arts Artuklu Sanat ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi
Artuklu Journal of Arts and Humanities

Research Article

Semiotic Analysis of the Animation Film *Soul*

Geliş Tarihi/Received: 12.03.2021
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 29.12.2021
DOI: 10.46372/arts.982060

Lecturer Asadul ISLAM
Yaşar University
Cartoon and Animation Department
asadul.islam@yasar.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0001-9510-1178

Assist. Prof. Üyesi Büşra İNCİRKUŞ
Süleyman Demirel University
Visual Comm. Design Department
busraincirkus@sdu.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0002-3056-0223

ABSTRACT
Animation films connect both children and adults in a comprehensive way that sometimes live-action films abstain to do so. The visually rich narrative structures in these films allow diverse interpretations and understandings of the subliminal messages. Such interpretive potential of uniqueness in ideas and visual languages in cinematic spaces is rarely investigated in the semiotic context. The aim of the study is to aesthetically analyze and comprehend the meanings of the visual information from the animation film *Soul* by understanding the main character Joe Gardner's journey. In the first segment of the research, all of the characters' personalities from inner and outer appearance were analyzed and their relation in the film's narration was discussed. In the second segment of the research, a total of 10 scenes were selected for semiotics analysis based on an indicator, indicative and indicated structure. Furthermore, straight and side meanings of the selected scenes were described. A significant positive relationship was identified between Joe Gardner and his pursuit of the meaning of life. The analysis revealed that the true meaning of life is in finding happiness from small things. Thus, this film's findings explain the thin line between choices and seeing things from different perspectives.

Keywords: animation, film, semiotics, soul, characters

Islam, A. ve İncirkuş, B. (2022).
Semiotic Analysis of the Animation Film Soul.
ARTS: Artuklu Sanat ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi, *7*, 85-104

arts Artuklu Sanat ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi
Artuklu Journal of Arts and Humanities

Soul Animasyon Filminin Göstergebilimsel Analizi

ÖZ

Animasyon filmleri, hem çocukları hem de yetişkinleri, gerçekçi şekilde çekilmiş aksiyon filmlerinin etkileme gücünden daha fazla etkilemekte ve bu iki yaş gurubunu bu anlamda bir araya getirmektedir. Bu filmlerdeki görsel açıdan zengin anlatı yapıları, bilinçaltı mesajlarının farklı yorumlanmasına ve anlaşılmasına olanak tanımaktadır. Sinematografik mekanlarda fikirler ve görsel dillerdeki benzersizliğin bu tür yorumlayıcı potansiyeli, göstergebilimsel bağlamda nadiren araştırılmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı, *Soul* animasyon filmindeki ana karakter olan Joe Gardners'ın yolculuğuna bakarak, görsel bilgilerin göstergelerini estetik olarak analiz etmek ve anlamlandırmaktır. Araştırmada ilk olarak karakterlerin tüm kişilikleri iç ve dış görünüşleri bakımından analiz edilmiş ve filmin anlatımındaki ilişkileri tartışılmıştır. Araştırmanın ikinci kısmında ise gösterge, gösteren ve gösterilen yapısına dayalı göstergebilim analizi için toplam 10 sahne seçilmiş ve seçilen sahnelerin düz ve yan anlamları da açıklanmıştır. Joe Gardner ve onun hayatının anlam arayışı arasında önemli bir pozitif ilişki bulunduğu analiz edilmiştir. Bu analiz, hayatın gerçek anlamının küçük şeylerden mutluluk duymak olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Filmdeki verilerden elde edilen sonuçlara bakılırsa, seçimler ile gerçekleşen olaylara farklı açılardan bakma ilişkisindeki ince çizginin resmedildiği görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: animasyon, film, göstergebilim, ruh, karakterler

INTRODUCTION

Semiotics is known as the analysis of signs, symbols and signification. It investigates how words and other symbols convey meanings (Noth, 1990). Symbols are something that represents anything other than itself in semiotics. The term "semiotics" dates back to ancient Greece, but Ferdinand de Saussure's study in the 19th century propelled its use in modern linguistics. Saussure a Swiss linguist made significant contributions to the field of semiotics, also known as semiology. Saussure believes that language creates meaning rather than merely conveying it. As a result, the vocabulary use to explain has an effect on experiences. The importance of Saussure's ideas in literary theory stems from this process of meaning-making. By reading and analyzing literary works it realised that language is a sign system and not a way of naming things. It is examined that different meanings contained in a text as well as how one text affects another (Taylor, 2021).

According to different scientific researches semiotics also means the study of how people make meaning and how they express it. Its roots are in the scholarly research of how visual and verbal signs and signals construct meanings. It's a way of looking at the environment and comprehending how the landscape and society in which we exist have an unconscious effect. Semiotics is a critical instrument for ensuring that desired interpretations are well interpreted by the recipient. Semiotics can assist with resolving this ambiguity and providing context consistency. Semiotics began as a study of the meaning of words (linguistics), progressed to studying people's behavior (anthropology and psychology), then to a study of culture and society (sociology and philosophy), then to assist with the analysis of cultural products (films, literature, and art – critical theory), and, most recently it became an approach analyze and research end users behaviour and communication with different brands (Signsalad, 2021). Hence for this study, the semiotics analysis in the animation film *Soul* (Pete Docter & Kemp Powers, 2020) is taken into consideration.

