

An aerial, top-down view of a city at night, showing a dense grid of buildings and streets. A bright, vertical light beam or lens flare runs down the center of the image, creating a sense of depth and focus. The colors are predominantly dark blues, greys, and oranges from the city lights.

HISPANIC URBAN STUDIES

DIANA Q. PALARDY

**THE DYSTOPIAN  
IMAGINATION IN  
CONTEMPORARY SPANISH  
LITERATURE AND FILM**



# Hispanic Urban Studies

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The Dystopian  
Imagination  
in Contemporary  
Spanish Literature  
and Film

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*I would like to dedicate this book to Joe, Quentin, and Evan Palardy.*

## PREFACE

I first became interested in Spanish dystopias when I read Miguel Delibes' 1969 masterpiece *Parábola del naufrago* (Parable of the Shipwrecked Man), which was published in English translation under the title *The Hedge* in 1983. Although written in a style that is abstruse (likely in order to make it past the censors during the Franco dictatorship) and at times almost painful to read, this work is a classic that is steeped in allegory, somewhat like a cross between *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), with traces of Joycean verbal play, Ionescan absurdity, and Sartrean existentialism. The protagonist is a submissive worker at a large corporation headed by a "benevolent" tyrant who sends him off to a cabin to take a forced vacation for having asked questions about the meaning of his work. After he plants some seeds given to him by his boss, an indestructible hedge begins to grow around the cabin at an abnormally fast pace, eventually entrapping him, invading his orifices, and leaving him so passive that, in the end, he is transformed into a sheep. The aspects of the novel that I found most fascinating were the use of dark humor, the layered and complex language that has to be deciphered like a code, the spatial constructions that take on such a dominant role that they transform into antagonists, and the imaginative allegories that aptly convey the oppressiveness and anxieties of the time. This novel sparked my interest in searching for other allegorical dystopias with spatial constructions that effectively capture the zeitgeist in which they were produced.

What surprised me when I first started researching Spanish dystopias in 2006 was how few of them there were at the time and how little scholarship had been done on the subject. After the 2008 financial crisis and the

15-M Movement, the number of Spanish dystopias increased dramatically and I developed an interest in more contemporary works. The challenge then became to decide which ones to include in my research. For this present investigation, I have chosen to focus specifically on works produced from the end of the twentieth century until the present. Of particular interest to me are Spanish dystopian texts and films in which the urban landscapes reflect anxieties about Spain's recent socioeconomic and cultural problems. I address works that deal either directly or indirectly with the buildup to or the fallout from the economic crisis, especially ones that capture the essence of problems related to globalization, consumerism, immigration, housing speculation, poverty, and/or resistance movements. Since there are so many dystopias from which to choose and many of them are quite recent, I have decided to concentrate on works that have received considerable critical attention, whether it be in the form of awards, academic articles, book/film reviews, blogs, or newspaper articles. I have also adopted an urban cultural studies approach to analyzing these dystopias because *topos*, meaning "place" in Greek, is integral to the concept of dystopia, and urban issues are at the core of all of these works. This investigation is oriented toward scholars and undergraduate and graduate students in utopian and dystopian studies, urban cultural studies, science fiction studies, and contemporary Spanish literature and film; however, it is my hope that it will be of interest to a wider audience. Ultimately, my intention is to open the door to the dystopian imagination in Spain and to explore the tensions between fictional representations of dystopia and the underlying sociopolitical problems that drive them.

Youngstown, OH

Diana Q. Palardy



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husband, Joe Palardy, for supplying endless hours of technical support for my website on Spanish dystopias and offering suggestions for the book from the viewpoint of an economist; and my toddlers, Quentin and Evan, for not accidentally erasing this manuscript from my hard drive.

