

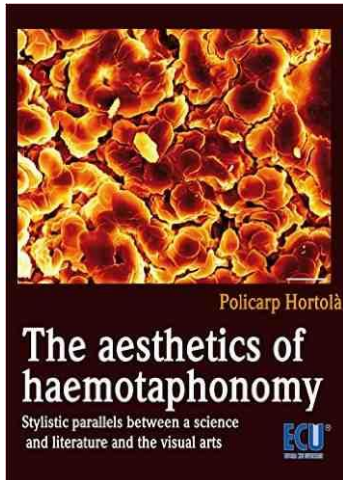
## RECENSIONES

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espléndido ejemplo de una colaboración desarrollada con los colegas marroquíes. Nos encontramos, por tanto, con un producto de madurez que, sin duda, va a servir de modelo a

desarrollar en otras muchas regiones del Norte de África.



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**HORTOLÀ, P., 2013:** *The aesthetics of haemotaphonomy: Stylistic parallels between a science and literature and the visual arts.* Editorial Club Universitario. San Vicente (Alicante, Spain).

The theme of Policarp Hortolà's book is on the relationship between the natural sciences, especially the biomedical sciences, and aesthetics. Specifically, Hortolà argues that the aesthetics of a given cultural framework is important for understanding science. To that end, he makes a distinction between "aesthetics *in* science" and "aesthetics *of* science." According to Hortolà, "aesthetics in science must emphasise aesthetics over science... [while] aesthetics of science must emphasise science over aesthetics" (p. 7). In other words, the former is interested in whether a particular object is beautiful or not, while the latter is concerned not with an object's beauty but rather with aesthetic movements within a culture; and, this includes science. Thus,

Hortolà's objective is not to define beauty or other aesthetical notions but to trace the parallels of an object's aesthetical qualities vis-à-vis scientific investigation within historical movements. His approach then is neutral with

respect to identifying the ideal nature of an aesthetical quality like beauty.

Briefly, Hortolà provides an introductory chapter on science and its aesthetics, and then he covers the science of haemotaphonomy (HTN). In the next two chapters, he explores the stylistic parallels between HTN and works of literature and the visual arts, respectively. In the penultimate chapter, he discusses the dualities of realism/naturalism, Baroque/neobaroque, and national/universal science associated with the aesthetics of HTN. Finally, he concludes by examining the significance of HTN's cultural framework.

In the first chapter, Hortolà introduces science and its aesthetics by providing a philosophical approach to the topics. Science is an effort to understand not only the world but to ensure that the understanding is justified, especially empirically. An important part of the effort to justify this understanding involves the aesthetical, which comes into play at both the perceptual and conceptual levels of scientific practice. In other words, notions of what is aesthetical influences a scientist's ability both to sense the world and to know it through this aesthetically categorized sensing. Thus, the aesthetics of science plays a critical role metaphysically in terms of the content

and form of the natural world through perceptual faculties and epistemologically with respect to understanding that world through cognitive faculties. In other words, aesthetics serves as a filter or sieve for discovering the world and as a means for understanding and justifying that discovery.

In the next chapter, Hortolà introduces HTN, which is fundamentally the investigation of bloodstains in terms of their architecture or general morphology and with respect to their sculpture or surface morphology. Although HTN is a forensic science, it does parallel the other natural sciences in terms of having a well-defined subject matter, particularly (red) blood cells, and technical methods, especially the scanning electron microscope and staining protocols, for investigating bloodstains.

Hortolà then devotes the next two chapters to the literary and visual-arts stylistic parallels of HTN. For HTN's literary stylistic parallels, he discusses both Tremendism and Decadentism. According to Hortolà, Tremendism "accentuates the somber aspects of life, with cruelty and violence in the foreground of human relations, and with an atmosphere of boredom and anguish" (p. 27). It is a kind of Spanish existentialism, as illustrated in the literary works of Camilo-José Cela in particular. Bloodstains reflect this literary style especially in terms of the dramatic and distressing conditions of life. Decadentism is a multifaceted literary style that celebrates the morbid nostalgically. It is emblematic of the "*ubi sunt* elegiac motif" (p. 30). In other words, it strives to regain past beauty and joys. As for HTN, the stylistic parallel is postdictive scientifically in terms of uncovering historical events as "a sort of phoenix that is reborn, in electron microscopy, of its light-microscopy 'ashes'" (p. 33).

For HTN's visual-arts stylistic parallels, Hortolà turns to Churriguerism and Tenebrism. Churriguerism is a Spanish version of late European Baroque architecture that represents the "last word in decadence" (p. 35). As Hortolà notes, it is free of restraint and is intended to overwhelm the viewer with its detailed and embellished decoration. This stylistic parallel is admirably illustrated with electron microscopic pictures of

bloodstains in three professional scientific articles provided in the book's Addenda. "Tenebrism", according to Hortolà, "is a Baroque style of painting in which the contrast of darkness and light introduces an element of mystery, ambiguity, and understatement, lending a dynamic quality to the light and bringing an element of drama and pathos" (p. 37). Again, this visual-arts stylistic parallel is exquisitely depicted by the electron microscopic pictures of bloodstains in the professional scientific articles.

