THE EXPRESSION OF SOCIAL CRITICISM IN
ANA MARÍA MATUTE'S PRIMERA MEMORIA:
A STUDY OF THEMES, CHARACTERS AND IMAGES

by

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ABSTRACT

Ana María Matute is known to have a critical attitude towards the Franco regime, and has declared that she writes in order to protest against oppression, hypocrisy and injustice. How she manages to do this and still survive literary censorship as a publishing author in post-war Spain is the problem discussed in this thesis.

I propose that Matute has made use of imagery as the most subtle means of conveying this criticism. Primera memoria, which received the Nadal Prize in 1959, and is considered by most critics to be her masterpiece to that date, appears to be the culmination of this form of expression; I have therefore chosen to study Primera memoria in this thesis.

The thesis is divided into three main parts: the study of themes in order to show general targets of Matute's criticism, the study of characters because they embody different aspects of Spanish society, and the study of images. Since themes and characters are largely revealed through imagery, images must inevitably be discussed throughout the thesis.

Because the three main themes of Primera memoria recur throughout Matute's works, in the first chapter I shall introduce these themes - childhood, isolation and Cain and Abel - as they are presented in all her other novels. Chapters II, III and IV deal with these themes in Primera memoria. Chapters V to IX discuss the characters in the novel. In chapter V Doña Práxedes is shown to represent the preservation of Spain's monarchic, Catholic, feudal past: the status quo, and in chapter VI her
dubious link with the Church is examined. In chapter VII Borja is studied as a representative of upper class hypocrisy, materialism and conformity and in chapter VIII Lauro is examined as a member of the meek, oppressed lower classes. Chapter IX deals with José and Manuel Taronjí as representatives of the lower classes' rebellion against oppression and injustice. Chapter X shows Matute's use of nature imagery - sun, flowers and wind - as a vehicle for her social protest and moral judgement. In the conclusion I shall briefly mention social criticism in the other two novels of the trilogy Los mercaderes.
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I would like to acknowledge the assistance and encouragement of my thesis director, Dr. Marian G.R. Coope, and my gratitude to her for having introduced me to the novels of Ana María Matute.
Since the Civil War, literary censorship has been a major problem for Spanish writers living in Spain, and when Ana María Matute was beginning her literary career, in the nineteen forties, censorship was stringent. In the article "A Wounded Generation",¹ which, significantly, has been published only in North America and in English, Matute discusses this problem:

Our generation grew without writers to emulate. As an example of the arbitrariness of these prohibitions, Dostoevski was forbidden almost entirely, as were Balzac and Anna Karenina - or they were mutilated. Almost all the contemporary writers of France, Italy and the United States were forbidden. Also prohibited were our own Baroja, Valle Inclán, Ortega y Gasset, a large portion of Unamuno and Clarín, not to mention the work of those who were forced to leave the country for political reasons. (p. 423)

We grew up in difficult times for Spanish writers. The Spanish novel of those days could reflect nothing but a spurious hero or the definitive triumph of decency over indecency, of the angels over the demons: the "good guys" and the "bad guys" once again, as in the tales of our childhood.

We brought to the novel a new criterion. When we referred to the war, we simply called it the Civil War instead of the Glorious Uprising or the Holy Crusade. But that was censored. So were words like liberty. There were certain relevant "taboos" in Spain. In the novels written in that epoch, no one, for example, committed suicide or adultery.

Those of us who were then 18 or 20 began to write in this suffocating environment. It was difficult....

The censor dismembered our books.

I remember how we wrote, our discovery of forbidden books in the back of certain bookstores, our discovery of new names, of new literary tendencies, in the shelter of silence, always silence. We were born to this vocation, breaking our heads against the systematic no, against the opposition and the negations. Between aseptic indifference and bought critics who labeled as Existentialist all they did not understand or approve, we turned our eyes back to the war. And this is easily explained since we had watched
it with ignorant, open eyes as it penetrated us; it finally became a way of seeing, vision itself. But the brilliance of what was revealed hurt us: and we were cut off from it, suddenly and brutally. We were surrounded only by echoes, distant rumblings. The words "liberty" and "the rights of man" were torn from our writings and erased from our program. And social justice, that justice for which we were clamoring, they changed to the word "charity". (p. 422-3)

Matute's view is corroborated by Willis Knapp Jones in the article "Recent novels of Spain: 1936-56" and by Kessel Schwartz in The Meaning of Existence in Contemporary Hispanic Literature. Jones and Schwartz further state that literature was deliberately shaped to political ends, and according to Schwartz, it was used to affirm the spiritual qualities of the rightist revolt: hispanidad, tradition and Catholicism.

Matute wrote her first novel, Pequeño teatro, in 1943 when she was eighteen years old. The protagonist Zazu, a girl with nymphomaniac tendencies, drowns herself. This might explain why the novel was not published until eleven years later, although when it was, in 1954, it was considered good enough to win the Premio Planeta.

In 1949 Matute's novel Las luciérnagas was, according to Eugenio de Norva, a semifinalist for the Nadal prize. It presents a highly critical picture of the conditions during the Civil War and of post-war Spain. The protagonists Soledad and Cristián struggle for six years to earn an honest living in the society of post-war Spain, which is depicted as economically ruined and morally corrupt. Their attempt is doomed to failure, for in such a society only the dishonest and unscrupulous prosper; the idealistic young couple find themselves humiliated and severely in debt. The novel was censored and Matute had to rewrite it, omitting the post-war period.
(Criticism of war-time conditions, it appears, was much less feared by Franco than criticism of the post-war, since the latter implies direct criticism of his government.) The rewritten version, entitled *En esta tierra*, was published in 1955.

Matute has not had any more novels banned, although she expected censorship of *Los soldados lloran de noche* since it has a communist hero. This is largely due to the fact that as the Franco regime has become more secure, the strictness of the censorship has lessened. It is perhaps also a result of the author's many foreign contracts to publish since she has become internationally known. Her works have been translated into French, English, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Dutch, Ukrainian, Polish, Italian, Portuguese, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Lithuanian, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian and Japanese. The fact that they have also been translated into Russian, but not into Greek, is politically significant. Above all, I suggest that her continuing publication in Spain has been due to her skill in evading censorship.

To avoid censorship on political grounds in post-war Spain, a writer must appear not to criticize the Franco regime. Matute is known to have a critical attitude to the government, for in December 1970 she took part in an anti-Franco demonstration with three hundred Catalan intellectuals. They signed the "Montserrat Manifesto", a treaty supporting the Basque nationalists and asking for public liberties and civil rights. Matute was fined fifty thousand pesetas, which is the maximum allowable for this offence.

The fact that she is a "persona non grata" in Spain is shown by the following incident reported by Janet W. Díaz:
In May 1972, Ana María Matute was detained by police in the airport of Barcelona and prevented from making a trip to France where she was scheduled to receive high recognition in an international meeting for her contribution to children's literature. Although she had been issued a new passport only days previously, she was refused permission to leave the country, without explanation. At the same time, other Spanish writers who were not to receive honours were permitted to make the trip.

This was the culmination of a series of incidents apparently intended to prevent Matute's receiving international recognition for her juvenile fiction. In previous years, the agency of the Spanish government which is officially empowered to make nominations for consideration by the H.C. Andersen jury (which chooses among nominees from many countries) had postponed and avoided Matute's nomination, consenting to mention her this year only after a Spanish writer won last year, thereby making another Spaniard ineligible for first place this year. When she was nonetheless invited to receive a special citation, she was denied a right which is supposedly fundamental in "free" countries the world over.  

Despite the censorship since the Civil War, and especially since the nineteen fifties, many Spanish novelists assert that the novel is not an end in itself. It is first and foremost a means of communication through which the reality of post-war Spain, its social and political situation can be revealed.

In July 1962, in the Paris journal Les lettres françaises, several young Spanish novelists made statements about the contemporary novel which reveal a uniform attitude towards it: the desire to reflect faithfully present-day Spanish reality so that others can see and understand it; to expose social problems in order to disturb the reader and oblige him to take a stand, with the hope of improving social conditions.  

In 1960 Ana María Matute had acknowledged the same aims:

La novela ya no puede ser meramente de pasatiempo y de evasión. A la par que un documento de nuestro tiempo
y que un plantamiento de los problemas del hombre actual, debe herir, por decirlo de alguna forma, la conciencia de la sociedad, en un deseo de mejorarlo.  

Although Ana María Matute has the same social purpose in writing as many of her contemporaries, and therefore treats similar themes, her technique is very different.

Between approximately 1951 and 1962, most young Spanish novelists were influenced by the techniques of objective realism in the American novel, then the Italian neo-realist novel and cinema, and finally the French "nouveau roman". In La novela española actual, José Corrales Egea attributes to the objective realism of this period the following characteristics:

Pues bien, en cuanto a la forma, la nueva novela se distingue por el predominio de la sobriedad frente al juego literario; la sencillez frente al ornamento; preferencia de la expresión concreta y directa frente a la imagen, el rodeo metafórico o alusivo. . . . (p. 60)

. . . en este realismo objetivo no cabía la disquisición, ni el planteamiento crítico y directo de cuestiones de tipo ideológico, social, incluso histórico, ese realismo tenía que ser, eminentemente, una exposición de cosas. El autor ha de limitarse a exponer hechos, sucesos, en una escueta realidad, como si la pluma se le convirtiera en una especie de cámara fotográfica, dejando que su film, mudo de comentarios, hable por sí solo. (p. 63)

He maintains that in Spain, this technique was not always adopted, as in France, for purely stylistic reasons, but in order to avoid censorship:

. . . el realismo que preconizaban al filo del medio siglo los jóvenes novelistas españoles de posguerra no ha sido siempre el fruto de una elección totalmente libre. Al contrario: el realismo se ha impuesto como una necesidad de expresión, como el vehículo más adecuado, quizá, para que el escritor logre expresar y
comunicar lo que quiere . . . . No era, entre nosotros, un problema de pura forma o eficacia, sino el único método acaso que permitía decir callando. (p. 63)

Ana María Matute, however, is an individualist who does not allow herself to be dominated by literary fashions. In an interview with Janet W. Díaz in 1965 she said:

To me, literary fads seem stupid. I always say something which is silly but, I think, quite true: that there are only two kinds of novels, good and bad, and nothing else matters. All techniques are good when the writer is good, and technique has nothing to do with it when the writer is bad. So it is that Objectivism is good in the novels of Robbe-Grillet, but used by a bad writer, it is catastrophic.

In any case, for me it is not enough. For my way of viewing the novel, Objectivism is exaggerated. Besides, I absolutely do not believe in it. My eyes will always be my eyes, and very likely see differently.

Thus objective realism cannot provide a solution to the censorship problem for Matute.

Her style is subjective and poetic, and for this reason critics generally separate her from most other writers of her generation. José Corrales Egea states in La novela española actual:

En medio del fervor realista, la obra de Ana María Matute da la nota original, distinta. . . . Es caso especial desde el punto de vista de su generación y de la literatura española moderna. (p. 105)

Janet Winecoff expresses a similar opinion:

A notable characteristic distinguishing this novelist's work from the contemporary novela objetivista and novela social is the presence of a strong personality. Her individual style, lyricism and subjectivism contrast with the aims of the objetivista who seeks total self-effacement in favour of that reproduction
of reality which might be achieved by a movie camera with a sound track.\textsuperscript{12}

Juan Luis Alborg praises the personal, subjective style which distinguishes Matute:

\ldots sus deficiencias \ldots a veces son considerables; y, sin embargo, creo que muchas de ellas deben serle excusadas a cambio de una excelente cualidad que precisamente es la que menos abunda en los libros de nuestros actuales novelistas, digámoslo una vez más, tan persuadidos de que el único dogma del quehacer novelístico consiste en el realismo más impersonal y fotográfico, que la precedente afirmación debe sonarles como una pura herejía.\textsuperscript{13}

Victor Fuentes also places her in a position of distinction:

Su exacerbado lirismo subjetivo, que la lleva a una dislocación poética de la realidad - realismo que frecuentemente adquiere en su obra dimensiones míticas y simbólicas - y la continua repetición de temas y personajes a lo largo de toda su obra, dan a su mundo de ficción una unidad y un acento personal, rara vez conseguidos en la novelística actual. Aunque su técnica narrativa desentoná con el monócorde realismo objetivista, practicado por la mayoría de sus compañeros de generación.\textsuperscript{14}

Yet in spite of acclaiming the individuality of Matute's style, most critics condemn her use of adjectives and images as excessive, repetitious and over-emphatic. Corrales Egea criticizes her thus:

Si en sus momentos felices la escritora se revela como una gran paisajista literaria, dueña de una paleta rica en matices, sensitiva, en otros momentos, esa misma exuberancia y facilidad la empujan hacia un virtuosismo que degenera en acumulación barroca, en plétora de imágenes.\textsuperscript{15}

Alborg states:

La matización ha sido sustituida por el brochazo violento, por la acumulación innecesaria de adjetivos casi siempre más restallantes que certeros.\textsuperscript{16}
Sobejano lists her defects as "énfasis, imágenes insostenibles, imprecisión, redundancia". Castellet criticizes her use of metaphors:

La prosa de Ana María Matute es tan brillante como peligrosa. Y su peligro estriba precisamente en esa brillantez, en esa facilidad para las metáforas que la lleva a usar y abusar de ellas. . . .

Villanueva supports these opinions, and also that of Norva:

Si nos fijamos, para empezar, en su estilo, vemos que es ante todo coloreado, vibrante, plástico y sensorial, rico — hasta el exceso — en adjetivación, abundante en imágenes brrias — pero con frecuencia superpuestas y reiterativas, hasta casi anularse unas a otras —; en una palabra, más brillante que eficaz; impresionista y expresionista antes que sencillamente expresivo.

Esta prosa, dotada a veces de poderío, pero que con más frecuencia se aleja de su origen apasionado y de su vocación poética para desplegarse en fórmulas retóricas inconscientemente enfáticas, es como un manto irisado tendido sobre la realidad novelística, que se vuelve así ficticia, convencional, artísticamente disfrazada, incluso cuando es o quiere ser más barbara e hiriente. (pp. 291-2)

The critics have not failed to notice Matute's emphatic use of adjectives and images, and to condemn it as unnecessary. While Matute is clearly a writer to whom the use of imagery comes naturally, and for whom imagery is an essential part of the creative process, I propose that she makes use of this essential ingredient of her style as a subtle vehicle for social protest. Since social criticism is the prime purpose of her writing, her images are not unnecessary, but intrinsic; their accumulation and repetition serve to draw the reader's attention to their importance.

Primera memoria, which received the Nadal Prize in 1959, appears to be the culmination of Matute's expression of social criticism through the use of images. The later twonovels which with Primera memoria comprise the
trilogy Los mercaderes - Los soldados lloran de noche (1964) and La trampa (1969) – presumably due to less rigorous censorship, are more direct in their social criticism, and their symbolism is more obvious. I have therefore chosen to study Primera memoria in this thesis.

The thesis is divided into three main parts: the study of themes in order to show general targets of Matute’s criticism, the study of characters because they embody different aspects of Spanish society, and the study of images. Since themes and characters are largely revealed through imagery, images must inevitably be discussed throughout the thesis.

Because the three main themes of Primera memoria recur throughout Matute’s works, in the first chapter I shall introduce these themes – childhood, isolation and Cain and Abel – as they are presented in all her other novels. Chapters II, III and IV deal with these themes in Primera memoria. Chapters V to IX discuss the characters in the novel. In chapter V Doña Práxedes is shown to represent the preservation of Spain’s monarchic, catholic, feudal past; the status quo, and in chapter VI her dubious link with the church is examined. In chapter VII Borja is studied as representative of upper class hypocrisy, materialism and conformity and in chapter VIII Lauro is examined as a member of the meek, oppressed lower classes. Chapter IX deals with José and Manuel Taronjí as representative of the lower classes’ rebellion against oppression and injustice. Chapter X shows Matute’s use of nature imagery – sun,
flowers and wind - as a vehicle for her social protest. In the Conclusion I shall briefly mention social criticism in the other two novels of the trilogy *Los Mercaderes*.

I. THE THEMES OF MATUTE'S OTHER NOVELS

As is the case with many other novelists of the post-war, the social responsibility which Matute assumes results almost directly from the effect of the Civil War on her. She states in "A wounded generation": "The Civil War was a decisive wound which marked forever my life as a writer, and the lives of all other Spanish writers of my generation." (p. 420). It results also, to a lesser extent, from her early childhood experiences of the Castilian countryside.

Matute was born in Barcelona on 26th July, 1926, and spent her childhood years in three different places: the winters in Barcelona and Madrid, and the summers in Mansilla de la Sierra, a small Castilian town in the region of La Rioja, near Nájera. She did not like Madrid, and perhaps for this reason the capital does not appear as the setting for any of her novels, whereas Barcelona and Mansilla do.

The visits to Mansilla were to cause the first social awareness in the young Matute. In "Notas de una escritora" she states: "Las gentes del campo de Castilla, sus problemas, su atroz lucha por la vida, se me revelaron por vez primera." The harsh life of the children there who had to work at the age of eight, and could rarely go to school or play, was probably the origin of one of the author's recurrent themes: that of the child deprived of his childhood prematurely. She was also strongly affected by the fate of idealistic schoolmasters and doctors who slowly
became disillusioned by poverty, hardships and ignorance. In an interview with Claude Couffon she states:

Había entonces en España muchos de aquellos maestros que llegaban al pueblo con buena fe y acababan embruteciéndose, emborrachándose, perdiendo la vida triste y sordamente.25

Such schoolmasters and doctors appear repeatedly in her work.

