Posthumanism and the Representation of Power Dynamics in Hispanic Graphic Novels

Savannah Campbell
slcampb@bgsu.edu
POSTHUMANISM AND THE REPRESENTATION OF POWER DYNAMICS IN HISPANIC GRAPHIC NOVELS

SAVANNAH CAMPBELL

HONORS PROJECT

Submitted to the Honors College at Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with

UNIVERSITY HONORS 2019

Dr. Pedro Porbén, World Languages and Cultures, Advisor
Amanda McGuire Rzicznek, English Department, Advisor
POSTHUMANISM AND THE REPRESENTATION OF POWER DYNAMICS IN HISPANIC GRAPHIC NOVELS

INTRODUCTION

My focus throughout this project has been to use graphic novels, a literary medium that is often marginalized in both academic and cultural circles, to examine how posthumanism, specifically from the viewpoint of Spanish and Argentinian creators, allows readers to explore and critique various power dynamics. As noted by esteemed Spanish professor Aaron Dziubinskyj, “Latin American and Spanish sf [science fiction is] not just… a passing literary phenomenon, but rather… a legitimate cultural artifact worthy of a prominent place in domestic and international academic circles” (429). This has been a core component of my research, and as such I aim to further establish the validity of both graphic novels and works created and produced in Spanish-speaking countries as valuable contributions to academia. But, before beginning my investigation of this topic, it is first important to define the context in which I will use the term “posthumanism.”

As defined by King and Page, posthumanism “constructs a narrative concerning ways in which scientific and technological developments…are displacing the figure of the human as ‘separate and liberated from nature and fully in command of self and non-human others’” (3). In this examination of posthumanism, it is essential to not only look at how humans and artificial intelligence interact, but also to examine the power of the artificial intelligence that we create (King and Page 4). As humans, we have structured an image of our species in which we have complete power over our Earth and everything within it. In examining graphic novels through a post-humanistic lens I aim to uncover some of the social commentary surrounding this notion of progress and supposed superiority. By defining graphic novels, discussing why they are relevant in this research, examining their history in Spain and Argentina, analyzing texts that use
posthumanism to critique power balances, and discussing the importance of such research, I will be highlighting how graphic novels created in Spanish-speaking countries and evaluated under a post-humanistic lens are a powerful medium through which to critique various power dynamics that exist in greater society.

DEFINING GRAPHIC NOVELS

In academically evaluating graphic novels, it is important to discuss why the interplay of word and image make comics such a valuable literary form. One of the leading cartoon theorists in the United States, creator Scott McCloud, offers many reasons as to why graphic novels are so important to academic discourse. One reason is because they encourage people to think critically. As McCloud notes of the definition of comics, “the secret is not in what the definition says but in what it doesn’t say!” (21). This is a powerful point to make, because it is a reminder that part of the magic of comics is that the reader has to be actively involved in putting the pieces of the story together between looking at both images and text. Whereas a book with written words is straightforward, a book made of only pictures requires a lot more thought on the part of the reader. In addition, comics are not restricted to any one genre, subject matter, or style, which leaves them accessible to all people.

Another reason that comics are an interesting medium through which to discuss academic discourse is because they allow readers to identify more with the characters. As noted by McCloud, “Storytellers in all media know that a sure indicator of audience involvement is the degree to which the audience identifies with a story’s characters” (42). McCloud argues that comics resonate more with readers because the characters are drawn vaguely enough that people are able to visualize themselves in the characters’ positions. On the other hand, when characters
are drawn too realistically, it is harder to envision being in their place. In addition, it is important to realize that just because a comic has a simple style does not mean it tells a simple story. Similar to how atoms make molecule, and molecules become life, simple elements can combine together in complex ways (McCloud 45). As McCloud notes, the earliest written word was a stylized picture (142), but as time progressed, the written word became more specialized, abstract, and elaborate, while pictures became more representational and specific (144). Although iconography and the written word are often portrayed as being from completely different fields, their unification speaks to the human experience in deep and thought-provoking ways.

