The Mystical Heroic Symbol of the 21st Century: The Mermaid As The Symbol Of Charm And Secrets In Different Cultures

Nebahat AKGÜN ÇOMAK
Galatasaray University
Turkey

Nilüfer PEMBECİOĞLU
Istanbul University
Turkey

***Abstract* - Tiny little details give us the clues of the big important things. It is important to notice, analyze and the clues as to find the real matters behind. The paper discusses how the values attributed to the mermaid image affect the consumption of the communication messages, expectations, and productions of the media with its charming and glazed "Mermaid" icon. The temptation, beauty and charm of the mystical heroine Melusine in media with its seductiveness as well as the insatiable enjoyment coincide with each other.**

After analyzing the examples of the past narratives and mythologies, current examples are collected and pinpointed to understand how the mermaid icon is changed, used, positioned and acknowledged in today's world. The paper discusses different attributions made to the image of mermaid on one hand and on the other hand evaluates the products through 12T's approach, analyzing its deeply rooted semiotic meanings, through its cultural, intercultural, mythological and symbolic meanings evolved in it.

Key Words: Mermaid, Myths, Social Media, Intercultural Values, Starbucks, Brand-making Strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Tiny little details give us the clues about the big important things. It is important to interpret and analyze the clues leading us to find the real matters behind. If we take coffee for example, as the theme to be analyzed we need to understand the appearances and uses of coffee in different cultures, what kind of meanings are attributed to the coffee consumption and who is the main target audience for the product as well as what are the main labels. Only then, one might position the cup of coffee and its meaning as well as its value and how with the demands of the young generations, positioning of coffee in their life styles and daily digest change.

Sometimes it is with the taste of the new products, sometimes with the nostalgia of the fairy tales, sometimes with the impact of the media, people change their values, systems, life styles or expectations. Especially with the help of more rapid communication strategies or with the help of the technology and social networks, the images become more important and popular than the thing and meaning itself. For example, the coffee needed no branding in Turkey for many years, yet, with the impact of the new global, world-wide known brands, launched in Turkish market, specifically the local companies recently produced their own brands and positioned themselves into the market.

The example of coffee is somewhat similar to media because its consumption requires a peaceful atmosphere in dignity, spare time and concentration of the individual as well as the groups and societies. Coffee is tasteful and has the potential of making addiction just like the media use. There are so many different types of coffee to choose that's why the individual choices are important. Even if the coffee types are limited the consumption rates might change from one society to another. Sometimes it's the season, sometimes it's the location or the type of coffee could be the main factor affecting the choices. It resembles to media very much, in the way of its consumption which is only possible within a group that people like to talk over a cup of coffee. Thus branding the coffee is very important for creating new markets and wide audiences. With its fortunetelling sessions, coffee has an important role for the people in Turkey and thus requiring an important brand making strategy. The coffee companies are struggling more with promoting their brands or associating themselves with interesting stories because in the 21st century what sells more than the coffee itself is the story.

One of the selling brands is Starbucks and how the values attributed to the Starbucks brand affected the coffee consumption in Turkey is a great concern for most of the others. With its charming and glazed "Mermaid" icon it represents the temptation, beauty and charm of the mystical heroine Melusine and seductiveness. Apart from the associations that could be rooted into the figure Melusine and coffee, it is interesting to figure out how the mythological heroine turned to be a well know brand icon in the 21st century. Yet, this coffee brand is not the only example to prove how popular the mermaids are in nowadays. Regarding the animation films, toys and even

This work was supported by Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit of Galatasaray University – Project number 17.300.009 – "Kültür, Mitoloji ve Simgesel İletişim – Culture, Mythology and Cultural Communication

Copyright © GSTF 2018
ISSN 2301-3710
doi: 10.5176/2301-3710_JMComm18.127

GSTF © 2018

electronic-computer games some kind of, "mermaidization" syndrome is developed. Hundreds of films were produced and many different brands designed and produced mermaids as toys for all ages. Yet, nobody notices the dynamics behind nor they are questioned through the parents, sociologists or else.

II. Aim and Methodology

The paper discusses how the values attributed to the mermaid image affect the consumption of the communication messages, expectations, and productions of the media with its charming and glazed "Mermaid" icon. The temptation, beauty and charm of the mystical heroine Melusine in media with its seductiveness as well as the insatiable enjoyment coincide with each other.

After analyzing the examples of the past narratives and mythologies, current examples are collected and pinpointed to understand how the mermaid icon is changed, used, positioned and acknowledged in today's world. The paper discusses different attributions made to the image of mermaid on one hand and on the other hand evaluates the products through 12T's approach, analyzing its deeply rooted semiotic meanings, through its cultural, intercultural, mythological and symbolic meanings evolved in it.

III. Findings

Melusine or Melusina is a figure of European folklore and mythology (mostly Celtic), a female spirit of fresh water in a sacred spring or river. Having its good and evil roots, the figure is usually associated with its water source. It's the same for the water having good or evil sources as the figure. By definition, "Mermaid" is a said to be a primitive sea creature. Even if it is not clear whether it is a girl or a fish it is a universal fairytale symbol. In the story of "The Little Mermaid" having different versions all over the world, a little mermaid falls into a deep love with the Prince who suddenly falls into the ocean and had a risk of suffocation. As a well-known fairytale, "The Little Mermaid" and specifically its Disney version travelled all around the world not only with its animation version but also all with the books, drawing books, bags, toys, clothes and all the other mermaid printed or labeled products.

A. Mermaids in Different Cultures and Narratives

The image of mermaid keeps on appearing in media and social media. It is used in almost all cultures and geographies. Mermaids appear in the folklore of many cultures worldwide, not only shaping the oral literature or narratives but also the life-space and design. For example, statues and sculptures of mermaids can be found in many countries and cultures, with over 130 public art mermaid statues across the world. The one in Copenhagen is the most famous one. The mermaid figure appears in folklore from Greece, the British Isles, Europe, Africa and Asia. Ancient Greece is where the original tale of mermaids first came from. The earliest version goes back from Assyria around 1,000 BC. The legend of Greek goddess Atargatis jumping into the lake and becoming fish from the waist down, was believed to be the first story of mermaids [1]. But her godly beauty could not be concealed and so she became half human and half fish. From there, the Greeks recognized her in their own mythology as Derketo. After that, there is speculation that this myth influenced in some way the tale of Aphrodite and Eros who became fish and are today honored in the constellation Pisces [2].

