

# THE FACTORY TIMES

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March 2021 | Spring Digital Issue Two





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**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

**GENESIS YEARBOOK**

**SUNY POLY PRINT SHOP**

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The Factory Times is published monthly and funded through advertising revenue and a portion of the mandatory student activities fee. It is written, designed, and published by the students of SUNY Poly. The articles inside do not reflect the views of SUNY Poly, the Student Association of SUNY Poly, or The Factory Times, but rather the view of that article's author. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or any means, except as may be expressly permitted in writing by the Publication Director.

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# GANNETT GALLERY

## New Show!

### ***2020: The Confluence***

*(Unique Stories From the Year  
That Should Never Have Been)*



## Next Show:

### **2021 STUDENT SHOWCASE!**

Submit Your Work Here:



## MAKING RELATIONSHIPS THAT LAST

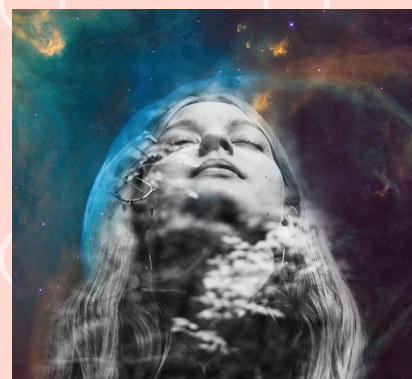
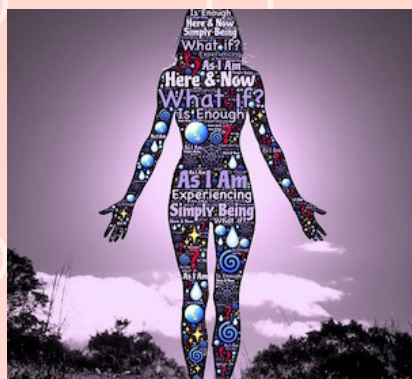
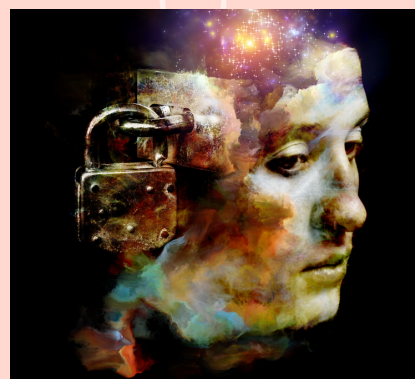
By: Joy Valencia

It's that time of year; where the cupids fly, and candy hearts read "Be Mine." While some of us enjoy Valentine's festivities, others of us cringe in disgust. No matter whether your status is single, taken, or 'it's complicated', everyone needs relationships (not just romantic ones). While relationships can bring excitement, fun, and comfort, they are hard work. I'm talking about the kind of relationships that can withstand the best and worst moments. Honestly, growing up, I wish I knew more about making lasting relationships.

For most of my life, I found myself constantly being available for other people ignoring my needs, thinking that's how relationships worked. Eventually, when I would have a crisis, I didn't know how to allow others to be there for me, or worse, I found that the people I was there for weren't there for me. As you can imagine, it left me exhausted and lonely. If you can relate, don't panic! I've decided to include advice I've heard and learned over the years. This isn't just for romantic relationships, but for any kind, from friendship to professional. By no means am I an expert on relationships, but I hope these tips can help you develop stronger, healthier, and lasting relationships.



## Know who you are



So many of us, myself included, think that somehow another person can complete us. Instead of spending time appreciating who we are as an individual, we get lost thinking how much better our life would be if we had a certain friend group, family, or significant other. No matter how perfect the fantasy seems in your head, no person will ever be able to complete you. Sure, they can make your life better and help you grow, but they can't make you accept how awesome YOU are. So, take time to get to know who you are. This can include a variety of things, from your personality to your dreams. As you understand who you are, you'll start to value yourself.