**SCIENCE FICTION, POSTHUMANISM, AND SPANISH GRAPHIC NOVELS**

I am choosing to use graphic novels to examine the representation of posthumanism because contemporary graphic novels provide a plethora of resources when it comes to examining such work (King and Page 1). As King and Page note, at the end of the twentieth century, science fiction narratives helped establish the graphic novel as we know it today (1). Since science fiction and graphic novels have a strong relationship among all cultures, and especially since science fiction is one of the most prevalent genres in Latin America, using graphic novels to explore the ideas of posthumanism is a necessity in the context of this research (King and Page 1). One important component of the posthumanism that I am focusing on in this research is that any posthumanist study of non-humans and humans should not be as preoccupied with questions of whether “the human” still exists in a posthumanistic society, but rather, what it means to be human (Rubio). As noted by Dziubinskyj, the genre of science fiction has been a huge part of Spanish culture for over a hundred years, and both Spain and Latin America have
produced a lot of high literary quality science fiction (428). Unfortunately, many of these graphic novels go unnoticed by greater society, because translations of European and North American classics often take up the majority of shelf space in book shops in Spanish-speaking countries (Dziubinskyj 428). Science fiction’s prevalence as a popular genre is often correlated to the fact that the use of dystopian fantasy stories allows individuals to make political commentary regarding contemporary society (Kraeher 634). By looking at graphic novels that fall under the science fiction genre, I will be able to examine and criticize the social commentary regarding not only the co-evolution of technology and society, but also how such stories allow individuals to comment on the power dynamics and inequalities in their respective societies.

**HISTORY OF GRAPHIC NOVELS IN SPAIN AND ARGENTINA**

In examining graphic novels created in Spanish-speaking countries, Spain, Cuba, Mexico, and Argentina have been the Hispanic countries with the most well-known graphic novel publications (Merino 13). In focusing specifically on Spain and Argentina, I feel that examining graphic novels from these two countries is important to this research because both countries have a fairly recent history of political unrest. Between Spain’s dictatorship and Argentina’s six military coups that occurred during the twentieth century, there was an immense suppression of ideas. Both governments shut down free expression, making it dangerous to critique the power structure. Of course, censorship cannot stop the human mind from coming to its own conclusions, and science fiction, through its creation of a fictional world that vaguely mirrors ours, establishes clear analogies to existing social conditions. Furthermore, comics are a wonderful medium through which to examine marginalized groups, because comics themselves are often literary forms that end up on the peripheries of society.
Although Spain was originally the country that started the first modern Eurocentric view of the world and was a major player in colonization during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spain fell immensely behind from the 1940s to the 1970s as a consequence of its civil war and thirty-six-year dictatorship, causing it in current times to be more delayed in its modernization (Merino 10). As Merino notes, Spain is now considered more of an outlying country in Europe, tied more closely to Latin America than to Europe (10). In the view of Merino, comics created in Spain and in Latin and South American countries are more marginalized in the comics world, since they are coming from these “less modern” countries.

Furthermore, Merino notes that by default, comics tell a postmodern story, since the comics we think of come from industrial cultures that have already had their periods of industrialism and modernism. Nevertheless, these stories are told without losing their “modernity,” being related fully to the world we currently live in, could possibly live in, or imagine we lived in. Even so, comics are often rejected by those who are more “cultured,” forcing such narratives into a more marginalized position (Merino 11). But, it is because of their marginalized position that comics are able to thrive. Although graphic novels are not considered as sophisticated, their legitimacy as a literary form comes from their appeal to mass and popular culture (Merino 11).