Hortolà then explores three dualisms associated with the aesthetics of HTN. The first is realism/naturalism. Specifically, the scanning electron micrographs of bloodstains represent a "visual naturalism" in which the pictures of bloodstains depict the real as opposed to an idealized natural world, while the HTN professional journal articles in which the pictures are published exhibit a "written realism" that is faithful to a visual naturalism. The next dualism is Baroque/neobaroque in which the former represents a certain sense of elegance in nature as expressed in the arts during a specific historical period or "*sensu-stricto*" while the latter the resurgence of the former in the modern period that transcends the original historical period or "*sensu-lato*." The electron micrographs of HTN are Baroque in a strict sense of mimicking structures from the unique Baroque period but also neobaroque in that they share this structure with other natural phenomena and thereby transcend the Baroque period—which brings Hortolà to the final dualism of national/universal science. Although HTN reflects a national culture associated with the Iberian Peninsula in terms of Churriguerism and Tenebrism, it is not just an Iberian science but a universal one in that it also exhibits French Decadentism and Roman Baroque. "Real science", as Hortolà claims, "is always universal science" (p. 46). And, HTN is a real science.

In a concluding chapter, Hortolà discusses HTN's cultural framework. That framework includes the tremendistic with its emphasis on the psychological dimensions of bloodstains, the decadent with its emphasis on their past and postdictive logic, the churrigueresque with its

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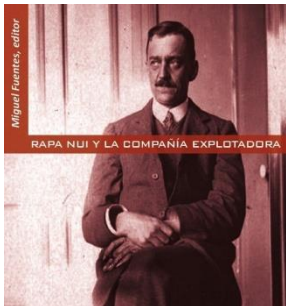
emphasis on their structural elegance, and the tenebristic with its emphasis on their visual contrast. Because HTN is tremendistic and decadent it is realistic, and because it is churriqueresque and tenebristic it is naturalistic. Finally, Hortolà entertains the question of why HTN is Baroque when it is a relatively young science. His answer is that although HTN parallels both the Baroque literary and visual-arts styles it is neobaroque in spirit as a contemporary “baroquistic science”.

Hortolà provides a very insightful introduction to the role aesthetics plays in scientific practice and in the conceptual analysis of it. In an important way, he has extended what Thomas Kuhn (1977) discussed concerning the role of aesthetics in science. Kuhn claimed that the aesthetical functions as a subjective value for guiding scientists in their investigations of the natural world. Being subjective for Kuhn, however, did mean an unabashed relativism; rather, he

championed a subjective aesthetic that reflects the historical movements within a society. Herein lies the brilliance of Hortolà’s book: the aesthetics of science is a powerful tool for guiding research into the natural world, especially given a particular culture’s metaphysical assumptions about reality. My only complaint is that Hortolà did not develop his insightful notion of the aesthetics of science to the extent it could be developed—95 pages is simply too short for the task. I can only hope that this deficiency is rectified through future publications.

## Reference

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## **Rapa Nui y la Compañía Explotadora, FUENTES, M. (ed.); Rapanui Press, Rapa Nui, 2013.**

El caso de Rapa-Nui puede ser significativo en nuestros días como modelo pragmático de ocupación de suelos de parte de la geoestrategia industrial. En líneas generales, uno de los puntos clave para comprender la imbricación entre las distintas estructuras sociopolíticas pre-capitalistas que el modelo de alto rendimiento/bajas garantías ha engullido a lo largo de los tiempos es, y debe seguir siendo, la Arqueología Social. Esta obra, *Rapa Nui y la Compañía Explotadora*, cuenta en su haber con uno de los acontecimientos políticos que caracterizaron estas formas de invasión del modelo industrial: el desmantelamiento de los

lazos sociales indígenas paralelamente al establecimiento de un *establishment* económicamente restrictivo, ajeno a los intereses de trabajadores y trabajadoras indígenas involucrados de manera forzosa en un apartheid institucional alentado por los vientos imperialistas. Miguel Fuentes consiguió en el año 2013 editar una publicación que es más que un compendio de artículos, y que exhibe más que gran capacidad multidisciplinar. Los capítulos dedicados a la arqueología de la producción, a la arqueología métrica y a la arqueología arquitectural nos dan una visión de conjunto de los medios materiales que, de una parte, fueron proporcionados por el capital industrial europeo y, de otra parte, de los que sobrevivieron de las formas tradicionales de la