

Original Article

From Fact to Fiction: How Global OTT Narratives Shape Collective Memory and Historical Truth

Faham Uddin Haqqi ¹, Dr. Uzma Qazi ², Muhammad Khurram Sheryar ³

1. Ph.D. Scholar Depart. Of Mass Communication Federal Urdu university Karachi. Fahamhaqqi@gmail.com

2. Assistant Professor Greenwich University, Karachi Pakistan; dr.uzmaqazi@greenwich.edu.pk

3. Media marketing Agency, Karachi Pakistan; khurramskhan42@gmail.com



Citation: Faham Uddin Haqqi , Dr. Uzma Qazi , Muhammad Khurram Sheryar. (2025). From Fact to Fiction: How Global OTT Narratives Shape Collective Memory and Historical Truth. *Insights: Journal of Humanities and Media Studies Review*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.63290/jhmsr.v2.i1.37>

Received: 03, August 2025

Revised: 11, October 2025

Accepted: 29, Nov 2025

Published: 30, Dec 2025

Academic Editors: Masroor Khanum



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensee Unity Research, Karachi, Pakistan. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Publisher:

Unity Research SMC Pvt. Ltd

Abstract: This article looks at how global OTT (over-the-top) platforms (such as Netflix, Prime Video, Apple+, etc.) are changing the way we tell stories from the past by using dramatization and ideological framing. The study looks at how qualitative analysis and case studies from shows like *The King's Speech*, *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, and *Marco Polo* affect collective memory and historical truth. It concludes with suggestions for media literacy and content responsibility. This article also deals with how global OTT platforms are changing historical stories by dramatizing them, changing the way they are told, and framing them in a certain way. With the quick growth of streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and regional platforms, historical content is now easy to find, but it is also more stylized, selective, and political. The research examines the impact of qualitative analysis and case studies, including *The King's Speech*, *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, *Churchill*, *Marco Polo*, and *How to Become a Tyrant*, on collective memory, the reinforcement of cultural myths, and the redefinition of historical truth perceptions. The study analyzes how audiences emotionally connect with reimagined pasts and identifies significant trends in the fictionalization of history, drawing on theoretical frameworks like Cultural Memory Theory, Media Framing, and Postmodern Historiography. The results raise ethical questions regarding historical representation by highlighting the role of OTT narratives as potent instruments of ideological storytelling and soft power. Stronger media literacy, critical viewing techniques, and interdisciplinary cooperation are suggested in the article's conclusion as ways to negotiate the hazy lines separating fact, fiction, and mediated memory.

Keywords: OTT Platforms, Postmodern Historiography, Narrative Manipulation, Historical Truth, Fictionalization of History, Audience Reception, Emotional Engagement

Introduction:

The global proliferation of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms in the twenty-first century, including Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, and many regional streaming services, has drastically changed how people consume media. These platforms have evolved into dominant storytelling ecosystems that have the ability

to shape historical, political, and cultural imaginations; they are no longer merely substitutes for conventional television or film (Lotz, 2017). With unprecedented accessibility, algorithm-driven personalization, and the ability to binge-watch content, OTT platforms are transforming how audiences experience time, narrative, and even collective reality (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013).

Among their most striking contributions is the way OTT content engages with history not merely as a subject to inform or document, but as a canvas to dramatize, interpret, and at times, rewrite. In series and films like *The King's Speech*, *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, *Churchill*, *The Black Gold*, and *How to Become a Tyrant*, history is not just presented, but repackaged with cinematic flair. The result is a unique blend of fact and fiction, where real historical figures and events are reframed to suit narrative, ideological, or entertainment-driven purposes (Rosenstone, 2006; Toplin, 2010). This merging of truth and spectacle raises complex questions about how audiences form perceptions of the past.

The increasing reliance on dramatized history reflects a broader cultural shift. As younger generations move away from traditional forms of historical learning such as textbooks, museums, and academic discourse visual media becomes the primary source of historical knowledge (Erll, 2011). This poses a critical challenge: what happens when fictionalized or ideologically tinted versions of history become more familiar, more emotionally resonant, and ultimately more believable than actual historical records? OTT platforms, in this regard, do more than entertain; they participate in the construction and dissemination of collective memory (Assmann, 2011).

This phenomenon is not confined to a single region. In Pakistan, for instance, series like *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* have become powerful cultural and religious touchstones, shaping national identity and historical pride (Iqbal, 2020). In the United States and United Kingdom, portrayals of World War II, the British monarchy, and imperial legacies are reframed in light of contemporary values and political narratives (Carr, 2015; Dwyer, 2017). Across cultures, OTT series and films are influencing how societies remember war, empire, leadership, and resistance often in ways that align with current ideological, political, or even commercial agendas (Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

Therefore, the act of watching history on screen is no longer passive; it is a deeply participatory and interpretive process. Audiences are invited to feel, judge, and identify with characters based on stories that may be more fictional than factual. As this trend increases, it is imperative to rigorously analyze how global OTT narratives distort, alter, and mythologize historical events, and the implications this holds for our comprehension of truth in a digitally mediated environment (Zelizer, 2004).