With the Spanish Civil War beginning in 1936, comics, along with everything else in Spain, faced major changes as the political situation deteriorated. In places where the Republican government still ruled, they tried to maintain commercial publications similar to those they had before the conflict broke out (Merino 101). Such publications, including comics, commented on the political situation of the time and were a vehicle through which to promote certain ideologies.
After the Spanish Civil War ended in 1939, any comics creator that did not support military dictator Francisco Franco’s party during the war was repressed and many of these individuals had to retreat into exile (Merino 104). Not only was Franco’s censorship of any ideology that opposed his own an issue for comics creators, but after the war, paper was a scarce resource making it extremely expensive to create and sell printed items (Merino 104). In 1975, Franco died, and in 1978, Spain’s constitution was established, a change that allowed for more personal freedoms as Spain converted to a constitutional monarchy (Merino 142). At this time, comics were increasingly being used to explore social and moral taboos, allowing people to question what had happened in Spain during Franco’s dictatorship (Merino 142).

ARGENTINA

In Argentina during the twentieth century, comics faced similar issues to those in Spain: censorship under a dictatorship. During the twentieth century, Argentina underwent six military coups, specifically in 1930, 1943, 1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976 (Torres 2). During the military dictatorship that began in 1976, Argentina underwent el Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (Process of National Reorganization), a time that was known for its unprecedented genocide (Torres 1). Also known as the “Dirty War,” this time is infamous for being a period of “bloody State terror when the armed forces violently suppressed any form of dissent… through the abduction, torture, and death of some 30,000 individuals in secret detention camps” (Reati 97). While comics did exist at this time and many attempted to criticize the Argentinian society, as noted by Torres, “owing to the control the government exerted over culture as well as the way comics were produced in Argentine publishing companies, it only occurred partially and limitedly” (1).
As Torres notes, the military junta had an overarching strategy to rebuild the nation, which especially focused on intervening in culture and education to fight the cultural enemy, who were identified as either “Marxist” or “subversive” (3). A work was considered Marxist if it mentioned concepts such as class struggle or dialectical materialism, whereas it was considered subversive if the theme went against the Western and Christian values, such as opposition to abortion or sexual freedom (Torres 5). Comics were not as persecuted as other media forms, because they were not considered a cultural medium nor a means of education by the government. But, since the dictatorship intelligence services of the time reviewed and controlled everything, comics still had to be careful regarding what they published (Torres 6).

**SELECTION OF THE TEXTS**

For the purposes of this project, finding graphic novels by Spanish and Latin American creators was surprisingly difficult. Even when I was studying abroad in Spain during the fall 2018 semester, it was challenging to find comics created by individuals from Spanish-speaking countries. I quickly found that American comics, translated into Spanish, occupied the majority of shelf space in the comic shops I visited. For the purposes of this project, I eventually settled on three graphic novels that were selected based upon the following criteria: each was written and published in a Spanish-speaking country, each included technology that acted autonomously, and each contained a storyline featuring humanity interacting with said technology.

In analyzing how posthumanism represents power dynamics in these three graphic novels, I am going to focus on two pages from each text. The books chosen for this project include *Robocracia* created by Spanish writer Igor Fernández (“Igor”) and artist Iván Pérez (“Ivanper”), *El Día Más Largo del Futuro* created by Lucas Varela of Argentina, and *El Último
Aragonés Vivo: La Amenaza Robótica written by David Terrer, drawn by Carlos Azagra, and colored by Encarna Revuelta.

**SUMMARY OF THE SELECTED TEXTS**

Created by Spanish writer Igor Fernández (“Igor”) and artist Iván Pérez (“Ivanper”), the graphic novel *Robocracia* is a collection of comic strips published from 2015 to 2018 in a Barcelona weekly satirical magazine called *El Jueves*. The collection of comics that make up *Robocracia* was published by Diáblo Ediciones, located in Madrid. The novel is 108 pages in length, and each page is its own separate story. Since the pages of *Robocracia* were published in a satirical magazine, every page encourages readers to critically think about society and the issues that Igor and Ivanper bring up. Some of their commentary was in relation to issues specific to Spain, such as politics, terrorist attacks, and the Franco dictatorship, but some of the issues were more global in nature, referencing topics such as our increasing dependence on technology, issues of gender and sexuality and the current state of the natural environment.