The hatred and envy she saw amongst the peasants became a favourite theme of her work, embodied in the story of Cain and Abel. The history of the area may have also suggested this theme to Matute, for it was here that the battle of Nájera was fought in 1367 between Pedro the Cruel and his illegitimate half brother, Henry of Trastamara, who was later to murder his brother in personal combat. The author has also stated that her first classrooms had "fascinating prints of Cain and Abel" on the walls.26

In Mansilla there was a prison camp for men surrounded by dirty little hovels built by their wives and children, and this camp appears in Matute's work. In the censored, unpublished novel Las luciérnagas, Cristián, driven to desperation in an attempt to live honestly in the corrupt society of the post-war, kills a usurer to obtain money for food and medicine for his dying son. He is sent to a prison camp, which is the one in Mansilla, and the end of the book shows Soledad his wife, with their child, dirty, ragged and starving, living nearby. The camp is also described in Los hijos muertos.

In "Notas de una escritora", Matute recounts her story "Los chicos", which describes the event in Mansilla which most influenced her career as a writer. The families of prisoners were very cruelly treated by the
villagers, and once when she was young, Matute saw the big son of the foreman of the penal colony brutally beat a much smaller boy, the son of a prisoner. She was filled with horror and shame; for the first time she became aware of the injustice in the world. Her feeling of impotence against the injustice, she states, caused her to write as a form of protest.

In spite of serious illnesses and consequent prolonged periods of solitude, Matute was a happy child:

Yo fui lo que podría llamarse una niña feliz, hasta los diez años. Ciertamente, vivía refugiada en un "país" propio, al que difícilmente daba entrada a los demás. Tenía mi teatro de marionetas, mi muñeco negro y, sobre todo, los árboles, el río, el bosque.

Up to the age of ten she studied in Barcelona and Madrid in schools run by nuns, which she detested. This autobiographical element is reflected in En esta tierra, where the protagonist Soledad feels rebellious towards the nuns of her school, and in Primera memoria where the protagonist Matia is expelled for kicking the subdirectora of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles. Matia, like Ana María as a child, had a puppet theatre, a black doll and an intense love for nature.

When Matute was ten the Civil War broke out, and she spent the three years with her family in Barcelona, which was a republican zone. Her nuns' school was closed, and Matute studied with private tutors until she was fifteen, when she abandoned her studies to devote her time to writing, music and painting. The war had an even greater effect on her
writing career than her experience in Mansilla:

... el momento más decisivo para mí, lo que realmente fue importante en mi vocación de escritora, fue la guerra civil. He dicho que fui una niña feliz hasta los diez años. Esa edad tenía yo en julio de 1936....

La fábrica de mi padre en Barcelona fue, naturalmente, colectivizada. Los conventos y colegios de religiosos fueron abandonados por sus ocupantes, que huyeron o se ocultaron. Estalló un mundo nuevo. Conocí los bombardeos, la violencia, el terror, el odio y la muerte. El pequeño mundo de mi infancia burguesa cambió de la noche a la mañana.28

With that ambiguous feeling between surprise and rebellion which all children experience before actions they consider unjust, we were violently shown the other side of that world in which we had been so utterly submerged. Suddenly we were shown, with all its crudeness, that "atrocious" world, that world which had been damned for us in advance. Overnight, we children had to ask ourselves why the nuns from our school were wearing street clothes, why they fled or hid; why our father's factory was no longer our father's; why had the good, clean, upright, honest, pleasing-to-the-sight-of-the-Lord world raised so much hatred? Who, if these were officially the good people, actually were the bad people? A handful of bewildered children, kneeling on the balconies, from behind half-closed shutters, observed the armed men, men they had never seen before, running through the streets: dark unfortunate men with faces of hunger and hate, with red handkerchiefs around their necks, were pointing rifles and machine guns at the "decent" houses.

The churches were burning. Why? What had happened? Why were these people shooting and burning the angels of our childhood? Men, women and children we didn't suspect existed: ragged, vociferous, consumed with an incomprehensible hatred, people we had never seen anywhere, people we never imagined could have lived in the same city with us. It was as if someone had opened a dam of seemingly peaceful, clean water, and at the bottom had appeared an unsuspected infinity of filth.

Around what we had considered to be immutably good or evil appeared a cloud of doubt. Who could point this out decisively on what map, in what country, in what paradise? Where was goodness, justice? A thousand
questions assaulted the world we had considered secure, sensible, unquestionable. In those hot days of July radio voices broke unleashed through the thick fear of night; men, women and children, surrounding a microphone, clamored, challenged, triumphed over a word, a word new to us: liberty.

A group of bewildered children observed; we were anxious, curious, expectant. A child of 10 is struck by these things and asks that incessant and obsessive question with the cutting simplicity of childhood: Why? And life - torn to pieces, violent, till then unknown, but certainly palpitating life - opened up before our eyes. The world was hunger. The world was hate. It was also the desire for justice; and it was egotism, fear, horror, cruelty and death.29

Thus the social conscience which had been aroused by her experiences in Mansilla de la Sierra was fully developed by the Civil War. Her vocation for writing, which had been established from a very early age, was now strengthened by her desire to denounce social injustice.

In her novels, Matute conveys social criticism through three major themes: the transition from childhood to adulthood, isolation, and Cain and Abel. For Matute, childhood is inevitably linked to the Civil War since she experienced it as a child. Speaking of her contemporaries in "A wounded generation", Matute states:

I must look back to the childhood, the adolescence, of those writers: to the childhood which hounded them and is present in almost all the works of those of us
who were children on that July 18, 1936, in Spain.
(p. 420)

For her, the Civil War accomplished swiftly what the normal process of
growing up would have done slowly; it put an end to her protected child-
hood innocence. This experience is reflected in her novels, for the
protagonists are nearly all children or adolescents who are deprived
of their youth prematurely and often very quickly. In the novel
Los Abel, Valba expresses this loss: "Y de pronto, sentí que la
infancia quedaba lejos, que se borraba y se perdía irremisiblemente."30

Marta in Los soldados lloran de noche is deprived of her childhood so
soon that she seems never to have possessed it: "No tuve infancia,
Manuel, y tú sí. Mi infancia es algo seco y muerto."31 Typical among
Matute's characters is the adolescent who wakes up to the reality of the
adult world dominated by violence and hate, just as the author herself
did. Marta in Los soldados lloran de noche is shown undergoing an ex-
perience similar to Matute's during the Civil War in Barcelona:

Antes de que él pudiera sujetarla, corrió al balcón,
lo abrió. Allá abajo se movían una veintena de
hombres. Parecían obreros. Y una mujer. Es una
mujer joven, casi como yo. Cerró los ojos. La
visión de aquella muchacha, la sacudía, la
zarandeaba, la llenaba de un vértigo que no podía
dominar. De un tirón brutal Raúl la entró, la
echó sobre la cama y cerró el balcón de nuevo.
Estuvo así, echada, oyendo el tiroteo. Una hora,
dos, tres quizá. No podría saberlo nunca. Temblaba,
se agarraba al borde de la colcha y se decía: me
hundiré, quiero hundirme, deseo hundirme en la
oscuridad, no sé nada, no oigo nada, no veo nada.
Después, el silencio de la calle. Un silencio
pasmoso, excesivo, cruel. No lo podía resistir,
Raúl no estaba, parecía que estaba sola en la casa,
que ya nunca más tendría compañía, en la tierra. Fue una sensación de soledad horrible, desesperante. No se atrevía a cruzar la puerta, por no hallar aquel silencio y aquella soledad. Fue al balcón, como una sonámbula, y lo abrió. Un sol pálido, iluminaba la calle. Había ropas esparradas, armas, papeles empujados por el viento. Y allá abajo, entre los adoquines apilados, los cuerpos. El cuerpo de aquella muchacha, tendido, oscuro. Un camino de sangre avanzaba, de alguna parte, de algún lugar invisible, viscoso.

Se apartó temblando, se echó de bruces sobre la cama. Sintió el frío de sus propias manos, en las mejillas. ¿Por qué? ¿Por qué? chillaba una voz en su interior. (p. 187-8)

Mónica in Los hijos muertos becomes aware of the unpleasant reality of adults and their world:

Mundo asqueroso éste, de viejos cansados por todas partes, dejándonos morir a nosotros, así, a su lado. La rabia le subía, despaciosa y fría, otra vez. Empezaba a conocer el odio.32

Cloti in En esta tierra comes to believe that "La vida era una mentira inmensa, monstruosa."33 Matute not only expresses this theme directly; she also conveys it through images. The disillusionment of Bear in La trampa is conveyed by the image of an empty shell:

El mundo se había convertido en una sucesión de frases cáscara, absolutamente huéres. . . . Para concretar, el viejo mundo le pareció sucio y pequeño.34

Like Goytisolo, Matute presents the innocent state of childhood as a paradise to which the adolescent looks back with regret and resentment at its loss. In Los soldados lloran de noche, Manuel’s sadness at the loss of his infancy is conveyed by the image of a dying bird: "mi infancia
que se debatía ya como un agonizante pájaro." (p. 154). Knowing he has lost it, Manuel tries to recuperate his childhood; other adolescent characters in Matute's novels, aware that they are losing it, cling to their infancy, sensing that it is a far better state than adulthood. For this reason Matute's adolescents seem much closer to childhood than adulthood.

The transition period of adolescence (which corresponds to a mental state rather than a specific age group) results, as it did in Matute, in an increased self-awareness, a questioning of values, and a search for some purpose, justification of fulfilment in life. Matute often uses the image of reflection, in water or glass, to express self-awareness and the desire for self-knowledge in her characters. Valba in *Los Abel*, Mónica and Miguel in *Los hijos muertos*, Zazu in *Pequeño teatro* and the young protagonist of *La torre vigía* all experience self-revelation as they contemplate their reflections. Matute's adolescents find justification in life through awareness of the misfortunes of others and efforts to help them. Marta's meaningless life is transformed through the communist Jeza, who tells her: "Prueba a pensar un poco en la vida de los demás. Acaso eso te sirva."\(^{35}\) Marta, along with Manuel, sacrifices herself for her beliefs. Bear in *La trampa* makes a similar gratuitous self-sacrifice. Daniel Corvo in *Los hijos muertos* rejects the landed aristocratic family in which he has been brought up to support the poor, and he fights for the Republicans in the Civil War.
Matute's admiration for such commitment is evident in her description of Daniel:

Si, sí, allí dentro de él, como estrellas nacidas, ascendían voces en su mente de muchacho aún ignorante. Era su tiempo de esperanza . . . Su rebeldía, su esperanza, se encendían y crecían . . . "Me iré de aquí, salvaré a los míos." Tenía catorce, quince, dieciséis años. Tenía la fuerza de la primera fe. (p. 71-2)

"Tiempo de seguridad, de fe." La gran fuerza, la confianza, empujándole a través del hambre, de la apatía, de la desesperanza de los otros, de la amoralidad o la indiferencia de los otros, empujándole a través de la injusticia, de la impiedad . . . el pillaje, el fatalismo. (p. 123-4)

Ana María Matute’s choice of children or adolescent protagonists involved in the mental process of growing up, enables her to contrast their innocence and idealism with the values of the world they encounter. Only a very few protagonists of her novels are adults, and these are usually presented reconstructing their lost youth, as in the case of Medinao in Fiesta al Noroeste. Adolescents can best convey social criticism, for as Matute states in "Notas de una escritora" (p. 11), "en la adolescencia es cuando más nos hieren la hipocresía y la falsedad."

Together with childhood and adolescence, isolation constitutes one of Matute's most basic themes. The protagonists of her novels feel themselves apart from other people, old and young. Many are orphans, or are
strikingly different in physique or social position from those around them, so that their spiritual aloneness is symbolized by their physical solitude. Juan Medinao, son of a rich landowner in *Fiesta al Noroeste*, is an ugly child with a disproportionately large head, and he prays to God to take him away from men, with whom he has nothing in common. The protagonist of *En esta tierra* is symbolically named Soledad. Her father, a wealthy Barcelona industrialist like Matute's, is violently killed on account of his social class during the Civil War, leaving Soledad an orphan. As a result of the War she suffers loneliness, alienation and separation:

> Estaba sola, profundamente sola, lejana, encerrada. ... ¿Dónde habrá un lugar para mí? se dijo con vaga melancolía. Su lugar parecía estar en sí misma, su refugio era su propio corazón.36

Matute's protagonists are frequently ostracized and rarely understood by others, and lack the ability to communicate. They are unhappy, aware of their solitude and the indifference of others, and they try to overcome these by attempts at friendship which occasionally succeed initially, but nearly always fail eventually. The young horseman in *La torre vigía* is an extreme example of rejection by others: filled with the desire to speak with someone of his own age for the first time, he repeatedly approaches other boys and offers them part of an animal he has killed for food; Matute shows that isolation is a vicious circle, for his total lack of experience in communication causes him to be rejected:

> Pero imagino que no atiné con las palabras precisas, pues apenas me veían, solían huyendo, aterrorizados.
Así... viendo como rechazaban tan neciamente mi oferta, sentía una cólera grande y dolorosa, que parecía rasgarme de la cabeza a los pies. Entonces saltaba sobre mi caballo, y perseguía con saña al elegido, hasta derribarlo y golpearlo ciegamente; tanto, que una vez mi vista se nubló bajo los golpes que yo mismo descargaba; y comprobé, con estupor, que esta fugaz ceguera era debida a súbitas e incomprensibles lágrimas.

Estos arrebatos acrecentaron aún más mi fama de violento y despiadado, cuando, en verdad, sí era violento, pero no despiadado, como tampoco piadoso: pues no había tenido ocasión de practicar ninguna de estas cosas, ni hallado objeto que me inspirara tales sentimientos. Herido por un gran rencor, me traspasaba en esas ocasiones un dolor muy grande, hasta sentirlo en mi carne como el filo de una espada.37

Bear in La trampa manages to make friends, but finds that this only increases his loneliness:

En esos momentos, Bear se sentía desconcertado y extraordinariamente solo. Cosa rara, porque antes no tenía amigos, como ahora: y antes, nunca tuvo conciencia de su soledad. (p. 34)

This existentialist vision of mankind is Matute's personal vision, very much inspired by her experience of the Civil War and the post-war period in Spain. From the essay "A wounded generation", it is clear that she, along with other writers of the same aims, suffered conditions similar to those of her protagonists. In her essay she points out that censorship had left them intellectually orphaned: "Our generation grew without writers to emulate." (p. 423). Writers and public alike were deprived of their ability to communicate their real feelings:

After the experience of the war we were able to understand the great lesson of words not uttered, of bitten-off cries, and the great, dull silence of the increasingly oppressive gag over thousands of mouths, ears, eyes and, finally, over thoughts. (p. 422)
The young writers' efforts to communicate their protest, instead of being taken up, were confronted with silence:

Perhaps that group of incipient adolescent writers who wrote in search of a road to truth in a vast sea of myths and shadows, of mirages and blindness - a road on which to shout their opposition, their hopes and their still unanswered questions - should be called the group which hurled itself - we splattered ourselves - against silence. (p. 422)

The silence became indifference:

A silence which dressed itself in indifference, in a world which suffocated itself in cotton. A world which covered its ears and eyes, and which neither shouted nor whispered, but only repeated. (p. 422)

And finally, ostracism:

The silence increased, extended, and the youth, our friends, their backs turned to ideas, became excited only over football. The young people did not talk about literature or politics: they did not even know what it meant. I remember how we sought one another out and found ourselves. Our enthusiastic discussions, our fellowship, our seeking one another's hand blindly in the midst of the hermetic and scornful environment. We did not exist. (p. 423)

They were lonely, considered different and abnormal:

The few who read us either scolded us or treated us indulgently; we were the enfants terribles whom time would subdue. We would grow and turn to "normal" literature and to "normal" ways. (p. 423)

Matute's characters, then, reflect the situation in which the protesters of her generation found themselves; they are a testimony of life in post-war Spain, forming a protest against the silence imposed by censorship and fear.
The third major theme through which Matute conveys social criticism in her novels is that of Cain and Abel. The Biblical story familiar to the author from an early age, was more deeply impressed upon her by the Civil War. The theme appears in her first published novel, Los Abel, and recurs throughout her works right up to her most recent novel, La torre vigía. It sometimes deals with violence and hatred between brothers, and sometimes with the clash of ideologies. It is not always related directly to the Civil War, but since it represents war between brothers, it always suggests this.

In Los hijos muertos, two members of the Corvo family fight on opposite sides in the Civil War. César Corvo, who is depicted as selfish and spoilt, is the son of a rich landowner and fights for the rebels, while his cousin Daniel, an idealist and hater of social injustice, fights for the Loyalists. The second novel which Matute wrote, completed in 1952 although not published until 1959, Fiesta al Noroeste, most clearly shows her use of the theme for the purpose of social criticism. Here the Abel-Cain pair is formed by Juan Medinao and his half-brother, Pablo Zácaro, for whom Juan feels envy and hatred mixed with an overpowering attraction which is subconsciously sexual, and the need to dominate and 'possess' him. He tries by various means to bring Pablo to submission. Because of his powerful and wealthy position he is even able to 'buy' Pablo's fiancée from her parents and marry her. He hopes...
to use the girl as a bait to lure Pablo into his house and guarantee his submission, but Pablo leaves the village, thus defeating Juan. Juan retaliates by raping Pablo's mother, who bears a striking physical resemblance to her son. He thus commits an act which is symbolically homosexual and incestuous.

Juan and Pablo also represent ideological opposites. Juan, as the only legitimate son of the one rich landowner in the village of Artamila, inherits his father's wealth and social position. Pablo, who is illegitimate, is a poor peasant. Juan is ugly, physically deformed, and morally decayed like his ancestors; he is indifferent to other men and is preoccupied with death. Pablo is physically healthy and attractive, loves independence and freedom, respects and loves other men and is interested only in life. One of his desires is to have his own land. Juan is a tyrant who exploits his tenant farmers like a feudal lord; Pablo organizes a strike against him, which fails. Juan is outwardly religious, but he uses religion to mask his own selfish motives and escape from his responsibilities. He is a hypocrite, for in Holy Week he makes his confession to a priest, but does not mention the rape.