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and the 15-M protest movement in Spain, there has been a growing interest in representations of dystopian societies in Spanish culture and the word *distopía* (dystopia) has finally made it into the dictionary of the Real Academia Española (Royal Spanish Academy).<sup>1</sup> The official Spanish definition of a *distopía*, which is a “representación ficticia de una sociedad futura de características negativas causantes de la alienación humana” (fictional representation of a future society with negative characteristics that cause human alienation), first appeared in the 2014 edition of the dictionary.<sup>2</sup> That year was a signature year for dystopias in Spain for other reasons as well. It marked the publication of *Mañana todavía: Doce distopías para el siglo XXI* (Still tomorrow: Twelve dystopias for the twenty-first century) edited by Ricard Ruiz Garzón, which is generally recognized as the first anthology dedicated exclusively to Spanish dystopias and the one most well received by the press, even though strictly speaking several of the stories are not actually dystopias.<sup>3</sup> According to Mariano Villarreal on his website *Literatura Fantástica* (Fantasy literature), approximately 30 translations (and reeditions of translations) of dystopias and 10 dystopias by Spaniards poured into the market in 2014.<sup>4</sup> This contrasts starkly with the data provided for other years around that same time frame, as the number of Spanish dystopias per year from 2013 until 2016 (excluding 2014) averaged around 4. In my own database of Spanish dystopias, which will be discussed in

greater detail at a later point in the introduction, the numbers differ but the pattern is somewhat similar, as there was a marked uptick in the production of dystopias starting in 2011 (averaging around 12 per year) and then a significant increase in 2014, reaching up to approximately 30 works. That same year, several articles appeared in prominent Spanish newspapers addressing both the inclusion of the word *distopía* in the dictionary of the Real Academia Española and the publication of the anthology *Mañana todavía*.<sup>5</sup> This growing fascination with the genre in recent years in Spanish society is also evidenced, in part, by a rise in Google searches in Spain for the term *distopía*, as well as by the immense popularity of the film *The Hunger Games*, which premiered there in 2012.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Spanish dystopian novels and films, which in the past rarely received any recognition outside of the domain of science fiction, have begun to make their way into the mainstream, even competing with other genres to win prestigious awards like the 2016 Premio Biblioteca Breve for Ricardo Menéndez Salmón's novel *El sistema* (The system) and the 2017 Premio Alfaguara de Novela for Ray Loriga's novel *Rendición* (Surrender).<sup>7</sup> These are just a few of the indications that the genre has been gaining more attention in popular Spanish culture in recent years.<sup>8</sup>

## THE DYSTOPIAN IMAGINATION IN URBAN CULTURAL STUDIES

It is a daunting task to analyze hypothetical spatial constructions utilizing an urban cultural studies method. In urban cultural studies, the objective is to probe the connection between, in Benjamin Fraser's words, "material conditions," such as the formation of urban landscapes that are represented in novels and films, and "cultural imaginaries," or the ways that these spaces are culturally inflected within the works.<sup>9</sup> But how does one examine the context in which an imaginary urban place, a product of an author's imagination, was created and the cultural relevance of that imaginary place? Moreover, how does one evaluate spatial relationships in what are often hypothetical, technologically advanced, futuristic societies, which are governed by new rules, structures, and values? Fortunately, the works of most authors and directors are somewhat derivative in nature, so this type of analysis may entail, for example, looking at the history of the construction and cultural relevance of a famous building that is represented in ruins in a text, or the cultural significance of plans for projects like



Eurovegas that never materialized (at least not yet), but are brought to life in fiction. Whether examining what features have been stripped from or added to an urban landscape, what is most important is the exploration of the cultural significance of the setting and the way that it has evolved into its present state, as represented in the novel or film.