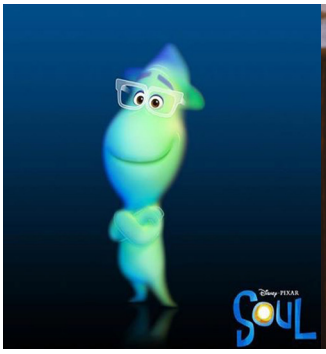
Animation films are very cogent in conveying messages to children as well as adults. The conventional way of portraying animation films only for children has been criticized over the years. The message and understanding conferred in animation films are at par with live-action films. It can be considered that people do get influenced by the touching stories from these films. The color palette, character design, visualization, narration, music and environment design all contribute to visually appealing emotion. It can also be seen that the visually represented emotive

behavior of characters shown in animation films is similar to the real-life behavior of people. This study analyses the semiotic information shown in the animation film *Soul*. The signs, symbols and indexes used in the film make the story and characters visually appealing and endearing for both young and adult viewers. Joe Gardner the film's main character feels stuck in his life and job. But one day by chance he played piano in the band of a jazz legend that was the turning point of changes in his life. The colors, visuals, cultural, social and psychological elements that contributed to the new world of Joe Gardner were discussed to understand the relationship among semiotic elements. The basic concept of the film shows two worlds revolving around the main character. Specific scenes were chosen that shows the semiotic information and its contribution to the narration. It is percieved that the use of semiotic comprehensions to support the narration in animation films increase the viewers' attention with meaningful thoughts and enrich the creative content of the film.

FILM DETAILS

This the latest animation film by Pixar Animation Studios released in 25 Decemeber 2020. The film is directed and partly written by Pete Docter and co-directed by Kemp Powers. This film is produced by Dana Murray. The cast of the film for Joe Gardner's voice Jamie Foxx, 22s voice Tina Fey, Curly voice Quest Love and Paul voice Daveed Diggs. The distributor of this film was Walt Disney Studios (Movie Insider, 2020). The director of photography was Matt Aspburry and Ian Megibben. The run time duration of the film is 1 hour 40 minutes.

CHARACTERS: EXTERNAL APPEARANCE, STYLE AND PERSONALITY



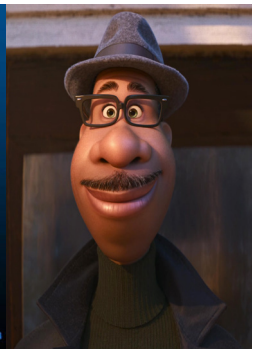


Image 1. *Joe Gardner as a human* ***Image 2.*** *Joe Gardner as a Soul*

Joe Gardner is a middle-aged African-American man with a black mustache and thick-rimmed black spectacles to improve his vision. He's dressed casually in a grey fedora, black pullover, brown slacks, and red shoes. As a *soul*, his nose isn't visible, but his spectacles and fedora have become a part of him. He worked as a middle school band instructor who had long wished to perform jazz music on stage and was given the opportunity after impressing two other jazz musicians during an opening performance at the Half Note Club. He slipped in a manhole inadvertently while celebrating his new job. This put him in a coma, a state in which he is neither living nor dead, allowing his spirit to travel to The Land of the Dead and then to The Great Before (both being places between the Land of the Living and the Land of the Dead). His father introduced him to a jazz club when he was a little lad, where he discovered his love for music. He has desired to be a successful jazz musician ever then but has yet to receive his big break. He is a kind and kind persona as a human. His passion for jazz is contagious, as seen by his performances on the piano. Despite the fact that he is an animated figure, there are times when he plays the piano and his body and hand motions appear to be quite genuine (The Disney Wiki, 2020)

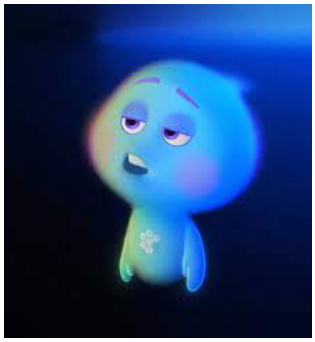


Image 3. *22*

22 is a minor antagonist in the story. The name 22 refers to the number of Pixar films released before the debut of *Soul*. Her physique resembles that of a light bulb. She had pale aqua cheeks, purple eyes and brows, a bucktooth in her mouth, a tuft of hair, and no legs. She can, however, develop legs anytime she wants, as seen by her dancing and running. She is a soul with a cynical and caustic demeanor. She doesn't want to live on Earth and would rather stay in the Great Before since she believes life on Earth isn't all that it's cracked up to be. When her mentors tried to assist her in discovering her "spark" to finish her Earth badge, 22 would shove them

away. 22 also imitates the voice of a middle-aged white lady in order to disturb others and discourage them from approaching her. In her initial form as a Lost *soul*, she retains her features, but her eyes and mouth become cyan, giving her a sinister ghost-like appearance. She gets a little larger and deformed in her second form, and her hands transform into tentacle-like arms. She also gains legs. She has just one cyan eye in her third and final form, she becomes taller and more deformed, she develops a bucktooth, and the tip of her head resembles a Santa hat. She also has a hole in her chest from when she threw her Earth pass at Joe Gardner. 22 has a dislike for her mentors. Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, Muhammad Ali, Copernicus, Archimedes, and Marie Antoinette have all served as mentors to her in the past. None of them, however, were able to assist her. In summary, 22 has a personality that is fairly comparable to that of a typical adolescent (Johnson, 2020; The Disney Wiki, 2020).