When you know your value, you set the standard for others on how to treat you. Someone once told me that we teach people how to treat us. That's why it's so important to respect yourself, because you're showing others to respect you too. This may not be easy for some of us, but it is possible and worthwhile. Instead of thinking about all things we wish we could change about ourselves, make a list of what you like about yourself. I'm serious - put on your phone or your mirror in your bag someplace where you'll notice it every day - when you know who you are, it will be easier to connect and develop more meaningful relationships with others.

## Communicate



I know this seems basic; however, it can be difficult to do. I've heard plenty of advice revolving around this topic. One area of communication I'll discuss is conflict. Everything is great when you and your friend, partner, or relative are getting along; but what happens when you don't? You can learn a lot about yourself and someone else by how they handle conflict. Some of us run away while some of us explode. Here's some advice for the next time you have a conflict.

First, say how you feel. This is also a great opportunity to say what you need if you haven't before. Some of us expect others to read us and notice that we're upset. If you're too upset to talk about the situation, say you need some time to cool down. Just remember; to eventually talk about the situation. I know it's easier and more satisfying at the moment to give the silent treatment, sweep the situation under the rug, or yell at the top of your lungs. From experience, I've learned that temporary gratification can bring enduring consequences.

Once it's time to talk about the situation, try to listen first. Listening means being present and not planning on what you're going to say to prove your point. If you don't understand what's being said, ask questions to clarify and show interest. When both perspectives are heard, take the time to exchange apologies for any hurtful behavior. It can also be a place to talk about any changes in behavior for the future. Then, love it out; I remember when my family members and I got into a conflict; we always ended in a hug because we all still love and care for each other. Sometimes it just takes time to see that.

During this whole process, being mindful of what I'm saying sounds a lot easier than putting it into practice. You may not get it right, and that's okay. As time goes along, you'll get better at handling conflict as long as you put in effort.

As the box of chocolates and roses fade, I've realized that relationships will never be that way; it is a core part of who we are. Whether you feel secure or unsure about your relationships, know there are always ways we can improve. Hopefully, from this article, you've come to see that YOU are capable of making meaningful connections, and you deserve to make them.





Whenever someone told me to enjoy my college years because they would “fly by”, I would smile before supplying a concurring quip. In actuality, I was slightly annoyed upon hearing advice of that sort; part of it being my aversion to clichés, and remarks about taking advantage of youth feeling especially trite. However, most of my misgivings came from what I perceived was implied by those who imparted such wisdom.

When one thinks of how “enjoying college” is portrayed in American culture, it typically involves binge drinking, drug use, and other illicit forms of experimentation. I naturally felt this was the type of fun being tacitly endorsed. Thus, as I’m not inclined to partake in anything illegal, I was reluctant of the upcoming collegiate experience at the time. Yet, part of me could not help but to feel guilty; if I did not “play hard” during the supposed best years of my life, would I regret it years later once fully fledged to corporate America’s rank and file?

As it turned out, my high school perspective lent itself to a false dichotomy. It was shortly after beginning college when I reached the seemingly obvious epiphany that making the best of SUNY Poly needed not involve recreating Animal House. Indeed, it was not through what I expected that these years had attained so much meaning, but rather through the insight I gained by acclimating to so much change. So that you may similarly benefit from the uncertainty that college brings, I will venture to offer some advice that, yes, I hope is not too cliché!

First, I would emphasize the importance of regularly evaluating whether your major is the best fit for you. Coming from a STEM-oriented high school, everyone had encouraged me to go into engineering, and I took little time for introspection to determine if said path really interested me. When I finally matriculated, I found that while our school has an excellent Mechanical Engineering program, I had absolutely no interest in it. Because of this apathy, my grades had begun to suffer. Feeling uncertain, I spoke to my First Year Seminar instructor, who encouraged me to share my interests with her. After this discussion, I realized that I may have been happier in the College of Business Management, as it was finance in particular that catered more to my strengths.