To most of the sources, people first speculated that humans may have developed from seagoing creatures and the idea of a hybrid species and thus the mysticism and romanticism behind a mermaid or a merman appeared. Their hybrid composition probably gives them the hybridization of good and evil parts as well. A Norman chapel in Durham castle has a picture of a mermaid carved into a wooden bench, being the first form of evidence that people believed in mermaids in England as well [2]. There have since been stories of mermaids trying to lure men into the waters only to drown them. A similar scene could also be found in the 21st century made film "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides" attributes to this belief.

Media overemphasized the mermaid images with the classically beautiful long-haired woman with a fish tail from the waist down. Yet, different cultures depict these sea creatures in much different fashion [2]. For example, "The Ningyo" from Japan is markedly different from the western view of a mermaid. The Ningyo is depicted as a giant fish with a human face and the mouth of a monkey [2]. It was believed that whomever ate one would be granted eternal youth and beauty. This came at a risk, however, for it was believed that catching one would bring terrible storms and mishaps upon a person's village. There is a feature film handling this belief directed by Miguel Ortega titled as "The Ningyo" (2017) telling us the story of Dr. Marlowe, a paleontologist and professor, finding a piece of a map pointing to the place where the Ningyo. What he could not anticipate is that, in his search, he is confronted with a choice that puts the very foundations of his morality to the test.

In some cultures mermaids turn to be the Nymphs of water having good spirited or evil spirited ones. The cradle of human civilization, Africa, has its mermaid tales about water spirits called Mami Wata ('Mother of the Water'). Sometimes they were described as mermaids, sometimes as men, others as snake charmers [2]. Similarly, as Akpabio stated [3], the themes of Nollywood films are indeed broad and covering Nigerian, African and universal issues: including mermaids, witchcraft, the spirit world etc. as well. These images of mermaids not only venerated in African folk stories but also the stories even made it to the Americas. Potter also attributes to mermaids as the far end creatures in an ideologically mocking style such as Haiti People blamed to be mermaids [4]. Hayward [5] in the book "Making a splash: mermaids (and mer-men) in 20th and 21st Century Audiovisual Media" refers to the mer-men as well as the mermaids. The book also concentrates on the production

GSTF © 2018

dynamics of the recent decade as well as the new millennium.

It also appears that mermaids, Mami Wata and the Sirens of Greek mythology may share a connection. The Mami Wata were feared, especially the females that allegedly lured men to their deaths. This bears striking similarity to the Greek tales of sirens with their captivating voices luring sailors into shipwreck.

Speaking of luring sailors, Brazil has its stories of Iara, the Lady of the Waters. It is also spelled as Uiara or Yara or Mãe das Águas as a figure from Brazilian mythology based on ancient Tupi and Guaraní mythology, originally a water snake, over the years through folklore, Iara changed into an immortal woman with long flowing hair and piercing green eyes who lured men to her underwater palace [2]. To this day, Iara is thought by some to have been responsible for the accidents and disappearances of many men of the Amazon.

Scotland And Orkney Islands attribute to mermaids as Selkies as gentle creatures who live their lives as seals while in the water and shed their skin to become human on land, but they're frequently equated with mermaids because in Gaelic stories they are associated with maighdeann-mhara, or "maid of the sea." [2]. Selkie legends usually end in tragedy; the folktales almost inevitably feature a selkie's sealskin getting stolen and the selkie getting married and having children with a human, only to later find its old sealskin and get called back to the sea.

Most tales of mermaids are passed down through spoken tales and pictures—and in New Zealand's Maori folklore, they are also seen in carvings. A little more intense than a mermaid, the Marakihau is a *taniwha* (guardian) of the sea [2]. It has a human head and the body of a very long fish, as well as a long, tubular tongue that is often blamed for destroying canoes and swallowing large quantities of fish.

A feminine spirit found in many medieval European folk stories, the Melusine has a serpentine tail and occasionally sports wings. France, Germany, Luxembourg and Albania all have varying tales of Melusine, but the general legend describes her as a willful maiden who attempts revenge on her father on behalf of her mother, only to be punished by her mother with a serpent's tail [2]. Melusine is especially connected with France as the royal French house of Lusignan claimed to be decedents of her. Images of this sea fairy can be seen over the world—especially on the coffee cups of Starbucks, which has a Melusine-like mermaid as its logo.

In Ireland - Merrow a magical cap called a *cohuleen druith* enables merrows to live under the water [2]. Female merrows, with their long green hair, are similar to traditional sirens—the beautiful, half-human fish of mythology. Male merrows, however, are considered hideous and frightening, more fish than man. And they're cruel—so cruel that merrow women were said to often have relationships with human men. Their offspring might have scales and webbing between their fingers. Merrows frequently become tired of the land and try to find a way to return to the sea—with or without their human family.

Often translated as “mermaid,” these water nymphs of Slavic myth were originally considered benevolent because they came out of the water in the spring to water crops. But the mythology also has a darker side: Rusalka are thought to be the spirits of girls who died violently, and thus they frequently lure men and children to their own watery deaths. Their translucent skin gives them a ghost-like appearance, and they'll sometimes use their long hair to trap and entangle their victims [6].

In the areas of Norway And Orkney Islands, mermaids appear in Finfolk culture as a less traditional version since finfolk are shape-shifters of the sea [6]. Considered nomads who can alternate between living on land and at their ancestral home—Finfolkaheem—finfolk tend to have an antagonistic relationship with humans. They often abduct humans for their spouses, making them more servant than partner. Finfolk also have an affinity for silver, and one might be able to escape their grasp by throwing a silver coin their way.

Although mermaids are often seen as bad in England, sometimes they are supposedly kind and help cure diseases. In Eastern Europe, mermaids are known as Rusalkas and are said to be young women who die tragic deaths especially of drowning before their wedding. They are said to inhabit lakes and rivers and have long pale green hair and pale skin, representing weeds in the lakes. These creatures can be seen at night, dancing about and luring young men into the sea.

