring of grief and support from survivors to reestablish social bonds. However, sometimes there are tragedies that have no community to restore a sense of order and meaning after loss of life or property, and the survivors pay for this void (Brison 2001). If there is no community to begin with, tragedy occurs in a social vacuum, as happens when death strikes isolated people. There is no one to reaffirm and support core community beliefs and standards of morality, no one to tell the survivors that their former identities are still honored and respected, no one to mull over the meaning of the death or recall memories of the deceased, and memorialization-the person or event is forgotten. There is no healing. (147)

Matute's literature can, in some respect, be considered a form of testimony to the political unrest and difficult times of Spain as her work portrays Spain during times of tragedy.

Interestingly, when Matute is questioned about the social isolation of her characters, specifically children, she offers a different reason for her protagonist's

isolation. In an interview with Pita she is asked, “¿El niño es un ser solitario porque es incapaz de comunicar su explicación del mundo?” and Matute responds:

No, es solitario sencillamente porque no pertenece al mundo de los mayores. Siempre digo y repito que el niño no es un proyecto de hombre, sino que el hombre es lo que queda de un niño, que es un mundo total y cerrado y redondo, y ahí no entra nadie más que su fantasía y otros niños. Los adultos no entran, y por eso es un ser solitario; no porque no pueda expresarse, que lo hace perfectamente con los suyos, y conmigo también.

(<http://www.elmundo.es/magazine/num113/textos/entrevista.html>)

Matute feels strongly that the world children and adults belong to are separate worlds that are incapable of mutual understanding. This is why she so often presents animosity between children/adolescents and adults. Considering the author’s point of view, it is difficult to ignore the environment of Matute’s characters and the role their circumstances, usually unfortunate, play on the characters’ sense of self and personality formation. The impact that a civil war and all that a war entails, death, mutilated bodies, exile, disappearances, violence, and hunger must impact the members of its society in a significant manner. The consequences of war must alter individuals in some fashion from their pre-war state. While for Matute it is true that the world of childhood is alienating, so is the fact that countless Spanish children were orphaned and exiled as a result of the war and the Franco dictatorship. It is inconceivable to think that the death of one’s parents, siblings, extended family, teachers, priests, neighbors, and friends does not

promote alienation. The war questioned Spain's national identity, as well as, individual identity at the same time.

The role that the family plays in an individual's identity formation cannot be underestimated. It is one of the oldest sources of identity formation and it is usually the first environment that fosters individuals to experience the feeling of a sense of belonging. Without having any a sense of belonging, individual's formation of identity and personality are challenged. Matute persistently demonstrates that the Spanish family is in great jeopardy in her short fiction and is often the cause of her character's unhappiness and problems with healthy self-development. The family not only provides a sense of belonging, but it also assists individuals in experiencing a sense of safety in the world. Due to the Civil War and the Franco years, many parents were killed or exiled and the children were left alone to confront their future's or were left under the care of friends and/or relatives.

Just as Matute depicts a pessimistic image of the family, she equally presents a negative role of the caretakers of the abandoned children and adolescents in her fiction. In many instances, the caretakers are unwilling to properly provide for the characters as seen in the short stories "Cuaderno para cuentas," "El río," "Noticia del joven K," "El maestro," "Pecado de omisión," and "El tiempo," or they are incapable of providing a nurturing environment for the children due to economic hardship and limited physical ability as seen in "Fausto," "La rama seca," and "Los niños buenos". In any case, the care takers fail as positive role models. They do not provide the protagonists with a strong sense of self and this ultimately ends up damaging their personal identity

formation. The loss of the family unit in conjunction with ill-prepared and/or unwilling caretakers creates a negative feedback loop that inhibits Spain's ability to recover from the damage caused by the years of political strife. The first years of formation of life are essential in healthy personal development and when this time period in a child's life is compromised, it has detrimental effects on an individual's personal growth. It is during this time period that children learn to establish basic trust with others in and outside of the home. Herman feels the importance of this bond between the child and first caretaker is fundamental to all systems of relationship and faith:

The sense of safety in the world, or basic trust, is acquired in the earliest life in the relationship with the first caretaker. Originating with life itself, this sense of trust sustains a person throughout the lifecycle. It forms the basis of all systems of relationship and faith. The original experience of care makes it possible for human beings to envisage a world in which they belong, a world hospitable to human life. (51)

Matute rarely depicts a world that is hospitable, quite the contrary; she depicts a world burdened by social injustice that alienates her characters, forcing them to retreat into a private or imaginary world. Her characters are unable to relate to humans and seek friendship in animals, dolls, and imaginary friends. Ascione agrees with Herman and states, "We now know that the development of a close and intimate relationship with a nurturing caregiver in the first two years of a child's life is critical for healthy human development. If attachment is absent or proceeds in dysfunctional ways, serious psychological disturbance may result" (21).