Image 4. *Terry*

Terry is a soul. Her look is that of an older woman with a bun on her hair. Terry is a perfectionist accountant who works hard. She is a bizarre extension of The Great Before's personnel, tasked with the solitary task of keeping track of The Great Beyond's entrants. Terry's fixation with The Count may be exhausting, especially when it's off, and each Jerry (the counselor) does their best to endure him. Terry is determined to put things right when Joe Gardner takes a detour to The Great Before. She only follows Joe because she detects that her soul count is incorrect and wants to repair it, demonstrating that she is merely attempting to perform her job. Despite the fact that she is the major adversary, she is not portrayed as malevolent (The Disney Wiki, 2020).



Image 5. *Five Soul Counselor Jerries*

Jerries, or counselor Jerry, are the supporting characters in the film *Soul*. Their spirit appears to be translucent blue in color. They are the entire cosmos compacted into human-understandable shapes. Their real identities aren't known, but they go by the name Jerry. Jerry is the name of the Counselors at The Great Before, and there are a lot of them. The Counselors, who are cheerful, happy, and (mostly) all-knowing, administer The You Seminar like camp counselors, wrangling dozens of fresh human souls, awarding them distinctive personalities, and assisting them in finding their spark and graduating to Earth. Jerry is a one-of-a-kind representation of the cosmos, combining patience, good humor, and passive-aggressive tendencies in various proportions. All of them, though, are enthralled by their metaphysical charges. Jerrys are a manifestation of dynamic energy that emerges in a logical if abstract, shape. The designs of these counselors illustrate the adaptation of the definition of Art Brut in doodling drawings. So that the most authentic expressions and emotions can be visually represented (Weiss, 1992). New souls are counseled and guided by the Jerries, who summon mentors from the Great Beyond to link them with soulmates. They communicate with the newborn and departed souls, but not with individuals who are now alive on Earth (Johnson, 2020; The Disney Wiki, 2020).



Image 6. *Moonwind as a Human*



Image 7. *Moonwind as a Soul*

Moonwind is a dedicated sign twirler on a Manhattan street corner, an activity that brings him joy and puts him in the zone, allowing him to mentally and spiritually journey to a mystical place called The Astral Plane (near The Great Before), where he rescues lost souls from their uninspiring, stressful lives. Moonwind is the result of a midlife epiphany that drove him to change his identity and his day job in order to live a better life. By doing actions, he demonstrates to the consumer how to get promotions (Johnson, 2020; The Disney Wiki, 2020).



Image 8. *Mr. Mittens*

Mr. Mittens is a therapeutic cat that spends his days purring, snuggling, and consoling hospital patients. Joe Gardner is hospitalized after a tragic fall, and the cuddly cat is engaged to help him. When Joe Gardner's spirit goes into Mr. Mittens body instead of his own, he is mistakenly cast out. Mittens was first introduced as a therapy cat. People in retirement homes, nursing homes, schools, hospices, and other human service care institutions benefit from therapy cats' compassion and comfort. Therapy animals, also known as emotional support animals or comfort animals, are frequently utilized as a part of a medical treatment plan. These animals give company, alleviate loneliness, and occasionally aid in the treatment of depression and phobias, but they do not perform duties that assist individuals with impairments. There are films about cats in intensive care and their intuitions when someone is about to die. They are known as Shaman Cats (The Disney Wiki, 2020).

There are several secondary characters such as Libba Gardner, Joe Gardner's mother. She is a typical mother, kind but firm. She mostly expresses her affection for her son. She is Joe's strongest supporter and his truth-teller. She has operated a profitable tailor shop in Queens for decades and is a proud entrepreneur. She can't understand why Joe wants to be a musician instead of working at the Tailor Shop, where he is better compensated. But that is the least of her concerns when Joe is involved in an accident and is sent to the hospital, where he recovers and begins to act strangely (Johnson, 2020).

Dorothea Williams is a minor character in the film. She looks to be a middle-aged African-American woman with brown wavy hair that she wears up with a headband all the time. She also wears red lipstick and dresses in classical-style clothing to give the impression that she is a skilled pianist. She also has golden hoop earrings on each of her ears and looks to be a bit broad. She is also frequently seen carrying her saxophone about with her, particularly during concerts and at the Half Note Club. She is a jazz icon and a superb saxophonist who has performed all over the world. She oozes confidence both on and off stage, and she isn't easily fooled. Joe's dream is supported by Dorothea. Dorothea offers Joe a once-in-a-lifetime chance when she invites him to join her quartet for a concert at New York City's Half Note jazz club (Johnson, 2020; The Disney Wiki, 2020).

