

# Lost in the Supermarxist: The Appeal of Pepe Carvalho

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The 1972 novel *Yo maté a Kennedy* launched a literary character, the detective Pepe Carvalho, which by 1990 made Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (1939-2003) Spain's most widely read novelist. The Carvalho series later grew to 25 releases, and a new installment was usually only outsold by a new book by the likes of Gabriel García Márquez. Commercial success aside, the series also garnered much critical attention, thus assuring its place in the literary history of post-Franco Spain. Contemporary Spanish literature has been characterized by its marketability, aided by its broad appeal and its frequent adherence to popular genres. Yet critics of the Carvalho series have thus far overlooked the series' relationship with the literary marketplace. In this essay, I will account for some of the extra-literary factors which have contributed to Carvalho's commercial triumph and reflect on the series' ideological function as a consumer product.

Back when the series began, its ascendancy was far from guaranteed. The initial press run of the 1974 novel *Tatuaje*, the first full-blown detective novel by Vázquez Montalbán, was a mere 2,500 copies. Written on a dare from a friend in a period of 15 days, the book was not even taken seriously, at least initially, by Vázquez Montalbán himself (Hart 95). The reading public greeted the book with surprise because its straightforward narrative style represented a radical shift in the trajectory of the author, identified with the "high-brow" techniques of the literary experimentalism in vogue in Spain at the time.<sup>1</sup> And worse still, it pertained to a genre, detective fiction, which had long suffered particular scorn from Spanish intellectuals. In just five years time, however, the powerful

Editorial Planeta would bestow the Premio Planeta on the fourth book in the series, *Los mares del Sur*, and publish the novel with an initial print run of 300,000 copies (Vázquez Montalbán, “No escribo” 334-35).

Part of the success of the series was undoubtedly due to the high public profile of its author. A longtime member of the PSUC, the Catalan branch of the Spanish Communist Party, Vázquez Montalbán was deeply engaged in politics, as evidenced by his presence at demonstrations and his statements in support of a variety of causes. His weekly column in the country’s most widely read newspaper, *El País*, brought him further visibility and occasionally he even made political news himself, as he did with his visit with Subcomandante Marcos in Mexico in 1999. His campaigning, along with Bernardo Atxaga and José Saramago, for Esker Batua (United Left) in the Basque regional elections of May 2001 further confirmed Vázquez Montalbán as a throwback to the French public intellectual.

The series also benefited from what has been referred to as the “normalization” of the Spanish literary market, that is, the tendency for Spanish readers to read Spanish, rather than foreign authors. From 1980 to 1990, for example, the number of books published by Spanish writers quintupled, and by 1990 the Spanish publishing industry could boast of the release of one fiction title per day, a rate on par with that of new fiction in France (Schumacher 13). Part of the normalization process was what many have referred to as a “boom” in Spanish detective fiction from the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties. While Spanish readers as a whole were turning toward homegrown writers, Spanish mystery readers, who had long been accustomed to works imported from France, Britain and the U.S., had very few mystery writers of quality to turn to in

the Spanish context. Then along came Pepe Carvalho, whose appearance in *Tatuaje* initiated the so-called boom in Spanish mystery writing. Although many theories have been advanced to explain the sudden interest in a genre that had been all but non-existent in Spain before the seventies, Vázquez Montalbán saw the upswing as a purely commercial phenomenon (Guemes).<sup>2</sup> This was a period when, in addition to the handful of regular mystery writers, editors were convincing established authors like Lourdes Ortiz, Maria Aurèlia Capmany, Beatriz Pottecher, Juan Benet and Antonio Muñoz Molina to dabble in the genre. The movement even had its parodic counterpart, with two novels by Eduardo Mendoza and the seven novels of P. García’s series based on Gay Flower, “detective muy privado.” If we add to this “the proliferation of films being made in the thriller/*cine negro* tradition” (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 89) we have an event that, if not a “boom” in purely quantitative terms, is at least a sharp increase in awareness.<sup>3</sup>

Pepe Carvalho’s stature in the Spanish literary scene was also due to aggressive marketing. The films based on the series form part of a small constellation of Carvalho-related products which include, in addition to the books themselves, television programs, box sets, and cookbooks with interactive CD-ROMs. All of these products are backed up by the economic might of Grupo Planeta, which describes itself as:

The world’s leading publisher of written material in the Spanish language with distributors located in several different countries. In the publishing sector, the Group has wholly-owned publishing houses and major shareholdings, whilst in more technological sectors, such as audiovisuals, it

makes use of its business strength, its market knowledge and its innovative stance in researching new contents and products, in order to build the best alliances. Strategic alliances have led the Group to share business ventures with such high profile business groups as IBM, Microsoft, Philips, Xerox, Telefónica, Altadis, Retevisión, Bertelsmann, Random House, CEAC and EM TV. In the audiovisuals field, they have led to licensing agreements for the Spanish market with such names as Disney, Cousteau, Time Warner, CBS-Sony, BMG-Ariola, MGM and [the] Discovery Channel. (Planeta)

The company's subsidiaries include other Publishing Houses like Ediciones Destino, Editorial Seix Barral, Ediciones del Bronce, Editorial Ariel, Editorial Crítica, Editorial Planeta (Ediciones Generales), Ediciones Temas de Hoy, Debolsillo, and Editorial Espasa. Its distribution network features the "Casa del Libro" chain of bookstores as well as the Telecinco television channel, where, not surprisingly, the most recent Carvalho television series has appeared.

There can be little doubt that Pepe Carvalho has bedded down with the corporate content providers of world culture, what Thomas Frank refers to as the "Culturetrust." The might of these behemoth corporations is acknowledged by all, except, strangely enough, many academics devoted to the study of contemporary culture. With the Frankfurt School in disfavor up until recently in the field of Cultural Studies, the raw power of the "Culturetrust" has been theorized away by relentlessly focusing on the liberating potential of consuming all types of mass culture, from comics to video games to music to movies. For instance, in a book that finds emancipation in the con-

sumption of everything from blue jeans to the World Wrestling Federation, John Fiske ponders the international reception of the television program *Dallas*:

*Dallas* is a supermarket of meanings from which its viewers make their selection, which in turn they cook up into their culture. So Arabic meanings of *Dallas* are cooked up quite differently from Jewish ones; a Dutch Marxist and a Dutch feminist read it quite differently but equally relevantly. *Dallas* offers pro- and anticapitalist meanings, pro- and antipatriarchal meanings; it allows its viewers to produce their own significance of the relationships between wealth and happiness, among commercial relationships, sexual relationships, and family relationships, it is variously about capitalism and kinship. However much it may be a commodity in the financial economy, in the cultural it is a rich and comparatively undetermined bank of resources out of which various popular cultures can be fashioned. (132-33)

Not to be outdone by the Arabs, Jews, Marxists and feminists, a heady collection of subalterns whose subversion is aided, not thwarted, by Americanized culture, Fiske is quick to point out that the resources of rebellion are open to everyone, even middle-aged white American males like himself:

I am 50 years old, and I have spent large amounts of my leisure time participating in popular culture. I enjoy watching television, I love the sensational tabloid press, I read trashy popular novels and enjoy popular blockbuster movies. I have spent many happy hours in Disneyworld, shopping malls, Graceland, and on

the Universal Studios tour—and despite all this, I do not think I am the dupe of the capitalist system because I can find great pleasure within it; in fact, *my* pleasures typically have an edge of difference to them, an awareness they are *my* pleasures that I produce for myself out of *their* resources, and that in some way I am, from their point of view, misusing their resources for my pleasure. My laughter occurs at moments they might not have chosen as risible; it contains a cynical bite they might not welcome. (178)

The assumption here, of course, is that the capitalist system is somehow fundamentally anti-pleasure, a supposition that conflates today's CEO's with the stodgy gray-suited organization of men of the 1950s. But as any hipster ad campaign will tell you, this is not your father's capitalism anymore. Today's corporate boardrooms are not filled with stern moralists, but with freedom-loving boomers, who have thoroughly internalized the pleasure-seeking mores of the 1960s. Disney doesn't care whether you laugh at or with Donald Duck; they want your \$48.00 at the gate. No amount of ironic distance can make up for the fact that you have paid the hefty admission price. You cannot fool them by indulging in *your* pleasure at the expense of *their* resources, not after you have given them a significant portion of *your* money. Pleasure is, after all, Disney's business. But your pleasure, freedom and rebellion while at Disneyworld—or Universal Studios or Graceland—are all mediated. You can snicker all you want at the tackiness of Elvis's grave or the misguided future schlock of Space Mountain but if you get out of hand, there's plenty of security around to bring things under control. But

here, as elsewhere, Fiske and other cultural studies scholars refuse to acknowledge a controlling power.

