
Global Commodity, Global Meme Culture, Global Mélange and “Baby Yoda”

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To cite this article:

Tugce Kutlu. Global Commodity, Global Meme Culture, Global Mélange and “Baby Yoda”. *International Journal of Economy, Energy and Environment*. Vol. 6, No. 6, 2021, pp. 134-141. doi: 10.11648/j.ijeee.20210606.11

Received: June 9, 2021; **Accepted:** December 3, 2021; **Published:** December 7, 2021

Abstract: Star Wars is a multigenerational saga. To look at it from a certain perspective brings with it the nostalgia as everyone who was born in the 70s or 80s has a personal history with Star Wars. However, it is no coincidence that the franchise made it this far, both globally and temporally. Precise strategies have been used throughout its marketing. I took on this project to examine these strategies. This study has three objectives: First, it examines Star Wars as a form of transmedia storytelling and its effect to create global culture, and; second, it focuses on internet memes and their global production and circulation. Lastly, it dissects the marketing strategy for merchandise behind the highly new and popular character “Baby Yoda”. While researching, I used marketing and transmedia literature and market research. This research finds that marketing techniques for *The Mandalorian* (2019-) are linked with nostalgia, that global memes are used for marketing as well, but also that global mélange is on the horizon. I will then conclude by discussing my findings which include how nostalgia marketing is used in Star Wars universe and why this universe keeps expanding. It is very timely that media recently relies heavily on nostalgia marketing.

Keywords: Internet Memes, Baby Yoda, Merchandise, Marketing, Global, Transmedia

1. Introduction

Since its release in 1977, *Star Wars* [32] (George Lucas, USA) has been a household name across the globe. In its 40 years, the entertainment juggernaut is estimated to have brought in \$30.5 billion [1]. The numbers surge up with each passing second. However, just like every business as lucrative as this one, there is a certain threat looming over *Star Wars* empire: to be able to sustain it. On this front, *Star Wars* is at a disadvantage as it is a part of creative industries. In any other business, a product is created, marketed, distributed, and then, hopefully sold. In the case of *Star Wars*, as it is comprised of products in various markets, first there should be a character in its creative industries front. Without a reference point in the saga, it is not conceivable to create merchandise, nor is it cost-effective. In addition to creating material that could potentially please the fans, content creators are made to think of its marketability as well.

The accomplishments of the *Star Wars* global empire are not entirely of pure intent as they are directly linked to globalization and its dark Sith-like shadow which is

neoliberalism. Culture and commercial profit are so often closely related through a global viewpoint. As Keith Wagner states that globalization can be considered as indivisible from the 'neoliberalisms' of the world, and that even in financial instability, globalization and neoliberalism have been appeared to rise above ethnic lines, lines of correspondence, and dialects by bringing business and culture nearer together [25]. As he explains, neoliberalism and globalization have the power of transcending borders, but to what extent and in what way? Globalization may be embodied as homogeneity or heterogeneity as Robertson argues that it can manifest in different ways [23]. Do cultures become homogenised or do they take the new piece of cultural artefact and make it completely their own or is there another way? This brings us to the term “global mélange” coined by Pieterse. “Global mélange” or “cultural hybridization” promotes interaction between cultures, it is a two-way exchange. Pieterse elaborates on the cultural hybridization and explains that “culture is a battleground” and hybridity doesn't block struggle however yields a multifocus perspective on struggle and, by showing numerous personality on either side, rises

above the “us versus them” dualism that wins in social and political fields [20]. It takes us to an interesting place within this research as we are to dive into the global appeal and marketing of Transmedia Empire of the *Star Wars* franchise. For a saga that is deeply rooted in an “us versus them” narrative, *Star Wars* unexpectedly exceeds this sense of duality and manifests a new kind of global m lange through its fandom and social media appeal.

Wagner and Kapur state that “New technologies of communications have served as the glue and conduit of neoliberalism whereas the production of culture is, after war, the second most important sector in the neoliberal economy” [24]. *Star Wars* is arguably the most successful global cultural product of our time. It makes highly important politicians wear Darth Vader socks, make them say “May the Force be with you!” in an international address or encourage royal family members to make cameos in *Star Wars* films. With its galactic premise, it is the epitome of globalization, but in its heart resides capitalism, American ideals and US culture. Nevertheless, there is always room for discourse and struggle in the cultural realm.