An image could appear simultaneously in different geographies or at different times of history they may appear in the narratives. In Anatolian culture in myths, in legends, we come across with the mermaids icon as "Sirens", "Water Nymphs", "Mermaid" and "Medusa-Şahmeran". Sirens are different from Marine Girls. The sirens have two tails. In Turkey, Smyrna, there are Siren rocks in Foça. There are seals on these rocks and the name of Foça is from "Phokhaia". According to the legend, it is believed that mermaids live in these rocks [7].

Originated from Greek mythology. Mermaids are first mentioned in Odyssey in a narrative form having a female body, birds-like wings and beautiful sounds. Later on, the bird wings had disappeared and the half-women turned into a fishlike creature with a half-fish tail. Famous Turkish poet Melih Cevdet Anday refers to Sirens in his 1962 poem entitled "Odysseus with Arms Crossed" and states that "Do not stay in the middle of the sea again / you will meet Sirens first / protect yourself from them / you'll be grown up with wild tales” [8].

In Mythology Medusa is the mortal one of the three monster sisters. In other words, it is one of the Gorgos. When Perseus cuts off the head of Medusa she gave birth to two children. One of them is Pegosos and the other one is

GSTF © 2018

Khrysaor. Being three sisters, Gorgos are three sisters. Sthenno, Euryale and the mortal Medusa. These three sisters' hair is knitted with snakes. They have gold wings to fly and bronze hands. Medusa is only mortal one, from the three Gorgor or fearful sisters [9]. The head of the Medusa is located in the Yerebatan Cistern in Istanbul. According to the legend, Medusa has the power of turning anyone looking at her into a stone. For this reason, the head is positioned in the opposite direction so that no one could meet the eyes and turn to stone.

One other popular image of mermaid could be found in the form of Shahmaran in Anatolia and neighboring countries. The way it's been related to the mermaid is that perhaps they also live underground and where the underground waters or wells could be found around as well as being half woman and half reptile like a snake.

Şahmeran "Shah-i meran" is the king of the Persian snakes, but at the same time she takes its power from the water, having the upper body of a woman as a female entity yet having a tail. In the Altar mythology it has the body of the Snake Goddess "Erlik" who is surrounded by all the snakes of the world. Usually known as Erbüke meaning "Snake progenitor", er meaning "man" and büke meaning twisted "dragon" as the ancestor of the woman in health and dignity.

In Turkish mythology, the snake symbol is on the drums of the shaman - kam represents the underground world. Resembling the snakes the feminine creatures are associated with change, mobility, unreliable ones with a long and beautiful body. Even if the modern culture does not reproduce the replicas even nowadays, the expressions such as "let the snake that does not touch me live long – meaning let sleeping dogs lie", or "falling into the sea anybody could become friends with the snake – meaning desperate times call for desperate measures or a drowning man will clutch at a straw - to one who has lost his way, a dog's bark is sweeter than the song of the nightingale", "stepping on the snake's tail – meaning let sleeping dogs lie", "feeding the snake in the bosom – meaning nourish a viper in one's bosom", "snaking like a snake" are still alive. Also in Dede Korkut's Stories', for Salur Kazan, "There was a living snake that came down from the sky, swallowing every man, when he saw, Salur Kazan, his head was cut and he did not give a damn to its request for mercy." [10].

In folkloric narratives Shahmaran is often depicted as a wise, intelligent woman, having female features above the waist and those of a serpent below. She is described as the queen of the snakes that could move very fast both in the world and underworld. And when the Shahmaran dies, it is said that her spirit will pass to her daughter [11]. The main issue here is that Shahmaran having the secret of living long and healthy is the creature to be hunted by human. There are many different versions to the legend, but in almost all she is depicted as the one falling in love with a man and after living with him for a long time helping him to go to the world again consequently kill the enemy. The surroundings include atmospheres like caves, wells and baths, hammams where there is enough water to feed her wet part and tail as well. Sahmeran has been a symbol of wisdom and fertility of the women's cultures and used as a protective symbol. Sahmeran prayer is also considered as an important symbol of protection power and turned to be an important symbol in the form of the wall paintings, on the tables, on the pillows and handkerchiefs of specifically throughout the East and South East of the country.

Even today, snakes are considered to be the symbol of pharmacy and medicine is. In Sultanahmet – Istanbul, there stands the "antiquity column", made of bronze as an ancient Greek monument, made up of three python snakes. It's been believed that the serpentine column protects the surroundings from insects and snakes because Shahmaran lives on the seventh floor under of the earth and is constantly concealed because after being expelled from the Paradise, it is said to be cursed by God and being convict to live underground. Providing the legend for the new generations, the film Shahmaran (1994) was directed by Zülfi Livaneli, and starred by Türkan Şoray and Mehmet Balkız.

B. Mermaids In Films

After the success of the Little Mermaid, most of the producers developed similar scenarios for feature films or for TV movies and series. Even having some other forms of characters, most of the series devoted at least a few episodes to the mermaids.

Searched for the Word "Mermaid" IMDb displays 200 results and YouTube provides 10.000 videos. According to the data, mermaids in visual world are mostly in the form of feature films (34%) whereas it is also possible to have the TV Series (8%) reaching with their episodes (24%) to a larger sum of the group. There is also the TV Movies reaching up to 6% and even games (1%) and video games (3%).

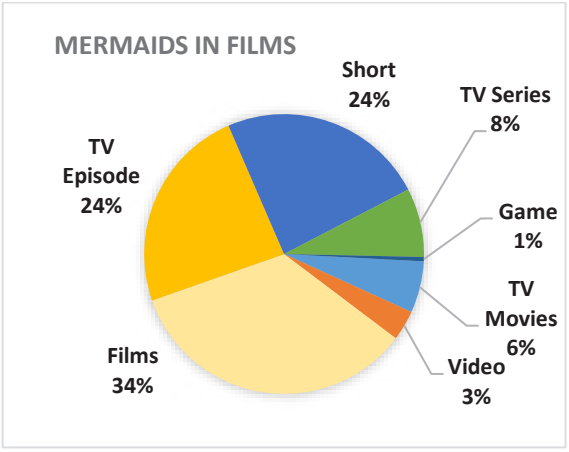


Fig.1 Mermaids In Films

GSTF © 2018

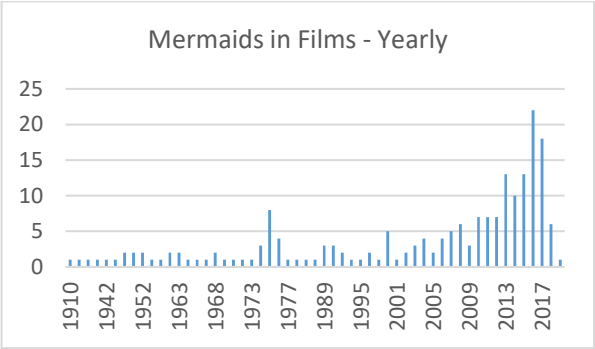


Fig.2 Mermaids In Films – Yearly

The image of mermaid seems to be popular from the very beginning. Regarding the filming decades of the industry, it is easy to argue that mermaid films produced since 1910's when they first appeared.

