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ISA. Dir. Jose Nestor Marquez. Perf. Jeanette Samano, Sabi, Eric Ochoa. Anarchy Post, 2014. Film.

What is a 17-year-old Latina's greatest fear? According to data collected through a brain scan of Isabel "Isa" Reyes — the protagonist of the 2014 made-for-TV movie, *ISA* — there is nothing more frightening than teenage pregnancy. We know this because a chief programmer, looking to control Isa, creates a virtual nightmare where Isa, confused and disbelieving, develops a fully pronounced belly. However, Isa can control this virtual scene and converts her stomach into dozens of butterflies that fly away, taking away her pregnancy and ending the nightmare. This scene, mid-way through the movie, highlights some of the film's central issues.

With its focus on a Latina high school student, 17 year-old Isabel Reyes, *ISA* provides a unique insight into a segment of the US population that is often underrepresented in popular media, Latina youths. As a science fiction film, the movie deploys common genre tropes to demonstrate that access to the abstract concept of freedom varies in the United States, specifically according to the categories of race and gender. With its portrayal of Isa, the film comments on this unequal access to an ideal American freedom by privileging this often-marginalized perspective.

Although *ISA* does not have the production value or cadre of stars that would have made it as successful as other productions of the same genre, the movie is an important milestone in the changing landscape of Latina/o identity in the United States. ISA is directed by Jose Nestor Marquez, the vice-president of digital production and video at Telemundo media, a subsidiary of NBC-Universal. The movie has circulated across multiple channels, most notably Syfy, Telemundo, and mun2. Moreover, NBC's investment in such a project reveals a general shift in US popular media that has historically positioned Latina/os outside of the mainstream. With Isa as its protagonist, the movie uses science fiction to comment on the place of marginalized communities in US society. Taking place in a not-so-distant future with technology similar to our own, *ISA* falls specifically within the realm of cyberpunk, as it was fashioned in the 1980s.

ISA depicts a world where computer technology has established a set of social relations, a common theme in cyberpunk fiction that has shaped our current understanding of the role of computers in everyday

life. Science fiction ushered in its 3rd wave by embracing the emerging digital world and treating computer technologies as banal fixtures in everyday life. The genre championed marginalized anti-heroes that could hack computers to overthrow a corrupt social system that privileged rich corporations. ISA continues in this tradition. Like other cyberpunk heroes, Isa is a great hacker. At first, she uses her technological prowess to partake in illicit activities at school. However, she ultimately triumphs over a "chief programmer" that works for a corrupt system of banks, which had been exploiting Mexican nationals by installing computer chips in their brains to carry out financial transactions and calculations.

ISA is made-for-TV-movie that takes advantage of cinematic techniques to appeal to wide audiences. *ISA* uses relatively unknown actors, on-location shooting in Highland Park, Los Angeles, shaky handheld cameras, and computer graphic images (CGI) to create the virtual world of Isa's mind. The film relies heavily on visual metaphors to advance the narrative. Isa, for example, must decipher a dream that takes place in a desert in order to unlock access to hidden code locked away in her memory. A common visual landscape in Latina/o art, the desert is all at once a site of danger, mystery, enlightenment, and freedom. *ISA* continues in this tradition by representing the desert as liminal space. At first, Isa crosses the desert into the United States to be saved from the exploitation at the hands of private banks. Later, the desert becomes a space of enlightenment, where Isa realizes her true identity by interpreting the metaphorical links between the imagery in the desert and her real life.

Above all else, the film's central idea that technology can be a source of either freedom or enslavement makes the film a worthwhile view for anyone interested in how US society positions women and people of color, specifically Latina women. As a work of science fiction, the film does well to highlight shifts in our current understanding of computer-based labor, revealing a developing set of class differences among computer programmers, developers, and users.

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