Aside from scholarly pursuits, people tend to discover the most about themselves through clubs and organizations. Schools know this, which is why they are so adamant about hosting club fairs so that students may “be connected with their interests.” While the intent for this reasoning is good and the underlying logic sound, I would like to append this goal, as a mention of discovering new interests also bears noting. As you are currently reading an article from The Factory Times, it can be deduced that I serve this organization as a writer. This would be an example of me connecting with my interests, as I have always enjoyed writing.

That said, my other major engagement at SUNY Poly as a leader of a Christian club is something that I never would have expected. I was a Sunday Catholic growing up, meaning that religion was only superficially significant during most of my upbringing. My freshman year of college caused me to lean more on faith, as most people do when they feel vulnerable. Because I had many questions about a belief system to which I was only nominally subscribed, I sought Poly’s Students of Christ. Although I would have laughed at the idea before, I found incredible value in connecting with my spirituality, and I gained a love for serving others which never was present in my life.

So, now we draw towards the conclusion. I would like to say that the takeaway is to prepare for and embrace the unexpected... but I expressed a desire to avoid clichés, had I not? Admittedly, there is little more I can add myself without knowing you, so I would implore you to meet people on campus who can give you a more profoundly personal insight. It is through connections with friends, peers, and mentors that we recognize new passions while critically reevaluating our standing beliefs and aspirations.

Although many of us at Poly may carry shells, I have found that at its core, our student body is incredibly approachable and insightful. There had been numerous occasions where I myself was hesitant to crawl out of my shell, but the social efforts I did make were invariably met with external kindness and rewarded with internal maturity. To that end, I would like to thank those at SUNY Poly who foster such an environment. It has indeed allowed these last few years to be among the best of my life, and I trust that those who inherit my soon-to-be alma mater will continue facilitating a non-intimidating forum which spurs personal growth for years to come.



*Written By: Jacques Anthony Bettig*

*Designed By: Yelizaveta Kiuchun*



# Confessions From a CID/IDT Student: “IDT For You and Me”

## Introduction: “Reflections and Motivations”

To those of you reading this, whether it be a fellow student, a member of faculty or staff, or even some outsider who just so happened to come across the article; looking at the title, you’re probably wondering “why am I writing this?”. After all, what type of student willingly vocalizes their academic experiences unless in the midst of some scandal, tragedy, or otherwise momentous event? However, perhaps the best counter lies in this response: my devotion to the SUNY Poly Community.

Being a highly eager and involved member of SUNY Poly over the past 3 years, I owe a lot of gratitude to what college has done for me. I’ve met some amazing people inhabiting the same classrooms as me, I’ve been taught by some truly outstanding professionals with a multitude of stories to tell, and I’ve even been a part of several amazing opportunities such as partaking in designing, writing, and even managing *The Factory Times*. The following community has invited me in wholeheartedly and allowed me to grow both physically and mentally - more so than I ever thought possible - and for that I will always remain thankful. But with this gratitude comes a sense of shock.

Ever since I’ve officially enrolled in the BS/MS CID/IDT program, with the hopes of achieving my master’s after my undergraduate graduation, I’ve come to realize that so few students take full advantage of the opportunities the IDT program can offer them. With so many undergraduates in both the Communication and Information Design and the Interactive Media and Game Design majors, it’s rather shell-shocking to see so few of them wanting to be a part of one of the very few media studies graduate programs out there. While I’m still relatively new to the program myself, I can’t help but notice the lack of communication provided, that chance to advertise just why the MS in Information Design and Technology is a great advantage for careers out there. With better chances at jobs and positions, greater average wages, and the ability for advancements, graduate programs such as these can be a steal.

So, to reach out towards potential enrollees, and possibly address some concerns associated with the graduate program itself, I’d like to present a few crucial points from my perspective, demonstrating why IDT can be of great benefit for you, just like it has for me.



**WRITTEN AND  
DESIGNED BY:  
KYLE FRENETTE**

## “Throw Me a Loan”

One of the biggest skepticisms I’ve heard in regards to signing up for the IDT Program are the expenses that come in the form of tuition and billing. It’s true, college is expensive - goodness knows I know this to a tee - , but if you think you have to break the bank to continue your education, then you’re wrong.