Star Wars franchise is a product of US origin, however, given the era that it was produced in and the saga’s marketability across the globe, it has expeditiously become a global sensation. To this day, global box office for *Star Wars* films is unbelievably high in comparison to other science fiction films. I defend that the reason for this success lies in Lucasfilm’s and later, Disney’s research skills in micromarketing. In Robertson’s words, ‘micromarketing’ is interpreted as this: “To a considerable extent micromarketing –or, in the more comprehensive phrase, glocalization– involves the construction of increasingly differentiated consumers, the ‘invention’ of ‘consumer traditions’ (...). To put it very simply, diversity sells” [23]. Since the beginning, *Star Wars* commercial empire has crafted products and marketed them to a “glocalized” customer base. When Disney excluded the film’s female protagonist Rey from their official merchandise after *The Force Awakens* [30] (J. J. Abrams, USA, 2015), a global social media outrage with the hashtag #wheresRey made the company take action by adding Rey back into their product line. *Star Wars* merchandise brought in \$9.6 billion for Disney during the first year of release was this move born out of a concern for diversity or was it the realization that a total protest could kill their merchandising sales and eventual profits? [4] Jeffrey A. Brown states that as well as encouraging Disney’s admittance to male filmgoers, *The Force Awakens* worked as a lynchpin for Disney’s abuse of the whole *Star Wars* universe and that the actual movies just address a glimpse of something larger for possible benefits and cross media abuse, according to Brown, the new Holy Grail in Hollywood is bankable transmedia establishments, as opposed to stand-alone movies and sequels [4]. Indeed, today’s media sphere is more about the cross media implications rather than profiting from a single film, hence New Hollywood’s obsession with transmedia storytelling and bankability of franchises. This study has three objectives: First, it examines *Star Wars* as a

form of transmedia storytelling and its effect to create global culture, and; second, it focuses on internet memes and their global production and circulation. Lastly, it dissects the marketing strategy for merchandise behind the highly new and popular character “Baby Yoda”. The purpose of this research is that it is very timely that media recently relies heavily on nostalgia marketing. It should be examined closely and soon as this research is vital. The background of this study is based on the fact that *Star Wars* is a multigenerational saga. To look at it from a certain perspective brings with it the nostalgia as everyone who was born in the 70s or 80s has a personal history with *Star Wars*. However, it is no coincidence that the franchise made it this far, both globally and temporally. Precise strategies have been used throughout its marketing. The research questions are why now, why nostalgia and is there a way to counter this?

2. *Star Wars* as a Form of Transmedia Storytelling

Subsequent to its conception, *Star Wars* has been profitable in nearly every commercial endeavour, but it was only made possible by building a transmedia empire. “Transmedia storytelling” coined by Henry Jenkins and later explained by his 2010 article is a term that describes a distinct narrative strategy [10]. Jenkins elaborates that transmedia narrative addresses an interaction where fundamental components of a fiction get scattered methodically across different conveyance channels to make a bound together and composed entertainment experience and that every medium makes its own exceptional contribution to the unfurling of the story [10]. This process which is now extremely common in the global media sphere has been used by Lucasfilm early on in the game. Across multiple media –including books, comics, games, costumes, toys– *Star Wars* has fractured and put together its narrative in a deliberate way. While movies establish the canon, books broaden the ever-expanding narrative universe. Nowadays, the transmedia storytelling has taken a new turn with the contribution of streaming services such as Disney +, Netflix, Amazon, Hulu and Apple Tv. It becomes evident throughout this research that Disney’s new streaming service is on its way to become a marketing tool for Disney’s other enterprises. Proctor and Freeman aim to explain the *Star Wars* Transmedia Empire in their article:

As Carol Roeder, director of publishing at Lucasfilm, states, the ‘books became very important to the franchise early on,’ and that ‘publishing became the real anchor for the brand when there were no new films, it kept the fans engaged’. By building a transmedia continuity through ‘narrative braiding’, a process which sutures individual novels, comics, etcetera, as ‘micro-narratives’ onto a hyperdiegetic ‘macro-structure,’ is also a form of ‘commodity braiding’. Each individual story in a transmedia network, whether it be a novel, comic or TV series, function as ‘entertainment stepping stones,’ each

one ‘a consumer product designed to inspire the sustained consumption of that text, a technique which ‘certainly makes sense from an economic point-of-view’ [21].