Several scholars have approached urban dystopian spaces in a similar fashion, although they do not all necessarily adhere to an urban cultural studies method. Within the field of architecture, Daniel K. Brown's website *Architecture and Dystopia* seeks to uncover the stories of oppression embedded in dystopian architectural structures, with an eye toward advocacy for social justice.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, the website *Failed Architecture: Researching Urban Failure*, supported by The Creative Industries Fund NL, offers a vast array of photo essays documenting real-life examples of urban dystopianism, with an entire section dedicated exclusively to "Ruins and Dystopia." Gordon MacLeod and Kevin Ward's article "Spaces of Utopia and Dystopia: Landscaping the Contemporary City," featured in a special issue of *Geografiska Annaler* edited by Guy Baeten, considers the interplay between utopian and dystopian spaces in contemporary urban environments. Gyan Prakash's edited collection of essays *Noir Urbanisms: Dystopic Images of the Modern City* (2010) offers an interdisciplinary, transnational exploration of dystopias in a variety of urban environments, but with a greater focus on the aesthetics of representations of dystopia.<sup>11</sup>

In my examination of theoretical approaches to the cultural significance of literary and filmic representations of dystopian spaces, I have utilized concepts presented by Marc Augé, Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, David Howes, Steven Flusty, and J. Brian Harley, among others. In each chapter of this investigation, I address theories that help to illustrate how the constructions of spatial relationships in the primary works contribute to a dystopian atmosphere. This emphasis on spatial analysis is particularly relevant in dystopian fiction because *topos*, meaning "place" in Greek, is key to the concept of dystopia. Also, since more dystopias take place in urban settings than in rural environments, an urban cultural studies approach is fitting. Although not all of the landscapes in the literary and filmic texts are imbued with a gritty, urban atmosphere, the issues raised in each of the works are highly relevant to the area of urban cultural studies, which may be defined more thoroughly as the effort "to explore the relationship between a project and its formation in the context of a necessarily and unavoidably urbanized (and urbanizing) society."<sup>12</sup> Whether analyzing representations of buildings, maps or any

other type of spatial construction in the works of fiction, my approach focuses on reading each cultural artifact as if it were a text, exploring the urban context in which it was produced or the urban discourses that it evokes. Several contemporary critics such as Sebastián Cobarrubias, John Pickles, Stephen Luis Vilaseca, Mónica Degen, Mehmet Dösemeci, Gordon MacLeod, Kevin Ward, and Elia Zureik have adopted interdisciplinary approaches to examining cultural issues within urban environments. These are just a few of the many critics who provide effective models for an urban cultural studies approach (even though, in some cases, they may not be labeled as such) and offer insights that are relevant to this present study.<sup>13</sup>

### STUDIES OF SPANISH DYSTOPIAS

This present investigation is particularly important right now because even though there has been a growing interest in Spanish dystopian literature and film since the 2008 economic crisis, to the best of my knowledge there are still no book-length studies on the topic, apart from doctoral dissertations.<sup>14</sup> There are a few relatively recent books in Spanish that address both utopian and dystopian fiction, such as *La utopía en las narrativas contemporáneas* (Utopia in contemporary narratives) (2008) by Gonzalo Navajas and *El sueño sostenible: Estudios sobre la utopía literaria en España* (The sustainable dream: Studies about literary utopias in Spain) (2008) by José Luis Calvo Carilla, but they tend to concentrate mostly on works from earlier periods.

Despite the absence of book-length publications on contemporary Spanish dystopias (or even just Spanish dystopias in general), a wide variety of book chapters and articles have focused on the subject, to varying degrees. Within a number of academic books on science fiction, there are sections dedicated exclusively to dystopias, such as in *Novela y cine de ciencia ficción española contemporánea: Una reflexión sobre la humanidad* (Novels and films in contemporary Spanish science fiction: A reflection on humanity) (2009) by Cristina Sánchez-Conejero and in *Historia y antología de la ciencia ficción española* (History and anthology of Spanish science fiction) (2014), edited by Julián Díez and Fernando Ángel Moreno. While not limited to dystopias, the article “Mirar al futuro para comprender el presente. Novela española contemporánea de ciencia ficción crítica” (Looking to the future to understand the present. Contemporary Spanish novels of critical science fiction) by Alberto García-

