The Influences that Inspired the Themes of Carmen Martín Gaite and Juan Marsé

My Senior Seminar will discuss the works of two authors that grew up in Spain during the civil war, and as a result experienced the repression of society and culture throughout the dictatorship of Franco. The essay will reflect upon the psychological and sociological impact these variables had in regards to the themes of their novels. I will explore the presence of their own personal memories, traumatic suffering, childhood experiences, psychological scarring, and the use of social realism, and explain how these factors found their way into the characters of the two novels. At times, the very essences of the authors reveal themselves through certain attributes of the characters, perhaps as a form of therapy or expression. Carmen Martín Gaite’s El cuatro de atrás and Juan Marsé’s El embrujo de Shanghai allow the authors to break through the barriers of the restrictions set by Franco and his regime and create a new paradigm of experimental expression.