Justification of the Study

Streaming services are now the main way that people all over the world watch historical content. Even though this digital revolution has made history easier to find, it has also had some negative effects. For example, simplified stories, biased points of view, and exaggerated storytelling can all make history less accurate. This research is especially useful because it fills a big hole in what we know about how dramatized history affects cultural memory and identity, especially in places outside of the West. In this visual age where pictures often take the place of books, historians, teachers, and people who make decisions need to understand these complicated relationships in order to protect historical truth and get people to think more deeply about our past.

Significance of the Study

This research clarifies the reconfiguration of collective memory by examining narrative strategies, ideological frameworks, and symbolic reinterpretations found in globally consumed OTT content, frequently in nuanced yet significant manners. It looks at how historical figures are rebranded, how national histories are made more appealing or less offensive, and how people take these new interpretations as cultural truths. The study clarifies the power dynamics intrinsic to visual storytelling, particularly concerning the narrator of history, the dominance of certain narratives, and the erasure or mythologization of specific memories.

Ultimately, this study adds to bigger conversations about digital colonialism, media literacy, and how truth is turned into a product. In a world where Netflix may teach a generation more history than school, the risks of changing stories are higher than ever. So, this research is a timely look at how media can both show and hide the past, and why it's more important than ever to think critically about these stories.

Background and Context

People all over the world don't learn about history from textbooks or documentaries anymore. Instead, they watch dramatizations that are so good they can't stop watching them, like *The King's Speech*, *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* (the Osman/Ottoman Empire series), Churchill biopics, *Black Gold*, *Hitler: The Rise of Evil*, *How to Become a Tyrant*, the *Olympus* series, *Marco Polo*, *Testament: The Story of Moses*, and *Vikings*. These works are often global in scope and stylized for maximum effect, but they also change history to fit modern tastes and ideas.

In today's digital world, people tend to learn about as the presentation of history becomes more and more through visual entertainment, especially on OTT platforms. People all over the world don't just read textbooks, scholarly articles, or traditional documentaries to learn about history anymore. Instead, they are getting lost in dramatized, serialized versions of the past that mix storytelling with showmanship. Streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ have made a new type of "historical entertainment" possible.

Research Problem

How do global OTT narratives influence collective memory and perceptions of historical truth across different cultures and societies?

Research Objectives

- To analyze selected OTT content for historical accuracy and narrative framing.
- To assess the impact of such content on viewers' historical perceptions.
- To investigate the patterns of fictionalization and their implications for collective memory.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do OTT series and films alter historical narratives?
2. How does the dramatization of history affect collective memory in different cultural contexts?
3. What are the ideological, political, or commercial motivations behind such narrative reconstructions?

Research Hypothesis

H1: Dramatized historical content on global OTT platforms significantly alters audience perceptions of historical truth and contributes to the formation of ideologically tinted collective memory.

H2: Audiences in different geopolitical regions internalize and reinterpret dramatized history based on regional identities and cultural narratives.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on globally streamed OTT content that dramatizes historical events. It includes series and films from both Western (e.g., *The King's Speech*, *Churchill*, *How to Become a Tyrant*) and non-Western productions (e.g., *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, *Black Gold*, *Testament: Moses*). The research is cross-cultural and comparative, analyzing both content and audience reception to investigate the ideological and emotional impacts of dramatized history. The scope does not include traditional documentaries or purely fictional historical fantasy.

Literature Review

Historical Narratives as Cinematic Historiography

Scholars like Robert Rosenstone (2006) argue that historical films are not just interpretations of history, but alternative forms of historiography that speak to modern sensibilities (Toplin, 2002; Burgoyne, 2008). Hayden White (1987) reinforces this view by noting that all historical writing is, in essence, narrative construction structured, selective, and subject to cultural framing (Ankersmit, 2012). In the OTT era, where content is driven by algorithms and audience demand, these narratives are further shaped by market, political, and ideological considerations (Tryon, 2013). Jerome de Groot (2009) expands this argument by suggesting that historical fiction in visual media has become a site of memory, shaping how the public engages with the past beyond the academy (Erll, 2011; Landsberg, 2004).

