Ekphrasis and its Application to the Novels *El cuarto de atrás* by Carmen Martín Gaite and *El embrujo de Shanghai* by Juan Marsé

Ekphrasis, an element of literature, is the relation between words and images. Ekphrasis gives a voice to the silent image and forces it to speak. Originally, ekphrasis transformed a digressive description inside of a rhetoric discourse. This explains why ekphrasis can be, for example, a narrative within a narrative; a story inside of the central storyline. In the beginning, ekphrasis meant “a full or vivid description”. The definition more common today is “the verbal representation of the visual representation.” (Heffernana, G James) Normally, the connection of ekphrasis is with something represented by a work of literature; with a painting described in a poem, for example. There has been speculation that ekphrasis, by its origin, can’t be applied to a novel, because traditionally it is applied to a poem that explains a painting or a statue. So the question is asked, can ekphrasis be integrated into a narrative fiction? Yes, despite accusations, it can be integrated and is integrated in the two novels; *El cuarto de atrás* by Carmen Martín Gaite and the novel *El embrujo de Shanghai* by Juan Marsé. In this case, they are not representations of an artistic work such as a painting or a statue, but inside of the text there exist elements and objects that exhibit the elements of ekphrasis.