Although Matute does show some sympathy towards Juan for his childhood sufferings at the hands of his degenerate father, she is clearly making a damning comment on the landed aristocracy, the system of medieval "feudalism" this class represents, and its close relationship with the Church.38 In "Autocrítica de Fiesta al noroeste" Matute states:
Si la acción sucede en Castilla - y ello se presupone aunque no se diga de un modo concreto . . . - no es por un azar cualquiera. . . . Esa Castilla es, aun hoy, el acervo de un tiempo, de un clima mental, de un modo de ser, donde las pasiones cualesquiera se dan en estado primogenio. 39

By presenting such a violent criticism of conditions in Castile, Matute is attacking *hispanidad*, tradition and Catholicism, precisely the values supported by the Franco regime. She is also revealing a profound sympathy for the causes of the peasants, especially that of agrarian reform, which became a rallying cry for the Republican side in the Civil War.

The same sympathy is revealed through the two brothers of *Los soldados lloran de noche*, the second novel of the trilogy *Los mercaderes*. Raúl and Jeza represent opposing political and moral points of view. Raúl is not interested in politics, whereas Jeza is a dedicated communist who is involved in plans for sharing out the land owned by the upper classes. He is imprisoned and executed by the Nationalists in the Civil War. Raúl is an unprincipled materialist who profits from the weakness of others. His egotism is summed up by the following words: "Hijita, el mundo es así: el pez grande se come al chico. Todo es válido, para no dejarse devorar." (p. 190) Matute reveals her attitude to him by the use of animal imagery, emphasizing his sharp canine teeth which give him the appearance of a cannibal. Her admiration for Jeza is evident in her use of religious symbolism which equates him with Jesus. She makes him a mythical figure, a symbol of the ideal; without ever actually appearing,
he dominates the entire novel. His greatness consists in his never having lost or betrayed the ideals of his childhood:

El seguía siendo un muchacho, el mismo de entonces. No como todos ellos, que al crecer se perdían a sí mismos definitivamente, y se contemplaba, como tristes enanillos, al final de un remoto camino. No, él era el mismo aún. No perdía nada, no recuperaba nada, siempre sería igual. (p. 219)

Thus Matute's use of the Cain and Abel theme intensifies her vision of solitude and alienation amongst men. The idea that since Cain, man is marked, that he is a fugitive on the earth, is expressed frequently. It refers, in the allegorical sense to man throughout history, to his earthly lot. More specifically, it refers to man's situation in Spain, the fratricidal struggle of the Civil War; the division of society into two opposing factions.

The action of Matute's novels takes place almost exclusively in Spain, which allows the author to expose particular Spanish social evils relevant to the Civil War and the post-war period. *En esta tierra*, set in Barcelona during the War, shows the frustrations and injustices suffered by the lower classes and leading them to rebellion. Matute shows a deep sympathy for those who suffer most in war time, the poor, the young and the losers. The censored, unpublished version of this novel, *Las luciérnagas*, is more audacious in its social criticism, for it covers also the post-war period. The two protagonists, Cristián and Soledad, who in the War remained uncommitted, ask no more of Franco's
regime than to be able to earn an honest, decent living. But this is
denied them by a post-war society which is economically unstable and
thoroughly corrupt. Educated, hard-working and thrifty, they sink
deeper into debt while the unscrupulous prosper through dealings on
the black market, usury, favouritism, and the buying and selling of
recommendations. Honourable people, Matute says, find existence in
post-war Spain disillusioning, frustrating and often impossible.

In *Las luciérnagas*, and to a lesser extent in *En esta tierra*,
Matute also presents the problems of rural Spain. Pablo, a village
schoolteacher, is witness to the backwardness of the inhabitants.
Standards of health and education are abominably low, and mental retardation is common. Agriculture is still executed in a primitive manner,
making the peasants' work unbearably hard and long. Their mentality is
primitive, consisting of violent passions and bestial sexuality repressed
by religion and superstition. The young and idealistic teacher, as poor
as the peasants around him, slowly becomes brutalized and animalistic,
and like them turns to drink. In *Los Abel* the village doctor Eloy undergoes a similar experience, with the same result.

In *Los hijos muertos* Matute exposes the feudal system still in
effect in rural Spain; the unequal land distribution, absentee landlords,
dispossessed tenant farmers and unworked lands. The setting of this
novel, the village of Hegroz (like the village of Artámila in *Fiesta
al noroeste*) is modelled on Mansilla de la Sierra:
Antes que a los Corvo, durante siglos, Hegroz, sus tierras, sus bosques, pertenecieron al Duque. El Duque, para Hegroz, significó solamente un nombre, el tributo obligado, un castillo en ruinas... El Duque era solo un nombre: ninguno lo vio, desde hacía doscientos años. Los bosques de Hegroz le esperaron en vano, invierno tras primavera, renovándose siglo a siglo. No llegó nunca su cacería fantasmal. Los bosques, allí estaban, acotados, inútiles, prohibidos. La única riqueza de Hegroz... los hombres allí nacidos apenas podían disfrutar de una pequeña asignación de leña para sus hogares. También amaban aquella tierra vieja, dura, que rebuscaban sus arados, picos y azadas. Pero ni la tierra ni los bosques les pertenecían... "La tierra ajena..." Los hombres de Hegroz vivían en casas donde nacieron sus abuelos y los abuelos de sus abuelos, y no eran sus casas. Comían, dormían, trabajaban en ajeno. Y al fin, sus huesos se quemaban dentro de la tierra, deseada hasta rozar el odio, como el amor, que fue la tierra del Duque. El Duque, vago, inconcreto, teórico. Pero real y dura, ineludible a la hora de la partición y el tributo. A la hora de las prohibiciones, de las vedas, de la servidumbre... Años de sequía y hambre. Años de epidemia, de heladas, piedras caídas de los muros, escudos devastados en las esquinas, rotos a pedrazas, quemados por el sol. Postigos y contraventanas tallados, podridos por las lluvias, guaridas de gatos, de ratas y de golondrinas. Tierra árida, ajena. Y en torno, los bosques, como un grito. (p. 10-12)

Matute contrasts the living conditions of the peasants with those of the landowners or 'caciques' largely responsible for their misery: the latter live a life of ease, degenerate and unproductive. Corvo, the name of the landed family in Los hijos muertos, is evidently symbolic of its predatory nature:

Hegroz odiaba la casa [de los Corvo] por sus grandes ventanas, por aquella imprecisa nota de piano... Por sus hijos, por sus criados extraños. Por su egoísmo, su holgazanería, su voracidad, su inconsciencia. (p. 18)
By using protagonists whose age causes them to be most sensitive to injustice and often the most innocent, helpless victims of it; by making them unhappy, solitary and alienated, often in their own family relationships, and by pointing out particular social problems, Matute is able to present a vision of life pessimistic enough to disturb the comfortable conscience of a society which 'conforms'. Because the Civil War awakened her own social conscience when she was an adolescent, she recreates her experience, directly or indirectly, in order to awaken that of the reader. The concluding paragraph of "A wounded generation" states:

We all look back to the war; for a page, a sentence, a word; always our eyes turn to the war. We did not have a miserable childhood, nor were we hungry; but in spite of the fact of being middle class, we are not content. We write, many years after the end of the war, because we are not happy and because we do not conform. Nor are we sleeping, blind or dead. We write because writing is a form of protest: a protest while we have life and strength against all that represents oppression, hypocrisy and injustice. (p. 424)
II. CHILDHOOD

In Primera memoria, the first novel of the trilogy Los mercaderes, Matute presents the major theme of the loss of childhood through the protagonist Matia. Matia relates the memories of her adolescence, which, like the author's, took place during the years of the Civil War. Although there are many autobiographical elements in the novel, the author has stated\(^{10}\) that "Primera memoria is the least autobiographical of my works." The novel is not set in Barcelona, where the author lived during the war, but in an unnamed Balearic Island which can be identified as Majorca.

Matia is first taken to the Island by her grandmother when she is twelve, and spends her first night in a damp, dark hotel room. She awakens while it is still dark outside and, frightened by a line of ants crawling along the wall, she hides under the bedclothes and seeks refuge in the security of the past:

Procure trasladar mi pensamiento, hacer correr mi imaginación como un pequeño tren por bosques y lugares desconocidos, llevarla hasta Mauricia y aferrarme a imágenes cotidianas. (p. 15)

The images to which Matia turns her thoughts are images of Matute's own happy childhood before the Civil War - the puppet theatre of cardboard, the black doll, the H.C. Andersen story book, the atlas and a close communion with nature. Matute shows by systematic contrast of images that Matia's happy past has been eradicated by an unhappy present. The
old servant Mauricia, dearly loved by Matia, has been replaced by the hated grandmother. The beautiful green countryside has been replaced by the unpleasant surroundings of the Island. The toy puppet theatre has accidentally been left behind. Matia experiences an overwhelming sense of loss:

Entonces comprendí que había perdido algo: olvidé en las montañas . . . mi teatrín de cartón. (Cerré los ojos y vi las decoraciones de papeles transparentes con cielos y ventanas azules, amarillos, rosados . . . el misterio enorme y menudo de las pequeñas ventanas transparentes. Oh, cómo desee de nuevo que fuera posible meterse allí, atravesar los pedacitos de papel, y huir a través de sus falsos cristales de caramelo . . . . Y sentí una rabia sorda contra mí misma. Y contra la abuela, porque nadie me recordó eso, y ya no lo tenía. Perdido, perdido, igual que los saltamontes verdes, que las manzanas de octubre, que el viento en la negra chimenea. (p. 16)

She thinks of "mis recuerdos y mi vago, confuso amor por un tiempo perdido." It is evident that Matia, in losing her nurse, the place where she spent her early years, and her toy theatre with its possibility of escape into the world of imagination, is losing her childhood. All this has been caused by her being brought to the Island. Matute shows symbolically that the carefree period of her life is over: "No me dormí y vi amanecer, por vez primera en mi vida, a través de las rendijas de la persiana." (p. 16)

Matia's experience of school is similar to that of the author. (Expelled for kicking the subdirector, Matia returns to her grandmother's house in the summer of 1936, when the Civil War breaks out on
We were middle class. The education received by the children of this class in pre-Civil War Spain generally kept them separate, distant from that world which did not consist of family and friends. Nearly all of us attended a religious boarding school. In those years religious education, especially for girls, was extremely isolated and shut off from the world, which was pictured as something distant, atrocious, terribly dangerous, diabolical and corrupting. (p. 420)

Matia was taught to regard the world in the same way: "Yo sabía - porque siempre me lo estaban repitiendo - que el mundo era algo malo y grande." (p. 106); "Aquél mundo con que todos me amenazaban, desde la abuela al Chino, como un castigo." (p. 139). It is not, therefore, surprising that she is reluctant to grow up. Matute shows that Matia clings to her childhood, for she is still very attached to her black doll Gorogó. She tries to escape from the adult world:

Contra todos ellos, y sus duras o indiferentes palabras; contra el mismo Borja y Guiem, y Juan Antonio; contra la ausencia de mis padres, tenía yo mi isla: aquel rincón de mi armario donde vivía, bajo los pañuelos, los calcetines y el Atlas, mi pequeño muñeco negro. Entre blancos pañuelos y praderas verdes y mares de papel azul, con ciudades como cabezas de alfiler, vivía escondido a la brutal curiosidad ajena mi pequeño Gorogó. Y en el Atlas satinado - de pie, medio cuerpo dentro del armario, escondida en su penumbra, oliendo la caoba y el almidón - podia ir repasando cautivadores paisajes: las islas griegas a donde iba Jorge de San Major, en su desaparecido Delfín, escapando, tal vez (¿por qué no como yo?), de los hombres y de las mujeres, del atroz mundo que tanto temía. (p. 114-15)

Her innocence and dislike for the world around her prevents her from understanding it:
No entiendo nada de lo que ocurre en la vida ni en el mundo, ni alrededor de mí: desde los pájaros a la tierra, desde el cielo al agua, no entiendo nada. (p. 139)

[Ramón] Estaba lleno de malicia y de sabiduría, sí... y sonreía como si estuviera en poder de muchos secretos (todas las cosas que a mí no se me alcanzaban). (p. 95)

Es Mariné se traía mucho misterio con los chicos, y siempre hablaban a medias palabras que yo no entendía. (p. 97)

Matia's attitude towards knowledge is ambivalent. At times her ignorance frightens her:

Y las confusas preguntas de siempre, que nadie satisfacía... Volví a sentir, como tantas otras veces, un raro miedo. No podían dejarme así, en medio de la tierra, tan despojada e ignorante. No podía ser. (p. 56)

But more often she is afraid of knowledge; afraid that unpleasant things might be true. When very young, she used to think: "la muerte no es verdad. Nos lo dicen a los niños para engañarnos" (p. 197). She feels the same fear when she is an adolescent:

Deseaba ardientemente que no muriera nadie en el mundo, que todo lo de la muerte fuera otra de las tantas patrañas que cuentan los hombres a los muchachos. (p. 175)

Even when she sees the dead body of José Taronjí it seems too horrible to be real:

Me volví de espaldas. Estaba sorprendida. Había oído muchas cosas y visto, de refilón, las fotografías de los periódicos, pero aquello era real. Estaba allí un hombre muerto, lanzado por el precipicio hasta la ensenada.

-Se quiso escapar cuando lo llevaban... Parecía mentira, parecía algo raro, de pesadilla. (p. 45)
From her reaction, it is obvious that Matia still does not fully accept the reality of death.

Matia is completely ignorant of sex, having only heard such matters alluded to by Borja and his friends. She does not understand why her grandmother will not let her spend the night away from home with a group of boys. Yet she feels a sense of shame when she is innocently alone with Borja at night (p. 114). She experiences a similar feeling of shame in Aunt Emilia's bedroom:

... me dije: "Esa almohada es la del tío Alvaro, ese su sitio. Siempre está esperándole la tía Emilia." Y algo que no era exactamente miedo me recorrió la espalda. Algo como una extraña vergüenza, acordándome de las cosas que Borja y Juan Antonio contaban de los hombres y de las mujeres. Y me dije: "No, acaso eso sea otra mentira". (p. 126)

Me incorporé poco a poco, ladeándome para mirarla. [Tía Emilia]. Era como asomarse a un pozo. Como si de pronto tía Emilia se hubiera puesto a contarme todos sus secretos de persona mayor, y yo no supiera dónde esconder la cara, llena de sobresalto y de vergüenza. (p. 128)

The image of the well which recurs throughout Primera memoria shows that for Matia life is dark and deep, that is, sombre and unknown. Matia wants to preserve her ignorance and innocence, to postpone the confrontation with reality:

Le miré [a Manuel] con la sangre agolpada en la cara, y un loco deseo de decir: No, no me descubras más cosas, no me digas oscuras cosas de hombres y mujeres, porque no quiero saber nada del mundo que no entiendo. Déjame, déjame, que aún no lo entiendo. (pp. 143-44)
Matute uses images of low animal and insect life to show that reality is horrible:

El Chino temblaba, quizá atrapado en su secreto, que, de pronto no deseaba conocer. Como si aquella carrera desenfrenada hacia el pozo de la vida, que emprendí desde mi expulsión de Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles se viera acechada por insectos, y ratas, y lagartijas, y húmedas lombrices, y rosados gusanos: y deseaba gritar y decir: "Oh, no, no, detenedme, por favor. Detenedme, yo no sabía hacia donde corría, no quiero conocer nada más". (Pero ya había saltado el muro y dejado atrás a Kay y Gerda, en su jardín sobre el tejado. (p. 163)

In leaving behind Kay and Gerda, the two children of Andersen's story "The Snow Queen", Matia is leaving behind her childhood. In "Diciembre y Andersen" in A la mitad del camino, Matute states:

Si algo ha influido realmente en mi infancia, fue precisamente aquel tomo de cuentos de Andersen. . . . "Kai y Gerda, en su jardín sobre el tejado".41

Thus once again Matia's childhood is linked to the author's. Matia wonders repeatedly if she has reached womanhood, but she is so different from the adults around her that she feels this is impossible:

Estábamos tan indefensos, tan obligados, tan - oh, sí - tan lejanos a ellos: al retrato de tío Álvaro, a los Taronjí, al recuerdo de mi padre, a Antonia, al Chino . . . Qué extranjera raza la de los adultos, la de los hombres y las mujeres. Qué extranjeros y absurdos, nosotros. Qué fuera del mundo y hasta del tiempo. Ya no éramos niños. De pronto no sabíamos lo que éramos. (p. 114)

Matute uses images of childhood - the black doll Gorogó and J.M. Barrie's Never Never Land - to show that Matia is exiled from it. Seeing Guiem fighting with a hook, Matia is reminded of Captain Hook and Peter Pan:
The attainment of knowledge of reality, which signifies the transition into adulthood, is brought about in Matia through her two companions, Borja and Manuel. Being a year her senior, Borja is the 'leader' in their exploits, and makes Matia his accomplice in dishonesty and cruelty. Borja forcibly enlightens Matia by making her acknowledge to herself his homosexual relationship with their tutor Lauro el Chino and his consequent blackmail hold over Lauro (pp. 171-76). He makes her read love letters he has stolen from his mother which Matia had always presumed to be from her husband Álvaro. However, the letters have been written by Aunt Emilia to Jorge de Son Major. Matia feels guilt and horror:

Era malo robar como robábamos. Era malo martirizar al Chino, era malo que Borja desenterrara los residuos de un amor triste y perdido. Era horrible dejar de ser ignorante, abandonar a Kay y Gerda, no ser siquiera un hombre y una mujer. Pero la maligna lengüecilla de luz continuaba revelándome, aunque no quisiera, el secreto de tía Emilia: "Querido mío, Jorge. . ." "Amado mío, Jorge. . ."