Chapter Two demonstrates that the family is depicted in a negative light more often than not in Matute's short fiction and it is characterized as a source of neglect and/or physical and emotional abuse. The absence of a positive and interactive active family life hinders Matute's protagonists in establishing a strong sense of self and safety, leaving them victims of alienation. The family is seen as a primary cause for the crises of identity seen in Matute's characters.

Matute's short fiction consistently portrays a violent society where her characters are frequent perpetrators or victims of violence. The violence present in the daily lives of her characters threatens their sense of self and safety leaving them vulnerable to further attack and weakened self-confidence. In many instances Matute's characters revert to violence as a coping mechanism because they cannot handle the emotional stress of their family life, economic and/or social status, and their inability to communicate with others in society. In general, the author's characters are depicted as alienated beings struggling to interact with others in society. Their state of alienation leaves them vulnerable to attack. The primary victims of violence are children and adolescents; however, Matute also demonstrates that animals and adults are targeted victims.

The protagonists suffer from both physical and psychological violence leaving emotional scars that impede or deform healthy identity formation. Overcoming acts of violence and cruelty is difficult and some victims never overcome the trauma they endure, rendering them helpless. They remain victims of violence and can only assume the identity of a "victim" forever losing their former identity. They lose their ability to trust others and they retreat even further from society. The idea of healthy communities is

consistently lacking in Matute's fictional world and she shows how society can cause more damage to its members than it prevents. The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (1993) explain the role a community or neighborhood can have on its members:

In neighborhoods in which children are protected, there is friendship among neighbors, watchfulness for each other's families, physical safety of the environment, common knowledge of community resources, visible leadership, and perhaps most critically, a sense of "belonging," ownership, and collective responsibility. By contrast, some neighborhoods have been so drained of these qualities that they are disastrous for children and families. (Trickett and Schellenbach 187-88)

The author's characters are troubled and need group support, something that is unfortunately unavailable to them. The family unit has been broken and there is no support inside or outside of the home for her characters.

The short stories chosen for analysis demonstrate different forms of violence and acts of cruelty such as bullying, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and physical assault. All of these types of violence demonstrate the inability of Matute's characters to feel empathy towards others; otherwise they would not commit such unjust acts. Matute's perpetrators of violence are concerned only with themselves they and are not concerned with how their victim might feel or the consequences of their violence. This indifference allows the cycle of violation to continue. In the case of bullying, some individuals actually take pleasure in abusing others and specifically target the weak. In instances like

this, the perpetrators of violence become dependant on their cruel acts and violence actually becomes a part of their identity. Bullying is found in “El tiempo,” “Los niños buenos,” “Cuaderno para cuentas,” “Bernardino,” “El precio de la soledad,” and “Noticia del joven K”. Matute speaks of this form of injustice in an interview with Elena Pita and expresses her disgust with those that abuse the weak:

... Pero lo que es una injusticia terrible es que los niños tengan que trabajar, peor aún el abuso; y eso ha ocurrido siempre, aunque antes no se sabía. Ese abuso del débil por el fuerte, sexual, social, laboral, es lo que más me impulsa a escribir. Y luego la falta de comunicación, la falta de interés por comprender al otro, que cada vez se agudiza más. Y el odio entre hermanos, el cainismo, que está en todos mis libros, que no sé si vendrá de la guerra civil.

(<http://www.elmundo.es/magazine/num113/textos/entrevista.html>)

The inability to communicate with others is a major challenge for Matute’s characters and the author demonstrates how this contributes to individuals expressing themselves through violence. Matute has created other stories that demonstrate her character’s pleasure in committing acts of violence and cruelty. “Los murciélagos,” “Bernardino,” and “Moro” are stories that exemplify cases of animal cruelty where the motive of the abuse falls under the sadistic theory, those who abuse for pleasure and a form of entertainment.