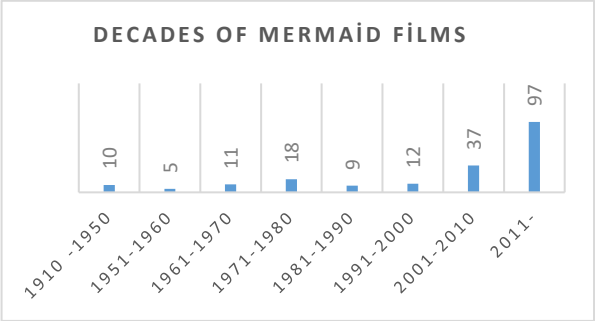


Fig.3 Decades of Mermaid Films

Probably, of all the films depicting mermaids, the most popular one is "The Little Mermaid". In the article, "The Happiest Films on Earth" O'Brien, argues that when textual analyses of Disney films are performed in conjunction with analyses of the films' production and reception contexts, added insights into the films as social and cultural forces emerge [12]. Similarly, in the book of Bell, Haas, & Sells, all the films texts are accused to have a certain politics regarding gender, and culture [13]. Having the same characters and plots, there could be many different readings and interpretations. According to Trites for example, feminists have criticized "The Little Mermaid's Ariel because she seems to have little ambition beyond getting her prince [14]. The little princess is not an activist in its real sense but activities such as making trade of her voice, falling in love or running after the prince are not usual ones for the little girls.

Having the most powerful image of mermaid, The Little Mermaid could be interpreted in many different ways. Anyhow, it's the story of a change and success, yet it yields the need for the change of the system, the need to be heard, etc. On the other hand, one might argue that the strangers always cause uneasiness on the side of the "self". Living in her lonely and peaceful underwater world, Ariel was happy and content with whatever she had but with the prince appearing as an intruder, all her balance has been changed and she felt unhappy and thus, wanted to change. This confrontation with the other triggered the motives to "change" that would even made her somewhat different from what she was before. But on the other hand, we might assume that she was all alone and unhappy in the world under the see and we may have a look at the appearing desires as the expectations from life. Singing, running, walking and dancing might be accepted as the synonyms for mobility. Sells interprets it as the desire for upward mobility as well [15]. She also represents autonomy and independence upgrading herself to the upper levels of class and "humanity" even for the sake of her own "voice". On one level argues Bell, Ariel's story is a parable of bourgeois feminist agendas, seeking upward mobility and access to a "white male" system from which she is excluded. One other thing to be mentioned is the female wickedness in the film embodied into another character, Ursula the Sea Witch.

As Susan White points out it "Split Skins" mermaids have become a pervasive cinematic symbol of the girl's difficult rite of passage to womanhood [16]. Wynss & Rosenfeld's research assesses the extent to which portrayals of father-adolescent daughter relationships in Disney feature films correspond with the qualities of successful and unsuccessful father-adolescent daughter relationships as revealed in the research literature [17]. Findings indicated that the relationships in The Little Mermaid and Aladdin correspond to father-adolescent daughter relationships in which the father denies his daughter freedom to explore her adolescence, while the relationships in Beauty and the Beast and Pocahontas are more consistent with father-adolescent daughter relationships in which the father allows the daughter freedom to negotiate her adolescence.

Some of the Mermaid films were starred by the most athletic women of the time. Many film fans today only know Kellerman as the biographical subject of the Esther Williams' film, Million Dollar Mermaid (1952). However, Kellerman, also starred in a series of mermaid films beginning with Siren of the Sea (1911) and ending with her last film, Venus of the South Seas (1924), all of which capitalized on her widespread fame as a swimmer. [18].

To Lacroix [19] on one hand and to Martin & Kazyak [20] on the other hand the children films introduce the audience "the others" in different ways. For the first one, it is the "sanitization of violence, sexuality, and political struggle concomitant with an erasure or repression of difference" and for the later one it's the presentation of hetero-romantic love and heterosexiness in children's g-rated films. To Williams [21] mermaids are powerful symbols of transformation. Part women, part fish, they embody hybridity. But the mermaid also stands, as it were, as the symbol of female sexuality and desire both as object of desire and as desire personified. In popular American culture, the mermaid has taken on the additional symbol of female rites of passage and pubescent change from girl to women. As Susan White noted [16], mermaid films in the late 20th century revolve around "painful 'growth' experiences" that address the fears and experiences of

GSTF © 2018

growing up female. For example, in the film The Little Mermaid, Arial is allowed to sing only if her song does not threaten patriarchal order. Perhaps if only the little mermaid was heard by her father first, she wouldn't be following her instincts to be loved perhaps more by her prince. Ariel, wants to leave her father's underwater kingdom to make a name for herself in the human world.

To Williams [21], Ariel has been both praised for her feisty defiance of her father and lamented for her obsession with a cure boy and unwavering ability to acquiesce to his desires. She leaves her father's home for her husband's and she abandons her own quest for self-discovery.

The story in its original or adapted forms, inspired many films all over the world. In Turkey for example in 1977, the film "Sawdust Tales" directed by Barış Pirhasan was adapted from the story of book "The Garden of Departed Cats" by Bilge Karasu. Even if there is no symbol of Mermaid in the story, the film created a mermaid as the main symbol of the film. Ishak is a youngster who lost his parents at early ages was working in the IOLA circus with his master, who adopted him and taught him to walk on the rope.