(Oh, sucias y cursis, patéticas personas mayores.) (p. 177)

By using the verb "abandonar" before "a Kay y Gerda", Matute suggests that Matia is not being deprived of childhood by outside forces, but by
her own actions. Matia comes to understand this through her relationship with Manuel. He, Matia realizes, knows about the ugly adult world: "El está con los hombres: con las feas cosas de los hombres y de las mujeres" (p. 148). Like Borja, Lauro and Aunt Emilia, he has a 'dirty secret', but unlike them he is in no way to blame for it:

Estaba asustada, temerosa de oír aquellas cosas. ¡Era algo tan nuevo para mí! No el haber descubierto el secreto de la vida de Manuel - un secreto sucio de hombres y mujeres, del que no era culpable (p. 146)

Matia, however, is fully responsible for the loss of her childhood innocence:

Y yo estaba a punto de crecer y de convertirme en una mujer. O lo era ya, acaso. Sentí las manos frías, en medio del calor. "No, no, que esperen un poco más... un poco más." Pero, ¿quién tenía que esperar? Era yo, sólo yo, la que me traicionaba a cada instante. Era yo, yo misma, y nadie más, la que traicionaba a Gorogó y a la Isla de Nunca Jamás. (p. 148)

Manuel is deprived of his childhood; Matia betrays hers.

Through Manuel, Matia first becomes aware of social injustice and moral responsibility. Manuel Taronjí is "un chueta de la clase más baja del pueblo" (p. 139), despised by all for his mother's previous concubinage with Jorge de Son Major. He is also treated as an enemy by the upper classes for the communist activities of José Taronjí, his stepfather. José has been assassinated by the Fascists, and his dog has been killed and thrown into the family's well. When Matia looks at Manuel properly for the first time, the stupidity and hypocrisy of her bourgeois life are revealed to her:
al mirarme aquel muchacho (a quien nadie estimaba en el pueblo, hijo de un hombre muerto por sus ideas pecadoras), me sentí ridícula, insignificante. Noté una ola de sangre en la cara, y me vino agolpadamente a la memoria el eco de mis fanfarronas bravatas, el aroma de mis Muratis, mis aires de superioridad y hasta mis caramelos de menta, como algo idiota y sin sentido. No supe qué más decir. Sólo mirarle y quedarme — de pronto me daba cuenta — con una mano incongruentemente extendida hacia él, notando lo insólito de mi presencia; la nieta de la vieja Práxedes, prima de Borja, con Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles detrás. (p. 134)

Matia expresses sympathy for Manuel and indignation towards the treatment he and his family have received:

- Me parece mal — dije. Y noté que mis labios temblaban y que decía algo que no pensé hasta aquel momento, algo aún confuso. — Me parece una cosa horrible lo que os han hecho. (p. 135)

Towards Manuel and other members of the lower class Matia feels a sense of shame and blame, of sins committed against them:

Y en medio de una extraña vergüenza, como si se abriese paso en mí la expiación de confusas, lejanísimas culpas que no entendía pero que lamían mis talones (cometidas tal vez contra todo lo que me rodeaba, sin excluir al Chino, a Antonia, ni, tal vez, al mismo Guiem; culpas y sentimientos que no deseaba reconocer, como el temor o amor a Dios) (p. 135)

The image of the sins as very distant and at the same time following immediately behind her, suggests that they extend far back. The image of them licking her heels compares them to a dog, and it is Manuel's dead dog which brought forth these feelings in Matia. Matia suddenly feels apart from her bourgeois family background, which is characterized by
deceit, rigidity, tradition, laziness, indifference and uselessness:

... me pareció que una delgada corteza se rompía,
con todo lo que me obligaban a sofocar, Borja con
sus burlas, la abuela con sus rígidas costumbres y
su pereza y despreocupación de nosotros y tía
Emilia con su inutilidad pegajosa. De pronto, me
levanté de entre todo aquello. Era solamente yo.
(p. 135)

Matia and Manuel become friends, and she repeatedly leaves Borja, her
studies and her grandmother's control to meet him. Manuel tells her of
the privileges he received from Jorge de Son Major. Jorge paid for a
good education for him on the mainland, but he did not help his mother
Sa Malene, or José Taronjí, or Manuel's brother and sister, "delgados y
tristones, que no iban a la escuela" (pp. 213-14). Manuel realized that
his family had a hard life, and he renounced Jorge's favours in order to
stay at home and help. Matia is astonished by this selfless, responsible
attitude to life, so different from the egotism of her grandmother, aunt
and Borja and the escapism of Lauro; astonished by "la forma cómo en-
tendía el desconocido mundo: el pavoroso, aterrador mundo con que nos
amenazaban a Borja y a mí, del que huía desesperadamente el Chino" (p. 146).
As a result of their friendship, Matia develops an existential awareness
of the passing time, and anguish over the monotony and insufficiency of
life. She describes these feelings as "Algo tan confuso como el incierto
deseo de justicia que iba apoderándose en mi conciencia" (pp. 178-79).
It is not until her friendship with Manuel that Matia feels pity for
anyone. During their encounter at the well, Matia sees in Manuel an
Matia also comes to pity the unhappiness of Borja (pp. 157 and 207), and of Aunt Emilia (p. 208). Thus through Manuel, Matia learns to have adult pity for the adult vices and weaknesses she learns of through Borja.

When Christmas time comes round, Matia and Borja have grown physically and psychologically, but they are not quite adults yet. The transition for Borja occurs when he prepares for the unknowing Manuel, whom he hates, to receive the blame and punishment for thefts for which he, Borja, was responsible. Matute symbolizes the mental transition by Borja's physical appearance: "Qué alto lo vi, de pronto, sobre la roca, con sus pantalones largos" (p. 221).

On the day before their return to school, Borja informs Matia that if she does not do as he pleases, he has the power to send her to reform school. He has friends who will bear witness that Matia is sexually involved with Manuel and Jorge. Matia of course has had no sexual
experience; when she held hands with Manuel it was to clasp a stone
between them: "¿Cómo hablarle de la piedrecilla azul, cómo decirle
que todo aquello de que me acusaba ni siquiera lo entendía?" she thinks.
It is the realization of Borja's wickedness that breaks through the
last veil of Matia's innocence:

Le hubiera llenado de bofetadas, de golpes, de patadas,
si no estuviera tan asustada. De un tirón se rasgó
la sutil neblina, el velo, que aún me mantenía
apartada del mundo. De un brutal tirón apareció
todo aquello que me resistía a conocer. (pp. 232-33)

Since Borja wishes Matia to accompany him to the church, she dare not
refuse:

Le seguí. Le seguiría en todo, desde aquel momento.
Empezaba a comprender al Chino y algo parecido a un
remordimiento me llenaba. "Si el Chino vivía ater-
rorizado por este lagarto, ¿cómo no lo voy a estar
yo, tonta charlatana, necia de mí?" (p. 234)

Waiting for him to leave the confessional, she feels that life is not
worth living under the power of Borja, whose name now evidently associates
him with the unscrupulous César Borja:

Me sentí cansada: "Ojalá no saliera nunca de allí",
pensé. No tenía ningún deseo de vivir. La vida
me pareció larga y vana. Sentía tal desamor, tal
despego a todo, que me resultaban ajenos hasta el
aire, la luz del sol y las flores. (p. 237)

But the worst is yet to come. Borja repeats, in front of his grandmother,
Matia and the parish priest Mosén Mayol, the false confession he has just
made to the latter in church. He hypocritically accuses the innocent
Manuel of blackmailing him and forcing him to steal. Suddenly, Matia
realizes the full extent of Borja's wickedness:

En aquel momento me hirió el saberlo todo. (El saber la oscura vida de las personas mayores, a las que, sin duda alguna, pertenecía ya. Me hirió y sentí un dolor físico.) (p. 239)

Matia's fear of Borja and his threat of a reform school prevents her from helping Manuel, and she follows him as he is taken to Doña Práxedes. She has betrayed her friend and the rebellion against injustice she learnt through him:

No tuve más remedio que seguirle, como un perro, respirando mi traición, sin atreverme siquiera a huir. Seguí sus pasos hacia el gabinete de la abuela. (El crujido de los peldaños, el tic-tac del reloj, allí en la esquina, como en aquella hora de la siesta, cuando le dije: "Me parece muy mal lo que hacen con vosotros". Y era peor que un perro muerto, lo que estábamos echando en su agua, era mil veces peor que un perro muerto, para mí.) (p. 241)

On the following day, Matia has the same experience as the first day on the Island: she wakes at dawn. For the first time in her life she did not dream. An image of doves fleeing from her room shows that purity is leaving her: "Algo había en la habitación como un aleteante huir de palomas" (p. 242). After Manuel had been taken away, she had tried to tell adults of the injustice done to him, but no one listened. Her aunt, Borja's mother, dismissed the injustice, advising Matia not to let it bother her. Matia is now fully aware of the horrors of life:

Y de pronto estaba allí el amanecer, como una realidad terrible, abominable. Y yo con los ojos abiertos, como un castigo. (p. 243)
The idealism of childhood cannot last because men do not love:

(No existió la Isla de Nunca Jamás y la Joven Sirena no consiguió un alma inmortal, porque los hombres y las mujeres no aman (p. 243)

Matia has lost her last link with childhood, for she cannot find her black doll Gorogó. Her inability to go back to sleep is again used as an image of facing reality: "¿Acaso nunca podría cerrar los ojos?" (p. 244).

By acquiring the knowledge of good and evil, by learning to distinguish between the two, Matia has fallen from the paradise of innocent childhood; she has acquired a conscience: "Estas cosas, dicen, son la conciencia" (p. 244).

We have seen that for Matute the theme of childhood is linked to the theme of the Civil War. The War, like the loss of childhood, represents the passage from a happy state of innocence to disillusionment; the attaining of the knowledge of evil; and the acquiring of a conscience. Matia, like the author and her generation, has undergone this experience. Reality, Matia sees, is horrible, because man suffers from weakness and vice, he does not love, and there is injustice in the world. She tries to remain innocent and ignorant for as long as possible, but the confrontation with reality inevitably comes.

All the characters who are developed in Primera memoria try to escape reality in some way or other, except for Manuel. Manuel was tempted to escape: "Pero a mí me daba miedo, y algunas veces pensé si no me
quedaría para siempre en el Monasterio, con los frailes" (p. 194) but overcame the temptation. Doña Práxedes, Matia's grandmother, is constantly taking pills, her Aunt Emilia drinks, and Lauro's retreat from life is evident in his constant preoccupation with death. Jorge de Son Major led an irresponsible, wandering life of escape sailing round the Greek Islands, and Borja's desire in life is to imitate him. Now old and crippled, Jorge evades reality by drinking, living in isolation, and in nostalgic memory of the past, an escape which appeals to Matia:

Verle allí, con su raída chaqueta de marino, en el jardín amurallado, Jorge de Son Major, refugiado en oscuras rosas, en recuerdos. Deseaba alcanzar, beber sus recuerdos, tragarme su tristeza ("gracias, gracias por tu tristeza"), refugiarme en ella para huir, como él, hundido para siempre en la gran copa de vino rosado de su nostalgia, que me invadía mágicamente. (p. 196)

Borja, after seeing the dead body of José Taronjí, plays cards. Matia describes him thus: "Por lo visto, quería hacer como si nada hubiera pasado. Como si lo hubiéramos olvidado, por lo menos" (p. 52). His mother Emilia also chooses to ignore reality, and lives in a physical and moral stupor, unaffected by anything. When Matia tells her of the injustice done to Manuel, she advises Matia to adopt the same attitude:

Desalentada regresé a casa, y busqué a tía Emilia, y le dije: "No es verdad lo que ha dicho Borja... Manuel en [sic] inocente." Pero tía Emilia miraba por la ventana, como siempre. Se volvió, con la sonrisa fofa, con sus grandes mandíbulas como de terciopelo blanco, y dijo: "Bueno, bueno, no te atormentes. Gracias a Dios vais a ir al colegio, y todo volverá a normalizarse". "Pero hemos sido malos, ruines, con Manuel..." Y ella contestó:
"No lo tomes así, ya te darás cuenta algún día de que esto son chiquilladas, cosas de niños. . . ."
(p. 243)

In attributing their behaviour to "chiquilladas", Emilia is making a facile excuse. Matia knows that to accept wrong easily, that is, to avoid disturbing one's conscience, as many people do, is stupid. After wounding Borja deeply by telling him of Manuel's relationship to his idol Jorge, she had said: "No puedo remediarlo, Borja, la vida es así" (p. 168). Then she had realized: "Y al decir esto me sentí estúpida y suficiente. ¡Qué idiotez! Lo of decir a veces a las criadas: "la vida es así"" (p. 168). Reality is harsh, but as long as people avoid it, accept it with ready-made phrases or make excuses for it, it will not improve. As long as people try to forget unpleasant events or pretend they did not happen, they are avoiding their conscience and the responsibility of making a moral judgement. So Matute reminds the reader of childhood, in order to reawaken in the reader strong impressions of the injustices of life. The only way to bring life closer to the ideal with which it so violently contrasts is by keeping the idealism of childhood.

Innocence has to be lost in order to be aware of the evils, but idealism can be kept by one's remaining faithful to childhood values. Matia does not manage this; she betrays herself in not remaining faithful to the child she was:

Era yo, sólo yo, la que me traicionaba a cada instante. Era yo, yo misma, y nadie más, la que
traicionaba a Gorogó y a la Isla de Nunca Jamás.
(p. 148)

At the end of the novel, Matia hears the white cock of Son Major. A cock crowing, in Christian terms, symbolizes betrayal: Peter's denial of Christ. Matia has betrayed Manuel, whose name is now obviously symbolic. She has also betrayed herself - the sensitive adolescent who spoke out against injustice - by allowing an even greater injustice to happen:

Allí estaba el gallo de Son-Majó, con sus coléricos ojos, como dos botones de fuego. Alzado y resplandeciente como un puñado de cal, y gritando - amanecía - su horrible y estridente canto, que clamaba, quizá - qué sé yo - por alguna misteriosa causa perdida.
(p. 245)
III. ISOLATION

The theme of isolation is expressed through all the major characters of Primera memoria. For Matute, childhood and adolescence are by nature lonely. Matia, looking back at Borja, thinks: "¿no eras acaso un animal solitario como yo, como casi todos los muchachos del mundo?" (p. 35).

But the loneliness and isolation in Primera memoria have a more specific cause: the time, which is the Civil War, and the place, which is the Island of Majorca.

Matia and Borja are lonely because their fathers are absent, fighting in Spain. Matia scarcely knows hers; yet she needs him desperately:

... mi padre (tan desconocido, tan ignorado; ni siquiera sabía si luchaba en el frente, si colaboraba con los enemigos, o si huyó al extranjero). Tenía que inventarme un padre, como un arma, contra algo o alguien. Sí, lo sabía. Y comprendí de pronto que lo estuve inventando sin saberlo durante noches y noches, días y días. (p. 57)

Borja blames the War for his loneliness:

Y aún, mi padre, jugándose el pellejo por culpa de gente así. Mi padre luchando en el frente contra esa gentuza... Y yo aquí, tan solo. (p. 53)

Manuel, unlike Matia and Borja, expresses no self-pity, yet the War deprives him of his father not merely by absence, but by death.

Although Matia and Borja are cousins, there is no brotherly love between them, for their fathers are fighting on different sides, and they
each identify with their own father's cause. "Tu padre", says Borja to Matia, "es un rojo asqueroso, que, tal vez a estas horas, esté disparando contra el mío" (p. 233). "También mi padre se juega la vida por culpa vuestra", says Matia (p. 56). They merely keep each other company, and then only for egoistic reasons of Borja (p. 20).

Their lives are totally lacking in love and affection, for none is provided by their grandmother, who is austere and indifferent, or by Borja's mother, who apparently never even speaks to her son and is intensely disliked by Matia. Tía Emilia also lives in isolation, withdrawn within herself. She is described as "distraída o ensimismada", "con aire de sonámbula", and "como un fantasma" (p. 72). Love does not exist in Matia's bourgeois family. The only love shown throughout Primera memoria, with the possible exception of Matia's moments of pity, is by members of the lower class. The following passage reveals the love between the servant Antonia and her son Lauro. Lauro says:

- Ustedes son impíos, son crueles... no comprenden nada. No es por mí, es por ella... ¿sabe usted? Es mi madre: no quiero que sufra por mí... ¡Está tan sola! Ella enseñó a ese pájaro, Condoliero, a ir de un lado a otro, cuando yo entré en el Seminario, para no quedarse tan sola. Ahora que me tiene no puede soportar que su abuelita me hable con dureza. (p. 90)

Matia is so deprived of love and care that seeing it given to others makes her envious. For this reason she resents Lauro:

Al ver las iniciales bordadas en aquel pañuelo, me invadió una oscura envidia. ¿Quién lo bordó sino su madre, la Antonia pálida de labios fruncidos? (p. 92)
Nos señaló con la mano y vi el anillo de plata de su madre en el dedo meñique.
"Él, su madre, el anillo", me dije confusamente. "Ellos, siempre ellos. Y a mí nunca, nada, nadie." (p. 91)

She also becomes jealous when Manuel expresses affection for Jorge de Son Major:

Y al decir "le quiero mucho" su voz tembló, tan cálida y cercana a mí, que una envidia rabiosa se me despertó.