Revenge, resentment, and jealousy are the principal motives behind the violence committed by the protagonists in the short stories “El tiempo,” “Cuaderno para cuentas,”

“Bernardino,” “Noticia del joven K,” “El río,” “Pecado de omisión,” and “El maestro”. In each case the abuser suffers from instability and communication issues. They are interested in self-betterment and disregard the outcome of their actions. They are socially immature and rely on aggression to combat their frustration when faced with challenges. These characters contribute to the general feeling of selfishness found in the fictional society portrayed by Matute.

Because her characters are socially isolated, they suffer from both social and emotional disorders. They are unable to rationally adapt to challenges and they become targets for violence or end up using violence as a remedy. James Garbarino, Kathleen Kostelny, and Frank Barry outline characteristics that promote prosocial and healthy adaptability:

- Active attempts to cope with stress (rather than just reacting)
- Cognitive competence (at least an average level of intelligence)
- Experiences of self-efficacy, with corresponding self-confidence and positive self-esteem
- Temperamental characteristics that favor active coping attempts and positive relationships with others (e.g., activity, goal orientation, sociability) rather than passive withdrawal
- A stable emotional relationship with at least one parent or other reference person
- An open, supportive educational climate and parental model of behavior that encourages constructive coping with problems

- Social support from persons outside the family (Trickett and Schellenbach 298)

These characteristics are not present in the characters and this is a possible explanation for explain their tendency to rely on using violence as a coping mechanism. This reveals how violence becomes a part of their identity. This consistent violence in Matute's short fiction shows the instability of her characters and how violence interplays with a person's identity and sense of self. Chapter Three demonstrates that violence and cruelty contribute negatively to identity formation in Matute's protagonists.

The characters presented in Matute's short stories are frequently alienated and subject to unjust forms of violence and cruelty and, as a result, they become victims of trauma. As Chapter Four discusses, the moment a traumatic event or experience transpires, the trauma is immediately marked in the conscience of the victim and forms part of their memory. Brison states, "...trauma not only haunts the conscious and unconscious mind, but also remains in the body, in each of the senses, ready to resurface whenever something triggers a reliving of the traumatic event" (x). Some victims are able to overcome their trauma while others remain in a posttraumatic state, unable to resolve the issues created by the trauma. The memory of trauma can haunt its victims who are unable to control unwanted flashbacks of the event itself. This is commonly seen in those that survive war and physical and/or sexual abuse. Other victims are tormented by the memory of the loss of a loved one as seen in the short stories "El tiempo," "Noticia del joven K," and "La felicidad". Regardless of the type of trauma, acute or chronic, the survivor's identity preceding the trauma is permanently altered and/or damaged and may

never be recovered. Research has shown that one of the most beneficial ways to heal from a traumatic experience is to create some form of narrative such as a journal, paintings, and song writing in an attempt to rid themselves of the survivor identity (Davis 207). According to Edkins, it is not just because the traumatic experience is so powerful that it is re-lived time and time again by survivors. It is because of the failure to allocate meaning to what happened (39). The act of creating a narrative of the event is to assist with the allocation of meaning and to re-establish a sense of trust.

Matute's literature is frequently described as autobiographic and in an interview with Pedro Manuel Villora the author explains that only the short story collection *El río* (1963) is in fact is a recollection of her childhood. Matute explains:

Nunca he escrito nada, excepto "El río", autobiográfico. Nada de lo que pasa en mis libros es algo que me haya pasado a mí. Nada excepto en "El río", que son recuerdos de mi infancia en La Rioja. Prefiero inventar, prefiero investigar el ser humano antes que ponerme yo en el centro.

(http://www.clubcultura.com/clubliteratura/clubescritores/matute/misc_en_tr3.htm)

The author's life experiences motivate her to write as she explains that she is interested in writing about varying forms of injustice that she has witnessed in the same interview:

...Me interesan los problemas sociales, los problemas de injusticia. Está dentro de todos mis libros. Se ve claramente que estoy preocupada por el ser humano, por la fragilidad del ser humano, por la facilidad con la que puede ser atropellado. Eso me indigna, me subleva, y está en todos mis

libros.

http://www.clubcultura.com/clubliteratura/clubescritores/matute/misc_ent_r3.htm)

Matute is a survivor of the Civil War and lived through the years of the Franco dictatorship. She has witnessed the atrocities of the war and has lived to describe her experiences which she presents directly and indirectly in her short fiction.