“Commodity braiding” is a term that is useful for our endeavour to look into the nature of transmedia narrative of *Star Wars*. Each commodity is only valuable as they are related within the macro-structure. A commodity is described by Lash and Lury as follows:

A good is a commodity to the extent that it is characterized by exchange-value. The exchange-value of a good is an abstraction from its use-value. A good’s exchange-value is expressed in abstract equivalents, in money. Exchange-value is thus a question of quantity, use-value of quality. Commodities have value in units of abstract equivalence. Goods are commodities to the extent that they exchange, not for other goods, but for money, for units of abstract equivalence on markets [14].

A commodity is therefore something that is characterized by its value in money. It needs to sell, and it needs to sell well. *Star Wars* is a good example of commodity braiding as it has global commodities across the board, even more so now that it has a border-crossing streaming service. Brown states that the exhaustive *Star Wars* universe way to deal with the establishment being utilized by Disney abuses and depends on enthusiastic crowd utilization, according to Brown, fans are urged to make associations across the different *Star Wars* stories and media stages, to substance out their comprehension of the whole *Star Wars* universe, and to fuse a feeling of individual identification with everything *Star Wars* [4]. As fans slowly get immersed in the experience that is *Star Wars* transmedia empire, they identify with the characters and the universe more and more, which in turn makes them consume all kinds of *Star Wars* related products such as lightsabers and Lego units. In 2015, 3980 *Star Wars* book titles, 84 music CDs and 1116 toys were listed on Amazon [15]. Nowadays, studios are not independent, they are a part of media conglomerates which aim to balance risk by greenlighting projects that are able to cross over various media platforms and markets [29]. The media conglomerates’ these aims make it harder to assume a fixed identity for a specific product, but here, a new term comes to our aid. In their book Lash and Lury talk about “following the object” and explain that following the object implied that we started to consider not just the transient sequencing of production, distribution and consumption, yet additionally to think about our objects regarding span or separation and that this act empowered us to consider our objects not as existing preferably in a consistent state or condition, yet as a bunch of relations, that is, as continually being made [13]. In this case, an artefact does not have to settle on a meaning or identity, as it can be ever-changing. In *Star Wars* transmedia universe, this is clearly evident. Identities transform, characters change, a sense of play enables new subjectivities to emerge. However, *Star Wars* is owned by Disney and Disney –like all global entities- wants to profit.

As I stated before in this article, for a lucrative business, sustainability is vital. This means that *Star Wars* transmedia

empire has to extend its reach to sell merchandising globally, to people of all ages, and as every toy company knows, children are the future... of markets. In regard to this, a game-changing event occurred in 1955 that turned the toy business into a form of transmedia.

In 1955, Mattel’s founders, Elliot and Ruth Handler, made a gamble that forever changed the industry. In what seemed like a risky investment at the time, they signed a 52-week contract with ABC Television to sponsor a 15-minute segment of Walt Disney’s Mickey Mouse Club at a cost of \$500,000—a sum equal to Mattel’s net worth. Prior advertising had occurred only around the holiday season. The popular daily kids show made the Mattel brand well known among the viewing audience, translating quickly into steady sales throughout the year [11].

The effects of this event still linger on, as transmedia narratives become more and more common, and marketing techniques cross media platforms almost seamlessly. Toy companies have always been on the front line of marketing advancements. *Star Wars* merchandising empire has been an “early bird” in that sense as well.

Star Wars entered the toy market relatively early, with Kenner Toys buying the rights to make action figures based on the movies. However, the company unfortunately did not make the deadline of May 1977 in time for the movie’s release, instead offering children an “Early Bird Certificate” or rather, an empty box with a certificate that children could use to redeem four figures later in 1978 when they finally released the action figures [26].