Curley is a black young man who is tall, has muscular arms, and is a little overweight but stocky. He has huge cheeks, is bald with a thick beard, and always smiles. He appears to be dressed casually in a black shirt with white lettering and a light gray jumper underneath. He's dressed in denim jeans and Air Jordan sneakers in green, white, and black. Curley, a previous student of Joe's, is a member of Dorothea Williams' jazz trio. Curley recommends his favorite piano teacher Joe when a need for a pianist arises (The Disney Wiki, 2020).

Paul is a tyrant. He's known as the cynic in the neighborhood. Everyone who walks into Dez's barber business gets a nasty or snarky response from Paul. Joe Gardner is his favorite target for harassment (The Disney Wiki, 2020).

Dez is a strong, tall African American man with a thick beard and a lot of hair on his arms. He has a square yet curly military cut. His everyday attire consists of a navy blue dress shirt with short sleeves, denim pants, and Caterpillar lumberjack boots, which he wears in the barbershop. He's also dressed in a black apron. He has a piercing in his left ear, a gold bracelet on his left arm, and tattoos relating to his work on both arms (scissors and flowers). He plays Joe's long-time barber and a decent listener in the film. Dez is a cheerful person with a bright smile and a good sense of humor who has known Joe for a long time (Johnson, 2020; The Disney Wiki, 2020).

Many notable characters appear in the film soul. These characters contribute to the story's development. Character development is fairly consistent with the aesthetic of the film, since the character serves as the driving force in the story, as seen in prior Pixar films. The storyline is created and pushed forward by the characters.

Viewers may immerse themselves in the universe produced by the characters, both in terms of how they interact with their surroundings and how they perceive their surroundings. Finally, the characters personify and represent the story's concept.

AESTHETIC ANALYSIS



Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: Playing and teaching an instrument in a place like a classroom.
Indicative: Students and a black teacher who teaches music
Indicated: Students of different faiths and their African music teacher

- **Straight Meaning:** Teacher and students
- **Side Meaning:** People from different ethnic groups and beliefs who play different instruments in a classroom.

Figure 1. *Joe Gardner Teaching in Class*

Students and an Afro-American music teacher teaching them are staged. In Pixar productions, whose main character is usually white, a black lead (Afro-American) character appears for the first time. Also in this scene students from different races can be seen in the classroom. It shows the multiculturism of a megacity.



Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: Man playing the piano with a suit
Indicative: Celebrity / A man playing pawn by acting as a very good pianist in his field
Indicated: Being ecstatic while playing the piano

- **Straight Meaning:** Good man playing the piano in the field with a suit
- **Side Meaning:** He feels like he has reached his biggest dream of becoming a jazz musician.

Figure 2. *Joe Gardner Playing Piano*

Joe's former student calls him and offers to work with one of the leading jazz artists, Dorothea Williams. For Joe, his biggest dream is about to come true. At first, he presses the keys of the pawn awkwardly, but then he plays it with ecstasy or self-consciousness, feeling as if he is playing in front of the audience on the stage where he wants to be the most. Dorathea Williams and other team members are stunned and amazed. Joe got the job, it is now a matter of waiting for the evening to become a jazz musician. While Joe is playing pawn, his blue surroundings on his

journey to realize his dream of becoming a jazz musician means he's liberated. The Navy Blue shows the meaning of freedom in almost all of the visual works. At the same time, because blue is the color of silence and calmness, this color, the tones of this color, sea, sky and oceans are frequently used in films, TV series and various advertisements (Kırık, 2013).



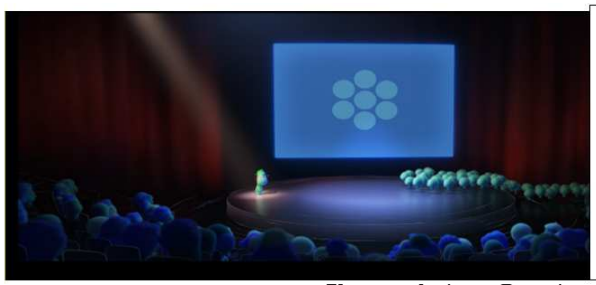
Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: Joe can be seen in the soul appearance.
Indicative: Looking confused and surprised.
Indicated: The feeling of not belonging there.

- **Straight Meaning:** Wants to return back to where he belongs.
- **Side Meaning:** To live the life which he received before dying.

Figure 3. *Joe Gardner as a Soul*

Joe's enthusiasm causes him to fall down a manhole as he walks away. Joe awakens as a soul on his way to the "Great Beyond". He seeks to flee as he doesn't want to die. The environment around him at first looks empty and dark. Which gives the feeling that he is alone there. Also, his physical appearance of the bluish turquoise color makes him look as in another world. This color combination has existed in several films where the souls are represented in a similar color style. It can be seen in past films that a soul has been several times represented in this color form. In real life, it has a visible look-alike appearance of a Hologram. Films such as *Star Wars* (Irvin Kershner, 1980) and *Iron Man 2* (Jon Favreau, 2010) have previously used hologram effect (Workman, 2013).



Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: Joe as a mentor on stage with souls on the other side.
Indicative: Unknowingly became a mentor for a soul.
Indicated: Meeting soul 22 as a mentor

- **Straight Meaning:** Showing himself as a child psychologist mentor.
- **Side Meaning:** Underneath mentorship to hide his real intention.