In an analysis of "Sawdust Tales" Öcel and Çomak put forward an important aspect [22]. In most of the fables and fairy tales, it is the mermaid who is saving the life of the human beings, usually of the prince who is kind enough to rule the kingdom. But in the film, it is just the opposite. The death of Ishak could lead to the rescue of the mermaid. Isaac's only desire is to save the mermaid owned by the Blind Fisherman, and to put her back to the sea. In the mermaid stories or in legends, usually there is a Prince who falls into deep waters to be rescued by the mermaid. Yet in the Turkish version, quite contradictory to the other versions Isaac wants to save the mermaid.

As a result, the mermaid in the sea and Ishak in the sky meet in the deep blues. In many cultures the colour blue represents purity, naiveté and innocence. It is a place where the hopes never end and the dreams come true. In the film, Ishak's wish of brining the mermaid to the sea was an interesting metaphor. The circus was in the town by the seaside but nobody had seen the sea. Similarly, everybody saw the mermaid kept in prison but no one believed that she was a real mermaid. In this world of simulations, the realty seems to be fake and the simulations seem to be real. Ishak tried to reach the "water" to interpret his belief because only the water could reveal the truth. Thus, water is not only the atmosphere, required for the mermaid to live in but also it is a type of reflection of the truth for Ishak. Instead of all the insists of Abib for spending a night out with a women, Ishak chooses to chat with the mermaid buying her gifts, soap, perfume to run after his childish dreams. As a reaction, his master Abib, comes and tries bribery to make the blind fisherman to take the mermaid away since Ishak and the mermaid's relationship and unity seems to be a danger for both sides. The blind fisherman and Abbib as the owners of their "treasures" (Ishak and the mermaid) are afraid of losing them.

Falling in love with the mermaid kept as a prisoner in the circus just to get more money and fame, İshak changes all his attitudes and expectations. The filmic story includes no details about the time or space and such an undefined way of storytelling it is associated with the fairytale rather than the reality. However there are so many concrete realities of the film referring to the democracy, ruling, leadership and humanity as well as "otherness" or "migration" issues.

C. Mermaids Appearing In New Media

Not only the number of the appearances of mermaids increased throughout the time but also the number of the research and analysis increased. So much that, the image of mermaid could be a familiar one in almost all cultures.

Regarding YouTube channel, the number of the mermaid mentions reaches up to 10.000. It's so common for the girls to become mermaids, so that we have contributions teaching us how to make a mermaid curly hairstyle and haircolor as well as mermaid makeup. In its game versions, apart from the drawing lessons on how to draw mermaids, you may probably come across with Siren as a new TV show series showing how to make mermaid sisters in The Sims 4 Create a Sim! The image of mermaid is also present in new media and social media in the form of WhatsApp icons.

D. Mermaids In Brands

Mermaids are also in the brands of many different products ranging from "Mermaid Brand Spiced Rum Vintage Liquor" to "Mermaid Soap", from sardines to powders. Sometimes with little gimmicks, Ariel and Sabastian together may look like The Starbucks Mermaid. The Mermaid Brand name always took top billing over the Newton Line Company name in any public advertisements, as well as in signs, posters, and sales literature that were used from 1910 until that beautiful mermaid image and the Mermaid Brand name was finally retired forever in 1930 [23]. One of the most famous ones, the Starbucks brand is universal and world-wide known and the "Mermaid" they made use of is the most important symbol of the Women Cult. The branding campaigns have a lot to do with the symbols to make the more effective and memorable for the audience. The audience might of course change from one culture to another and include different age groups as well as the socio-economic classes. Thus, the brands are also looking for the stories to make their brands "tasty" world-wide. Having mythological characters as the brand icon such as the flying horse, unicorn or Phoenix are already tried and had fruitful results regarding their retention strategies as well as socio-economic returns. Their stories as well became an integral part of brands and their communication texts, preserving their daily meanings only through relying on their roots in the past.

Starbucks' choice of seductive, seductive mermaid is linked to the image of the mermaid calling the marines with

GSTF © 2018

beauty and charm, just like the coffee calls us. It's promising, tasty and activating. It also signifies the mobility in its intellectual, physical, emotional or psychological means, it even helps and guides people from time to time. As the mermaids with their soft voices and effective lyrics convince the marines to come with them, Starbuck's also promises the audience with their coffee and customer experience accompanied with free Wi-Fi.

However, when the story of the mystical hero Melusine is analyzed spouse who is charmed by the beauty and thus accepted all the conditions and circumstances, faces a dramatic end. What awaits those who are attracted by Starbucks, one of the giants of capitalism, is an unhappy last wish against the beautiful, pleasant, happy promises of capitalism and all the giant brands?

E. Analyzing Mermaids Appearances In Media

It is obvious that the image of mermaid is a popular one even in the 21st century. Regarding the 12T's approach it's easy to see how the images are depicted for various purposes in highly different ways. Namely Theme, Topic, Text, Thread, Task, Transfers & Trends, Transition, Thinking, Tailoring, Taking Risks, Technology, Transmedia. These T's put forward how the narrative is shaped and what it includes apart from the main issue.

Considering the "Theme", the mermaid as a theme is a very rich one, it involves so many different variations in different cultures and geographies. Having such a rich theme, many narratives, mythologies, and products could be found as a topic. Regarding the "Topic" the narratives usually handle the mermaids in a current day topic involving the ambitions, values, expectations and gender issues. When the narrative turns to be a "Text" the possibilities range from classical narrative texts, fairy tales to filmic text, virtual ones or even the interactive games of the popular age. It seems that the popular genres of the time is mostly activated in the texts. Throughout time, apart from the mere costume of the mermaid with a twisting tale the technological 3D's and animation techniques were added to the filmmaking business to create more effective characters either in beauty or in cruelty. This type of innovations made it more affordable, applicable and multiplied the image of mermaid causing the number of the reproduced movies to increase. Thus the made up text could be reaching to the audience in many different stylistic ways.

Regarding the "Thread" many other concepts could be added to the theme, topic and text, different values, cultures, believes are attributed as threads of it. For example, in the brand new film, "The King's Daughter" (2018) director Sean McNamara tells us the story of King Louis XIV's quest for immortality leading him to capture and steal a mermaid's life force, a move that is further complicated by his illegitimate daughter's discovery of the creature. Even if the popularity seems to be a bit low at the moment, stars like Pierce Brosnan, William Hurt, Benjamin Walker seem to be very powerful.