Deseé fugazmente ser mala, cruel. (Y no se me ocurría nada que decirle contra las palabras que me dolían: "le quiero mucho". Pues sólo se me atropellaban tonterías como: "Pues yo quiero mucho a Gorogó: pues yo quiero mucho a aquella bola de cristal, y quiero mucho, quiero mucho. . . ." Qué dolor tan grande me llenaba. ¿Cómo es posible sentir tanto dolor a los catorce años? Era un dolor sin gastar. (p. 149)

Isolation is only one part of the oppressive mental climate of the Island. The oppression the Island represents is revealed in the images used to describe Matia's first night in Majorca. In the damp, dark hotel room besides feeling terribly alone, she feels fear due to the ants and the strange bed. Ants appear constantly throughout Primera memoria, suggesting an atmosphere of fear. The following image shows that the Island is riddled with it:

(En la isla entraban hormigas por todas partes. Por toda ella había caminos y caminos de hormigas; diminutos túneles, horadándola, delgados, como infinitas venas huecas. Y las hormigas yendo y viendo, yendo y viendo, por ellos.) (p. 103)

The image of the bedstead with its iron bars appears in conjunction with the image of the ants, symbolizing the mental prison of fear the Island represents. When Borja points out to Matia that she supports "ellos",

(p. 103)
the Republicans, she does not reply:

Nunca me lo había preguntado. . . . Algo había que me impedía obrar, pensar por mí misma. . . . Sin saber por qué, volvían de nuevo a mi recuerdo las sombras de los hierros forjados y las hormigas en la pared. En lo que me rodeaba había algo de prisión, de honda tristeza. Y todo se aglutinaba en aquella sensación de mi primera noche en la isla: alguien me preparaba una mala partida, para tiempo impreciso, que no sabía aún. . . . Volví a sentir, como tantas otras veces, un raro miedo. (p. 56)

By linking Matia's first night on the Island with the last one presented in the novel Matute shows that this premonition Matia experiences is of her betrayal of Manuel. Just as the mental prison of fear prevents her at first from thinking that she supports the Republicans, so fear later prevents her from defending Manuel and protesting against injustice. The fear has a temporal aspect, for Matia feels anguish that she will have to live indefinitely ("para tiempo impreciso") in the environment of fear which is the Island:

En plenas vacaciones estalló la guerra. Tía Emilia y Borja no podían regresar a la península, y el tío Álvaro, que era coronel, estaba en el frente. Borja y yo, sorprendidos, como víctimas de alguna extraña emboscada, comprendimos que debíamos permanecer en la isla no se sabía por cuánto tiempo. (p. 18)

Her presentiment is justified, for she will remain in the oppressive environment of the Island even after the Civil War is over: "Tenía doce años, y por primera vez comprendí que me quedaría allí para siempre" (p. 13).
Matute is thus equating the oppressive environment of the Island during the Civil War with that of post-war Spain. For this reason she emphasizes the Island's physical isolation, its distance from the War, which enables it to exist in a state of apparent peace:

Y seguíamos los cuatro – ella, tía Emilia, mi primo Borja y yo –, empapados de calor, aburrimiento y soledad, ansiosos de unas noticias que no acababan de ser decisivas – la guerra empezó apenas hacía mes y medio –, en el silencio de aquel rincón de la isla, en el perdido punto en el mundo que era la casa de la abuela. (p. 10)

Se veía, sí, que en la isla estábamos como perdidos, rodeados del pavor azul del mar y, sobre todo, de silencio, Y [sic] no pasaban barcos por nuestras costas, nada se oía ni se veía: nada más que el respirar del mar. (p. 116)

The above passages show that a quality attributed to the War in the Island is silence. This negative quality is repeated so insistently that it becomes the dominant one:

La calma, el silencio y una espera larga y exasperante, en la que, de pronto, nos veíamos todos sumergidos, operaba también sobre nosotros. (p. 18)

En aquel tiempo, bajo el silencio rojo del sol, detrás de los rostros de los criminales – los Taronjí, las fotografías que venían de más allá del mar – (p. 35)

"¿La guerra? – me dije –. ¿Qué guerra? Este silencio podrido, este horrible silencio de muertos." (p. 152)

The violence of events in the mainland is continually contrasted with the calm silence of the Island:
But Matute shows that the Island's 'peace' is false, for it does not acknowledge the reality of the Civil War:

Nos aburríamos y nos exasperábamos a partes iguales, en medio de la calma aceitosa, de la hipócrita paz de la isla. Nuestras vacaciones se vieron sorprendidas por una guerra que parecía fantasmal; lejana y próxima a un tiempo, quizás más temida por invisible. (p. 12)

Matia's grandmother exemplifies this attitude, for she is determined to go on acting as if nothing had happened:

- La guerra no debe interrumpir más nuestra normalidad. La guerra es una cosa horrible. . . .
- Odio la guerra - continuó la abuela -. Debemos vivir, en lo posible, ignorándola. (p. 152)

The words "calma aceitosa" and "hipócrita paz" imply that the Island is hypocritical in another way: besides ignoring the distant Civil War it is also giving an appearance of calm to its own war, like oil smoothing rough water. For although the Island appears to be peaceful, Civil War is being waged quietly, hidden beneath the surface.
IV. CAIN AND ABEL; THE CIVIL WAR

Although there is no open warfare in the Island, the fact that war is being waged there as well as in mainland Spain is shown by the following words:

Y siempre la sombra presente del padre - El Coronel - y los periódicos de la abuela, con sus horribles fotografías ¿pastiche? ¡realidad? ¡Qué más daba! de hombres abiertos, colgando de ganchos, como reses, en los quicios de las puertas. (Y disparos en las afueras, carretera adelante, al borde del acantilado, más allá de Son Mayor. Un grito, temerosamente oído una tarde, escondidos entre los olivos del declive.) (pp. 35-36)

The openness of the details of violence, published in the newspaper, contrasts strongly with the discretion shown by the words "afueras", "acaso", "temerosamente" and "escondidos". The War exists in the Island, but it is hidden.

The description above presents a true picture of the Civil War in Majorca. On 19th July, 1936, General Goded secured Majorca for the Rebels with hardly a shot fired, and the Island remained under their control. They executed a programme of purges of dissidents, quietly arresting men at their homes at night, driving them in a lorry to a lonely spot and shooting them. The French writer Bernanos, who spent the early part of the Civil War in Majorca, gives the number of assassinations there between July 1936 and March 1937 as three thousand.
Ana María Matute uses the theme of Cain and Abel to express Civil War in the Island. For centuries there had been strife between inhabitants of Christian ancestry and the Chuetas of Jewish ancestry; Matute shows that now traditional bonds of loyalty are broken as Chueta fights against Chueta.

The Chueta Taronjí brothers, the local Phalangist bosses, are cousins of José Taronjí, but there has always been hatred between them. José was in fact a communist, as is revealed in Los soldados, and was in possession of a list which indicated the dividing and sharing of the property of the landowners of the village. Es Ton describes to his wife Lorenza the brothers' arrest of José and four others:

"Los han metido en el corral a los cinco. Se subieron al muro los dos Taronjí y sus compañeros les apuntaron con las pistolas. Y ellos sin hablar, callados." A Lorenza no era sudor, eran lágrimas lo que le caían, oyendo a su marido decir aquello... "Y ha dicho la del administrador: ¿Y ése, leyendo todos los días "El Liberal"? Y nunca ponía los pies en la iglesia. Y Taronjí le dijo con la culata. Entre tanto los otros querían empujar la puerta. Y mira, mujer, eran como animales; sí, igual que animales. A los tres carboneros les ataron las manos a la espalda y miraban hacia arriba que daba miedo. Entonces dijo el mayor Taronjí: abrid. Y los sacaron. Se montó el pequeño de Riera en el coche, ya sabes, ese coche negro que tienen del Ayuntamiento, y lo pusieron en marcha. Me miró es Taronjí mayor, y me dijo: mejor que te vayas a casa, Ton. Mejor que no mires ninguna de estas cosas. (pp. 43-44)

José Taronjí then tried to escape from the car, according to his captors, and was shot. Before José's assassination, the hatred between the cousins had pervaded the whole village:

El odio, recuerdo bien, alimentaba como una gran raíz el vivir del pueblo, y los hermanos Taronjí clamaban con el de una parte a la otra, desde los olivares hasta el espaldar de la montaña, y aún hasta los encinares altos donde vivían los carboneros.
Los Taronjí y el marido de Malene tenían el mismo nombre, eran parientes, y sin embargo nadie se aborrecía más que ellos. El odio estallaba en medio del silencio, como el sol, como un ojo congestionado y sangriento a través de la bruma. (p. 37)

The Taronjí brothers are a threatening presence throughout the novel, for they are the only obvious sign of Phalangist terrorism: "el silencio, sólo Hollado por las botas negras de los Taronjí" (p. 77), "y allí, en la isla, en el pueblo, la espesa y silenciosa venganza. Los Taronjí subían en el coche negro y recorrían la comarca" (p. 180). They are responsible for the fear in the Island:

La isla, el pueblo, los sombríos carboneros, apenas se atrevían a mirarles un poco más arriba de los tobillos, cuando pasaban a su lado.) Los Taronjí llevaban los sospechosos a la cuneta de la carretera, junto al arranque del bosque, más allá de la plaza de los judíos. O a la vuelta del acantilado, tras rebasar Son Major. (pp. 27-28)

Although she makes no more direct references to incidents of the War in Primera memoria, Matute presents a symbolic Civil War which enables her to express certain insights which might otherwise be censored. The children, copying the hatred of the adults, have their own war. By stating the occupation of each boy's father, Matute shows that their social class and political interests determine the side on which they fight. Borja, member of a landowning, rightist, military family, leads a gang comprising the doctor's son Juan Antonio and the two sons of his grandmother's administrator, León and Carlos. The rival gang is led by Guiem, the blacksmith's son, and comprises Toni the carter's son, Antonio, son of a tenant farmer, and Ramón, son of the carpenter. Matute points
out the motives of Borja's supporters. Juan Antonio fights for Borja because the latter has a knowledge of his vices which he could reveal. The father of León and Carlos, who as the grandmother's administrator, is well-to-do, is dependent on her and her possession of lands for his job. His sons fight for Borja, even though they hate him (p. 164), because he orders them to. Matute shows that their father is supporting Doña Práxedes out of self-interest, compromising his own values and beliefs in order to dosso, and has brought up his children (the next generation) to do the same (pp. 95-96). Matute ends her description of the behaviour of the administrator and his sons with the words: "En la isla todo iba así", thus making it clear that in the Island, hypocrisy and the support of those in power for cowardly, selfish reasons, is general.

In the boys' war it is Borja who is in control. Matia wonders why:

Me pregunté por qué razón nos dominaba a todos: hasta a los mismos de Guiem, que siempre aceptaban sus treguas. (p. 55)

Borja's control is partly due to the fact that he is better armed. He has the revolver and rifle of his dead grandfather, while Guiem and his followers only have meat hooks stolen from the butchers. Guiem is frightened by the guns and accuses Borja of unfair play: " - ¡Juega sucio, juega sucio con la carabina!" (p. 112). There is thus another parallel between the children's war and the adults': the inequality of armaments on the two sides.
Agression against a member of one's own family, the Cain and Abel theme evident in the Taronjís' relationship with José, is repeated on a smaller scale throughout Primera memoria. Doña Práxedes and her grandson Borja are responsible for it. Borja mercilessly torments his cousin Matia, bringing her to final submission by blackmail. He hates and is desperately envious of his relative Manuel, whom he overcomes by having him sent away to a reformatory. Doña Práxedes despises her relative Jorge de Son Major, with whom she has had no communication for years. She is also involved, at least morally, in the aggression of the Phalangist Taronjí brothers, for Matia thinks of José as "asesinado por los amigos o, al menos, partidarios de mi abuela" (p. 136).

With the grandmother in her support of the rightists are the mayor, the municipal government, other local dignitaries, the vicar and the parish priest, Mosén Mayol. And, of course, the Taronjí brothers. This group comes close to the constituents of a purge committee, according to Bernanos' statement in "Les Grands Cimetières":

Du jour au lendemain, ou presque, chacun de ses villages a eu son comité d'épuration, un tribunal secret, bénévole, généralement ainsi composé: le bourgeois propriétaire, ou son régisseur, le sacristain, la bonne du curé, quelques paysans bien-pensants et leurs épouses, et enfin les jeunes gens hâtivement recrutés par la nouvelle phalange, trop souvent convertis d'hier. . . . Cinq cents phalangistes le 17 juillet. Quinze mille quelques semaines plus tard, puis vingt-deux mille. (p. 432)

Doña Práxedes and Mosén Millan are the most important; together they
arrange a Te Deum to thank God for the victories of the rightist armies, and they preside at a luncheon following it.
Matute reveals the character of Doña Práxedes through images closely associated with her. In the descriptions of the grandmother's house, images of a monarchic, Catholic past predominate. The dead grandfather's suite, "Rara suite lujoso-monástica, como toda la casa de la abuela" (p. 33) contains valuable old objects, including a gold dinner service given to the great-grandfather by the king, and a book about the Inquisition. It also contains arms. Images of dirt, decay and death reveal the physical and moral decadence of Doña Práxedes and her family: "mugre", "herrumbre, telas de araña, poca higiene" (pp. 33-34); "toda la casa estaba llena de polvo" (p. 29); "mariposas laminadas y el cadáver de un murciélago - sí, de aquel murciélago muerto y hecho cenizas detrás de la biblioteca" (p. 34). A sense of cruelty associated with the past is suggested by the arms, the book describing the burning of the Jews, and the ghostly presence of the grandfather, "como si el alma de aquel hombre cruel flotase por sus tres habitaciones contiguas" (p. 34). There is also a sense of evil, for the window of the grandfather's rooms shines like the gate of hell: "La ventana, con su cristal roto que despedía resplandores al atardecer, como un anticipo del infierno" (p. 34). Condemnation of all the past represented by the grandfather and grandmother is evident in the images Matute uses to describe the bath:

La bañera era vieja y desportillada, con patas de león barnizadas de blanco amarillento, y tenía grandes lacras negras, como estigmas de una mala raza. (p. 73)
To emphasize the link between Matia's grandparents and Catholicism, Matute compares the house with the parish church of Santa María. In the house there is an "oscuridad verde y húmeda de tiempo y tiempo" (p. 34); in the church "la humedad negroverdosa, como de pozo, se pegaba al cuerpo" (p. 79). The house has "ratones que huyen como alma en pena" (p. 140) and Matia wonders if there are rats and bats in the church too.

Sitting in the church, listening to Mosén Mayol's Te Deum, she thinks:

También la casa de la abuela era sombría y sucia. . . . Había telarañas y polvo en las porcelanas, la plata y la vajilla que regaló el rey al bisabuelo, cuando se casó. Y en la vitrina, en las resplandecientes estatuillas de jade, y arriba, en el enorme y misterioso cuarto de baño (con su espejo inclinado y nuboso, como la puerta de un complicado mundo, y su nido de cañerías que siempre reventaban en invierno), y abajo, en el huerto, con las hormigas; y en la casa toda con sus goteras y el viento, allí, en los rincones de la nave, había el mismo viento mojado. Y en la casa de la abuela igual mezcla de olores: madera, verdién, sal. Y las flores. (p. 79)

Matute shows by her use of images that there is also a feeling of cruelty about the church:

Por encima de la cúpula de mosaicos verdes, arrancándoles un llamear dañino, estaba el sol, rojo y feroz en medio del cielo pálido. Y me dije: "Casi nunca es azul el cielo". Una cruel sensación de violencia, un irritado fuego ardió allí arriba: todo invadido, todo empapado, en aquella luz negra. (p. 79)

Un rayo de luminoso rojo caía al suelo, como una mancha de sangre. . . . Mosén Mayol cantaba:

- De-un Lau-da mus: te Dominum confi-
te-mur. . . (p. 80)

On the way to the church, Borja thought of his grandmother as a whale (p. 75). To Matia, the church looks like a whale (p. 81).
Doña Práxedes' affinities with monarchism, Catholicism and the past show that she represents tradition. Her name may be symbolic of this, for the Greek word "praxis" means accepted practice or custom. Matía describes her as "la abuela con sus rígidas costumbres" (p. 135). As the landowner of the village, she also represents the traditional absolute territorial power of a lord over his vassals. She is treated with great respect. By describing her as always carrying a stick she does not need, Matute shows that this respect is for the grandmother's authority:

Llevaba casi siempre un bastoncillo de bambú con puño de oro, que no le hacía ninguna falta, porque era firme como un caballo. (p. 10)

The cane's gold handle suggests that she holds authority through wealth.

The following image suggests the same:

Entre la tía Emilia y el Chino ayudaron a subir las gradas a la abuela, cogiéndola cada uno de un brazo, como si levantaron una gran tinaja por las asas, con infinito cuidado, para que no se derramara el aceite. (Y eso era la abuela: como una rica sustancia que todos apreciaren, aunque la tinaja fuera vieja y basta.) (p. 78)

With her husband dead, she is in complete command of her lands, her servants and her family. Matute shows through Aunt Emilia, who is thirty five years old and married, that the grandmother rules like a dictator. She is the only one to speak when the family is together, and Aunt Emilia's replies consist of "Sí mamá. No mamá. Como tú quieras, mamá". (p. 11). The image of the tenant farmers on her land as dolls and puppets shows her absolute power over them:
Desde la ventana de su gabinete, ella escudriñaba su fila de casitas blancas, cuadradas, donde vivían los colonos. Aquellas casitas, al atardecer, se encendían con luces amarillentas, y eran como peones de un mundo de juguete, y muñecos sus habitantes. (p. 31)

Matute expresses the immensity of her power by making her larger and the peasants smaller than life. She expresses horror of this power by using grotesque imagery:

Allí estaría, como un dios panzudo y descascarillado, como un enorme y glotón muñecazo, moviendo los hilos de sus marionetas. Desde su gabinete, las casitas de los colonos con sus luces amarillas, con sus mujeres cocinando y sus niños gritones, eran como un teatro diminuto. Ella los envolvía en su mirada dura y gris, impávida. Sus ojos, como largos tentáculos, entraban en las casas y lamían, barrían, dentro de las habitaciones, debajo de las camas y las mesas. Eran unos ojos que adivinaban, que levantaban los techos blancos y azotaban cosas: intimidad, sueño, fatiga. (p. 60)

The images which Matute uses most frequently to describe Doña Práxedes are of animal origin. She compares her sense of smell to that of a greyhound which can track down children (p. 19), and her eyes to "dos peces tentaculares" (p. 202), "dos cangrejos patudos" (p. 203) and "dos hormigas recorriendo mis niñas" (p. 210) to emphasize the loathsome-ness of her constant snooping and prying.