Figure 4. *Joe Gardner in Mentor selection*

Joe was mistaken for a mentor in this scene and was assigned to train soul 22. She is a pessimistic soul, who has spent all of her life in the Great Before and wishes to stay away from Earth. In this scene, it was visible that 22 doesn't like any of her mentors. She had mentors in the past such as Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and Mother Teresa but none of them succeeded. She shows her unsatisfactory look with evil

happiness when she meets Joe. The light in the scene has been kept as an indoor ceremony situation. The color composition is warm and the lights were focusing on the mentors.

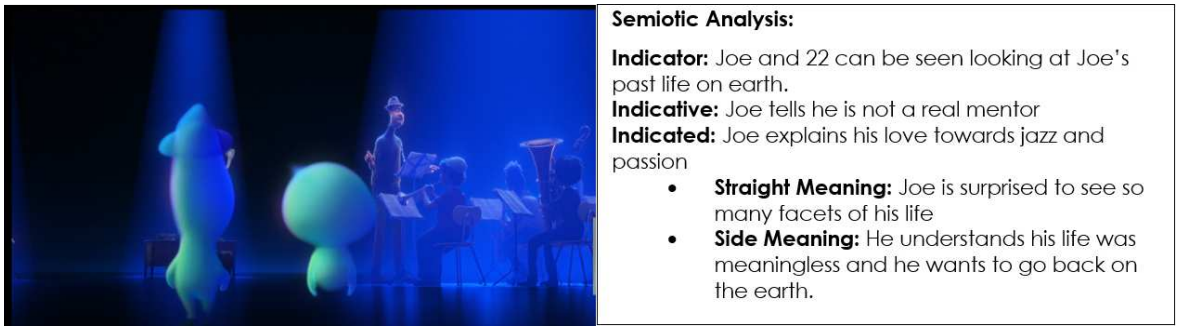


Figure 5. *Joe and 22 looking Joes past*

Joe starts mentoring 22 and explains his life as a music teacher from the earth. His passion for music 22 can be seen with his students in music lessons. However, 22 seems not interested and uninspired. Similar existence of stubborn child character can also be seen in Dreamworks Animation studio *Boss Baby* (Tom McGrath, 2017) film. They both can be seen observing the life of different mentors here. The lighting is focused on the importance of the object. As Joe loved to play piano the spotlight can be seen focusing the as well. As this place appears as an outer space hence the surrounding is dark black. The ambiance lighting here is kept bluish to give the feel of memories from a different world.

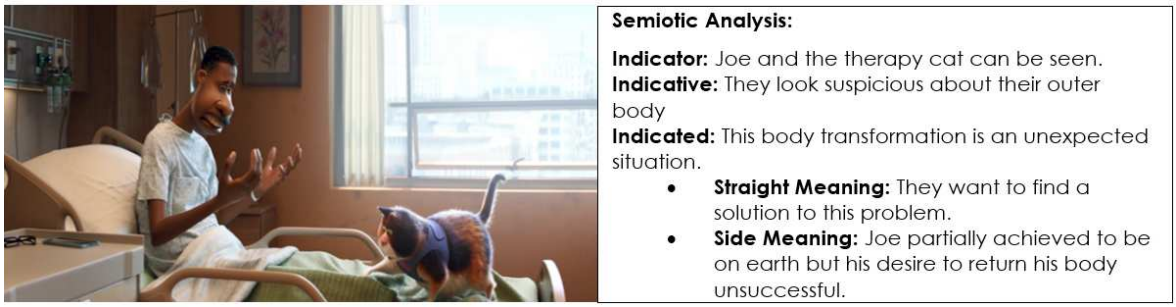
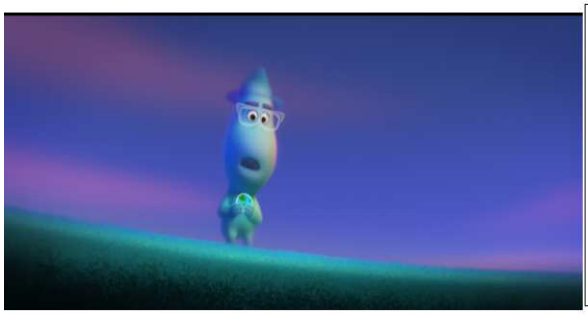


Figure 6. *Joe and 22 in their wrong body*

Joe can be seen alive with the therapy cat. Joe and 22 souls return to earth by jumping from the great before but accidentally their souls enter the wrong body. Joe's soul enters the body of a therapy cat and 22 to Joe's body. The excitement of this achievement lowers as it was not what they wanted to do. Hence they were

shocked by this body transformation and trying to find a solution to return their original body.



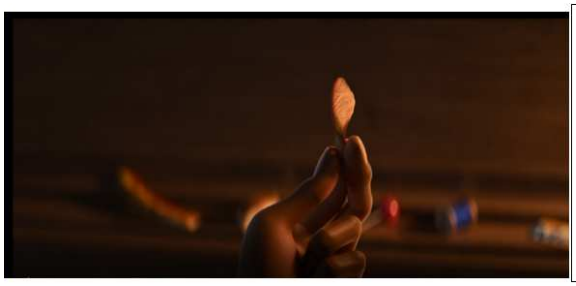
Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: Joe can be seen astonished with the earth badge.
Indicative: He want to go to earth to be live the incomplete life of his.
Indicated: It was an illusion of his to go to earth.