Kenner Toys selling empty boxes to families is just a sign of things to come in the sphere of marketing for *Star Wars* merchandise: from selling empty boxes on Christmas to creating lovable characters just to sell toys. Content creators quickly learned what toy industry has known for a long time: managing supply and managing demand are the real challenges in the business. “In 1984, the two industry leaders accounted for 21% of U.S. retail toy sales. Fifteen years later, Mattel and Hasbro own over 33% of the market with the next largest player controlling only 3%” [11]. The marketplace within the toy industry is a rapidly evolving one, so is the distribution. Johnson writes that during a fifteen-year period of consistent combination for makers, change was additionally happening in distribution and that in the same way as other businesses, changes in the retail channel have re-imagined the toy inventory network, according to Johnson, in the previous fifteen years, retail chains have lost 16 market share points of the overall industry generally to discounters and national toy chains [11]. Now one of the official manufacturers of *Star Wars* toys, Hasbro controls a big share of the market, and selling products belonging to a global brand such as *Star Wars*, has benefits in distribution as well. When it comes to production, however, there are still quite a few problems that need addressing. Johnson elaborates that after WWII, toys have been the initial step on the assembling stepping stool for some developing economies and that being not difficult to deliver and with relative low quality necessities, toys were ideal items to pursue cheap labour,

according to Johnson, toys firmly followed production development in low wage rate nations such as Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, and China and that in turn, caused a loss in managing supply [11]. Cheap labour has become an important issue in toy industry, especially for a product line as marketable as *Star Wars* merchandising. As they need to sell, and they need to sell fast, *Star Wars* merchandise has been notorious for exploitation of labour. Helleiner predicts the outsourcing in his 1973 article: “Large multi-national firms will move increasingly into the internationalization of production and marketing, knitting the less-developed countries into their international activities as suppliers not only of raw materials but also of manufactured products and processes” [8]. Disney does this both with the production of merchandise and with filming locations.

The outsourcing also meant that there was no flexibility in managing supply. That is one of the reasons why Hasbro announced that they would not be manufacturing “Baby Yoda” toys for this Christmas. Nevertheless, the most important reason was managing demand. To put it more simply, if you make people wait, they will be eager to pay more in the future.

Star Wars merchandising has been one of the game-changers in toy industry, closing the gap between children and adults. With Kenner Toys and their action figures, toys for children started to turn into “collectibles” for adults which was directly fuelled by a nostalgia for one’s childhood. This swiftly brings us to the main subject of the article: “Baby Yoda”.

3. “Baby Yoda” as a Global Commodity

When Disney + launched its shows, the most talked about one was *The Mandalorian* (2019) [31], created by Disney regular Jon Favreau. Its air of nostalgia and sentimentalism swept through the globe for the reasons that I will now elaborate on. First, the main character The Mandalorian – sometimes referred to as Mando (a wordplay on Lando?) – reminds the audience of a certain bounty hunter named Boba Fett that met an early demise back in the original trilogy. Secondly, and most importantly for my research, an adorable creature called “The Child” graces our computer screens. It is a puppet that is so real that even Werner Herzog who plays “The Client” in the series, has often forgotten the fact that it is not a real baby. The Child has the looks of someone very dear to *Star Wars* universe, the one and only, ever-so-wise Jedi master Yoda. The similarity is so striking that the fandom starts calling the child “Baby Yoda” despite protests from the creator (good marketing, again) that it is not Yoda as the show takes place at least 5 years after Yoda’s death.

There are some questions that need addressing when looking at *The Mandalorian*. Why does Disney rely on nostalgia? Doesn’t *Star Wars* guarantee lucrativeness as a brand? The answer to these questions lie in the previous chapter. Managing demand is always crucial in any business. As successful as *Star Wars* may be on its own, the real profit comes in the form of merchandise, and for people to buy new

merchandise, there needs to be new characters that create demand. There needs to be an original referent in the saga. Wolf mentions this in his chapter of *Lego Studies: Examining the building block of a transmedial phenomenon* (2014):

Star Wars playsets (LEGO and otherwise) include models of characters, vehicles, props (such as weapons), and locations, with which particular scenes from the movies can be recreated by the user. Typically, these characters, vehicles, props, and locations will be simplified, with their recognizable and distinct features exaggerated, resulting in caricatures that still are able to evoke their original referents. Thus their overall shapes, color palettes, and distinctive details, particularly those clearly shown in the films, become the criteria behind the design of a LEGO Star Wars set [28].