In a study I’ve done, comparing graduate tuition prices between various universities, I found that SUNY Poly costs \$5,655 per year, whereas private colleges come in at an average of \$18,847, almost a \$13,000 difference! While \$5,000 may still seem like a hefty amount for the average college student, especially if one already has undergraduate loans, is that really a lot compared to that same \$13,000 difference that can be earned in average wages between bachelor’s and master’s degree holders? For a brighter future, it sure doesn’t. Indeed, I’m going to have some finances to pay later on, but with college degrees slowly becoming more of a common requirement in the workforce (especially in technology-based fields), it is an investment I’m happy to make.

And for those of you currently in the CID program, you can always sign up for the BS/MS degree option your junior year or later (provided you have an appropriate 3.0 GPA). With the opportunity to take up to 12 credits of graduate courses at an undergraduate level price, this allows for those, like me, to save both time and money while working on both degrees.

## “Crossing the On-Line”

Despite the fact that we are technologically-inclined students, there’s a certain comfort to having on-campus classes, having the option to physically seek your professors or classmates for guidance. As such, I can imagine a few developing some anxiety seeing that all IDT courses are online. However, allow me to relay my current course experiences.

While I am indeed one of those people who have become used to the atmosphere associated with physical classrooms, I quickly realized that my online education was not much different. Even though I cannot directly ask a question, online education allows me to both have all the content and material needed, while also allowing me to email my professors anytime. Whereas papers and other handouts can quickly become lost and forgotten about, having everything right at your screen really allows for one to focus on seeking guidance if desired. Indeed, I cannot express enough how convenient it is to have access to projects and assignments anytime and anywhere, all while being able to contact instructors and even other students at anypoint.

And yet with such freedom and accessibility comes the double-edged sword that is responsibility. While having asynchronous online courses can be difficult to keep track of, they can also be easily managed, provided you are willing to organize a schedule. What I’ve personally done in the past is assign different classes/projects to different days of the week, allowing me to focus on specific things at a time while getting everything completed. Whether this system works for you or not is all dependent on how you react to it, but I feel the stigma of an online class module is more negative than in actuality.





# "Why You Should Focus on Getting Lost" Next Vacation

By Kurt Lui

Designed by Bobby Zuch

*When travelling, one might initially want to avoid the concept of getting lost. However, not only is this known as a method of exploring new places and getting immersed in the culture of your vacation or travel destination, you may not know that there are many other benefits to this travel strategy. If wandering aimlessly rather than following a specific path, you open yourself to experiencing benefits such as a more authentic view of your destination, less crowds, and so much more. Read on, and find out why you should aim to get lost on your next trip (once it is safe to travel once more)... just be sure to bring a map or GPS on your device!*

## Save Money – A Lot of Money

Vacations and travelling are already expensive, why waste more money? When you go to the most popular spots, you are often going to a place where businesses have realized they can make good money by overcharging for everything. While this may not seem the case in certain places, if you look carefully, you'll find that hot spots have increased prices for everything from the food to the parking spaces! This can make an especially big difference when travelling to countries that aren't fully using converted prices. Imagine the cost difference that a location using U.S. conversion rates has, compared to a spot that prices according to the local currency! Not only can you save money, but you can afford to spend more, which can positively contribute to a good business's livelihood.

## Avoid Tourist Traps and have a more Authentic Experience

No one likes tourist traps. They overcharge (as previously mentioned), they tend to give watered-down versions of the history of the location, and they are often packed with meaningless merchandise at the gift shops. Wouldn't it be better to just wander about and fully experience what your travel destination has to offer? When you trek aimlessly around a destination, you aren't directing yourself to anything a tourist company has tried to rope you into, but are rather straying off the path, and giving yourself a genuine chance to experience the everyday culture of wherever you're vacationing.

