
Estabulario (Stable)

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Estabulario is a brilliantly conceived and fantastically well-written collection. I'm not the sort of person who usually reads speculative/science fiction, but this is exactly the sort of book that makes me pay attention. It fits just as well into the world of traditional sci-fi, in the vein of Dick, Ballard and Gibson, as it does into the category of fantastical literary writing, à la Poe, Borges, Cortázar. This is because the originality of Puertas's ideas is backed up by excellent and versatile writing, and a brilliant grasp of narrative tension and ambiguity. He knows exactly when to reveal a mystery, or drop his denouement... especially 'Torremolinos' and 'Estabulario', which echo Philip K. Dick's finest moments in the way they criss-cross so much between reality, fantasy, advertising, TV shows, internet etc., so that the reader, like the protagonist, is never sure which 'reality' is the real one. They all merit multiple reads and there are no easy answers in any of them.

*As such, Estabulario could have the potential to attract a large cross-section of readers, SF fans who don't read literary fiction because they feel it lacks ideas and imagination, and literary fiction readers who tend to skip SF because of (often unfounded) concerns about the quality of writing. It chimes with other hybrid literary-SF books; Ben Marcus's *The Flame Alphabet* springs to mind. There is also an obvious similarity between these stories and the hugely popular TV show *Black Mirror*, in that both present a variety of dystopian ideas and carry them off with narrative and stylistic panache, in a way that's both uncomfortable and highly addictive. Add to that the darkly humorous nature of many stories, especially the first one, and you have a collection ready to counter any potential objections readers may have.*

Puertas takes the big themes of today- globalization, drug addiction, nationalism, refugees, fear of technology, and the omnipresence of advertising, and takes them to their logical conclusions in a way that is at once thrilling and relatable.

Having read a fair amount of the Spanish reviews of Estabulario, I have to agree with them. This is a fantastic, original, collection that masterfully blends genres, forms and ideas in a new and exciting way, and it's one of the best works of fiction from Spain I have read in recent years. I would highly recommend it to UK publishers, literary, SF or otherwise.

From the reader's report by [Rahul Bery](#) [1]

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