- **Straight Meaning:** His desire to go to earth is not with cost of sacrificing 22.
- **Side Meaning:** His biggest purpose was realised.

Figure 7. *Joe's soul holding the Earth Badge*

22 gives Joe the earth batch for him to return to earth. Joe looks towards the earth thinking to go and live the life which he left before dying. He just looks towards the earth for his spark music which is also the purpose of his life.



Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: The tree flower petal.
Indicative: The purpose of happiness.
Indicated: The memories that Joe lived when he was with 22.

- **Straight Meaning:** The importance of happiness.
- **Side Meaning:** Small happiness means a lot in life.

Figure 8. *Hand of Joe holding a Petal*

Before Joe holds the petal he looks backs at the memory in the time of what he has experienced before the happiness he received like eating a slice of the pizza, role of thread from her mother's tailor shop and other memories. Finally, Joe looks at the dry flower petal which 22 collected when she was in Joe's body and thinks about the purpose of 22. Later while playing piano he transformed to the Great Before in the lost souls section.



Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: Joe and 22 can be seen together to fly towards the earth.
Indicative: 22 looks concerned to leave Joe and go alone to earth this time.
Indicated: It is important to support others' purpose and happiness even if you can not get it.

- **Straight Meaning:** He could go but he still supports 22 to go to the earth.
- **Side Meaning:** His biggest dream is no more possible.

Figure 9: *Joe and 22 looking at each other*

Joe goes along with 22 flying towards earth however he doesn't have the permission but still he goes together as far it possible together. He sacrifices his desire to go to earth for motivating 22. Then 22 with a sad face of leaving Joe and goes towards the earth and Joe seems contented while making his way to great beyond.



Semiotic Analysis:

Indicator: Joe can be seen taking a deep breath.
Indicative: He is happy to be back to live his life.
Indicated: If you deeply wish for something you will get it.

- **Straight Meaning:** He wants to live every single moment of his life.
- **Side Meaning:** He doesn't look at just one thing in life perhaps the happiness from many things.

Figure 10: *Joe taking a deep breath*

By looking at his deeds the Jerry gives him permission to return to his real life on earth. Joe returns to Earth and begins the next day determined to enjoy every moment of his life. Joe takes a deep breath with a smile to live every minute of his life.

IDEA DEVELOPMENT OF *SOUL*

After receiving his second Academy Award for *Inside Out* (Pete Doctor & Ronnie Del Carmen, 2015), director Peter Doctor began developing the film *Soul* in January 2016 as he looked for new artistic directions. The origins of human identities, as well as the idea of determinism, were discussed by Doctor (Alessandro, 2019). Docter looked into, where should be the concentration in life, as well as in the soul? What are the things that, at the end of the day will matter when looked back on life? (Romano, 2019). This conceptual thought can be experienced in Joes' character in the film. Pixar focused on a musician as the central protagonist as they preferred a "profession the audience might cheer about" and they decided on musician after trying out a scientist, whose life was not as inherently pure as a musician's. For about two years, Docter and Jones worked on the main character's development.

According to Docter, once the creators decided on the central protagonist becoming a jazz musician, they chose to make him African-American because of how closely African-Americans have been linked to jazz history (Goldstein, 2020). Furthermore, Kemp Powers, the film's co-director, became Pixar's first African-American co-director. Powers based many aspects of Joe on his own life

because he wanted to make the character more available by transcending his own experience. Until the final screening, the producers were undecided about the film's conclusion. Joe was said to have passed on to the Great Beyond in some versions of the ending, while others saw him returning to Earth a year later or living in the Great Before as a mentor. Several brief scenes depicting 22's life on Earth after her new birth was storyboarded, including one of her reuniting with Joe in New York. However Docter decided that allowing the audience to make the decision was much more appropriate, and these scenes were eventually cut (Boone, 2020).

RELATIONSHIP OF *SOUL* WITH OTHER DISNEY PIXAR FILMS

According to Pixar theorist Jon Negroni (2021), all Pixar films are interconnected in a giant timeline. These films are part of the same universe. This theory is also known as the "The Grand Unifying Theory". The concept of *Soul* has existed in previous Pixar films. For instance, Woody and Buzz Light Year from *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995), Lightning McQueen from *Cars* (John Lasseter & Joe Ranft, 2006) and *Wall-E* (Andrew Stanton, 2008), these characters will not come to life in real-world without soul. Another similar concept of dimensions such as Great Before and Great Beyond was also seen in previous Pixar films. In *Coco* (Lee Unkrich & Adrian Molina, 2017), a whole new dimension was seen. It was known as the Land of the Dead. It is like an alternate reality a completely different world.



