

Responding to an Issue in *Sleep Dealer*.

Choose one prompt, *brainstorm* the questions, and write a multi-paragraph answer of 400 words.

1. Immigration and The American Dream

Rudy Ramirez, the Mexican-American drone “pilot,” lives in The American Dream. Memo dreams of participating in The American Dream by getting nodes and living in the city. But the brutal killing of Memo’s father reveals that America/The American Dream is a dystopia.

- a) Describe how *Sleep Dealer* represents The American Dream as a dream that is really a dystopia: How does Memo imagine it at first? How does his brother see it? How does his father see it? How is it represented on TV? How does Memo see and experience it as a worker in the cybermaquilas? What is Rudy’s role in The American Dream?
- b) The end of the film has Memo and Rudy come together to create a new dream. What is it? What clues from the film do you have to support your interpretation?

2. Fighting the System

The last word Memo says in the film is “fight.”

- a) Considering *Sleep Dealer*’s story, what/who do you think Memo is going to fight? What clues from the film do you have to support your interpretation?
- b) What is at stake in this fight? What can be gained? What can be lost?
- c) Is this a just fight? Why? Why not?
- d) Is Memo asking us to join him in the fight? If yes, should we join the fight? Why? Why not?

3. Cyber Wars

In *Sleep Dealer*, soldiers go on “missions” by remote-piloting drones to far away places and their missions are televised live. Currently, the United States uses drones such as these for combat in Afghanistan and to patrol the border between the US and Mexico.

- a) List the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of remote warfare. Look at your two lists and explain whether it is a good idea for countries to use this kind of technology to conduct wars.
- b) Rudy Ramirez, the Mexican-American drone “pilot,” hesitates before he explodes Memo’s father to bits because he gets to see his face—a rare occurrence according to the TV commentator following Rudy’s mission. Why does seeing “the enemy’s” face make it harder for

a soldier to kill? Should it be hard to kill someone, even in a war? Is it okay for a pilot to shoot it up in Afghanistan all day via a satellite link and then sleep at home at night? Why? Why not?

c) Is televising war a complete exaggeration or something that could happen soon? Can you imagine audiences watching real people being blown up in distant places and cheering? Why? Why not?

4. Cyborg Life

In *Sleep Dealer*, people become cyborgs by buying implants called “nodes” that allow to connect them to cyberspace.

a) Make a list of how nodes are used by the main characters: Memo, Luz, and Rudy. What uses seem perfectly normal to you? What uses seem perverse? What uses are exploitative? Are there any uses that should be illegal? What uses are very similar to interactions on the internet?

b) In *Sleep Dealer*, Luz makes a living by uploading and selling her memories in cyberspace. Is this ethical? How does selling actual memories compare to writing a “tell all” autobiography, for example? How does it compare to participating in a reality television show?