Readings of popular culture that privilege the subversive nature of its consumption often base their assumptions on Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. Thus, in his analysis of professional wrestling, Fiske deploys Bakhtin to explain how, through inversion and parody, wrestling fans engage in subversive rule-breaking (83-90). Such usage of Bakhtin shows the pitfalls of removing cultural theory from its original cultural context. Although Fiske correctly identifies laughter as central to Bakhtin's notion of carnival, he fails to take into account what carnivalesque laughter is supposed to oppose. In Bakhtin's estimation, "A boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" (4). Writing in the Soviet Union under Stalin, where laughter was excluded from the official culture, Bakhtin undoubtedly had an important political stake in the carnivalesque. But Fiske lives in a country whose official culture prides itself on being irreverent and unorthodox, a country which bombs adversaries like Panama and Iraq to the tune of a rock and roll soundtrack. Unlike in the Europe of the Middle Ages and in the U.S.S.R., official culture in the U.S. is anything but serious. The malls and theme parks that dominate our landscape indicate that carnival has now taken up residence in the very heart of the official culture. While you can outlaugh Joseph Stalin or John Paul II, it is very difficult indeed to outlaugh Mickey Mouse. Thus carnival, as powerful as it may have been in the Middle Ages, has been rendered a useless weapon in the fight against today's official consumerist culture. What's worse, if you attempt to wield it,

say by attending a wrestling match or going to a Hard Rock café, you and your money only reinforce the very culture you wanted to subvert.

Fiske ignores another important aspect of contemporary culture. What happens when the mall, theme park, cinema, sports stadium, and fast-food restaurant where you do all your rebelling are owned by the same company? While academics have focused on Madonna's subversive this or that, the mergers and acquisitions in the "culture industry" have continued unimpeded by any countervailing force. The cultural studies response to these developments has been a smug neglect. One wonders why, to quote historian Eric Guthey:

[have] so many highly trained, intelligent and critical cultural scholars [...] chosen to overlook so completely the burgeoning corporatization of American culture? Isn't this a bit like oceanographers refusing to acknowledge the existence of water? (qtd. in Frank, *One Market* 291)

Pepe Carvalho's relationship with his corporate backers has yet to be theorized. While the critical consensus hails the series as subversive, only Joan Ramón Resina sounds a discordant note. Resina warns against the power of the post-Franco publishing industry, which has established a cultural control without parallel during the dictatorship and with much worse consequences (165).<sup>4</sup> He provocatively reads the valorization of "low" culture in contemporary cultural institutions—museums, universities, academies—not as a democratization of culture but its very opposite. In this view, monopoly capitalism insists that every aspect of human activity be controlled by market forces, and the introduction of commercial cinema, pop music, television series, comics and other

texts of popular culture into our cultural institutions erases not only "high" culture, but the very notion of an independent intellectual space that a university or a museum is supposed to represent. Ironically, the monopoly takeover of the world's leading cultural institutions is being led by the academic postmodern left, which is blind to the fact that its assault parallels the offensive against any form of socialism in the political sphere (Resina 14-16).

These observations raise some fundamental questions when we apply them to the Carvalho series. If the publishing industry is as powerful and menacing as Resina suggests, then why did Vázquez Montalbán, the engaged intellectual, affiliate himself with the likes of Grupo Planeta? And if the Carvalho series is at all subversive, which I also believe, then why does Planeta, whose stake in the new world cultural order is nearly hegemonic, publish a writer like Vázquez Montalbán?

In writing for Planeta, Vázquez Montalbán seemed to be following the Gramscian idea that intellectuals should employ popular culture to undermine the bourgeois-controlled media and promote revolutionary ideas among the proletariat (Forgacs 297). Furthermore, Vázquez Montalbán had no ideological prejudices against mass culture:

Yo no había jugueteado con los materiales de la cultura de masas a la manera de un desganado *campista*. Aquellos materiales formaban parte de mi conciencia, de mis instrumentos para entender la realidad y a mí mismo. ("No escribo" 334)

Much of Vázquez Montalbán's work—including his vanguardist poetry, his two studies of mass culture, *Crónica sentimental*

*de España* to *Crónica sentimental de la transición*, and the Carvalho series itself—cites directly or alludes to commercial culture, which has led critics (Colmeiro and Balibrea among them) to read Vázquez Montalbán as postmodern. Yet Vázquez Montalbán, even in the Carvalho series, incorporates mass culture with a seriousness of purpose beyond that of postmodern playfulness. Behind the references to books, movies, radio programs, and football stars, there is a recognition by Vázquez Montalbán that after the historical shift from production to consumption in the advanced capitalist societies, social ties are not formed in the workplace but in spaces of consumption:

Increasingly issues of work, production, and corporate daily life are not the building blocks that bind people together in friendship networks in modern society, if they ever did. Instead social ties are centered more around mutual concerns regarding lifestyle. (Gottdiener 17)

Therefore, any effective oppositional political program must take into account that people form their identities and social ties through leisure, not through work.<sup>5</sup>

So is the Carvalho series subversive? By cultural studies standards, of course, it's difficult to tell since virtually everything has subversive potential. Yet even if we hold the series to a higher standard, it clearly works in a counter-hegemonic fashion. The series systematically uses the conventions of detective fiction, a largely Anglo-Saxon genre, in order to question and contest dominant discourses and practices in Transition-era Spain. As Santana convincingly argues of *Los mares del Sur*, the very notion of detection itself, the genre's central trope, is intrinsic to Vázquez Montalbán's political commentary (536). Carvalho's investigation in this

novel is the vehicle which transports the reader to two "clearly demarcated zones" (538) of Barcelona, which dramatize the city's class polarization, its spatial division of proletariat and bourgeoisie, of "victors and vanquished" (538).

Just as Vázquez Montalbán mobilizes the central figure of the detective genre, he also makes use of several of its minor conventions. For instance, in the tradition of Rex Stout's character Nero Wolfe, Carvalho is an accomplished cook. But Vázquez Montalbán adapts the convention to his political needs by transforming the detective into a gourmet militant who fights the penetration of American fast food in the Spanish diet. Whereas Arthur Conan Doyle uses the conversations between Sherlock Holmes and Watson to highlight the deductive prowess of his detective, Vázquez Montalbán employs exchanges between Carvalho and his sidekick Biscuter to chronicle contemporary Spain, its changing sexual mores, right-wing vigilante violence, and its continued police repression. From the pages of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, via film noir, Vázquez Montalbán borrows the model of the loner sleuth and employs it as a metaphor for the subject in post-Franco Spain, deprived of collective dreams of historical progress and subjected to the vagaries of market-based turbo-capitalism.

Perhaps the most subversive of all of these conventional refunctionings, however, is the way the Carvalho series appropriates a convention of Belgian mystery-writer Georges Simenon. During the course of his investigations, Simenon's protagonist often reflects on his childhood. Vázquez Montalbán takes this convention and, during a time when collective memory is in crisis, turns it into an instrument to recuperate historical memory. Thus Carvalho's reflections on the years of hunger after the

Civil War, Communist resistance to the regime, and imprisonment are all reminders of the road Spain has traveled to reach the present. Furthermore, the detective's own remembrances are reinforced by "a series of secondary narratives determined by the explicit desire to recover the past" (Santana 547). These stories, as elsewhere in detective fiction, are collected by the detective as part of the investigation but here this long-standing detective convention serves a second function, that of reconstructing historical memory.<sup>6</sup>

Carvalho's reflections on the past, both personal and collective, are attempts to combat the pastlessness which, although new to Spain, has held the United States in its grip for decades. "History is bunk!" screamed Henry Ford, long before Frances Fukiyama took up his call (Frank, "Dark" 267). In the Spanish context, forgetting the past was an integral part of the official culture of the transition. To cite one example, in October of 1976, the pop group Jarcha wrote a song to commemorate the launch of *Diario 16*, one of three major newspapers to begin publishing during the Transition. "Libertad sin ira" was the result, and it became an anthem of the Transition:

Dicen los viejos  
que en este país hubo una guerra,  
y en su España se guardan aún  
el rencor de viejas deudas.  
[.....]  
Pero yo sólo he visto gente  
que sufre y calla dolor y miedo,  
gente que sólo desea su pan,  
su hembra y la fiesta en paz.

The song counsels Spaniards to forget the ire of the past, a task that apparently involved forgetting the past altogether.<sup>7</sup> But *desmemoria*, of course, is not just a Spanish

phenomenon. Forgetting is not simply a way for Franco's minions to get off scott-free, it's an imperative of the New World Order. This is largely because:

[n]o effective challenge to the rule of business can be mounted without solid grounding in precisely the sort of cultural memory that Information Capitalism [...] has set itself out to destroy. (Frank, "Dark" 271)

The erasure of history in our time is both chronic and pandemic. A gloomy future seems to be on the horizon and if we are not careful, to again cite Frank:

Western capitalism will soon accomplish what the century's more murderous tyrants, with all their poisonous calculation, could only dream of doing: effacing the cultural memory of entire nations. ("Dark" 272)

For Vázquez Montalbán:

el gran triunfo ideológico de la derecha no ha sido el venderte un cuerpo doctrinal, ha sido el extirparte la capacidad de recordar, de reinventar y de repensar. (Interview 8)

Against what he calls the "dictadura del presente," Vázquez Montalbán writes the Carvalho series, attempting to link contemporary reality with the past. The task has become an urgent one for the left, eager to maintain the social gains won over the course of a century. In Spain, this is somewhat ironic, since under Francoism the right fought to retain the memory of the war.<sup>8</sup> But while Franco used memory to keep together his diverse and fragile coalition (Preston 13), the left, I believe, revisits

the past for very different reasons. Political change requires sacrifice and a long view of history from a left perspective provides a metanarrative (despite the dangers of social control that this metanarrative may present) which offers a larger vision in which people want to and need to incorporate themselves in order to give meaning to their lives and their sacrifices. Secondly, delving into the past accomplishes the important intellectual task of providing an archeology on which we can ground our understanding of the present. This is a way of combating the tendency to understand the current socio-economic situation as “natural,” and consequently inevitable.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the left digs up the past in order to revive some of its passion, for the purpose of redirecting it toward the present. This is a delicate issue in Spain, as 73% of Spaniards view the war as “a shameful period of Spanish history that it is better to forget” (Preston 14). But despite the crushing defeat the left suffered at the hands of Franco, Vázquez Montalbán views the war in positive terms. This was, after all, a time when politics mattered, a time when many Spaniards fought for the basic tenets of social justice.

If we accept that the Carvalho series is contestatory at least at some level, why would a “Culturetrust” concern like Planeta publish it? Perhaps it is due to the literary complexity of the series. While the series may be subversive, Pepe Carvalho himself is most definitely not. Outwardly he’s a political cynic dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure, a subject position well suited to the needs of consumer capitalism. Much of contemporary culture has the ideological function of teaching us how to be good consumers, what movies to see, music to listen to, clothes to wear, food to eat, and in this sense, Carvalho is a model consumer in a market-oriented culture which needs such

models to thrive. But the reader gets the sense that Carvalho, perpetually cranky, is a metaphor for the unhappiness of the times. Still, the series offers little in terms of imagining a better future even though, at times, the possibilities are alluded to. For example, in *Los mares del Sur*, Cifuentes, an old Comisiones Obreras militant proclaims:

La burguesía tardó cuatro siglos en llegar al poder y la clase obrera sólo tiene cien años de existencia histórica como movimiento organizado [...]. Hay que tener paciencia. Con paciencia no hay quien nos venza. (118)

Although imagining the future should be as important, if not more important, than remembering the past in any progressive political program, such declarations are rare in the series.

Another explanation may be that Planeta has figured out that the left in Spain is just another profitable demographic, a group of ex-communists with some money and a lot of free time on their hands. Perhaps the left has become just another of what Thomas Frank calls the “thirty or so professionally-accepted psychographic market niches” (“Dark” 274). Perhaps this would explain Planeta’s ownership of Editorial Crítica. Publishers of works by the likes of Noam Chomsky and John Kenneth Galbraith, Editorial Crítica is the publishing house that, according to Vázquez Montalbán, gives us the culture necessary to understand “the new disorder” (“Presentación”). Why does Planeta want readers to critically understand the new order in which it itself plays such an important role? It may be that the left in Spain and elsewhere has degenerated to such an extent that it is now what Gottdiener and others call a *neotribe*, a



consumer niche whose lifestyle is defined by “the media, fashion, local customs, loosely articulated political ideologies, styles of consumption, and friendship networks” (23). In this view, the consumption of the Carvalho series would play an important role in the identity formation of the tribe and its individuals. For its services, Planeta charges a modest price.