The consumer then has the power to build a narrative of their own, within the universe built by the franchise. It is up to the imagination of the user to decide where they take the narrative. However, as Wolf takes into account, there always needs to be an original referent, ready to stir up the imagination mechanics.

It should be noted that Disney has been a pioneer in terms of marketing and market researching since the beginning and *Star Wars*, in the hands of the media conglomerate that is Disney, has nothing left to do, but to be profitable.

The optimal commercial goal is for a content package to achieve ‘classic’ status, positioning it for anniversary re-release and repeat consumption long after the initial costs of its production have been amortized, with the resultant revenues representing almost pure profit. The demonstrated success of the Walt Disney Company in re-packaging and re-marketing its iconic film and cartoon library for successive generations of consumers has long been identified as the industry model for contemporary content-maximizing strategies. With diversified media conglomerates competing to ensure their content brands maximum market penetration, it is not so much the idea of content recycling as its scale which looks set to expand in the early decades of the 21st century [19].

Disney is one of the most prominent –if not, the most prominent– players in the game of market penetration and content-maximizing strategies. The sheer fact that it made \$9.6 billion in merchandise during the first year of release after *The Force Awakens* (Disney’s first *Star Wars* film) shows that Disney is ahead of its competitors. The film itself which was highly reminiscent of *Star Wars: A New Hope* (1977), brought in \$2,068 billion globally.

What makes a franchise as old as this one still profitable? How do you sustain demand? You need to form such a strategy that can tug at people’s heartstrings and reach out to their wallets at the same time. There enters the picture the always dependable nostalgia. Nostalgia as a tool for marketing is nothing new, it has been used by many corporations including Coca Cola and Volkswagen. Reisenwitz, Iyer and Cutler expound the “nostalgia marketing” as such:

One of the biggest challenges to advertisers today is to use

techniques that are the most effective in communication to a selected target market. Nostalgia advertising is one of a plethora of techniques available to facilitate this communication. Nostalgia advertising, which uses artefacts and/or themes that hark back to the past, has gained notable popularity in recent years. Researchers have attempted to explain the emergence of nostalgia, or the bittersweet yearning for the past (Hirsch 1992), as a dominant theme in society. Some conclude that nostalgia is particularly prominent in a culture during a transitional period such as the end of a century. This condition is called the *fin de siècle effect*, “endism,” or the “end-of-the-century malaise” (Miller 1990; Stern 1992). It is a time of cultural anxiety since there is a perceived discontinuity between the centuries, the old one metaphorically dying, the new one still on the horizon. Therefore, the public may look toward the less threatening and comfortable past rather than face the present or future [22].

As we approach a new decade, Disney’s “nostalgia marketing” techniques start to make sense. A world in chaos, a climate in global peril, politicians going haywire and old ideologies coming back to haunt... In this environment of extreme anxiety, Disney aims to profit by making people miss “the good old days”. While Disney + goes along with its streaming of *The Mandalorian*, Disney and its sidekicks Hasbro and Funko create demand for official merchandise. Even now, before the release of official toys, the internet is full of unofficial Baby Yoda merchandising. If one takes a look at the online retailer Amazon, it is possible to see Baby Yoda t-shirts, crochets and plush toys, all designed to exploit nostalgia.

In creating and sustaining demand, Disney has chosen a strategy that is in alignment with the Zeitgeist: breaking the Internet. This is a phrase which is considerably new, but it has spread across the globe like wildfire. “Breaking the Internet” essentially means creating a content that is so relatable that the amount of sharing figuratively stops the Internet from working. As this study is interested in Baby Yoda as a global commodity with an exchange-value in money, I would like to talk more about how the demand is created globally, which brings the conversation to the global production and circulation of “language 2.0” or commonly known as “internet memes”.