*El Día Más Largo del Futuro* is a graphic novel created by Lucas Varela of Argentina and was published by La Cúpula in 2017. What is most interesting about this graphic novel is that except for the titles of the five chapters, it is wordless. To begin, we notice that there are two major societal groups that live strictly separated lives: the blues, which are represented by a bunny, and the reds, which are represented with a pig. The two societal forces are actually separate corporations that want to destroy each other.

The novel has two main protagonists, an average office worker of the blues and a robot that is dedicated to housework of the reds. Neither of these individuals have any idea that they are about to live the most insane days of their respective lives. It all begins when an alien arrives
on their planet with a mysterious briefcase, a briefcase that’s inside brings both dreams and nightmares to life. Each of our respective protagonists are selected by the CEOs of their respective corporations to infiltrate the other’s home office and destroy both the headquarters, as well as their leaders, with deadly force from within.

Finally, *El Último Aragonés Vivo: La Amenaza Robótica* is a graphic novel written by David Terrer, drawn by Carlos Azagra, and colored by Encarna Revuelta. It was published by GP Ediciones located in Zaragoza, the capital of Aragón in 2015. This graphic novel is arranged as a single, continuous story. In it, we learn that Aragón, a once a prosperous and happy autonomous community of Spain, was destroyed by a virus that killed over 1,400,000 people. The only survivor is a man named “El Último Aragonés Vivo” (The last Aragón man alive).

But, El Último Aragonés Vivo soon realizes that his solitary existence will not last forever when he stumbles upon a red-headed female American agent named Kate. Kate, on a mission to stop a deadly robot that is going to be activated any second, rushes toward the United States military base in Zaragoza, only to see she is too late. The two characters watch as a huge robot erupts from the ground. Together, Kate, El Último Aragonés Vivo, and four clones of famous people from Aragón’s history must work together to save their precious land from the brink of destruction.
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTS: ROBOCRACIA

Figure 1: page 8 of Robocracia
Figure 2: page 9 of Robocracia
As I noted previously, *Robocracia* is a collection of graphic stories that were published in the Spanish magazine *El Jueves*. In looking at the power dynamics present in this graphic novel, I am going to focus on the relationship between people and technology. While this book is not always commenting on the power dynamics between humans and technology, it is using humans and technology as a vessel through which to illustrate the various power balances that exist in society.

As seen in Figure 1, our story begins with a robot happily looking at the human he is leading forward on a leash. This simple image, void of any words, manages to speak magnitudes. From reading the introduction to the book a page earlier, we see that humans are being rounded up and sold in pet stores to robots. So, from this first image, we can assume that the robot has just bought his human at the store and is excited to bring him home.

In examining the commentary this image makes, Igor and Ivanper immediately are challenging us to examine our relationship with technology. In reality, technology does lead our lives. Most people I know sleep with their phone on the nightstand next to them, and it is the first and last thing they look at in their day. Not only is technology very influential in personal lives, but it is becoming increasingly important in professional lives as well. In my experience studying abroad in Spain, I definitely noticed that smartphone use was prevalent. In fact, research shows that Spaniards use smartphones more than Americans. In surveys done by Statista in 2017, it was found that 75 percent of Americans are using smartphones (“Share of people in the U.S. using personal electronic devices 2017”), whereas 87 percent of Spaniards are using smartphones (Spain: electronic device usage 2017). As such, the image of a robot leading a human forward by a leash really encourages readers to critically reflect on which entity truly has the most power.
The second page is where we really start to see the commentary Igor and Ivanper make in regard to power dynamics. I am going to evaluate the panels from left to right, top to bottom. In the first panel, we learn that the robot who has led the human home is named José Luis. He comes home and is surprised to see his roommate, Ultronio, there. José Luis nervously tells Ultronio that he did something that will make Ultronio mad.