She uses animal imagery also to reveal much worse characteristics of Doña Práxedes. By comparing her to a pig (p. 19), a beast, a heavy, panting rhinoceros in water (p. 20) and a whale (p. 75) she conveys the idea that the grandmother is horribly fat; she is "una mole redonda y negra" (p. 76). She shows that the fatness is due to greed by her
repeated use of the adjective "glotón". The pig image expresses, besides fatness and laziness, the ferociousness of the old lady, for there are wild pigs on the island. When she smiles she shows her "tusks", which are like those of a pig:

Pesada y firme, con su estúpido bastoncillo en la mano, salió la abuela. El Chino cogió apresuradamente el periódico y lo desplegó. En gruesos titulares, se decía que en un pueblo de la Península habían arrojado el párroco a los cerdos. Imaginé por un momento al hermoso Mosén Mayol, luchando con una piara de cerdos, de los que tanto abundaban en la isla. Feroz animales, de largos colmillos. No lo podía remediar: los cerdos y sus colmillos tenían la misma sonrisa de la abuela, de Borja y acaso mía. (p. 183)

The importance of the smile is not so much in how it is done, as when.

Both times it is mentioned, the grandmother has just read of bloodshed:

Mosén Mayol abrió el periódico y señaló los titulares. Se acababa de conquistar otra ciudad. Lauro el Chino se ruborizó:
- Ha caído ... ha caído ... - dijo.
Empezaron a hablar todos a un tiempo. La abuela sonreía, enseñando los dientes caninos, cosa poco frecuente, ya que cuando sonreía, de tarde en tarde, solía hacerlo con la boca cerrada. Así, con el labio encogido entre los afilados dientes, tenía el mismo aire de Borja, en su segunda vida, muros afuera de la casa. "Acaso también la abuela esconda otra vida, lejos de nosotros." Pero no me la imaginaba compadreando canallamente con los del pueblo. (p. 65)

Perhaps Matute is suggesting that Doña Práxedes is a member of a "comité d'épuration"? Unlike Borja, however, her associates would not be "los del pueblo", but the most respected people of the town.

More images are used to show that she is like a carnivorous animal, greedy for blood:
Matute emphasizes her appetite for blood by showing her reading the newspaper at mealtime:

No obstante, al parecer, sucedían cosas atroces. A la hora del desayuno los periódicos de la abuela crujían entre sus garras glotonas, y el bastoncillo resbalaba al suelo una y otra vez, como una protesta. Su anillo gris despedia reflejos de cólera. - "Horrores y horrores, hombres enterrados vivos..." -, bebía distraídamente su café, y por sobre la taza, los ojos, redondos y sombríos, resiguían las letras con morbosa avidez. (p. 180)

Doña Práxedes' greed, and her enjoyment at the sufferings of others, are manifestations of her egoism. Her voice and manner are repeatedly described as harsh and cold to emphasize her indifference to people. Matia says to herself: "a la abuela no le importaba nada de nadie" (p. 145). She describes her grandmother's usual lack of love and care for her, and contrasts it with the protective caresses bestowed on her in front of visitors (pp. 12-13). Doña Práxedes' interest in the children's education is entirely selfish: "Necesitáis una buena preparación para no exponerme a un nuevo fracaso" (p. 153). She has a "falta absoluta de piedad" (p. 9). Matute juxtaposes an object and a person to show that she treats them both in the same way, throwing them out when they are of no use to her: "(doña Práxedes, ferozmente indiferente,
catando uvas ácidas, despidiendo preceptores inútiles)." (p. 164).

The author shows through images that the grandmother's values are wrong. The first description of her in Primera memoria shows her wearing two diamond rings. One is, significantly, in the most dominant position - on the index finger of her right hand. Matute reveals her critical attitude towards them through the adjectives she chooses to describe them. The diamonds are "enormes" and "sucios" (p. 9). She contrasts their ugliness with the beauty of a grape the grandmother picks up: "Era tan fresca y hermosa, como feo y sucio su brillante" (p. 151). She describes the sapphires on the grandmother's opera glasses as "falsos" (p. 10). Doña Práxedes' values are superficial, for she tells Matia that beauty "es lo único que sirve a una mujer, si no tiene dinero" (p. 119). Matute shows that in her superficial judgment of people she treats them as animals to be bought and sold:

Sentada en su mecedora, escrutándome con sus redondos ojos de lechuza, me obligaba a andar y a sentarme, me miraba las manos y los ojos. (Me recordaba a los del pueblo, los días del mercado, cuando compraban una mula. (pp. 120-21)

She believes that marriages are to be made for the sake of money and social position. Matía imagines Manuel saying to her:

Vuelve, vuelve, que te casarán con un hombre blando y seboso, podrido de dinero, o con un látigo bestial, como el tío Alvaro. (p. 140)

The grandmother praises Emilia's marriage to a rich, powerful man and condemns Matía's mother who "se dejó llevar por sus estúpidos sentimientos
de muchacha romántica, y pagó cara su elección" (p. 120). Through the words "pagó cara su elección", Matute subtly shows the old lady's superficiality and materialism. For these words are not used figuratively, but literally. The marriage was a tragedy, in the grandmother's eyes, because it cost her daughter money. Because Matia's father spends money on his beliefs, (which she calls "ideas torcidas" since he is a socialist) she calls him "un hombre sin principios" (p. 120): the irony is evident. Doña Práxedes wants nothing to do with her son-in-law. Her estrangement from Jorge de Son Major, who spent his fortune extravagantly, was apparently also caused by a quarrel over money (p. 152).

By juxtaposing a visible symbol of wealth with claims to poverty Matute shows that the grandmother is hypocritical about her wealth: "con el parpadeo de un sol gris en los enormes solitarios de sus dedos. A menudo le oíamos decir que estaba arruinada" (p. 10). She uses the excuse of being ruined and living in bad times to account for her lack of care of her home:

El jardín estaba muy descuidado, y la abuela se lamentaba de ello.
- Pero - dijo - corren malos tiempos para ocuparse de estas cosas. Vivimos días de recogimiento y austeridad. (p. 75)

and of the children:

- La niña - iba diciéndole tía Emilia a la abuela -, pobrecita, está enferma. Hemos de vigilarla...
- Ah, sí - la abuela levantó de pronto las dos manos y sostuvo un momento la mantilla sobre su onda blanca -. A estos pobres niños no les ha tocado vivir una buena época... ¡Aruinados y en guerra! ¡Dios mío, Dios todopoderoso, qué congoja! (p. 77)
Instead of trying to improve matters, she escapes from them:

A menudo le oíamos decir que estaba arruinada, y al decirlo, metiéndose en la boca alguno de los infinitos comprimidos que se alineaban en frasquitos marrones sobre su cómoda, se marcaban más profundamente las sombras bajo sus ojos, y las pupilas se le cubrían de un gelatinoso cansancio. Parecía un Buda apaleado. (p. 10-11)

- Madre - la voz de tía Emilia parecía lejana -, Matia no es una niña como las otras... Acuérdate, madre: María Teresa empezó así. Antonia dice que gritaba por las noches...

- Estos niños beben - dijo la abuela -. Estoy segura de que beben. Hay alguien que les proporciona alcohol y cigarillos: eso es todo. Están en una edad difícil y estos son malos tiempos. Antonia, acércame las píldoras. (p. 211)
VI. MOSÉN MAYOL; THE CHURCH

Doña Práxedes is very closely associated with the church, and is often in the company of the parish priest who is remarkable for his elegance and worldliness:

La frente de Mosén Mayol aparecía rodeada de gotitas brillantes, como una corona. El párroco era alto y muy hermoso. Tendría unos cincuenta años, el pelo blanco y grandes ojos pardos. El Chino se ruborizaba cada vez que le dirigía la palabra. Mosén Mayol se llevaba la servilleta a los labios con mucha delicadeza, y daba en ellos un golpecito suave. Mosén Mayol poseía un gran sentido de la dignidad, y a mí me parecía el hombre más guapo y elegante que vi jamás. (p. 68)

The grandmother's praise of the church reveals that its attraction for her is the above superficial and social qualities:

"Es muy hermoso - decía la abuela -. Oficia con la dignidad y majestad de un Príncipe. ¡Nada hay comparable a la Liturgia Católica!" (p. 68)

Her attitude to religion is egoistic, for she prays to "un Dios de su exclusiva invención y pertenencia" (p. 12). Matute shows that she and Mosén Mayol think of themselves as better than everyone else: "Mosén Mayol y la abuela reinaban, despreciaban y callaban" (p. 84). Through juxtaposition of "mesa" and "iglesia", Matute shows that she perverts Christian values through her egoism. Christmas, which should be a time of love for others, becomes a time of self-indulgence, an excuse for the grandmother's vice of gluttony:

Pasábamos la mitad de nuestro tiempo repartido entre la mesa y la iglesia. Irámos a la iglesia
con la cabeza llena de vapores, y allí se nos llenaba de cánticos, luces e incienso, para volver de nuevo a las cargas de la mesa. (p. 226)

Doña Práxedes does prepare packages for the poor of the village, an activity which Matute laments in *A la mitad del camino* as too often indicative of a condescending attitude and false charity:

Del mismo modo como no entiendo, y me llena de estupor, que algunas señoras, generalmente de cierta edad, adineradas y ajetreadas, tengan lo que ellas llaman "sus pobres", como pueden decir "sus zapatos", "sus misas", "sus alimentos", "su dentadura", etc. — ¡Estoy cansada de oír llamar caritativas a ciertas gentes que empaquetan jersey y mermelada por Navidad, con destino a ciertos eligidos que definen "mis pobres"!

In "Les Grands Cimetières", Bernanos condemns this form of charity as politically motivated during the Civil War in Majorca:

Au beau temps de l'Action Catholique en Espagne, les grandes dames de Palma, sur le conseil de leurs confesseurs, choisissaient systématiquement leurs pauvres parmi les malheureux soupçonnés d'appartenir aux partis avancés. "Nous ne faisons pas de politique, disaient ces dames. Fi de la politique! C'est au nom du Christ que nous venons à vous. Le Christ ne connaît ni rouges ni blancs... (ici un petit rire)... Voilà toujours du tabac pour votre pipe!" Quelques mois plus tard, comme je demandais à l'une de ces charitables visiteuses des nouvelles de ses protégés. "Ne m'en parlez pas, dit-elle. Je n'ose pas me renseigner. Ils doivent être tous fusillés". (p. 560)

Doña Práxedes' attitude to religion is the same as to everything else: she uses it for her own selfish purposes. Matute uses religious images to reveal the nature of these purposes:

Robar a la abuela era mucho más excitante. Solía guardar el dinero en una cajita de metal, que deformaba
nuestras caras y se empañaba con la respiración. La tenía en un estante del armario y ponía siempre encima, como si quisiera protegerla, el Misal y el estuche con el Rosario de las Indulgencias, traído de su viaje a Lourdes. Al lado, como un centinela, colocaba una botella de cristal llena de agua milagrosa, de la que de cuando en cuando bebía un trago. La botella tenía la forma de la Virgen, y su corona se desenroscaba a modo de tapón. (pp. 118-19)

The role of the Church, for Doña Práxedes, is to protect her wealth. The Church accepts this role. José Taronjí was shot because he had the lists showing the planned division of the grandmother's house and land. He was shot by the Taronjí brothers, with the sanction, at the very least, of the grandmother and Mosén Mayol, who did not want him to be buried in holy ground.

According to a common belief in the Church and the bourgeoisie, social classes are structured by divine right, and therefore the Church should support the status quo. Matute suggests through images that by taking the side of the rich and powerful in the Civil War, the Church is compromising its values by materialism.

Mosén Mayol, we have seen, is a worldly man. Just as Christmas, for the grandmother, becomes an excuse for indulging her gluttony, for the priest it becomes an excuse for indulging his vanity and making a display of material wealth:

Aquellos días Mosén Mayol aparecía en toda su majestad. La abuela tenía razón, cuando decía que tenía algo de príncipe. ... Santa María resplandecía. Mosén Mayol, alto y hermosísimo, seguido de sus dos acólitos, vestía
de rosa muy pálido, oro y perlas. . . . Todo brillaba tanto que dolían los ojos. (pp. 226-27)

In Matute's description of Mosén Mayol, images of gold and silver associate him with riches. His head is described as silvered and shining (p. 227) and his eyes as "dorados, fríos y relucientes como dos monedas" (p. 68). Images of gold also show that his parish church is wealthy (pp. 78, 79, 81, 236). Hugh Thomas, in *The Spanish Civil War*, discusses the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church at a slightly earlier date:

The losing battle which Rome had fought in France, Germany and Italy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century caused the elaboration of a policy to keep at least one country - Spain - 'safe from liberal atheism'. A great burst of religious building followed, with the consolidation of the Church's wealth in Spanish capital. Jesuits in particular were believed to hold vast fiefs in the gradually increasing wealth of the country, in all sorts of concerns, from antique-furnishing businesses to, later, dance halls and cinemas. The interpretation put by the Spanish Church upon the modernizing encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI was, indeed, that they permitted the accumulation of clerical capital. The saying 'money is very Catholic' became almost a proverb, only half a jest. (p. 54)

Thomas goes on to quote from J.B. Trend's *Origins of Modern Spain*:

In the Church Catechism published in 1927, the question, 'What kind of sin is committed by one who votes for a liberal candidate?' elicited the answer, 'Generally a mortal sin.' But the answer to 'Is it a sin for a Catholic to read a liberal newspaper?' was, 'He may read the Stock Exchange News'. (p. 54)

The Catechism was probably first published in the 1860's and nobody was ever excommunicated for voting liberal, but this passage does serve to show the Church's interest in the accumulation of wealth. Matute's image of the Church of Santa María as a sunken ship serves to reveal its corruption:
Las grandes costillas de la nave, como un barco
sumergido en el mar, subderto de musgo, oro y sombras,
despelen algo fascinante y opresor (pp. 236-37)

for it compares the Church with the sunken boats of Santa Catalina:
"los viejos egoístas o indiferentes, corroídas como las barcas de
Santa Catalina" (p. 35). By arranging with Doña Práxedes for a Te Deum
to thank God ("Dios de los Ejércitos" [p. 83]) for the victories of the
rightist armies, he is serving the interests of the privileged social
classes wherein lies his economic security.

The epigraph to Primera memoria is a quotation from the Old
Testament. The words are spoken by Jeremiah to Hananiah, the false
prophet of war: "A tí el Señor no te ha enviado, y, sin embargo, tomando
Su nombre has hecho que este pueblo confiase en la mentira." (Jeremías
28-15).

The role of the Church during the Civil War is the main target of
criticism in "Les Grands Cimetière". Bernanos, a strong Catholic writer,
expresses disgust at the Church's support of the rightists which gave the
War its title of 'Holy Crusade':

Je comprends très bien que l'esprit de Peur et l'esprit
de Vengeance - mais ce dernier est-il autre chose que
l'ultime manifestation de la Peur? - inspirent la Contre-
Révolution espagnole. Qu'un tel esprit l'ait inspirée,
je ne m'en étoune nullement. Qu'il la nourrisse aussi
longtemps, voilà le problème. J'écris donc, en langage
clair, que la Terreur aurait depuis longtemps épuisé sa
force si la complicité plus ou moins avouée, ou même
consciente, des prêtres et des fidèles n'avait finale-
ment réussi à lui donner un caractère religieux. (p. 425)

He gives examples of 'purges' in the Island when men suspected of Republican
sympathies were taken from their homes at night in a lorry, driven to a lonely
spot and shot 'en masse' by the Phalangists. Before their execution they
were given the last rites, and Bernanos shows a very critical attitude to
the priests who thus did their duty.

In Ramón Sender's novel, *Requiem por un campesino español* (1953),
there is implicit the same critical attitude to a priest doing this duty.
The name of the priest, Mosén Millán, is so similar to Mosén Mayol as to
suggest a definite reference to Sender's work of protest. The plot of
*Primera memoria* also resembles that of the *Requiem*, where Paco, like
José Taronjí, rebels against the injustice of the "feudal" division of
land and is executed by the Phalangists.

The fear which inspired the Revolution, Bernanos states, was the
panic of the bourgeoisie before the rise of the poor. Franco, like
Hitler and Mussolini, he sees as a brutal gladiator paid by an effeminate
society to whip its rebelling slaves, and to whose whip the slave-keepers
themselves sooner or later submit. He says that society gets along well
with its poor as long as it can absorb the malcontents in hospitals or
in prisons. But when the proportion of the malcontents increases to a
point of danger, society calls in its gendarmes and opens wide its
graveyards. Matute mentions several times that Borja's father Álvaro
has a whip, and that Borja is effeminate. Matute thus reveals through her depiction of the rightist elements
the same opinion as Bernanos and Sender: that the landowners and the
clergy support Franco for selfish, materialistic reasons which they
cover up with hypocritical piety.
VII. BORJA; HYPOCRISY, MATERIALISM AND CONFORMITY

Doña Práxedes' grandson Borja exemplifies the continuity of hypocrisy in the younger generation in Primera memoria. Matia says of him:

No sé si Borja odiaba a la abuela, pero sabía fingir muy bien delante de ella. Supongo que desde muy niño alguien le inculcó el disimulo como una necesidad. (p. 12)

Matute first presents Borja restoring his grandmother's cane to her, an act symbolic of restoring her authority. His feigned submission to her, Matute shows, is a result of his materialism: "conocía muy bien el significado de las palabras herencia, dinero, tierras" (p. 12).