Image 9: *Wisp looking like soul from the film Brave*

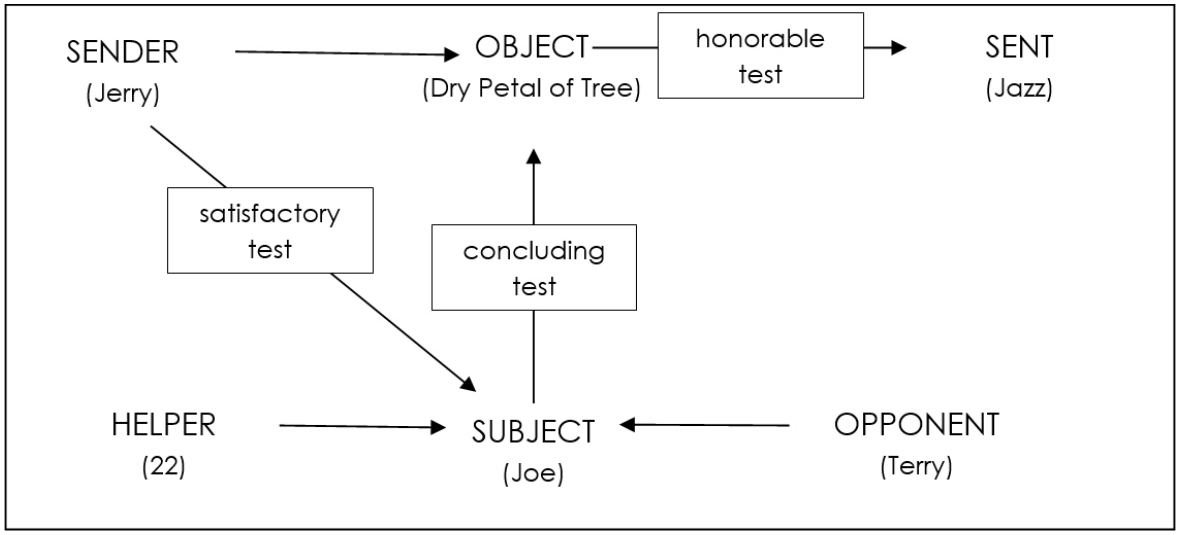
Furthermore, in the film *Brave* (Mark Andrews & Brenda Chapman & Steve Purcell, 2012) the concept of soul was also seen in the form of blue entities known as *Wisp* as shown in image 19. It could be seen in the shot where Merida the main character of the film tries to find out the witch and she follows the colour abstract

figures. These have a very close visual resemblance to the lost souls. Another scene where the existence of the soul can be seen when Merida and the bear fight and the bear got killed by the heavy stones fall on him. A rise of a blue figure can be seen. Which takes the form of a human and later it changes into the shape of a Wisp. It could be assumed that the soul got its freedom from the body for a journey to the Great Beyond. Hence the existence of the *Soul* was from long ago. Pixar always focuses on the character's need to have a soul. This is a common trait among all Pixar's Oscar-winning films.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Soul is a film about the ups and downs in life and little things that makes it worth living. This film consists of interesting details of characters and their behaviors. Every scene in the film relates to the major question of existentialism. It can be seen in the film that how society controls the choices and actions of Joe Gardener's life. He is mocked directly and indirectly because of his unsuccessful music career. But he sees hope when in one scene of the film Joe tells that "he could die as a happy man if he could perform for Dorothea Williams" and it eventually becomes true as he did die after his first performance and getting the job with Dorothea Williams. It could be seen in several other Pixar films that the meaning of life is bigger than having only ambition in life. *Soul* also signifies a similar message. This is very well explained by Joe's journey in the film to pursue his life as a human. In a scene where Joe as a therapy cat steals a slice of pizza from a shop eventhough he realizes a rat doing the same thing. This action again signifies a deeper meaning to acknowledge the value of life. In Table 1. Actantial model is used to analyze the actions, describe the different roles and functions that took place in the story. In this model the major actions, elements in the film and the coherent picture of relationships with the characters are represented.

Table 1. *Evaluation of Greimas Actantial Model of Soul*



This Actantial model was created by inspiring from the figure in Rifat's study (2019, p. 75).

This model reflects a complex relationship of Joe Gardener with the expectations of other secondary characters resulting in a loop of problems. An inner and outer conflict can be seen in Joe's character throughout the narration of the film as opposing elements lead to substantial sentimentalism. In Table 2. A general narrative program is shown. In this table, the important keyword used during different stages of the film is explained. The narrative structure is described in four stages start, glitch, transformation and result. It can be understood that at the beginning of the story Joe was in the zone of comfort but he wanted something different than his regular job. This leads him to a sequence of unfamiliar situations. He contests back to get what he wanted but had to pay a heavy price to be a soul. But in the end, due to Jerry's act of kindness, Joe returns to his real life as a changed human being.

Table 2. *General Narrative Program of the Film*

START	GLITCH	TRANSFORMATION	RESULT
Piano Playing	Fall of Joe in the manhole	Finding himself	Joe goes to Earth
Job Offer	22 as a lost soul		22 goes to Earth
Purpose	Changing to a Cat Body		Live happily every single moment with mindfulness

It was inspired by the General Narrative Program of the text in the work of Çetinkaya-Edizer (2018, p. 78).