## Cut the Crowds and Save the Environment

While environmental friendliness does not often seem to be on many tourists' lists, not having to deal with litter and excessive crowds should be. When you go to a destination that isn't known or common for travel, you actively separate yourself from lines, crowds, and all of the other problems associated with well-known locations. The less known a place is, the more you can enjoy it, and perhaps more willingly take responsibility to keep it enjoyable (after all, no one wants to be the first person to toss garbage somewhere). If everyone diversified their choices in travel locations, versus going to the most famous beach or bar in the area, there would be a lot less human impact on favorite vacation spots. But for now, you as an individual can at least experience this yourself by choosing to end up in a vastly different place. Who knows, you might find the perfect place to enjoy all to yourself!

## Enjoy More Spontaneity in Your Vacation

Isn't the point of travel or a vacation to break routine? Why work with tight tourism schedules when you can enjoy a destination at your own pace? When you wander aimlessly, you are in control of your vacation, and have the ultimate say in what you do! So the next time you're travelling, consider all the new possibilities that lie within throwing away that tourist brochure and walking in whatever random direction interests you. It's interesting, unique, and incredibly fun!



# California: High and Mighty

Written and Designed by Paul Gluck

As we approach the 9<sup>th</sup> month of quarantine, it doesn't look like things are going to improve anytime soon. We're seeing an uptick in COVID cases all across the United States, and with those cases come the lockdowns. Of these lockdowns, California, the most populous state in the country, has some of the strictest rules of all.



California Governor Gavin Newsom said last week that he is pulling the "emergency brake" on the reopening of California and set 94% of Californians to face the strictest set of rules that close indoor churches, indoor dining, and gyms, along with most other indoor businesses. Newsom has also said that he is keeping schools closed, however malls are allowed to operate at 25% capacity, which raises some questions regarding the valuation of education.



With this re-lockdown of the state comes cries from business owners who are forced, once again, to close, even after following all the state guidelines to get their business opened. Dr. Mark Ghaly, the state secretary of health, has said that research shows business have been sources of virus transmission. However, Brad Pollock, the associate dean of public health sciences at UC Davis, said that "the jury is still out" on whether the closing down of businesses will actually help stop the spread. Most business owners argue that a clean and sanitary restaurant is safer than a friend's living room, and yet, millions of employees across the state are once again unemployed.

Newsom seems to agree with that argument, as he and his wife were caught attending a friend's birthday party with "dozens" of friends at the ritzy French Laundry restaurant in the wine country north of San Francisco. This news came shortly after many California Legislators went to Hawaii to attend a "political conference", even in the wake of a new travel policy that "urges

residents to avoid non-essential travel." Newsom was upfront in his apology and said that he's concerned that he "may" have undermined his own message.

This is all following the August scandal where Speaker of the House, and Californian, Nancy Pelosi was caught on video getting her hair done, without a mask, during a time period where hair salons were forbidden to operate in the city of San Francisco. Many were outraged by this news and claims of a "double-standard" became a common cry. Pelosi, however, claimed that she was the victim of a "politically motivated set-up" and lashed out at the owner of the salon who let her come in.

A spokesperson of Pelosi claimed ignorance and said that "The Speaker complied with the rules as presented to her by this establishment." Pelosi also came out herself to retort the footage that was leaked where she is seen without a mask on,

"I just had my hair washed. I don't wear a mask when I'm washing my hair. Do you wear a mask when you're washing your hair? I always have a mask. For me, for the people I'm encountering, but for my family as well. But I don't wear it when I'm getting my hair washed, and that picture was when I just came out of the bowl, getting my hair washed."

Pelosi was then asked whether or not she thinks she should apologize to the industry workers who are currently unemployed because of actions like hers, responding, "Well I don't. I think that this salon owes me an apology for setting [me] up." Pelosi again claimed that she didn't know about the ban on salons, although famous comedian and podcaster, Joe Rogan, hit back saying, "I don't even have hair and I know that salons are closed."