Borja's materialism is revealed through several major images which relate him to Doña Práxedes and Mosén Mayol. His hands, as he hypocratically passes the cane back to his grandmother, resemble hers (p. 11) with which she hypocratically caresses Matia in front of visitors. When Borja asks Manuel to take the money to Es Mariné for him his hands again reveal his hypocrisy: "Borja hizo un gesto extraño con las manos que me recordó a la abuela" (p. 224). As with the grandmother, Matute uses animal imagery to reveal his egoism. He has the same canine teeth as she has (pp. 24, 157, 164), which give him the ferocious air of a cannibal. From the maternal side of his family he has inherited monkey-like qualities (p. 26), and Matute often presents him in monkey-like positions.
Matia also addresses him as "mono". Like the priest, he is exceptionally handsome, but too much so for a boy (p. 179). Matute describes him as effeminate (pp. 55, 167) and indicates the effeminacy has moral connotations by calling him a "mujerzuela" (p. 19). He does indeed prostitute himself sexually for control over Lauro. At the end of the novel, when Borja is sobbing out his false confession to his grandmother, she describes him as a "despreciable mujerzuela" (p. 240) to show that he is prostituting himself morally. As with the priest, images of gold are used to show his concern for money: his skin is "como de bronce o de oro" (p. 35), his fingers "dorados" (p. 23).

Borja, like León and Carlos, feigns religious devotion to please Doña Práxedes. Matute exposes hypocrisy by contrasting his behaviour with his religious appearance:

(Para delante de la abuela Borja aparecía confiado, bueno.) Borja besaba las manos de la abuela y de su madre. Borja se persignaba, el rosario entre sus dedos dorados, como un frailecito. Eso parecía, con sus desnudos pies castaños dentro de las sandalias. Y decía:
- Misterios de Dolor...
(Borja, gran farsante...)(p. 23)

She ironically compares him with images of saints; a figurine in Lauro's room: "un santito moreno que se parecía a Borja, con el pelo rizado y los pies descalzos" (p. 25) and a picture in a stained glass window in the church: "Allí estaba el Santito que se parecía a Borja, con sus rizos como racimos" (p. 80).
The image of a puppeteer controlling puppets, which Matute applies to the grandmother, is also applied to Borja. His power over Matia makes her dream that "Borja me tenía sujeta con una cadena y me llevaba tras él, como un fantástico titiritero" (p. 25). His companions are described as "los serviles, los suyos" (p. 36), for he dominates them all (p. 55). The image of Borja killing insects as he torments Lauro serves to emphasize the boy's power over his helpless tutor (p. 93). By the end of the novel, having gained control of Manuel and Matia, Borja is all-powerful. He says to his cousin: "- No hagas gestos idiotas: estás en mis manos, igual que Lauro y Juan Antonio. ¡Y que todos, en fin!" (p. 231). Borja's power shows that his name is symbolic of the Borja family, of Alexander and César Borja, the unscrupulous religious and political figures. As César Borja did, Borja makes himself powerful at the expense of other people. Besides using their weaknesses for blackmail he keeps them economically indebted to him. Matia exclaims: "De todos modos, aún le debía dinero. Nunca acabarían mis deudas con él!" (p. 52). Matute shows that he uses his friends as a means to more money for himself. He teaches them to gamble, then wins their money (p. 36). She describes him haggling to show that he does not give anything away to his friends but sells for the best price he can get. Matia is very surprised when Borja gives her a cigarette she asks for (p. 53).

Matute reveals through juxtaposition that Borja judges the worth of people by their social position. When Matia asks him about José
Taronjí he replies: "- Ya te dije que era un mal nacido, un mal hombre" (p. 50). He condemns José's family first of all because everyone else does, for he is a conformist:

No se debe ayudar a esa gente. Nadie les ayuda. Hace ya muchos días que recogen ellos solos su cosecha. . . Todos tienen miedo de ayudarles, porque Malene y los suyos. . . pues eso, están muy significados, muy mal vistos. (p. 49)

He conforms because it is to his own advantage; the lower classes conform through fear (pp. 131-32). This is the reason for Matute's criticism of the inhabitants of the Island; they conform with the oppression of those in control. José Domingo's article on the trilogy Los mercaderes is titled "Analísis de una sociedad conformista". Matute shows that Borja also condemns José Taronjí because José would not be bought by money:

- Eso - Borja hizo un gesto vago con la mano -, que son mala gente. Su padre, ese que han matado, era el administrador del de Son Major. . . Y dicen que el de Son Major lo casó con su querida, Sa Malene, ya sabes, la madre de Manuel. El de Son Major les dio la casa, los olivos, el huerto. . . ¡Todo se lo deben a él! . . . Un desgraciado, después de todo lo que hizo por ellos Jorge. Le odiaba, le odiaba con toda su alma. ¡Y el Chino dijo que tenía las listas y que entre todos se repartieron Son Major! Luego, ya lo ves: lo llevarían a alguna parte y se ha querido escapar. . . Han tenido que matarlo. . .

- Fíjate si son de mala especie: él les estuvo favoreciendo tanto -. . . Y a Manuel le tenía en un convento, viviendo y estudiando. Todo pagado, todo. . . Bueno, no sé ni como tienen cara para salir de casa. Y aún, mi padre, jugándose el pellejo por culpa de gente así. Mi padre luchando en el frente contra esa gentuza. . . (pp. 50-53)
The fact that Jorge paid for all these things for José, and that José wanted to divide and share out Jorge's land, in Borja's eyes makes Jorge virtuous and José wicked. Borja can be bought by money and expects to buy other people with it; he condemns José's non-materialistic values, his refusal to support the system, as ungratefulness and vice.

When Matia asks Borja about the attitude of the lower classes, his answer shows that he justifies the good living conditions of the upper classes by accusing the poor of envy:

> Están llenos de rencor. El Chino dice... Tendrán envidia porque nosotros vivimos decentemente. Están podridos de rencor y de envidia. Nos colgarían a todos, si pudieran. Yo sí les odio. Les odio de verdad. (pp. 52-54)

Matute exposes Borja's self-righteousness, for his hatred of the supposed envy of the lower classes is in itself a sin. She also exposes his equation of decency with wealth.

Borja's values and judgements are all dictated by money; he is the representative of an upper social class with a mercantile mentality, which profits from the weakness of others and compromises all idealism in favour of materialism.
VIII. LAURO: THE OPPRESSED LOWER CLASSES

Matute uses the servants of Doña Práxedes as an example of those who serve the system she represents. Lauro teaches the children the Catholic Church's doctrine of humility which keeps the poor poor and justifies the rich. When Borja asks Lauro what God thinks of José Taronjí, he replies:

- Seguramente piensa que era un mal hombre. No es bueno dejarse dominar por la envidia y el odio, todos los hombres deben conformarse con lo que Dios dispuso para ellos. (p. 93)

He uses a biblical image to imply the Church's disapproval of José Taronjí's political opinions:

"Pues como antes, que iban los leprosos con campanillas a la puerta de David, y se retiraban los hombres puros al oírlos, así debían ir por donde pasan con la peste de sus ideas... (p. 40)

But Matute shows that Lauro, who has been prepared for priesthood at the wish of Doña Práxedes, has been taught to be an unwilling mouthpiece of the system:

Pobre Lauro el Chino, triste preceptor sin juventud, sin ordinariz compartida, con palabras aprendidas y corazón de topo. Sus manos de labrador frustrado... (p. 28)

Matute shows by his reactions to news of the War that he secretly supports the workers' side:

Mosén Mayol abrió el periódico y señaló los titulares. Se acababa de conquistar otra ciudad.
Lauro el Chino se ruborizó:
- Ha caído... ha caído... - dijo. (p. 65)

Lauro's mother Antonia, along with the other servants, secretly sympathizes with the Taronjí family (p. 131), and Borja suspects that Lauro does too (p. 54). The author shows through her use of images that he bears a secret hatred which he hides out of fear:

(Pobre, pobre mono con sus lamentos nocturnos y su húmeda mirada de protegido de la abuela, con su atado, retorcido, empaquetado odio, arrinconado debajo de la cama, como un lio de ropa sucia... . . ) (p. 28)

The flowers in his room have "algo violento, como el odio cerrado de Lauro" (p. 29). When Borja reminds Lauro that Doña Práxedes is going to get rid of him after Christmas, he is described thus:

El Chino no contestó, pero la vena de su frente se hinchó como un río que va a desbordarse. Por primera vez pensé que su odio también podría ser grande y peligrosa. Que tal vez su odio podría estallar algún día. (p. 159)

But Lauro does not rebel; he meekly accepts the cruel and unjust treatment he receives from the grandmother, Borja and Matia. Matute associates him with images of martyrdom to express pity for his suffering and the death he is sent to by Doña Práxedes: "Era malo martirizar al Chino" (p. 177), thinks Matia. She wants to say to him the words spoken by Christ on the cross to God: "Perdónales, pues no saben lo que hacen" (p. 163). He resembles the martyrs of the stained glass window of Santa María, and feels them to be his dead brothers (p. 172).
Lauro's martyrdom, Matute implies, is not heroic, for he is a hypocrite professing values in which he does not believe. Rather like Juan Medinao in *Fiesta al noroeste*, he is ugly, sexually self-indulgent and sodomistic, and preoccupied with religion and death. Es Marine accuses him thus:

*Tú no crees en nada. Te echaron de allá por descreído. Sólo crees en tu cochina barriga — y con la punta del cuchillo le señalaba el vientre negro y hundido, con sus botones marrones, palpitando de miedo —. ¡Tú no crees más que en tus cochinas tripas! ¿Qué es lo que vas a enseñar a estos inocentes? Se refería a nosotros. Luego escupió y dijo: — ¡La muerte les enseñas tú! Muertos, nada más. No sabes de otra cosa que de la muerte... Anda, renegado, Judas. (pp. 108-09)*

As it does for Juan Medinao, death represents escape for Lauro. He accepts martyrdom and death instead of protesting; he betrays himself through his meekness:

*Su voz temblaba, tal vez de ira. Pero mesurada, con la traidora dulzura de la mansedumbre.*  
(p. 159)

As a servant of the system, the only protest he is permitted is a general one directed against the mercantile mentality prevalent in the Island:

*Lauro el Chino. Solía decir, a veces: Ésta es una isla vieja y malvada. Una isla de fenicios y de mercaderes, de sanguijuelas y de farsantes. Oh, avaros comerciantes. En las casas de este pueblo, en sus muros y en sus secretas paredes, en todo lugar, hay monedas de oro enterradas. . . . Parecía que al hablarnos de los mercaderes lo haciera con la única furia permitida a su cintura doblada de sirviente. (pp. 20-21)*
In order to appear a meek servant of the system, Matute, like Lauro, can openly criticize only the "mercaderes". But she can, indirectly, through the use of images, make it clear that the materialists are the supporters of the system.
IX. JOSÉ AND MANUEL TARONJÍ; THE PROTESTERS

In this Island of "mercaderes" there is one exception: José Taronjí and his family. The images with which Matute describes the Taronjí's home shows that their values are not those of the other Islanders:

Entre sus muros, vivían como en una isla perdida en medio de la tierra de la abuela, ya muy cerca del mar. (p. 37)

Images of self sufficiency show that, unlike their neighbours, they are not dependent on Doña Práxedes:

Ellos eran como otra isla, sí, en la tierra de mi abuela; una isla con su casa, su pozo, la verdura con que alimentarse y las flores moradas, amarillas, negras, donde zumbaban los mosquitos y las abejas y la luz parecía miel. (p. 39)

Images of sun and shade serve to contrast the Taronjí's house with the grandmother's:

La puerta del huerto, quemada por la sal y el viento, estaba siempre abierta (al contrario que en nuestra casa, donde todo permanecía obstinadamente cerrado, como oculto, como guardando celosamente la sombra.) En cambio, en la casa de Manuel el sol entraba por todos los agujeros, de un modo insólito, casi angustioso. La casa, el huerto y los árboles de Manuel Taronjí, pertenecieron antes a Jorge de Son Major. ... Las tierras de los Taronjí eran tierras intrusas en el declive de mi abuela. (p. 138)

The Taronjí's garden is like Paradise (p. 148) and a holy place (p. 185).
Matute contrasts physical characteristics of Manuel and Borja which have a moral significance. Borja's golden skin (p. 35) is a symbol of his materialism; Manuel's is a sign of his hard work in the sun:

... era su nuca de oscuro color moreno, del bronco color del sol sobre el sudor, no del dorado suave de Borja. (p. 41)

Doña Práxedes and Aunt Emilia have white faces, for they do not work and do not go out in the sun. The Taronjí brothers are also pale (p. 27). Manuel's size and strength compared to Borja's smallness refers as much to moral stature as physical. Manuel is as selfless and sensitive to the suffering of others as Borja is egotistical and indifferent. Matute's use of religious imagery is most indicative of her attitude to José and Manuel. She emphasizes the fact that they are of Jewish descent, and reminds the reader of the Spanish Inquisition through the book found in the grandfather's room. She evokes the autos da fé which were held in the "plaza de los judíos" as the boys playing at war light bonfires there (p. 160). The surname Taronjí occurs frequently in old accounts of autos da fé, states José Domingo in his "Análisis de una sociedad conformista". José Taronjí's murder by Franco's supporters is thus associated with religious persecution by the Church, a very critical comment on the role of both in the Civil War. In "Les Grands Cimetières" (pp. 442-44) and in La France contre les Robots Bernanos describes the inquisitional tactics
revived by the Spanish in Majorca to help the Phalangists in their purges. While purgers visited the villages to liquidate suspects, the terrorized population crowded to the churches in order to obtain certificates of Easter communion to protect themselves. Kessel Schwartz (p. 198) mentions invectives against the Jews published in the Phalangist ABC.

Borja is accusing Manuel of having "impure" Christian blood when he calls him "pelirrojo": "Pelirrojo como todos ellos - dijo Borja, entonces -. Pelirrojo. Chueta asqueroso" (p. 41). He is also comparing him to Judas, who reputedly had red hair.

Matute's images reveal, however, that José and Manuel are much more Christian than the Taronjí brothers and Mosén Mayol. Their names and relationship immediately suggest Joseph of Nazareth and his 'adopted' son Emmanuel. The image of Borja feeling the holes made by the bullets which killed José compares José to Christ:

Metió el dedo en un agujero, y luego en otro. Al verle hacer esto me acordé de lo que decían de Santo Tomás, que metió los dedos en las heridas de Jesús, para asegurarse de su verdad. (p. 48)

Manuel is frequently attributed with supernatural qualities, and with an overwhelming goodness. He tells Matia:

Soy algo diferente de los demás, no tan listo. . . . También allí arriba, resultaba demasiado inocente. Y ella me dijo: "Hijo, eres demasiado bueno, ya tienes quince años". (p. 145)

Matia thinks:
"Por eso, [su pesar] éste no es de Quiem ni de Borja. Por eso no es de ninguno de nosotros". O acaso, fuese de todos nosotros. "Porque es tan bueno..." (p. 147)

Tal vez era demasiado bueno... No era como nosotros, ni como los hombres. Era aparte. (p. 218)

Pero Manuel continuaba, igual que siempre, sereno y silencioso: "Sí, es demasiado, es irritantemente bueno..." (p. 222)

Matute uses images of Christ's arrest to describe that of Manuel. Matia says of him: "Lo sacó de entre los olivos, parecía" (p. 241).

(Matías was captured on the Mount of Olives.) Matia follows Manuel to the grandmother's house and listens outside the door with the servants.

The Gospel according to Saint Matthew, 26:58 states:

But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priests' palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

After Matia's denial of Manuel, she hears a cock crow, as Peter did.

Continuing the religious parallel, Borja is both the Judas who sold Christ and the false witness who testified against him.

Thus Matute shows that the leftists José and Manuel Taronjí, treated as outcasts by the Catholic Church, are closer to the true spirit of Christianity than the rightists Mosén Mayol, Doña Práxedes and Borja.
As has been shown in chapter III, Matute uses images of the Island surrounded by sea to convey its isolation. She uses images associated with Matia's first night in Majorca - the dampness and darkness, the ants and the iron bedstead - to express the oppressive mental atmosphere of the Island. Images of dirt, decay and death describing Doña Práxedes' home and the church reveal her attitude towards the conservative rightist elements. Three more very important images describing the setting of Primera memoria are used to convey Matute's social protest. These are sunlight, air and flowers.

Sunlight, air and flowers, the following passage indicates, represent the good elements of life, as opposed to the darkness and dampness of the church, which represent death:  

Olía a moho. Las grandes costillas de la nave, como un barco sumergido en el mar, cubierto de musgo, oro y sombras, despedían algo fascinante y opresor. Me sentí cansada: "Ojalá no saliera nunca de allí" pensé. No tenía ningún deseo de vivir. La vida me pareció larga y vacía. Sentía tal desamor, tal despego a todo, que me resultaban ajenos hasta el aire, la luz del sol y las flores. (pp. 236-37).