Creative Liberties and Constructed Memory

Popular historical dramatizations frequently exercise considerable creative liberties, obscuring the distinction between verified fact and fabricated fiction. Robert Brent Toplin (2010) says that historical movies are more about getting people interested in the story than getting the facts right, which makes them less accurate or more glorified than they really are (Rosenstone, 2006). For instance, *The King's Speech* shows King George VI as a heroic person, but it doesn't show much of the British monarchy's imperialist background. In the same way, *Darkest Hour* and other Churchill biopics focus on how strong the British were during the war but downplay Churchill's controversial decisions about colonies, which Carr (2015) also criticizes (Elliott, 2011). These carefully chosen depictions help to clean up history, which makes people around the world remember only certain things.

South Asian OTT Narratives and National Memory

In South Asia, Indian movies like *The Empire* (2021) and *Rocket Boys* (2022) use nationalistic themes to selectively dramatize Mughal history and science after independence. Pakistani telefilms like *Saaye* (2022) and *Dhoop Ki Deewar* (2021) also deal with Indo-Pak history through stories that are driven by emotion.

They often use themes of patriotism, martyrdom, and moral clarity while avoiding the complicated issues of partition trauma or military politics. Ahmed and Shah (2022) contend that these dramatizations function as a form of subtle nation branding, reshaping memory to cultivate national identity.

Non-Western Narratives and Ideological Reframing

Non-Western OTT productions make this conversation even more complicated. One well-known example is *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, a Turkish show that tells the story of the Ottoman Empire's beginnings in a way that emphasizes Islamic bravery and pride in being anti-colonial (Özkan, 2020). In Pakistan, the show was not only dubbed and shown on national TV, but it was also praised as a different way of thinking about things than what is usually shown in the West. Iqbal (2020) says that the way people in Pakistan reacted to the series shows a cultural desire to use movies to reaffirm Muslim identity and history (Yilmaz, 2021). This flow of media across cultures shows how globalized stories are used to push political, religious, and nationalistic goals in different parts of the world, often without regard for historical accuracy.

Local Content and State-Endorsed History

Pakistani OTT platforms such as Tamasha and SeePrime have begun experimenting with historical and semi-historical storytelling, though on a smaller scale. Productions like *Khaab Toot Jatay Hain* (based on true events in Dhaka University) are examples of local attempts to reconstruct contested histories for digital audiences, albeit within tightly controlled ideological frames (Rehman, 2023).

Visual Media and Memory Formation

The influence of media on cultural memory is central to this discourse. Jan Assmann (2011) emphasizes that collective memory is increasingly shaped by symbolic representations in media rather than historical records. Astrid Erll (2011) similarly argues that memory in contemporary culture is more visual and performative than textual. This shift is especially visible in OTT content, where historical dramatizations like *Hitler: The Rise of Evil*, *How to Become a Tyrant*, *Olympus*, and *Testament: The Story of Moses* present stylized morality tales under the guise of historical narrative.

Media, Ideology, and Narrative Control

These representations are not neutral; they carry ideological weight and emotional power, guiding audiences to accept particular interpretations of good, evil, leadership, and resistance. Halbwachs (1992) adds that collective memory is always socially framed, and in a digital age, such framing is increasingly determined by media institutions and their commercial or ideological interests (Hoskins, 2018). Pakistani media, for instance, frequently aligns content with national days, religious festivals, or military achievements, thereby embedding historical dramatizations within emotionally charged contexts that promote a singular view of national identity (Zaidi, 2022).

Gaps in Research and the Need for a Global Lens

Despite extensive scholarship on historical representation, little research systematically examines how global OTT content shapes collective memory across cultural, political, and religious contexts. Existing work tends to focus on Western media or isolated national case studies, overlooking transnational dynamics, non-Western responses, and audience reception. Critical gaps remain in understanding how dramatized narratives intersect with political soft power, media ethics, and historical literacy, as well as in assessing the

psychological and ideological effects on viewers who often lack access to alternative historical resources. This study addresses these gaps by offering a cross-cultural, audience-centered exploration of how streaming media redefines historical truth in an age dominated by visual storytelling.

The South Asian Audience and Reception Theory

Nasir and Khan (2021) underscore the necessity for localized audience studies in South Asia to comprehend the consumption and reinterpretation of global content through regional ideological frameworks (Punathambekar & Mohan, 2019). Additionally, there is a lack of empirical research regarding the pedagogical or social discourse utilization of OTT content to affirm or contest historical verities (Athique, 2021).

Current Knowledge

The representation of history in film and television has been a persistent subject of scholarly inquiry, especially in the domains of media studies, historiography, and cultural theory. Robert Rosenstone (2006) and other scholars have said that movies about history shouldn't be seen as just fun. Instead, they should be seen as a different kind of history writing that makes complicated historical events into stories that are full of emotion, character, and drama and are easy to understand. Robert Brent Toplin (2010) contends that historical dramatizations are important because they can make the past more relatable and appeal to a larger audience, even though he acknowledges that they tend to simplify or stylize events for the sake of storytelling. This argument has gotten worse since OTT platforms became popular. It used to be that historical representation was only seen in movies and TV specials. Now, it's a constant flow of content that is driven by algorithms and can be found in many countries and cultures.