California has released a new gatherings policy in-time for the holiday season which has also been controversial, prohibiting gatherings of more than 3 households, requiring the recording of names and contact information of everyone present so contact tracing is possible, and "strongly discouraging" singing, chanting, and shouting. Many residents feel this is an infringement on their rights and freedom as a citizen, following in the wake of many lawsuits against Gavin Newsom being filed and ruled, with one even ruling against Newsom, over the reach of a Governor's executive power.

With all of the hypocrisy in politics, on both sides, and in life, I think it is important to keep in mind a quote from the former first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, "It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself."

- Paul Gluck





# BAD BUNNY: CHART-RISING LATIN ARTIST

BY: LINDA PAREDES

From the start of Daddy Yankee's "Gasolina", released in 2005, to the most recent hit in "Despacito", Latin music has become popular in the music mainstream, mainly Reggaeton. Reggaeton, known as Latin trap, has become one of the most mainstreamed music genres today, with skyrocketing Youtube views, Billboard chart placements, and global concert sales. Currently, Bad Bunny holds as one of few artists for the most chart-topping hits in the music mainstream today.

Bad Bunny aka Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio was born in 1994 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He began singing at the age of five and always took it seriously, with his big inspirations being Hector Lavoe, Vico C, Daddy Yankee, and Marc Anthony. He studied audiovisual communication at the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo and worked in a grocery store as a bagger while making his own music by night, posting it to Soundcloud. Bad Bunny signed to the "Hear This Music" label in 2016 after DJ Luian found one of his songs "Diles" interesting.



"Soy Peor", issued in December of 2016, became one of Bad Bunny's breakthrough singles, peaking at #22 on the Hot Latin Songs chart and its video pulling in more than 650 million views. In early 2017, he kicked off an especially prolific run with singles "Pa Ti", "Loco Pero Millonario", and "Dime Si Vas a Volver," amid numerous collaborative tracks with Poeta Callejero, Farruko, Brytiago, Almighty, and others.



In late 2017, Bad Bunny, along with J Balvin and Prince Royce, scored with the collaboration "Sensualidad" and again in 2018 with the solo track "Amorfoda", alongside another collaboration with J Balvin and American Rapper Cardi B on her single "I Like It", which topped Billboard's Hot 100 in the summer of that year.

In late 2018, Bad Bunny issued his debut album, "x100pre", which hit number one on the Latin albums chart within a week of release and peaked at number 12 on the Billboard Top 200 Album in January of the following year. The songs ranged from the pop-punk of "Tenemos Que Hablar" to the reggaeton ballads of "Solo de Mi" and "Si Estuviesemos Juntos", to the tense hip-hop of "Caro".



In June 2019, Oasis, the long-teased full-length collaboration between Bad Bunny and J Balvin, released, peaking at number nine in the Billboard Top 200 album. At that year's Latin Grammys, Bad Bunny took home the award for "x100pre" as Best Urban Album. He surprised more fans with the unexpected release of his second full length album "YHLQMDLG" ("Yo hago lo que me de la gana: I do whatever I want") at the end of the February of this year. This album contained a set collaboration with Daddy Yankee, Yaviah, Nengo Flow, Anuel AA, and Jowell y Randy, entering the Billboard Top 200 at number two and becoming the highest debut appearance of an album by a Latin artist.



# Living The Stream

Written and Designed By:  
Kyle Frenette

Within the 2010's, and now even more so as we continue through the 2020's, there has been a noticeable decline in the popularity of cable television. It's almost impossible to imagine the slow, yet subtle downfall of something so popular and prevalent as cable was. Decades after decades, millions were raised by the juggernaut of the media industry, supplying them with a seemingly endless array of channels and content, both live and recorded. From the high-stakes dramas, to the spectacles of sports, as well as the absurdity of sitcoms, cable has quenched humanity's thirst for entertainment.