Teresa and Juan Manuel Santiago does offer an extensive overview of many recent Spanish dystopian novels. Also very helpful is Mariano Martín Rodríguez's "Bibliografía de tipo académico (en inglés, alemán o cualquier lengua románica) sobre la literatura de ficción especulativa publicada en España en castellano, gallego y catalán desde 1870 por autores españoles o activos en España (estudios publicados entre 1950 y 2015). I" (Academic bibliography [in English, German or any Romance language] of speculative fiction published in Spain in Spanish, Galician and Catalan since 1870 by Spanish authors or authors who are active in Spain [studies published between 1950 and 2015]. I), which is followed up by a second bibliography and a supplement in the online journal *Hélice. Reflexiones Críticas sobre Ficción Especulativa* (Helix. Critical reflections on speculative fiction).<sup>15</sup> Martín Rodríguez's bibliographies are quite comprehensive and organized according to subgenres and topics. He has also written extensively on Spanish utopias and dystopias from their origins up until approximately 1960. Some of the critics who have focused on contemporary Spanish dystopias include Santiago L. Moreno, Julián Díez, Fernando Ángel Moreno, Cristina Sánchez-Conejero, Yolanda Molina Gavilán, Yaw Agawu-Kakraba, Juan Manuel Santiago, Alberto García Teresa, Michelle Murray, Teresa López-Pellisa, Mariano Martín Rodríguez, Juan Antonio López Ribera, Gabriel Saldías Rossel, Andreu Domingo, and Alexandra Saum-Pascual. Several scholars like Stewart King, Íñigo Jáuregui Ezquibela, Piotr Sobolczyk, Eva Antón Fernández, and Luis I. Prádanos explore the hybridization of dystopia and other genres such as detective, zombie, Cyberqueer, ecofeminist, fantasy, or climate fiction. The journal *Utopian Studies* dedicated a special issue to "Utopias and Dystopias in Modern Spain" edited by Carlos Ferrera and Juan Pro, which examined works from the nineteenth century until the 1960s. Also, Elizabeth Russell offers a reflection on the state of utopian studies in Spain, vaguely touching upon dystopianism, in the special issue of *Utopian Studies* commemorating the 500th anniversary of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516).

In the realm of digital resources, some of the most helpful ones have been the online journal *Hélice. Reflexiones Críticas sobre Ficción Especulativa* (which published its first issue in December 2006), the website *Literatura Fantástica* created by Mariano Villarreal, the blog *Utopía: Red Transatlántica de Estudio de las Utopías* (Utopia: Transatlantic web of utopian studies) coordinated by Juan Pro, the websites for the Society for Utopian Studies and the Utopian Studies Society (the European counterpart), the online journal *Spaces of Utopia*, the online

database *Tercera Fundación* (Third Foundation) affiliated with the association Los Conseguidores (The Go-Getters), the website for the Asociación Española de Fantasía, Ciencia Ficción y Terror (Spanish association of fantasy, science fiction, and terror), and the website *Sense of Wonder* by Elías F. Combarro. Also of value have been some of the blogs/websites that are no longer producing new content like *Bibliópolis*, *Cyberdark.net*, and *Literatura Prospectiva* (Prospective literature) (sponsored by the Asociación Cultural Xatafi [Xatafi Cultural Association]). The blog *C: Reseñas, Reflexiones, Artículos ... sobre Narrativa* (C: Reviews, reflections, articles ... about narrative), which carried on where the website *Cyberdark.net* left off, offers thoughtful and critical analyses of works of speculative fiction.<sup>16</sup> For non-Spanish speakers who would like to read Spanish science fiction translated into English, the website *Speculative Fiction in Translation* by Rachel S. Cordasco and the section titled “Spanish Books in Translation” of the aforementioned website *Literatura Fantástica* by Villarreal are useful. The fact that so much research on Spanish dystopias has been conducted in recent years is a testament to the increasing interest in this field. However, many of these studies are in Spanish and dispersed far and wide, which might be an obstacle for some scholars wanting to learn more about the topic. By contrast, this present study is the first and most comprehensive examination of Spanish dystopias published in English.