This first panel is reminiscent of a human bringing home a pet without really thinking about the consequences. Similar to how José Luis does not think that taking on the life of a living being is a big deal, humans often do this with animals. There is a clear power dynamic at play, as those who have the power to make the decisions often do so for their pleasure, as opposed to the pleasure of the subordinate being.

In the second panel, we see Ultronio’s reaction to the human: he is angry. Mostly he is mad about the financial obligation of owning a human, exclaiming that humans require a lot of food and pornography. While this sentence is short, it is a very effective way of pointing out that humans are driven by food and sex. These things complicate our lives, making us less efficient in completing our tasks. Robots, on the other hand, are not get distracted by such aspects of life.

José Luis, eager to make Ultronio accept the human, remarks that it was just so sad to see the human in the store, and that he just had to buy the human. Ultronio remarks that, of course, the humans in the store evoked sadness in José Luis, since such institutions are designed for that. This sentence was very interesting, because it demonstrates just how powerful pain, suffering, and hardship are in marketing. Businesses know they are able to appeal to buyers through pathos, and to me, this raises the question as to how much power corporations have over us.

In the third panel, Ultronio remarks that humans hardly ever last a week. To follow up to this, José Luis remarks that is why he decided to name his human “Efímero,” which literally
translates to “ephemeral” in English. This was a strong commentary regarding power dynamics, because in reality, technology can long outlast us, and in comparison, our lives our fleeting.

To me, this panel also demonstrated the reality that those in power get to determine the identities of others. Even though the human tries to add that he has name, the robot only wants to call him Effímero. This reminded me of Christopher Columbus, a man made powerful by his weapons, who called the indigenous people he found in the Americas “Indians,” although he was not in India, and deciding to classify all of the natives he encountered as the same, even though the native people of the Americas came from a variety of different cultures.

The fourth panel continues to touch on the fragility of human life, as Ultronio talks about how humans die of cancers. José Luis, unphased, remarks that their humans die of cancer because they live next to an asbestos factory. Considering asbestos has been implicated as a cause of certain cancers, this was a strong statement. This panel shows that in some ways, we have the power to stop our demise, yet we continue to manufacture the items that can hurt us because they have economic benefits. The secondary action of this panel includes José Luis playing with Efímero’s hand. This image demonstrates how those in power are able to treat other beings how they choose without regard to their personal dignity.

The fifth panel demonstrates how in our commercial world, we assume all things are replaceable. In this panel, Ultronio reminds José Luis of the human they had who lost his head, and José Luis calmly replies that that was his fault for not properly having his hands calibrated and pulling on the leash too hard. The way they talk about this previous human, it is as if his life had little value. And in a way, that’s true, because they were easily able to get a new human. This panel is a reminder that those in power need to be conscientious of their actions, as something seemingly unimportant to them can have a major effect on the life of someone else.
In the sixth panel, Ultronio and José Luis continue to talk about the humans they have accidentally killed, when they reminisce about the human they attempted to castrate while following a Latino tutorial on Youtube, and laughing, how they had never seen so much blood in their lives. We see Efímero getting more nervous as he realizes that his life is in the hands of robots who have no idea how to care for him. This goes to show that those in power often think that what they know what is best for their subordinates, and if they happen to make a mistake along the way, it is not a big deal, because everything is replaceable— even human lives.

The seventh and final panel shows a crying Efímero huddled in the corner in a pile of his own pee. Ultronio and José Luis yell at Efímero, calling him “bad.” Sniffling, Efímero asks the two if they still have his receipt and asks if they will return him to the store. This image reminded me of people adopting a pet and being angry at the pet for not assimilating immediately to their new life. To me, this panel demonstrates the power that dominate entities have, and that they assume that whatever they do, the subordinate entities should be grateful for what they have been given. Often, these subordinate entities just want their lives to go back to how they were before the powerful groups came in and tried to “improve” their lives.