Matute's storylines have also been described as "triste" (Pita <http://www.elmundo.es/magazine/num113/textos/entrevista.html>) which is not surprising due to her exposure to violence and social injustices for such an extended period of time. Her vision of the world has been tainted by death, political unrest, and a lack of sense of safety. In fact, the author herself has been diagnosed as possessing posttraumatic stress disorder. A Spanish translation of the *Clinicians Administered PTSD Scale* was administered to Matute in Barcelona in 1997 and the findings show she is a victim of PTSD as Dr. Patricia G. Heiber of Georgetown University writes:

Test results are supportive of Ms. Matute's currently suffering a PTSD subsequent to her experiences during the Spanish Civil War. She reports being disturbed by a persistent re-experiencing of the trauma, avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma as well as numbness and restriction of her general responsiveness since the trauma. Ms. Matute also reports experiencing distress over her increased level of arousal as manifested by irritability, mild problems with concentration, an exaggerated startle response and physiological responsiveness to exposure to trauma related

to trauma similar events. These symptoms support a PTSD diagnosis.

(Frame 135)

Matute's short fiction serves as a narrative for Spanish society for the Civil War and post-Civil War period. Her characters' crises of identity and posttraumatic stress demonstrate the damage caused by the war and its aftermath. Matute's work assists trauma victims, and possibly herself, in their healing process as her literature speaks for those who are "unheard" victims of history. Her short fiction becomes a record of Spanish stories that creates a unique narrative, an essential component to trauma recovery. Frame concedes, "Perhaps, from this perspective, one could say that Matute's portrayal of trauma goes some way to bridge her own generation's reconstituted literary past and her own literal reconstructed history (Frame 134). Even though her literature is fictional, one can infer the toll of the Civil War and the dictatorship on the Spanish nation and its identity.

Frame feels the War influenced the thematic choice of Matute and others in her generation:

Even today it must be admitted that when it is stripped of its emblematic value and anti-Franco veneer, or rendered less sensationalist or demythified, critics on both sides of the Atlantic would be hard pressed not to accept the notion that the War deeply affected the artistic thematic choice and that it became a personal form of narrative preoccupation of a majority of the writers of this particular generation, and created as it were a 'wounded (trauma=Gr. A wound) generation' of writers. (129)

“El hermoso amanecer,” “De ninguna parte,” and “El maestro” specifically focus on the Civil War and demonstrate the catastrophic effect the war has on the protagonists. The true victims in these stories are the orphaned children who are left to survive alone. They have lost their innocence, sense of safety, and trust in others and must battle the memory of their traumatic experience that has forever altered their persona.

Matute’s literature is unique in that it offers a different perspective of the Spanish reality in the 20th Century. She brings to the fore her perception of children and adolescents and also offers her personal perspective, that of a woman, who experienced the Civil War, the dictatorship, and transition into democracy. Boring explains, “There can be no doubt that the post Civil War Spanish novel has utilized the world of children as an important theme. Children no longer form part of the descriptive background of the novel but rather have been made the center of the author’s attention” (479) and this is true of her short fiction as well. Matute’s body of fiction can be seen as a form of social protest and as Pablo Gil Casado explains, “Diremos que una novela es ‘social’ únicamente cuando se trata de mostrar el anquilosamiento de la sociedad, o la injusticia o desigualdad que existe en su seno, con el propósito de criticarlas” (Sobejano 299). Matute chooses to demonstrate her view of the world through literature as she states in a conversation with the Spanish author Camilo José Cela about the trend of writing in the 20th Century and the role of writers, “La literatura es mucho más importante que eso. Es una forma de ser y de estar en el mundo. Me canso de repetirlo: no es ni una profesión ni siquiera una vocación, es una forma de ver el mundo” (http://www.clubcultura.com/clubliteratura/clubescritores/matute/encuentros_cela.pdf).

She also stated in an interview with Juan Manuel de Prada, Más tarde, me daría cuenta de que, a través de mi obra, tenía la obligación de expresar una cierta protesta del mundo; escribir es siempre protestar algo, aunque sea de uno mismo”

(http://www.clubcultura.com/clubliteratura/clubescritores/matute/encuentros_jmprada.pdf)

f). Matute favors children and adolescents as protagonists in her short fiction and demonstrates the challenges the transition into adulthood presents for her characters.

This work aims to show that Matute’s short fiction can serve as a greater metaphor for the national identity crisis Spain experienced and warrants a re-reading of her short fiction through the lens of identity formation and how identity is affected by trauma related events. Each chapter discusses selected issues that significantly contribute to her characters’ problems with identity formation: family, violence, trauma, and memory.

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