## DEFINITIONS OF DYSTOPIA

The question of what qualifies or does not qualify as a dystopia in Spain is complicated, as many scholars have become enmeshed in battles of typology and nomenclature. In his article pointedly titled “Secesión” (Secession), Julián Díez has made a compelling argument for using the expression “literatura prospectiva” (prospective literature) as an umbrella term for science fiction that serves as a tool for speculating about society (as opposed to sci-fi that is purely for entertainment). Prospective literature encompasses dystopia, uchronia, post-apocalypse, and a host of other forms of speculative fiction.<sup>17</sup> Díez, a prominent member of the Spanish science fiction community who has published extensively on science fiction, contends: “Ni Orwell ni Huxley compartían en modo alguno las intenciones, las influencias o los modos de hacer literarios de la ciencia ficción, género que, por añadidura, ya existía cuando ellos crearon sus obras y al que obviamente no tuvieron la menor intención de inscribirse” (Neither Orwell

nor Huxley shared in any way the intentions, influences or styles of creating the literary genre of science fiction, a genre that, besides, already existed when they created their works and to which they obviously didn't have the least intention of subscribing).<sup>18</sup> Díez notes that *literatura prospectiva* often functions allegorically and for the purpose of warning about the potential impact of allowing certain negative trends in contemporary society to continue unchecked (in other words, for “prospección-admonición” [prospection-admonition]).<sup>19</sup> The latter function lines up well with Fernando Ángel Moreno's definition of dystopia, as a “visión negativa de una sociedad ficticia basada en la hiperbolización de los problemas culturales de nuestra sociedad” (negative vision of a fictional society based on an exaggeration of the cultural problems of our society).<sup>20</sup> However, nowhere in Díez's article does he use the word dystopia.

It is necessary to take at least a cursory glance at where dystopias are situated in relation to other genres and subgenres. Although many critics such as Darko Suvin consider dystopian literature a subgenre of science fiction, Alexandra Aldridge, in the same vein as Díez, contends that the major dystopian novels of the twentieth century are not science fiction because “their primary emphasis is *always* on power relationships in clear sociopolitical terms” and that they are influenced strongly by the utopian tradition, which foregrounds social, ethical and philosophical concerns.<sup>21</sup> Even so, Suvin observes that dystopian literature and science fiction share in common their frequent usage of cognitive estrangement: “SF is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment.”<sup>22</sup> Like science fiction, fantasy also relies heavily on defamiliarization; however, fantasy differs in that it does not try to explain supernatural phenomena with the laws of the empirical world. There are commonalities between the genres (or subgenres) of postapocalypse and dystopia, yet the former emphasizes more the survivalist narrative and is less focused on issues related to the structure of society. An argument could be made for labeling cyberpunk, defined in *Merriam Webster* rather loosely as “science fiction dealing with future urban societies dominated by computer technology,” as a subgenre of dystopia, depending on the degree to which the work in question offers a critique of the oppressiveness of society and the failure of its formerly utopian ideals.<sup>23</sup> Oftentimes, dystopia straddles the line between a parable, which weaves a message of morality into its narrative, and an essay, which expresses it directly through

its rhetoric. The tendency in dystopian literature is to combine arguments from a philosophical, political, and/or ethical debate with the format of a parable to create a work of fiction that is engaging and has the potential to motivate its readers to take political or social action. Inherent in dystopian fiction is the kernel of hope that the society depicted can be prevented. Thus, as suggested earlier, it serves didactic and admonitory functions.