In another text, a TV serial the "Mermaid" is an awesomely bizarre tale of a strange girl called "Alisa, who, as a little girl, lives by the beach with her comically grotesque mother and grandmother and pines for her father to come and rescue her. Later on in her life she is forced to confront reality when she travels to Moscow with her family, and as a teenager, finds out all about all the wonders of the world, including love, jobs and friendship, all seen through an impossibly optimistic and offbeat sensibility." states one of the viewers of "Rusalka" (2007) [24]. This gives us another "Thread" to Russia, knowing that mermaids are called as Rusalka in Russian culture, this is the need of the audience to get away from the reality through such films. The concept of Rusalka is so strong that we have another film named as "Rusalka: Ozero Myortvykh (Mermaid: The Lake of the Dead)" (2018) directed by Svyatoslav Podgaevskiy. In this film, an evil Mermaid falls in love with Marina's fiancé Roman and aims to keep him away from Marina in her Kingdom of Death under water. The Mermaid is a young woman who drowned a few centuries ago. Marina only has one week to overcome her fear of the dark water, to remain human in the deathly fight with the monsters and not to become one herself.

To give another example for the issue we may cite another film. Sirenomelia, is a kind of deformity syndrome, which is also known as mermaid syndrome, is an extremely rare congenital developmental disorder characterized by anomalies of the lower spine and the lower limbs. Affected infants are born with partial or complete fusion of the legs. The TV movie "Mermaid Girl" (2008) directed by Benetta Adamson is a Documentary about Shiloh Pepin who was born with a rare disease called Sirenomelia, also known as Mermaid Syndrome, and defied doctor's expectations by living to age 10.

Regarding the "Task" each different form of the text might fulfill a different task. The mermaids in the form of a feature film might have a different task on the side of the audience whereas the television movies or series with different episodes fulfill a different task. For example apart from its fairy tale narrative or the documentaries adapted to television movies, "The Little Mermaid Live (2019) is prepared as a musical to be released by 2019.

Regarding the "Transfers and Trends", mermaid films are very productive as well. For example, even if there is no mermaid other than the name of the town itself, in the film Mermaid (2000) directed by Peter Masterson, four year old Desi learns to accept the death of her father by sending him a letter on a balloon to which she receives a reply. According to the theory named gratifications and uses, here we may satisfy the needs of the audience: The need to believe in something supernatural appears in it as well. Here in this film, the image of mermaid is used only as a help to give way to the transfers. These may include the mystery, secret actions experienced by the seaside. The expectations of meeting a mermaid is transferred to more human actions and values.

GSTF © 2018

As for the "Transitions" the real characters changing is not easy as it is in the animation films. For example, mermaid is not an exotic character of the cinema films but also the seductive and mysterious creature of the television movies. In "Mermaid Chronicles Part 1: She Creature (2001) the director Sabostian Gutierrez tells us the story of a different mermaid. In Ireland, two carnies abduct a mermaid and decide to take her to America. In their sea route, the seductive and mysterious creature reveals an uncontrollable darker side. In this film, the characters and the plot reveals many different types of transitions of the characters, aims, values as well as the mood of the characters encountering with a different step at each time. Similarly, in another mermaid television movie Mermaids (2003) Diana acts as a stubborn mermaid and is determined to bring justice to the men who killed her merman father. Never having lived out of water before, she enlists the help of her two sisters (already living on land) to track down the murderers. Diana finds that her sister, Venus, is an aquatic dancer in a seedy bar who was forced into the position by the evil bar owner who has taken Venus' magic tiara, giving him ultimate control of her. June, the third sister, works at the local aquarium and is able to recruit the help of her friend, and love interest, Randy, a coast guard officer, to help the mermaids track down their father's killers. The sisters join forces and along the way, discover how difficult it is to be a fish out of water, and how meaningful sisterhood is. This film also shows us how the mermaids could have different transitions throughout the difficult path.

The "Thinking" box of the 12T's approach more dwells on the rising awareness of the audience and design of their decision making process. The Mermaid Chair (2006) could be an accepted as an example to that. It was another TV movie having nothing to do with the Mermaid at all. It was a film adopted from a bestseller book but it moves the audience from one real situation to another causing them to think in between and decide if the decisions were right or wrong, etc.

One of the T's, "Tailoring" involves witty settings for the theme to flourish. When something is tailored into the narrative, another aspect is emphasized or a multidimensional, multi-lingual, multi-cultural perspective is revealed. Tailoring different interdisciplinary aspects to the narrative might lead us to analyze the theme through different facades. In the film Mermaids: The Body Found (2011) a TV movie, directed by Sid Bennett the setting is provided as modern times in Africa. In 2016, when marine biologist Dr Brian McCormick (Sean C. Michael) stumbled across a recording of mysterious underwater sounds, he launched a scientific investigation to uncover the creature responsible. In search of conclusive proof, he and his research team are called out to an unusual whale stranding in South Africa. Here they find the part digested remains of an animal none of them can identify. As each of its body parts is autopsied, they provide new pieces of the puzzle. As the picture builds, McCormick is drawn to an astonishing conclusion: this new marine creature is related to humans. This two-hour special combines beautiful CGI animation, real natural history, a thrilling contemporary conspiracy theory and a race against time to unveil an ancient secret before it's too late, hell no!"

Tailoring could be managed through adding somewhat scientific part into the theme, yet, it could be possible to add a different and unique cultural perspective such as in the film "Mermaid Story". Mermaid stories are selling so well that, directors Elham Gharehkhani, Mehrtash Mahdavi had "Mermaid Story" (2017) in their culture. Even if it's a fantasy film, in it, there are a lot of people but no mermaids… Another film Mermaid (2006) as a TV movie having drama and fantasy together, so it could also be accepted as an example of tailoring.

Of course with each new product, the producers are "Taking Risks" as well as the audience who spares some time to watch the product. The product could be anything having the brand or label of "mermaid", having a mermaid in it or not. At each step, the producer takes the risks of satisfying the needs and expectations of the audience and the audience takes the risks of spending the time in vain. Even if films and other type of entertaining facilities are positioned as to fulfil the expectations of the fantasy world and labeled as an escape from the realities, the limitation of the virtual world and its probability of convincing the individuals or groups are regarded as great risks.