4. Global Meme Culture

Memes are the language of tomorrow, there is no doubt about that. However, they are also the language of the past [5]. Their origin can be traced back to cave drawings which are cultural products on their own, just like Internet memes. The coining of the term belongs to the biologist Richard Dawkins, explained by Díaz:

The meme concept is an academic concept coined in 1976 by the biologist Richard Dawkins in his book *The Selfish Gene*. He proposed the term meme as a Darwinian, gene-centred approach to cultural evolution, defining it as “the unit of cultural transmission”. Nevertheless, nowadays it is

possible to find the concept of meme almost everywhere on the internet, not making allusion to the concept created by Dawkins, but relating to certain kinds of images, jokes or trends popular within the cybnauts [7].

Even though Dawkins is constantly criticised for taking the biologic analogy too far, he provides a starting point for all scholars of meme culture. What he talks about in his book is the cultural meme and it contains fashion, traditions and cuisine. It substantially means every cultural process that can be repeated and sustained [7]. What this research is focused on is how Internet memes work to create a global culture that in turn creates global demand.

One of the trailblazers of meme culture studies is Patrick Davison. In his seminal article, he describes an Internet meme as “... a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission” [6]. Another prominent scholar on the subject matter, Ryan Milner explains them this way: “Memes, as networks of mediated cultural participation use them, are multimodal artifacts, where image and text are integrated to tell a joke, make an observation, or advance an argument” [17]. The part related to humour is ever so present in both of those descriptions, which is precisely the nature of Internet memes. Davison himself elaborates on the phenomena:

While not all Internet memes are jokes, comparing them to offline jokes makes it clear what makes Internet memes unique: the speed of their transmission and the fidelity of their form. A spoken joke, for instance, can only be transmitted as quickly as those individuals who know it can move from place to place, and its form must be preserved by memory. A printed joke, in contrast, can be transmitted by moving paper and can be preserved by a physical arrangement of ink. The speed of transmission is no longer limited by the movement of individuals, and the form of the joke is preserved by a medium, not memory. Now, consider a joke that exists on the Internet. The speed of transmission is increased yet again, in an incredible way. Space is overcome: computers connect to one another through far-reaching networks. Time is overcome: the digitally represented information is available as long as the server hosting it remains online. A joke stored on a website can be viewed by as many people as want to view it, as many times as they want to, as quickly as they can request it [6].

All the limitations of space and time are overcome, and the production and circulation of humour speeds up exponentially. With it, the cultural production and circulation become global in an unprecedented way. In the case of Internet memes, every second a new one is being created and circulated all over the world, and contrary to popular belief, they provide local cultural commodities as well as global ones. As memes go, *Star Wars* is on the front line, understanding the value of a global cultural commodity. Nevertheless, since *Star Wars* is a part of a US media conglomerate (Disney), its intentions cannot be separated from those of capitalism and neoliberalism. Williams and Zenger [27] touch on the subject:

We do not regard “global,” cross-cultural forces as inherently good, evidence of a “flat” world where access and opportunity are equal, yet we also don’t regard those same economic and cultural forces as necessary harbingers of the destruction of “authentic” local culture. What is more interesting to us in this project is the interaction of the global and the local.

In creating a global cultural product such as an Internet meme, it is probable to cross borders without much resistance, here resistance being the defence of the local culture. Internet memes are funny, fast and replicable, and they can be disarmingly dangerous to an unsuspecting culture. An Internet meme as innocent as Baby Yoda is even more perilous as it can seep into the culture and dominate it with its political agenda. “... if America is presented in the guise of an ‘innocent child abroad,’ then it is less likely to be seen as a threat to other national and cultural identities” [12]. The unstoppable popularity of The Child showcases the impact of global meme culture. This does not have to harbour a sinister meaning, as the cultural production is not a one-way street, as mentioned earlier with Pieterse’s “global mélange”. Another term that is useful to this research is “grassroots convergence” [9]. It represents the fan media that has been created all along, however, with the age of Web, it has grown infinitely.

The Web has made visible the hidden compromises that enabled participatory culture and commercial culture to coexist throughout much of the twentieth century. Nobody minded, really, if you photocopied a few stories and circulated them within your fan club. Nobody minded, really, if you copied a few songs and shared the dub tape with a friend. Corporations might know, abstractly, that such transactions were occurring all around them, every day, but they didn’t know, concretely, who was doing it. And even if they did, they weren’t going to come bursting into people’s homes at night. But, as those transactions came out from behind closed doors, they represented a visible, public threat to the absolute control the culture industries asserted over their intellectual property [9].