In a 2014 essay titled “El fraude en el etiquetado de la distopía” (Fraud in the labeling of dystopias), Díez defines dystopia strictly as a “falsa utopía” (false utopia), or a “sociedad que desde la cúpula del poder se impone como utópica, pero no lo es, sino que es vivida como un régimen totalitario por los ciudadanos verdaderamente conscientes de la situación” (society that is imposed from up above as utopian, but it is not one; instead it is experienced as a totalitarian regime by the citizens who are truly aware of the situation). Díez argues that the term dystopia has been overused for marketing purposes, especially in the wake of the international success of Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* (2008) (translated into Spanish in 2009 as *Los juegos del hambre*) and the barrage of dystopian fiction that followed.<sup>24</sup> One reason that this is such a point of contention among science fiction scholars in Spain is that science fiction is viewed as a marginalized area of interest, yet dystopias are seen as more appealing to the general masses. Fernando Ángel Moreno observes that works identified as dystopias are often found in the general literature section of Spanish bookstores and thus avoid the stigma of being classified as science fiction.<sup>25</sup> Disillusioned with the trend of mass marketing dystopias, Díez insists that the genre of dystopia has become diluted over time and that to the best of his knowledge, not a single work of contemporary Spanish fiction truly qualifies as a dystopia.<sup>26</sup> However, Díez’s article was written in 2014, before several of the works that I analyze in this study were produced. He also fully admits that he could just be unfamiliar with contemporary Spanish dystopias and that some may actually exist.

While the umbrella term “literatura prospectiva” offers considerable flexibility, I will continue to use the word dystopia because this present investigation is oriented toward audiences that likely have more familiarity with the concept of dystopia within the predominantly anglophone tradition and the way that it is commonly used today. Lyman Tower Sargent, one of the foremost scholars of utopianism and dystopianism, offers a frequently cited definition of dystopia that reduces the concept to its core features: “a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporane-

ous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived.”<sup>27</sup> Since dystopias reflect the zeitgeist of the historical periods in which they were produced, they must necessarily take on a variety of guises, and allowances must be made for variation across cultures and epochs. The hybridization and evolution of genres are natural phenomena and many works are difficult to categorize.<sup>28</sup> One way in which the variations within and deviations from the genre have been addressed by scholars is to create additional categories of dystopianism. As an alternative to using expressions like pseudo-dystopia or semi-dystopia for works that have dystopian qualities but may not be dystopias per se, Miquel Codony has invented the useful word *distopina* for works that have “esa sustancia elusiva que condensa en sus moléculas la esencia de la distopía” (that elusive substance that condenses in its molecules the essence of dystopia), even though they may not follow the formula for a traditional dystopia or seem dystopian enough to literary critics.<sup>29</sup> Antonis Balasopoulos, in his essay “Anti-Utopia and Dystopia: Rethinking the Generic Field,” has created an impressive, albeit somewhat dizzying array of subcategories of anti-utopias and dystopias.<sup>30</sup> His subcategories of dystopias—which include dystopias of tragic failure, dystopias of authoritarian repression, dystopias of catastrophic contingency, nihilistic dystopias, and critical dystopias—speak to the wide variety of dystopias in existence, as well as to some of the prominent trends in dystopianism.<sup>31</sup> This last subcategory, critical dystopias, is borrowed from Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini in reference to a society that is generally dystopian, but that contains at least one utopian enclave.<sup>32</sup> As the balance between dystopia and utopia may be more even in some texts, Margaret Atwood has coined the term “ustopia” for the “imagined perfect society and its opposite.”<sup>33</sup> Gregory Claeys, author of the recently published *Dystopia: A Natural History* (2017), generally views dystopia as a utopia that has been brought to fruition, emphasizing, quite significantly, that one person’s utopia may be another person’s dystopia and vice versa.<sup>34</sup> A case in point is when professors taught *Brave New World* (1932) in the 1960s and their students believed that the world of sex-and-drugs presented in the novel was ideal.<sup>35</sup> Chad Walsh, author of *From Utopia to Nightmare* (1962), the first academic text completely dedicated to dystopias, firmly asserts: “Anyone skimming through *Brave New World* with a bare minimum of literary acumen will know after twenty pages that the author loathes this idiotically happy world.... Always, a writer’s intention is what counts.”<sup>36</sup> Even though literary critics are often discouraged from relying on an author’s

intentions to guide their interpretation of a text, in the case of literary dystopias the reader must discern the author's attitude in order to fully comprehend the work.