As seen in this in-depth analysis of just two pages of *Robocracia*, this book effectively uses posthumanism to discuss power dynamics. Posthumanism is involved because we see that in the future, robots have progressed past their need for humans, and have come to control the world. They can think and act independently of what humans originally programmed them to do. This novel also does a good job of illustrating various power dynamics through the vessel of technology and humans. While the relationship between humans and technology is a very interesting power relationship to examine, Igor and Ivanper take their social commentary even farther by using the robots as an “other” to allows us to reflect on our own actions.
Figure 3: page 130 of El Día Más Largo del Futuro
Figure 4: page 131 of *El Día Más Largo del Futuro*

*El Día Más Largo del Futuro* is a very interesting graphic novel because it exclusively uses images to portray its story. In it, the main power struggle emphasized is that between two
major corporations, but it can be broadened to emphasize the power struggles between rivaling governments as well. In choosing two pages that I felt best demonstrated this power struggle, I will be referencing a section called “Fin de Transmisión” (end of the transmission) at the very end of the story. In it, we see two characters, the bunny that represents the blue team, and the pig that represents the red team. As context for this analysis, earlier in the book, we see some of the propaganda that each company puts out, where it shows the other company as being violent and cruel. This page is set up like a television propaganda campaign, but its end has a twist.

To start, we see the blue bunny smiling and looking happy. He then looks surprised when the red pig enters the scene. In response, we see a smiling blue bunny beat the red pig to the ground and then attempt to strangle him with rope. What is most concerning about these images is how happy the blue bunny is to inflict violence upon the red pig.

An image such as this makes it seem that power is only achievable through violence and cruelty. Naturally, the only response to violence is more violence, and the red pig cuts the blue bunny’s eye, after which the red pig is kicked to the ground. The blue bunny jumps on the red pig and grabs his tongue, and we see the red pig pulls out a gun. As the blue bunny pulls the red pig’s tongue, the pig shoots the bunny through the chest. At this point, the altercation between the two has become a complete bloodbath. It only gets worse, until the two beat each other so badly that they are just a pile of pulp on the ground. After the two have destroyed themselves, two birds fly in and eat the toxic remains until they, too, die.

As seen from these two pages of El Día Más Largo del Futuro, companies and governments that resort to violence will often end up destroying themselves. We see in this story how technology is being used for violent purposes, and how this technology is able to think and act for itself. The pages included in this paper are excellent examples of power struggles,
because they show that no matter how strong we think we are, no amount of technology can save us from our own self-destructive tendencies.
ANALYSIS OF THE TEXTS: EL ÚLTIMO ARAGONÉS VIVO: LA AMENAZA

ROBÓTICA

Figure 5: page 18 of Él Último Aragonés Vivo: La Amenaza Robótica
Figure 6: page 19 of Él Último Aragonés Vivo: La Amenaza Robótica

The final text that I am going to analyze is Él Último Aragonés Vivo: La Amenaza Robótica. This graphic novel is a short story that incorporates posthumanism because it includes
a robot that is fully in control of itself. The two pages that I find most relevant to my examination of this book through the lenses of posthumanism and power dynamics include the history of the United States’ presence in Spain as well as the history of the robot.

Kate, the American agent, explains the history of the American military base located in Zaragoza, stating that the subterranean base was secretly constructed in the 1960s. It included laboratories, a small hospital, a kitchen, and warehouses of food and weapons. The base had everything needed to survive for years in the event of a nuclear attack. She then asks El Último Aragonés Vivo if he is aware of the Cold War and goes on to explain that her government put lots of these top-secret programs in place in all of their European bases, including the one in Zaragoza.

The objective was simple: to respond to a possible nuclear attack from the Soviet Union with a new, secret, and destructive weapon that was capable of function without any human involvement. Kate further explains that there were robots placed in all of the subterranean bases in Europe and their sensors would wake them up only in the case of a nuclear attack from the Soviet Union. But, since Aragón’s population was devastated by a deadly virus, the robot mistook the lack of human presence in the region as the result of a nuclear attack, and it came to life.