It has already been established that the grandmother's house, like the church, is shady and damp, whereas Manuel's house is dry and filled with sunlight. Likewise, that Doña Práxedes, Emilia and the Taronjí brothers have pale, humid faces, whereas Manuel's skin is dark and dry. The sun
which continually shines on Manuel also shines on Matia when she protests against injustice:

Apenas lo dije, me sorprendí de mis palabras, y noté que mi cara ardía. Tenía la piel tan encendida como si todo el sol se me hubiera metido dentro. (p. 135)

The sun shines approvingly on life and justice. It thus becomes an instrument of Matute's moral judgement. Images of infection, illness and wounds show that the sun and sky are hurt by the death and injustice in the Island. When José Taronjí's body is discovered, the sun is like an ulcer: "A través de las nubes hinchadas, color humo, se intensificaba por minutos, como una úlcera, el globo encarnado del sol" (p. 37). The hatred between the two branches of the Taronjí family is reflected as illness in the sun: "El odio estallaba en medio del silencio, como el sol, como un ojo congestionado y sangriente a través de la bruma" (p. 37). The boys' war, symbolic of the Civil War, is reflected in a swollen sky: "No eran días de tregua. El cielo aparecía tapado por una nube grande, hinchada y rojiza" (p. 157). Images of anger and ferocity illustrate the sun's judgement against the Taronjí brothers and their domination of the Island:

Siempre, allí en la isla, me pareció siniestro el sol, que pulía las piedras de la plaza y las dejaba brillantes y resbaladizas como huesos o como un marfil maligno y extraño. Las mismas piedras donde resonaban las pisadas de los hermanos Taronjí. . . (p. 37-38),

against the Church:

. . . las vidrieras de Santa María con sus hermanos muertos allí arriba, y detrás el sol feroz y maligno empujando con su fulgor. . . (p. 40),
against Mosén Mayol's Te Deum (p. 80) and against the merchants' wares for sale behind the church (p. 94). It protests against the assassination of José:

"Han tirado al hombre, lo han despeñado rocas abajo." Algo empezó a brillar. Quizá era la tierra. Todo estaba llena de un gran resplandor. Levanté la cabeza y vi como el sol, al fin, abría una brecha en las nubes. Se sentía su dominio rojo y furioso contra la arena y el agua (p. 43),

and against Borja's rationalization of the murder. The sun's protest seems to have the desired effect on Matia; it disturbs her conscience:

El sol lucía plenamente, y dentro del silencio, durante un rato... oí su voz, que decía: han tenido que matarlo, han tenido que matarlo. Todo el cielo parecía meterse dentro de los ojos, con su brillo de cristal esmerilado, dejando caer el gran calor sobre nuestros cuerpos. Sentí un raro vacío en el estómago, algo que no era solamente físico. ... El resplandor me acompañaba aún. Lo tenía tan metido dentro, que todo: yo, las barcas muertas, la arena, las chumberas, parecíamos sumergidas en el fondo de una luz grande y doliente. Oía el mar como si las olas fueran algo abrasador que me inundara de sed. (p. 51)

As Matia watches Sa Malene and her children returning from burying José and suffering the insults of the villagers, the sun hurts her eyes terribly (p. 86). It is not until after she has protested against injustices to Manuel that she says:

Un verde resplandeciente nos bañaba, y allá arriba, el ojo furioso y rojo del gran sol parecía achacarnos. Sabíamos que el sol no podía con nosotros... (p. 142)
Like Manuel, his mother has red hair. The images Matute uses to describe it attribute to it the qualities of the sun:

Era una mata de cabello espeso, de un rojo intenso, llameante; un rojo que podía quemar, si se tocase. Más fuerte, más encendido que el de su hijo Manuel. Era un hermoso cabello liso, cegador bajo el sol. (p. 61)

Her hair thus can be seen as a symbol of protest against injustice. When Sa Malene showed her "sentimientos poco resignados" to the Taronjí brothers, they took her to the "plaza de los judíos", where the village women cut off her hair (pp. 181-82). Matute uses red as the colour symbolizing protest; it occurs dozens of times throughout the book. Its usual political significance cannot be ignored; Doña Práxedes looks in the newspaper for "huellas de la hidra roja" (p. 24), and Borja insults Manuel as "pelirrojo" and Matia's father as a "rojo asqueroso".

Flowers, another image of life, are also used to convey Matute's social protest. They are often associated with the sun by their colour, and with the repressed protest of the lower classes by their silence. The flowers in Lauro's room are described thus:

Antonia estaba en las flores que había al borde de la ventana, y que el sol parecía incendiar. Eran, bien las recuerdo, de un rojo encendido, con forma de cáliz, y tenían algo violento, como el odio cerrado de Lauro. (p. 29)

The flowers on the beach, when José's body is found, have similar qualities:

De pronto, las flores, como el estupor de la tierra, encarnadas y vivas, curvadas como una piel, como un temblor del sol, gritando en medio del silencio. (p. 38)
The violent death of the protester José is symbolically reflected by the violent death of a flower:

Aún veo los juncos, tan tiernos, brotando de la arena, y el azul violento de las pitas. Una estaba rota, con los bordes resecos como una cicatriz. (p. 43)

Other pitas at Santa Catalina have "un aire feroz, de alfanjes" (p. 49). Matute draws the reader's attention to the unusual qualities of the flowers on the Island; their size, their bright colour, their relationship with the sun and their total domination of the environment (p. 89). But this image of life is not complete without another image with which it is linked. The flowers are "como nacidas de las piedras", and stones in turn represent fear and hatred of the Phalangist terror:

Algo había, como un gran mal, debajo de la tierra, de las piedras, de los tejados, de los cráneos. Cuando en el pueblo caía la hora de la siesta, o al resguardo de cualquier otra quietud, en esos momentos como de espera, resonaban en las callejuelas las pisadas de los hermanos Taronjí. (p. 27)

Las mismas piedras donde resonaban las pisadas de los hermanos Taronjí. . . . (p. 38)

While Borja is bearing false witness against Manuel, the pitas are shouting their silent protest: "Las pitas se alzaban igual que gritos, allá abajo" (p. 240). Flowers have the same function of disturbing the conscience as the sun, for at the end of Primera memoria, Matia wonders:

¿había flores, irritadas y llameantes flores rojas, en el cuartito de allá arriba? . . . "Estas cosas, dicen, son la conciencia. (p. 244)
The third major image of protest is the air, particularly the wind. The wind starts to blow as Manuel rows José's dead body away from the beach, and attacks Borja and Matía: "Sólo nosotros dos y el viento, que de pronto nos lanzó sobre la cara una onda de arena, que sentimos crujir entre los dientes" (p. 48). The wind is symbolically throwing the blame in their faces, for the sand was stained by José's blood (p. 46). Sand again indicates Borja's guilt as Manuel leaves the beach with the box of stolen money:

Borja retrocedió levemente. Manuel le arrancó la caja de las manos, y sin decir nada se encaminó hacia la Leontina. Borja le siguió, sacudiéndose la arena del pantalón. (p. 225)

The most violent attack made by the wind is when Mosén Mayol points to a victory of the troops announced in the newspaper, and Doña Práxedes smiles, showing her canine teeth:

De afuera llegó algo como un rumor, bajo y caluroso, y se alzó la cortina. Sobre la mesita, los periódicos adquirieron vida súbita, volaron sus extrañas alas y se debatieron bajo la mano del párrroco, que cayó plana y pesada sobre ellos.

- Viento - dijo la abuela -. ¡Se levanta el viento otra vez! Me lo temía.

La abuela conocía el cielo, y casi siempre adivinaba sus signos. A la tía Emilia le fue la cortina hacia la cara, y las dos lucharon torpemente. La cortina parecía algo vivo, y se enzarzaron en una singular batalla. Borja corrió a su lado, y la libró del engorro. Estaba muy pálida y sus labios temblaban. Miré al jardín. Allá abajo corrían dos papeles arrugados, persiguiéndose como animales. La abuela seguía hablando, a mi espalda:

- Mañana, a las once, Mosén Mayol oficiará un Te Deum. Todos en esta casa acudiremos a Santa María a dar gracias a Dios por esta victoria de
nuestras tropas... La lámpara empezó a oscilar, y la abuela dijo:
- Cerrad ese balcón. (pp. 65-66)

Like her grandmother and her aunt, Matia is frightened by the wind:

Pero al viento le temía, y, antes de que empezara, lo presentía como el roce de un animal que trepara por la pared. Me despertaba en la oscuridad: El espejo brillaba y sentía como un soplo recorriendo el cuarto. A veces, me daban un miedo parecido las flores que surgían inesperadas, de los pequeños jardines y huertos, tras las casas del pueblo: como denunciando algún misterio de bajo la isla, algún reino, quizá, bello y malvado. (p. 88)

When Borja is betraying Manuel to Mosén Mayol in the church, the wind is blowing outside: "Allí fuera empezó a soplar el viento, y, de pronto, una nube lo cegó todo" (p. 236). Later, after Manuel has been taken away, the wind continues to blow on the guilty Matia, forcing her to protest:

Entonces, supe que en algún momento de la tarde – con la luz muriendo – había vuelto allí, que quedé presa en aquel viento, junto a la verja pintada de verde, cerrada con llave, de Son Major. Llamé a Jorge, desesperadamente, pero sólo apareció Sanamó, con sus llaves tintineantes, diciendo: "Pasa, pasa, palomita". El viento levantaba su pelo gris, señalaba el balcón cerrado. Y decía: "Está abí arriba". Le grité: "Van a castigar a Manuel, y es inocente". (p. 243)

Thus sun, flowers and wind all convey Matute's protest against the oppressive control of the Phalangists, the landowning bourgeoisie and the Catholic Church in the Island: the reign of Phalangist terror during the Civil War, which Matute foresees as lasting for an indefinite period in the future.
CONCLUSION

I hope to have shown in this thesis how Ana María Matute conveys her social criticism through images. I hope to have justified her style, heavily criticized for its "excessive" use of imagery, by showing that Matute's main purpose in writing is to convey social criticism, and images have proved to be an effective means of achieving this.

In the later two novels of the trilogy Los mercaderes, Matute continues to use the important images of Primera memoria. The image of the "mercaderes" in particular is more fully developed. The image probably originates from the biblical episode in which Jesus overturned the tables of the merchants in God's temple. Significantly, the word "mercaders" in Catalán was used for a long time as a synonym of bourgeoisie. The image comes to represent all those who allow idealism to be corrupted by materialism. Lauro's invective against the "mercaderes" in Primera memoria retains its significance: such a generalized criticism is the only kind which Matute may freely express. However, censorship was evidently laxer when Matute published Los soldados in 1964 and La trampa in 1969, for the images conveying social criticism are much less subtle than in Primera memoria. In Los soldados, Manuel dies for the Republican cause, and the hero, the idealist whom Matute contrasts with the materialists, is a communist. La trampa depicts the grandmother's house and the
Island approximately twenty years after the Civil War, and the most
violent criticism is that nothing has changed since then; Matia's fears
for the future, expressed in *Primera memoria*, have been realized.

Franco's Spain as a prolongation of the country's traditional evils
is the direct target of criticism in Matute's trilogy *Los mercaderes*, and
it is the only aspect of the novel which I have studied in this thesis.
The novels are, of course, also of a more general interest, for Matute
uses the particular situation of Matia and her country to discuss the
universal problems of moral and social responsibility.

At the end of *Primera memoria* Matia is forced to choose between
her own welfare and another's, a dilemma every human being must face.
When she betrays Manuel, she also betrays her ideals and acts out of
self-interest.

Matia's moral dilemma is not only personal, but also of a social
nature. Matia is middle class; in betraying Manuel she is permitting
an injustice to the lower class in the interest of her own. She is
betraying the liberal ideals of her father and the ideals taught by her
religion, both of which are professed by the middle class. Instead of
acting in accordance with middle class ideals, she acts in accordance
with middle class behaviour, as exemplified by her family and her church
on the Island. Because she acts against her ideals and her conscience
she feels guilt and a sense of defeat for herself and her class, feelings
which continue and are intensified in *La trampa*. Thus her class faces
the same existential dilemma as she does personally - idealism or self-
interest - and faces it just as much after as during the Civil War.
Matute is showing Matia's failure to act resolutely in accordance with her conscience, with her social and moral ideals, in order to disturb the reader's individual conscience and to condemn the apathy of the bourgeoisie everywhere.
FOOTNOTES


5 For information on *Las luciérnagas*, see Janet Winecoff Díaz, *Ana María Matute* (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1971). The original unpublished text of this novel is preserved in the "Fundación Ana María Matute" in the Boston University Library.

6 Winecoff Díaz, p. 137.


8 José Corrales Egea quotes these statements in *La novela española actual* (Madrid: Ed. Cuadernos para el diálogo, S.A. Edicusa, 1971), pp. 61-62:

*Antonio Ferres*: La realidad es, para mí, la única fuente viva de la obra literaria. La realidad española es fácil de ver, y de ahí que la enfoque unas veces en tanto que denuncia de las condiciones sociales, y otras como un compromiso frente a las fuerzas que desean disfrazar esta realidad.

*Alfonso Grosso*: Intento, como otros hombres de mi generación, testimoniar e inquietar... Adopto una actitud de denuncia y, desde luego, francamente "engagée"...
Juan Marse: Es sabido que el primer deber de todo novelista estriba en describir la realidad sin falsificarla. . . . Pero, además, escribir novelas significa, para mí, defender una causa. . . .

Armando López Salinas: El servicio que puedo prestar a los otros hombres de mi país es el de desvelar las relaciones sociales y mostrar el mundo tal y como creo que es. . . . La obra literaria, en un amplio sentido, puede ayudar a la creación de nuevas condiciones [sociales]. . . .

Juan Goytisolo made a similar statement in L'Express (24 March 1960):

En una sociedad en que las relaciones humanas son fundamentalmente artificiales, el realismo se convierte en una necesidad. . . . Para nosotros, escritores españoles, la realidad es nuestra única evasión. . . .


10 See Nora, pp. 285-88; Egea, pp. 57-108; Winecoff Díaz, p. 120.

11 Winecoff Díaz, Ana María Matute, p. 121.


15 Corrales Egea, p. 108.

16 Alborg, p. 187.


20 Matute, Primera memoria (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1960).

21 Matute, Los soldados lloran de noche (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1964).

22 Matute, La trampa (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1969).

23 La torre vigía (Barcelona: Editorial Lumen, 1971), Matute's most recent novel, relies heavily on images and symbols which are used even more subtly than in Primera memoria for the purpose of social criticism. But as this novel has no definite historical or geographical setting I must disregard it.

24 Matute, "Notas de una escritora," Instituto de Estudios Norteamericanos, Boletín, II (Barcelona: Spring 1965).


28 Ibid.


31 Los soldados lloran de noche, p. 100.


33 Matute, En esta tierra (Barcelona: Editorial Éxito, 1955), p. 113.
34 La trampa, p. 45.
35 Los soldados, p. 218.
36 En esta tierra, p. 130.
37 La torre vigía, pp. 46-7.
38 Matute is not anti-Christian; she is however very anti-Church.
42 This imagery is continued on p. 164.
43 The significance of images of damp and dark will become clearer later in the thesis. See chap. V, p. 60; chap. IX, p. 83; and chap. XI, p. 87.
44 The image of ants has the same function throughout the trilogy. Its significance is clearer in Los soldados; compare for example: "Con pavor salvaje, con hormigas rojas recorriendo sus arterias, con un miedo deshumanizado que le hacía temblar y sudar" (p. 39).
46 Once again the imagery is clearer in the other two novels of the trilogy. In Los soldados, fear and the impossibility of escape are expressed in terms of the Island and the sea:

El miedo es el silencio de las islas, en el grande y espejeante mar azul, el miedo es el silencio de las calles y el polvo y la arena levantados por el viento.
El miedo es el Port, en calma, un turbio y lento espejo,
verde y mudo bajo el cielo de la tarde, donde el agua choca y salpica las balaustradas de cerámica. El miedo es un enorme embudo, arremolinado como el mar, que traga las barcas. Tengo miedo, y Es Mariné y Jacobo y José Taronjí y Marta tienen miedo, tenemos miedo, viviremos siempre en el miedo. (pp. 153-4)

In La trampa, in Matia’s explanation for her return to the Island, Matute shows quite clearly that the Island represents tyranny: "Yo sé perfectamente por qué he venido aquí. Yo sé muy bien por qué razón no puedo desprenderme, ni me sabré desprender de la tiranía. He nacido en la tiranía, y en ella moriré" (p. 21).

In La trampa, Matia describes her grandmother thus: "¿Qué importancia tiene para ella el curso de los humanos acontecimientos...? La ruina nunca es su ruina. La muerte nunca es su muerte. La desgracia nunca es su desgracia. Lo que no le ocurre a ella, no le ocurre a nadie" (pp. 17-18).


In Los hijos muertos Matute shows her anger at these words through Daniel Corvo: "Y se decía con una ira sorda: 'Gerardo se dice arruinado', y le miraba deambular por el prado, oliendo a anís, con la mirada perdida y la lengua torpe. Y cuando veía a los hermanos Migueles, que se les murió la caballería de vieja y tuvieron que ir ellos tirando del arado... el hermano y la hermana Migueles, de dieciséis y catorce años... sin ira, con la cara sumida de la pobreza indiferente... (p. 67).


53 See thesis p. 75.


55 In *Los hijos muertos*, Daniel Corvo criticizes the self-righteous bourgeois prejudice that money indicates virtue:

(A la derecha del Señor, donde ellos creían tener un lugar preferente por su trabajo, por su fe, por su pureza y su decencia). Ah, él era de los otros, de los tachados, de los impuros. Y los eligió. Ya sabía cuál era su pecado: la pobreza. Ya sabía cuál era su mancha, cuál era su maldad: la pobreza." (p. 68)

56 Loc. cit.

57 In *Los soldados*, Matute associates the image of bonfires and burnt flesh (suggesting the Civil War as well as the Inquisition) with the Taronjí brothers, while they are in church:

Los Taronjí, el ruido de sus pisadas en las piedras, la negrura de sus guerreras bajo el sol. Los Taronjí, con el olor de las viejas hogueras en la piel, con olor de una antigua carne quemada, abrazándose sobre las piedras de la plaza, trepándose a los ojos y a los dientes y colmillos sedientos en la pálida cara, con el borde de los ojos oscuro, como el humo de la fulgurante y diabólicamente luminosa carne quemada, un humo graso, pegado a las ropas y a la sonrisa fría y fija y el miedo, como el terrible olor de una antigua carne quemada de unos antiguos huesos desenterrados y quemados, de unos antiguos cadáveres desenterrados y quemados, con mechones de un viejo cabello podrido, emergiendo de los cráneos desnudos. Los Taronjí, con un redoble remoto tras de sus pasos que olía a cirio entre unas manos atadas con soga; y algo que era su propio redoble, el
de su grandísima venganza y la larga cadena negra de su servil sonrisa hacia el señor de Son Major, y la señora Doña Práxedes, y los Príncipes de la Iglesia. (pp. 33-4)


59 Images of dark and damp have already been discussed on pages 60, 83 and 87.

60 See thesis p. 83.

61 See thesis p. 84.

62 See thesis p. 60.
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