### CRITERIA FOR DYSTOPIA

Given all of these different ways of understanding the genre of dystopia and how the interpretations of it and terminology for it have evolved, how does one determine what a dystopia is? Does it have to pass some sort of litmus test and, if so, what should that entail? In determining if a work is a dystopia or not, literary critics have to decide to what degree it is important to take into consideration the standard literary conventions of a genre (e.g. if a work more or less follows the formula for a traditional dystopian plot), the most commonly accepted definitions of dystopia, and/or some other type of criteria. In order to decide which texts and films to include in this present study, I have generated my own criteria, which are based on an extensive review of dystopias in English and in Spanish, as well as detailed examinations of the core features of dystopias described in Arthur O. Lewis' seminal article "The Anti-Utopian Novel: Preliminary Notes and Checklist," the definitions of dystopia provided by Sargent and Moreno (cited earlier in this introduction), and the key characteristics of dystopias culled from a variety of other canonical articles and books on the topic. I have created a list of qualifying questions, prioritizing the ones dealing with the core definition first, followed by ones related to function and literary conventions. The following are questions which foreground important characteristics of many *but not all* dystopias:

- Is it a hypothetical society?
- Are the individuals in the society (or in a certain subsector of the society) oppressed, even though they may not realize it?
- Does the work suggest that systemic, sociopolitical problems are to blame for the current state of affairs?
- Are these problems an extrapolation of concerns that are not being dealt with effectively (or at all) in the author's/director's society?
- Is it a deliberately planned society, in many cases intended to be ideal for at least some of its citizens (or better than what previously existed, as the society is often created after a war, an environmental disaster, or some other major traumatic event)?



- Does the work explicitly or implicitly serve an admonitory function (i.e., warn the reader/viewer to address the sociopolitical problems now while they are not so bad and have not yet reached the dystopian extremes represented in the work)?
- Does the author/director intend for the implied reader/viewer to experience defamiliarization upon entering the world?
- Does the author/director want the implied reader/viewer to question the moral code of the society?
- Is the behavior of the characters monitored and/or controlled (or do they often just feel as if they were being monitored and/or controlled)?
- Does an important character (often the protagonist) experience a process of disillusionment and then attempt to rebel against the system?

While an affirmative answer is not necessary for every single question in order for a work to be considered a dystopia, an abundance of positive responses (especially in regard to the questions dealing with the definition) increases the likelihood that it would be perceived as one.<sup>37</sup>

In the process of reviewing Spanish dystopias, I have composed a database of over 250 works of Spanish fiction (including films, novels, short stories, plays, and even one poetry collection) which either a literary critic, publishing house, journalist, science fiction scholar/specialist, or I myself have labeled as a dystopia. The works span from 1879, when the first dystopia “El futuro dictador” by José Fernández Bremón was published, until 2017, with the appearance of Ray Loriga’s *Rendición*.<sup>38</sup> Since there is considerable debate as to what technically qualifies as a dystopia and I have not read or seen all of the works listed, I have erred on the side of inclusiveness in compiling this list and it may be filled with more *distopinas* than dystopias. With this caveat in mind, the list, which can be found on my website *Spanish Dystopias* (<http://spanishdystopias.com/>), may prove to be useful for those interested in Spanish science fiction with a dystopian bent, especially for scholars who want to specialize in any of the specific topics that are noted in the description column. The database is a work in progress and will continue to be updated and modified over time.