Internet meme is now a big part of “participatory culture”, and it is becoming more and more relevant every day. Commercial culture, with its lawyers and executives, is wary of the threat, but they are aware of the possibilities as well, such as free global marketing. It is no coincidence that Disney’s first big budget show on their brand new streaming service is about *Star Wars*, a fan-favorite cultural Trojan Horse. They need to get consumers to commit to the new streaming service as they compete against previously established enterprises such as Netflix and Hulu. They are aware that they are in dire need of a sensation to ripple across the globe, and they found it in a small, green packaging that is cuter than Baby Groot and Paddington combined. But grassroots convergence and fan service have always been present in *Star Wars*.

On one level, *Star Wars* does not belong solely to Lucas anymore; its characters and stories have escaped the original text and grown up with the fans, who have developed their own very firm ideas of what *Star Wars* is

and is not about [3].

Those fans now have limitless Internet, and the Force of the memes is with them. Internet memes have the power of infiltrating a culture, but they also inhabit the possibility of hybridity and connection. “The point of analysis, therefore, should be the resulting hybrid cultures: that is, the stylistic features of local cultural life that emerge materially and discursively as “tonalities” of global culture [18]. Each culture has devised acceptable versions of the “Baby Yoda” meme, they appropriated the cultural product.

A famous Spanish Instagram page called “Cabronazi” that circulates memes around the Spanish speaking world has a Baby Yoda meme. The meme translates into English as “My mum watching as we open our presents from Father Christmas”. As Spain has a maternal culture, this meme is funnier in that context. The prominent cinema page “allocine” that is of French origin has another meme. It says “The first time I have seen Baby Yoda/The thousandth time I have seen Baby Yoda”, which is a reference to our global obsession with the green puppet. The last meme I will be speaking of is from a Turkish humour page. Baby Yoda looks up with those big eyes and utters “I am waiting for The Mandalorian to come pick me up from the Quran School”, which is the Islamic equivalent of a Bible School. These memes are just an example of the current global craze surrounding “Baby Yoda”. The global commodity that is “Baby Yoda” turns into a global cultural product which now borders on hybridity. The marketing team behind the “Baby Yoda” character is aware of the impact that they have made, and I will go as far as to suggest that they planned a big part of it.

[...]Web was always planned to have the possibilities that it offers now: connecting people around the world, sharing content and experiences. Something still changed around the turn of the millennium, and this shows in the story of Internet memes as well. Learning from such popular viral personal websites as Mahir Çağrı’s, advertising agencies created the first instances of viral marketing, such as Super Greg by the Minneapolis based agency, Fallon Worldwide. Memetics was gaining significance [2].

Global memes have the possibility of being used as part of a viral marketing strategy. They are adaptable to every culture, they cross borders without problem, they enter hearts with the speed of Millennium Falcon piloted by Han Solo. Internet memes spread faster as they possess a rich intertextuality, as the most famous intertextual internet meme “Star Wars kid” makes [13]. Baby Yoda is the new sensation to prove that global memes are crucial for marketing strategies of transmedia corporations.

5. Conclusion

Baby Yoda memes contain politics, tradition, economy and Star Wars mania in one small package, all made possible by the web. Toby Miller discusses the era of new technologies as a place where labour is forgotten [16]. A small, cute and green creature makes us forget all the labour which goes into producing films, shows or merchandise. However, at the

same time, global meme culture enables us to connect in ways that were imagined to be impossible before. Reaching out with a funny picture and a text can be the easiest way to build bridges between communities.

In this study, I aimed to explain the forces behind the global commodity that is “Baby Yoda”. On this path, I dived into the transmedia empire that is *Star Wars*, I touched on the subject of toy commodity chains, then examined the nostalgia advertising technique behind *The Mandalorian*, and how global meme culture was utilised as a viral marketing technique for the show. Nonetheless, we also witnessed the struggle for cultural domination, and how there is always a place for hybridity.

I conclude by saying that I started this work hoping to come across a global mélange within the global advertising strategies of Disney and I can say that we might have found a global meme that has touched people’s hearts across borders and prompted them to make memes of their own culture.

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