Hence, this kind of narrative structure adds depth to the story of the film. Another important aspect that was seen in the film is the use of the principle of continuity to seamlessly connect shots and add a sense of realism to the story. For example, in frame 29.06 a cardboard box entrance was seen in which Joe and 22 enter by rushing towards it. Similar types of cardboard boxes appear again in frame 56.39 where Paul is scared by Terry. Also, in both these scenes, the characters had similar expressions of worry, fear and visibly transformed near to a desaturated gray background. Thus, the back and forth of using visual elements and props add a mechanism of continuity to the plot. In *Soul* it can be seen to find the *Spark* is another important thing in different stages of the story which was the primary requirement for the new souls. This is comprehensively explained as to try out different activities in the hall of everything. Which has a very similar resemblance to real-life scenarios. Such as collection of successful small achievements by the souls completes their Earth badge i.e., final journey to start life as a human on Earth. The idea of life's purpose is often associated with money, fame and success. *Soul* explains to value happiness as life's purpose. It emphasizes to live every moment of life and enjoy what you are doing. Everything we experience the highs, the lows, the successes, the failures, the love, the negativity that's what living life is all about. These are all part of life. Experience is the true meaning of life. Happiness in life can come from a small purpose such as walking and breathing air. We should not limit ourselves in a box. To be alive is to be happy and we should appreciate of what we have. The film leaves with a question of what you want to do for happiness.

REFERENCES

Alessandro, A. D. (2019, 29, June). 'Soul' Will Be Pixar's Big Pic Next Summer. *Deadline*. https://deadline.com/2019/06/soul-pixar-summer-2020-release-date-1202634880/. Date of Access: 10 April 2021

Andrews, M. & Chapman, B. & Purcell, S. (Director). (2012). *Brave* [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures & Pixar Animation Studios.

Boone, J. (2020, 28, December). 'Soul' Filmmakers Reveal the Movie's Original Ending. *Etonline*. https://www.etonline.com/pixar-soul-alternate-ending-spoiler-breakdown-158021. Date of Access: 15 April 2021

Çetinkaya Edizer, Z. & Gündüz, A. C. (2018). "Prensi Olmayan Masal Kitabı" Adlı Metnin Eyleyenler Modeli Çerçevesinde Değerlendirilmesi. *Erzincan Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi,* 20 (2), 499-516. DOI: 10.17556/erziefd.408603

Docter, P. & Powers, K. (Director). (2020). *Soul* [Film]. USA: Pixar.

Docter, P. & Carmen, R, D. (Director). (2015). *Inside Out* [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios.

Favreau, J. (Director). (2010). *Iron Man 2* [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Goldstein, G. (2020, 23, June). 'Soul' Producer Murray Reflects on Cannes-Selected Animated Feature. *Variety*. https://variety.com/2020/film/spotlight/soul-murray-cannes-kemp-powers-1234646745/. Date of Access: 20 April 2021

Johnson, Z. (2020, 22, December). Meet the Characters of Disney and Pixar's Soul. *The Official Disney Fan Club*. https://d23.com/meet-the-characters-of-disney-and-pixars-soul/. Date of Access: 25 April 2021

Kershner, I. (Director). (1980). *Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back* [Film]. USA: Lucasfilm.

Kırık, A. M. & Karakuş, M. K. (2013). Sosyal Medya ve İnternet Teknolojisi İle Yöndeşen Televizyon Yayıncılığı: Sosyal TV. *AJIT-e: Online Academic Journal of Information Technology,* 4 (12), 61-73 . DOI: 10.5824/1309-1581.2013.2.003.x

Lasseter, J. (Director). (1995). *Toy Story* [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures & Pixar Animation Studios.

Lasseter, J. & Ranft, J. (Director). (2006). *Cars* [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios.

McGrath, T. (Director). (2017). *The Boss Baby* [Film]. USA: DreamWorks Animation.

Negroni, J. (2021). The Pixar Theory. *Jon Negroni. https://jonnegroni.com/2013/07/11/the-pixar-theory/*. Date of Access: 15 April 2021

Movie Insider (2020). Soul Movie credits. *Movie Insider.* https://www.movieinsider.com/m13620/soul/credits. Date of Access: 18 April 2021

Noth, W. (1990). *Handbook of Semiotics*. United States: Indiana University Press.

Rifat, M. (2019). *Göstergebilimin ABC'si*. İstanbul: Say Yayıncılık.

Romano, N. (2019, 06, November). Pixar bares its Soul in first look at film with Jamie Foxx and Tina Fey. *Entertainment Weekly*. https://ew.com/films/2019/11/06/pixar-soul-photo-jamie-foxx-tina-fey/. Date of Access: 26 April 2021

Signsalad. (2021). Our Thoughts What is Semiotics?. *Sign Salad.* https://signsalad.com/our-thoughts/what-is-semiotics/. Date of Access: 05 April 2021

Stanton, A. (Director). (2008). *Wall-E* [Film]. USA: FortyFour Studios & Pixar Animation Studios.

Taylor, D. (2021, 10, August). What is Semiotics? Definition & Examples. *Study.com*. https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-semiotics-definition-examples.html. Date of Access:17 March 2021

The Disney Wiki (2020). Soul characters. https://disney.fandom.com/wiki/Category:Soul_characters. Date of Access: 28 April 2021

Unkrich, L. & Molina, A. (Director). (2017). *Coco* [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures & Pixar Animation Studios.

Weiss, A. S. (1992). *Shattered Forms: Art Brut, Phantasms, Modernism*. New York: Suny Press.

Workman, R. (2013, 23, May). What is a Hologram? *Live Science*. https://www.livescience.com/34652-hologram.html. Date of Access: 16 May 2021