But series readership certainly goes beyond the cadre of unreconstructed Spanish leftists. For its wider readership, the fact that the Carvalho novels pertain to a genre and a series only add to their marketability for Planeta. Marketing is enhanced because the Carvalho novels are what Bernard Gendron calls “textual artifacts,” a cultural product that is grouped into a genre, whose recognition not only produces pleasure for consumers but also steers their next purchase: if you like this book, you’ll also like this one because it’s of the same genre. With the Carvalho series, serial marketing is complemented by the look of the product. Its characteristic black covers, aside from invoking its genre (Gallimard’s *Série Noire* was so-named for its black covers), have splashes of red, which gives the books a certain subversive flavor by recalling the colors of revolutionary organizations like the anarchist CNT. The use of such imagery in marketing is consistent with other products and brands which ally themselves with some aspect of contestatory politics: Benetton, the Body Shop, and even Mobil Oil, which has recently taken up the icon of the heroic worker from the playbook of socialist realism. The object of such brand positioning is to cut through the commercial clutter and offer weary consumers the promise of a non-advertised, authentic experience, as the slogan says, “The Real Thing.” The quest for authenticity is the mechanism that drives late-capitalist consumption, and turns po-

tential political dissent into defacto consent. If alienation is a process in which your intentions result in unintended outcomes, the Carvalho series is a case study in alienation, for readers and author alike.

In this essay I have explored the meanings of the Carvalho series as a consumer product. It is clear that Planeta and Vázquez Montalbán have largely divergent interests in their publication of the series and that their partnership was an uneasy one. Planeta’s stake is to maintain and increase their role in the current cultural and economic order while Vázquez Montalbán sought to put into question this very order. So far, Planeta seems to have gotten the best of it but perhaps Vázquez Montalbán’s gambit, as Gramsci surmised, may pay off, albeit in the long run, of course.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The relationship between the pre-Carvalho and post-Carvalho periods of Vázquez Montalbán’s career is ambiguous. While the author himself saw the so-called Spanish *novela negra* as contesting the self-absorption of the experimental *novela ensimismada*, he also insisted there is continuity in the two periods of his own work. See Vázquez Montalbán, “Contra la pre-textualidad” (9-10), and Colmeiro (174).

<sup>2</sup> The history of mystery writing in Spain is well documented. See Colmeiro for criticism on earlier Spanish crime writers like Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, Joaquín Belda, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Mario Lacruz and Francisco García Pavón. Hart visits the work of these authors along with the work of playwrights Enrique López Alarcón and José Ignacio de Alberti as well as the Catalans Manuel de Pedrolo and Jaume Fuster. José Valles Calatrava deals with theoretical considerations of the genre but on individual pre-Transition authors he sacrifices depth of analysis for quantity, providing only brief commentaries on each writer. A similar approach is taken by Salvador Vázquez de Parga, who provides an extensive catalog of Spanish mystery production. In

my view, what prevents us from considering all of these writers as a “detective tradition” is that, unlike in France, England, or the U.S., none of these writers was aware of each others’ work. In other words, although Spain has had a number of mystery writers since the middle of the nineteenth-century, there is no continuity, no sustained practice that can be considered particularly Spanish. Instead, earlier Spanish writers imitated foreign models. As Mari Paz Balibrea has written, Vázquez Montalbán began the “nationalization” of the genre with *Tatuaje* (565).

<sup>3</sup> This is reflected in the attendance numbers for films based on the Carvalho series; while only 28,000 spectators attended *Tatuaje* in 1976, some 170,000 saw *Asesinato en el Comité Central* in 1981 (Spain). Apart from Vázquez Montalbán, however, few writers continued practicing the genre beyond the early ’80s.

<sup>4</sup> Resina also objects to the way Catalans are portrayed and/or ignored in the Carvalho series, going so far as to condemn the series’s cultural and linguistic politics as “franquista” (172-73). See Santana (541) for a discussion of this issue.

<sup>5</sup> Leisure, in Thorstein Veblen’s conception, includes politics, war, and religion, in addition to the “play” activities we normally associate with the term (Gottdiener 8).

<sup>6</sup> The secondary narratives of *Los mares del Sur* ground the characters in a (his)story which spans more than a century. This includes the origin of the Vilardell family fortune in the slave trade, the Civil War, resistance to the Franco regime, and events of the Transition to democracy (Santana 548-49).

<sup>7</sup> A 1983 poll said that 35% of Spaniards were not sure who the International Brigades fought for; 41% were not sure who the Condor Legion fought for; 24% were not sure who Hitler supported and 37% were not sure who Stalin supported (Preston 14).

<sup>8</sup> According to Preston, “Franco worked harder than anyone to keep the war a festering issue” (12). For this purpose the Falangist hymn,

*Cara al sol*, played on television every night; José Antonio Primo de Rivera’s name appeared on the walls of every church; national holidays celebrated important dates in Francoist history; the ruins of Belchite, destroyed during the war, were left standing as a Nationalist monument and the pharaonic *Valle de los Caídos* was constructed (12, 17).

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Bourdieu writes “Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness” (77).

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