Regarding the "Technology", the mermaids could even have a profound test. For example, with the TV movie "Mermaids: The New Evidence (2013)" people carry the image and symbol of mermaids to academic research. Examining the startling, never-before-seen video evidence of aquatic hominids that has come forward since the documentary *Mermaids: The Body Found* first aired in 2012, with the original whistle blower on the Mermaid Conspiracy, Dr. Paul Robertson. Last Mermaids (2013) is another TV Movie. This time the mermaids are in a different geography. A look at the life of the last generation of Jeju Island's haenyeo: female free-divers, most of them now ranging in age from their 60s to their 80s, who brave the sea to harvest seafood from the sea floor.

As for the "Transmedia" the mermaid impact of the products are so heavy that hundreds of films, brands, products could be associated with it. Regarding the films, for example, starting with the fairy tale version and recovering to the book and ending with the wide variety of product versions mermaid involves a real transmedia function in it. Each film in a different culture would be considered as a kind of transmediatic effect for the main source. And sometimes, it is even true within the same culture. "Die kleine Meerjungfrau – The Little Mermaid" (2013) for example is a TV movie adapted from Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale by director Irina Popow.

The following piece of news provides an example of how the theme could be as Transmediatic as possible. Regarding

GSTF © 2018

the agreement between The Lexmark and Disney, Lexmark Little Mermaid 1000 model would be launched from September 1998, simultaneously with The Little Mermaid movie. The CD-ROM, accompanying as a gift along with the printer was supposed to attract the attention of the adults as well as the children. It was able to print calendars, envelopes, celebration cards and various documents on the colorful little mermaid figures on it and the price of the printers was set as $125 [25].

As the storytelling trends of the past moved to the filmic world to make the narratives turn to be the products starred by famous heroes and heroines. But downgraded little icons these themes and topics all of a sudden find themselves in the world of the written language as the ornaments of the individual correspondences.

In a different way, through transmedia, we may look at the children books titles change their way to become adult entertaining programs. “The Little Mermaid” (1974 TV Movie) directed by Marily Fox, was telling us the generally accepted version of the fairy tale. When Marina looks up, she doesn't see the sky; she sees the world of the surface. As the youngest princess of the undersea kingdom, she's always longed to see what lies above. Stealing her way upwards during the dead of night, the mermaid princess finds the man of her dreams as he sails across the dark sea. But one encounter, no matter how dramatic, isn't enough for her. Marina visits the sea witch, and begs to have her fishy tail replaced with human legs. As the story goes, the princess must pay with her voice - but also agree to a condition. If her prince does not return her love, and instead loves another, then she will turn into foam! In a tale more faithful to the original Hans Christian Andersen story, The Little Mermaid is a fairy tale at once familiar, but also darkly different.

Roxy Hunter and the Myth of the Mermaid (2008 TV Movie) Roxy, in pursuit of a local journalism award, brings home a mysterious amnesiac who was found soaking wet outside of the local coffee shop. After ceremoniously naming her *Annie Nonymous*, Roxy takes the young lady home and finds that even the most common household item is a complete mystery to Annie. When Annie returns dripping wet from the lake several nights in a row, Roxy determines what is abundantly clear to her, Annie is a mermaid. A mermaid who has to find her way home. Here we have the normal, usual, real world vs the abnormalities associated with a certain character Roxy. The setting is given as journalism at the beginning but later on the sea covers the film more than the ambitions of a journalist.

One other “Transmedia” example is the TV movie: “The3Tails Movie: A Mermaid Adventure (2015)”. Emily, Selena and Jackie - known to their 50 thousand YouTube fans as The 3 Tails - finally bring their journey to the big screen. Their mermaid adventures have enchanted fans for more than five years, as the girls struggle to understand the meaning of their special gift, protecting their secret from the world. Even their parents don't know that they have the ability to transform into mermaids. In The 3 Tails: A Mermaid Adventure, their lives are threatened after a stranger learns of their abilities and kidnaps one of the girls in order to harness her DNA. During a perilous ocean rescue mission, they discover that mermaids are not the only endangered species in the sea.

The YouTube videos also include many Transmedia examples having a great richness ranging from tutorials on the anatomy of mermaids to the secret cameras or documentaries about them. Animations and even summer schools teaching kids how to swim in a mermaid way are so popular. Games are establishing fans for established teams such as Mermaids vs Sea Witch. In another program we might come across with Ursula like women acting as the matchmaker or family advisor. There are even diet recipes to look like a mermaid. In the films, it is also possible to see the characters of Ursula and Morgana (possibly Ursula is Triton's sister) later on turn to be the dolls of the story produced by different manufacturers. Through their characters the representation of the good and evil is also multiplied in different ways. Taking from them or from the original fairytales, the other feature films also tend to reproduce the mermaid images in its negative forms rather bloody, ruthless, malicious and even spiritless, killing people unmercifully.

IV. Conclusion

The 12T’s approach gives us a tool to categorize what we have in the hand. Thus we have the opportunity to see the different images, concepts, tailored identities, products, etc., all in one glance. This type of categorization proves the fact that now and in the past, the image of mermaid was a selling one due to the mystical elements in it. In conclusion it could be obviously seen that the playful impact of the mermaid image is widely used in the popular media. It is either referring to the innocent girl having no voice heard by the others, expecting to be accepted and loved or the bad-minded, monster-spirited, ugly looking ones, killing the surrenders for a specific purpose and sometimes without any purpose. Just like the mermaid scene attributes in “Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides” the mermaid could also change forms from the good to evil, from the unable to the able ones. They can even sing very tempting songs and sound very flirty, however, in their nature under the sea they are as ruthless as any other sea creature could be. The collectivity presented in the same scene is also a very important aspect since they in fact all refer to the part of a collective and unified life. So, when one of them sings, the other mermaids appear in silence and in the form a circle and wait until they are activated in their ill manner. Even if they hear nice words from the sailors, with their half open lips and desiring looks, they turn to be vampires with their long teeth and wide open eyes, they S-show their real faces later on attempting to kill all the men. This looks like a fight of the two genders having its revenge through the third kind. This topic of revenge is handled in many other films in this way or another putting it into a formula that either the

GSTF © 2018

delayed revenge changed the nature of the mermaid into an evil or the ones they fight caused their change and they now try to get the revenge of it. This dilemma is the one making the mermaid films to be even more popular.