Now though, a new competitor in the entertainment sector has gradually risen into the hearts of many. Digital streaming, accessing different platforms to arrange a variety of content, has become the new standard for dozens upon dozens of households and it's easy to see why. One big reason is the near deletion of commercials and long advertisement breaks, allowing people the opportunity to remain in the midst of their favorite programs - and consequently watch more in the process - without the required pauses. Another major factor to consider is the ability to access your favorite shows and episodes whenever. While cable channels often hosted different genres and shows, more than likely providing you with your interests, the system wasn't as fine-tuned as streaming has shown. With cable, you may find your favorite or desired show, but not in the time-frame or capacity you seek. With streaming however, you can access any show or episode provided whenever you want, giving viewers more of their specified requests and making streaming much more "personalized" than television ever was.

While there are definitely crucial benefits to the phenomenon known as streaming, there is one key negative that is always brought to audiences' attention - the exclusive natures of the platforms themselves. Currently, with several different services available, including Netflix, Hulu, HBO Max, AppleTV, YoutubeTV, Disney+ and more, it's important to note that each service comes with its own list of available shows and movies... and its own subscription. Something you may enjoy may be on Netflix, while another may be on AppleTV; do you miss out on one of these interests or do you cough up the cash to have both channels? Indeed, this is the one (major) disadvantage with streaming over traditional cable, having select titles only be available within certain networks. While monthly multiple subscriptions are certainly cheaper than even the most basic cable packages these days, this is no doubt an affordance caused by a capitalist society and the corporations that run these platforms. Add in the fact that these networks are now creating their own original series, and viewers may be left with decisions to ponder, especially when on a tight budget.

My advice before considering streaming services is to take a list at the shows, movies, (or genres), you/your friends and family actively like or watch and choose your networks from there. True, it is rather unfortunate that these platforms have grown to a level where they are splitting the market, but the number of options with each service is still expansive, and again, certainly cheaper than cable providers. Whatever decision you may come to, the future of streaming is growing into quite the juggernaut in the entertainment realm, providing a more individualized and accessible framework that is surely a heavily welcomed presence in the household, much as television and cable networks were for previous generations.



It's no doubt that Bad Bunny will become one of the biggest artists in world if he continues to appeal to his widespread fanbase with his melds of Latin soul, pop, and R&B, hard-hitting trap beats, and reggaeton, providing a slippery delivery that revels in allowing emotions to color in his songs.

DESIGNED BY: MCDHELLYNE EDWARDS



A promotional image for the movie Soul. On the left is Joe Gardner, a middle-aged Black man with a mustache, wearing a grey fedora and glasses. On the right is Soul, a small, glowing blue and green character with glasses and a bow tie. The background is a dark blue gradient with a diagonal light blue line.

# "THIS MOVIE'S GOT SOUL"

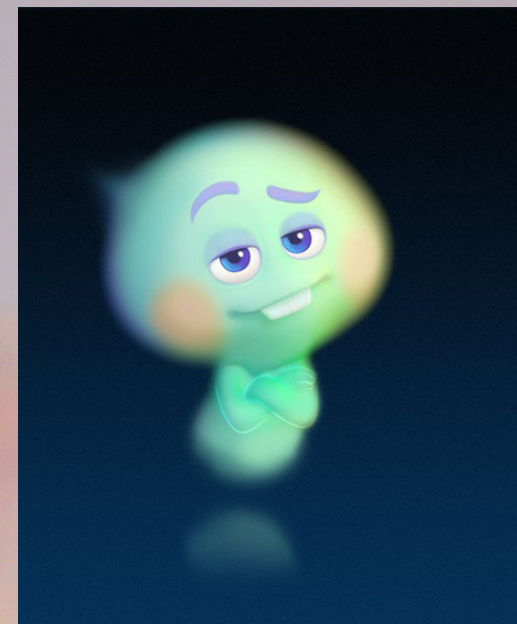
*By: Kyle Frenette*

Have you ever wondered what the meaning of life is? Do you contemplate your existence; questioning whether your purpose, your legacy, matters in the grand scheme of life? Billions upon billions of souls - our essences - traverse the world every day, yet what does it mean for us to be living right here and now? While these may be complex and rather deep questions to process, I'm sure many of us have thought about what it means to be "alive" or to be "in the moment", wherever your passions or goals lead, and that's precisely what Disney/Pixar's Soul represents.