As seen from this small excerpt of Él Último Aragonés Vivo: La Amenaza Robótica, this story is a good example of posthumanism and the power relationship that exists between the United States and Spain. From these panels, we see that the United States military has created a robot capable of mass destruction, and they have created it to work without their command. The power balance presented in this story is that the United States has one-sided power relationships with other countries. In this story, the United States has a military presence in Spain, whereas
Spain does not have a military presence in the United States. Furthermore, beyond just Spain, the countries that were hosting United States military bases did not ask for violent, destructive robots to be placed on their lands. But, because of how large the United States is, and how powerful its military is, the U.S. had the power to do what it wanted.

DISCUSSION

The importance of my research is related to two aspects: first, the fact that it examines books created in Hispanic countries, and second, that it uses posthumanism to study power dynamics. As seen from the findings of this paper, there is some existing research in relation to comics from Spanish-speaking countries, but, in general, I would say that it is a field of academics that has been underrepresented. As noted by Merino, one of the goals she had for her book, *El Cómic Hispánico*, was to “bring together Latin-American and Spanish academics and show them the place that comics have as an expression of Hispanic culture and how solid of a space they have in academic discourse” (Merino 16). Living in the United States, we often forget that our culture is so influential that even in other countries it can drown out the voices of local creators. I especially noticed this when I lived in Spain and quickly realized that American movies were often the ones in the theaters, many American books were featured on the shelves of book stores, and there even American songs played on the radio.

In terms of the importance of using posthumanism to evaluate power dynamics, this is an important concept that should continue to be researched. Science fiction has long been used as a vessel through which people can critique their current society by projecting it upon a futuristic one. By using posthumanism, specifically, we not only can explore how the technology we are creating is able to displace us, but we can also use these fully autonomous robots as an entity
through which to criticize our current state. Evaluating power dynamics is also important because all relationships can be seen as a binary, one in which one entity has more power than another. Innate to our human nature, this idea of a power binary has always been prevalent to our species, so examining how it evolves over time and across cultures is important in understanding humanity.

CONCLUSION

Graphic novels have long been treated as cartoons for children rather than as significant forms of literature in their own right. Perhaps because of their marginalized status, graphic novels often provide biting commentary on societal issues and inequalities. This unique form of literature, combining image and word, has a long history of social commentary which often critiques modern society through the veil of dystopian science fiction. Graphic novels are further made important to research, because they are cultural artifacts that allow us to study social, cultural, and political processes (Carrasco et al.).

Hispanic graphic novels are especially of interest because even within the larger world of graphic novels where, ironically, the subject matter is often related to domination and exploitation, there is a hierarchy. Specifically, books produced in the United States dominate the shelves, crowding out minority voices. Due to this, graphic novels from Hispanic countries are especially important to study, since many of these graphic novels “present a critique of modernity, denouncing the economic inequalities, the social exclusions and the environmental damage brought about by the developed world’s continued reliance on exploitative, imperialist practices” (Page). As individuals currently living in the United States, we come from a nation so large and powerful that there is rarely a need or want to examine creative works from other
nations. But, as seen from my research, graphic novels from abroad speak just as strongly to the human experience as works created and produced in the United States, and by examining them, we are not only able to establish critical connections between cultures, but we are also able to see how the “other” is not so different from us after all.
Works Cited


Dziubinskyj, Aaron. “Science Fiction in Latin America and Spain.” *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2004, pp. 428-433,


Kraeher, Rudi. “Neoliberalism, Posthumanism, and Memory in Latin American SF and Technoculture Studies.” *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2014,

www.jstor.org/stable/10.5621/sciefictstud.41.3.0634


Page, Joanna. “Latin American Graphic Novels in the UL.” *WordPress*,
europeancollections.wordpress.com/2016/07/05/latin-american-graphic-novels-in-the-ul/


citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.629.331&rep=rep1&type=pdf