Consequently the image of mermaid seems to be somewhat spread all over the world in different cultures and geographies. Even if it could be found in the old mythologies as well as new narratives in different settings, the modern image of the mermaid seems to be much more stereotyped and branded with Disney's film or Starbuck's logo. Having a common and powerful story in the background provide much power to the dissemination and acceptance of the image and thus, these global brands make use of the old fairy tales, mythological and cultural background to put it into the transmedia versions. However, one can observe neither the richness of the *Theme* and its originality, in the *Topics* provided for mermaids nor enough creativity appears through the *Texts* or *Threads*. The positioning of *Tasks* for the audience is just fixed to enjoy the beautiful and glorified image of the mermaid or hate the distorted and evil image. With all its other T's, *Transfers & Trends, Transition, Thinking, Tailoring, Taking Risks, Technology, Transmedia*, it seems that the mermaid became just another icon to sell to fulfil the demands and expectations of the people. These expectations would range from snuggling the "old and mysterious" renovating, enriching it with the new concepts and keeping it aside as a part of the modern world. With the mobility of the modern world the mobility of the images and concepts is also possible. Specifically with the new technology providing great opportunities to make use of the image in a richer atmosphere and greater variety. To give an example, it's just like having a cup of coffee. You may have what you have throughout the whole range of choices but having a branded one, just like Starbucks would mean something different.

With the new production and animation techniques it will always be possible to reproduce the image endlessly and in return it will soon turn into a great profit. Perhaps it was also possible in the earlier decades but with the speed and richness of the new media now it's much more possible. With the impact of the social media such as YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp or Instagram these images would be multiplied in various different ways. The image of mermaid is still present in new media and social media much more than the traditional and classical one. For example there are various WhatsApp icons in the form of mermaids and day by day we are surrounded with the mermaid culture. The advertisements put the girls into their brand new mermaid fashion with the glittering, shiny dresses, profoundly delivering their shape of body like a mermaid or replicated images all over the world ranging from hairstyles, haircolor or mermaid makeups to develop more of the "mermaidization syndrome" and kept alive for promising profits.

REFERENCES

[1] https://tailsofmermaids.weebly.com/mermaids-in-different-cultures.html

[2] http://mermaidsofearth.com/the-cultural-significance-of-mermaids-around-the-world-part-1/

[3] Akpabio, E. (2007). Attitude of audience members to Nollywood films. Nordic Journal of African Studies, 16(1), 90-100.

[4] Potter, A. E. (2009). Voodoo, zombies, and mermaids: US newspaper coverage of Haiti. Geographical Review, 99(2), 208-230.

[5] Hayward, P. (2017). Making a splash: mermaids (and mer-men) in 20th and 21st Century Audiovisual Media. Indiana University Press.

[6] http://mentalfloss.com/article/75471/9-mermaid-legends-around-world

[7] http://arkeolojigezginleri.blogspot.com.tr/2014/08/foca-nin-siren-kayaliklari.html

[8] Cevdet, A. M. Kolları Bağlı Odysseus. 1963, *Yelken, S*, *71*, 8-9.

[9] Erhat Mythology Dictionary, 2010: 118

[10] Ögel, Bahaeddin, (1989). Türk mitolojisi. *CI, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları*. p. 258

[11] Demir, Ali Faik, ve Akgün Çomak, Nebahat (2009). Şaman ve Türk Dünyası. İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları. p. 111

[12] O'Brien, P. C. (1996). The happiest films on earth: A textual and contextual analysis of Walt Disney's Cinderella and The Little Mermaid. Women's Studies in Communication, 19(2), 155-183.

[13] Bell, E., Haas, L., & Sells, L. (Eds.). (1995). From mouse to mermaid: The politics of film, gender, and culture. Indiana University Press.

[14] Trites, Roberta, 1990/1991. "Disney's Sub-Version of the Little Mermaid" Journal of Popular Television and Film 18:145-59.

[15] Sells, L., "Where do the Mermaids Stand?" Voice and Body in The Little Mermaid, p.175-192, in Bell, E., Haas, L., & Sells, L. (Eds.). (1995). From mouse to mermaid: The politics of film, gender, and culture. Indiana University Press.

[16] White, Susan. 1993. "Split Skins". In Film Theory Goes to the Movies, et. Jim Collins, Hilary Radner and Ava Preacher Collins. New York: Routledge, p.186

[17] Wynns, S. L., & Rosenfeld, L. B. (2003). Father-daughter relationships in Disney's animated films. Southern Communication Journal, 68(2), 91-106.

[18] Catapano, P. (2008). " The Perfect Woman:" Annette Kellerman And The Spectacle Of The Female Form. Proteus, 25, 23-27.

[19] Lacroix, C. (2004). Images of animated others: The orientalization of Disney's cartoon heroines from The Little Mermaid to The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Popular Communication, 2(4), 213-229.

[20] Martin, K. A., & Kazyak, E. (2009). Hetero-romantic love and heterosexiness in children's G-rated films. Gender & Society, 23(3), 315-336.

[21] Williams, C. (2010). Mermaid tales on screen: Splash, the little mermaid, and aquamarine. Beyond adaptation: Essays on radical transformations of original works, 194-205.

[22] Öcel, Nilüfer & Akgün-Çomak, Nebahat, "The Concept of Time and Place: Cycling Theory- Usta Beni Öldürsene" Turkish Film Festival & Conference, A Collaboration of İstanbul University Communication faculty & Arizona State University Turkish Student Association, TUSA&TAA-AZ, February 27-March 2, 2003. The proceedings İstanbul Üniversitesi, İletişim Fakültesi Yayınları, 2003, p. 257-269.

[23] http://afewlinesaboutline.blogspot.com.tr/2008/02/how-old-is-your-mermaid.html

[24] Akpabio, E. (2007). Attitude of audience members to Nollywood films. Nordic Journal of African Studies, 16(1), 90-100.

[25] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0995747/reviews?ref_=tt_ql_3

[26] Bilişim, Hürriyet, 2 Eylül 1998

[27] https://tailsofmermaids.weebly.com/mermaids-in-different-cultures.html

GSTF © 2018