In an effort to provide existential insight into individualism and the meaning of life, Pixar's latest masterpiece tells the story of middle school band teacher, Joe Gardner, who is shown to be a rather mild-mannered type of guy, yet feels he is lacking "importance" in his life. This all changes though when Joe encounters an old student of his who sets him up with the chance to perform in the band of a legendary jazz artist.

Joe's excited for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, feeling that this is the big break he's been waiting for, until he unexpectedly falls into a manhole, taking him to the realm of the "Great Before" - a land preparing unborn souls for life - where he is mistaken for a new soul counselor. There, he is assigned to guide 22, a rather cynical soul who feels there is no purpose in going to Earth and starting a life (despite the number of counselors she has had previously). There, the two form an unlikely partnership as 22 agrees to help Joe reconnect with his body in exchange for allowing her to remain in the Great Before.

The duo eventually find a way back to Earth... only for their souls to be swapped as Joe becomes trapped in the body of a cat while 22 becomes... Joe! With the band performing that night, wacky shenanigans ensue as Joe now must find a way to guide 22 through human living and reunite with his body so he can perform.



Throughout the film, Soul is rather unique in that it subtly diverges from some of the traditional Disney/Pixar formula. I feel an essential example of this is in the comedy. While there are certainly laughs (especially during the "body swap" events in the later part of the movie), the humor isn't the focus, rather much of the jokes and laughs come from more subdued and spread out moments more so than an obvious set-up. This by no means subtracts from the movie at all, in fact I believe this is one of the most entertaining Pixar films overall, but just note that the humor isn't what the movie is trying to highlight.

Rather, I feel the strongest aspect of the film is in the character development and how it guides the story. If there's one thing I love about Disney/Pixar movies, it's the intriguing and in-depth characters they have provided audiences for generations; from rats to robots, these films always make it a priority to drive the entertainment through the actions of the characters, and Soul is no exception.

Without spoiling any major developments or events of the movie (besides the basic plot summary I delivered), I firmly believe that Joe and 22 may be some of the strongest characters I've ever seen. The characters have desires and motives that we can empathize with. We understand Joe's struggles with inheriting some legacy; he's not necessarily disappointed where he is with his current job, but rather he's frustrated as he feels like he should be more. And with 22, she may seem cold at first, but she's that way because she's been beaten down by a millennia of previous failures and others giving up on her. But as the film progresses, we can see how each character plays off each other and how they learn over the course of the plot. We see 22 begin to enjoy all the little moments and experiences of everyday life, something Joe lost sight of through his persistence to "succeed". We see people that Joe daily interacts with and all the moments and feelings they have, another aspect he took for granted. The character interactions and progressions ultimately culminate in the climatic third act, which while I can't go into detail without spoiling, really highlights these characters and the story they go through at their finest.







At the end of the day, Soul may be Disney/Pixar's most philosophical movie yet. While they have definitely provided high-depth analysis and insight in the past, I don't think any of them are as prevalent as the concept of existence. This film does an outstanding job at showing us that life isn't about an end game or achieving certain goals; while those can certainly be motivators for moving forward, they are by no means the definitive conclusion. Soul instead captures those everyday moments - the times we smile, laugh, explore, adventure, learn, feel... - as a true necessity for life; the things we - myself included - often overlook

Soul is a movie that not only left me smiling, but also thinking. Reflecting on memories or moments I had forgotten, those small moments that have left an impact one way or another, and I hope that maybe this picture can encourage others to do the same. With brilliant characters, an innovative story, and even other impressions I left out such as the vivid animation and the surprisingly soothing soundtrack, this is one film I'd highly recommend to everyone. Whether you agree with my review or not, I personally find this to be one of Pixar's best.



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