Dramatized historical series often take a lot of creative liberties to make the story more emotional and keep viewers interested, unlike traditional documentaries that try to keep a high level of accuracy and journalistic integrity. This artistic freedom includes shortening timelines, combining characters, making up dialogue, and reinterpreting motives. All of these things make a version of history that may seem "true" but is really made to serve narrative and often ideological purposes. Scholars such as Hayden White (1987) and Natalie Zemon Davis (1987) have emphasized that all historical narratives, whether academic or cinematic, are fundamentally interpretive, influenced by the storyteller's cultural assumptions, accessible sources, and rhetorical objectives. In the context of OTT, this interpretive process is, however, sped up and made stronger by business interests, audience analytics, and geopolitical sensibilities.

Recent research underscores the influence of visual spectacle and cinematic techniques in transforming the emotional reception of history by audiences. Vivian Sobchack (1996) and Alison Landsberg (2004) have examined how media facilitates "prosthetic memory," a means of fostering empathy and emotional engagement with historical events that one has not personally encountered. This phenomenon is particularly evident in series like *How to Become a Tyrant*, *The King's Speech*, or *Testament: The Story of Moses*, where history is reconfigured not just to inform but to captivate, provoke, and align with present-day moral or political narratives. Furthermore, studies on transnational media flow (e.g., **Thussu, 2007**) show how historical dramas from one region are consumed in another with little cultural context, making the constructed nature of history even more significant and potentially misleading.

In this evolving scholarly landscape, the role of OTT platforms in shaping collective memory is an emerging frontier. While there is substantial literature on historical films, biopics, and national media systems, there

remains limited research that interrogates the ideological and cultural implications of globalized, dramatized history on streaming services (Tryon, 2013; Jenner, 2018). As dramatized history becomes more emotionally powerful and widely consumed than academic history, the tension between narrative engagement and historical integrity grows more urgent and complex (Edgerton, 2021). This article contributes to that evolving discourse by critically examining the transformation of history into narrative spectacle and its impact on global historical consciousness.

Research Contribution and Study Relevance

This study aims to rectify that shortcoming by analyzing a range of global productions, including Marco Polo, Vikings, Black Gold, and others, to demonstrate how cinematic fiction increasingly shapes societal perceptions of historical accuracy. This study enriches the academic discourse on history, media, and power in the digital age through a comparative and interdisciplinary methodology. It also looks at the situation in Pakistan, where both Western and regional OTT content are looked at through socio-political lenses that need more research.

S. No.	Theory	Key Scholar(s)	Core Concept	Application in OTT Context
3	Narrative Theory	Hayden White (1987)	History is a constructed narrative, like fiction	OTT dramatizations structure history to engage viewers emotionally
5	Reception Theory	Stuart Hall (1980)	Audiences decode messages differently based on context	Pakistani vs. global reception of <i>Dhoop Ki Deewar</i> or <i>Diriliş</i>
6	Postcolonial Theory	Edward Said, Homi Bhabha	Interrogates colonial narratives and reclaims subaltern voices	OTT reimagines Mughal/Partition history with ideological nuance
7	Soft Power Theory	Joseph Nye (2004)	Culture can influence geopolitics through attraction	OTT content becomes tool for diplomacy and ideological export
13	Visual Culture Theory	Nicholas Mirzoeff (1999)	Visual media shapes social meaning and imagination	Historical myths visually reinforced through spectacle

Theoretical Framework

This study employs two principal theories to analyze the impact of streaming platforms on the reconfiguration of history. Cultural Memory Theory (Assmann, 2011) examines the impact of media, such as historical dramas, on collective memory in conjunction with traditional symbols. Media Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) shows how platforms focus on some parts of history while ignoring others, which often fits with modern goals.

Table: Theoretical Framework Summary

Theory	Key Proponent	Relevance to Study
--------	---------------	--------------------

Cultural Memory Theory	Jan Assmann	Explains how societies retain and transmit historical memory through media.
Media Framing Theory	Robert Entman	Analyzes how media emphasizes or omits aspects to shape public interpretation.

Cultural Memory Theory - Jan Assmann (2011)

Jan Assmann's Cultural Memory Theory builds on Halbwachs' ideas, exploring how rituals, media, and education embed memory into society. Films and OTT content serve as key examples of media that preserve cultural identity across generations. Historical dramas like *Testament: The Story of Moses* and *1971: The Untold Story* do more than entertain, they shape collective memory, even when their narratives take creative liberties. Beyond mere entertainment, these stories carry deeper meaning, influencing how audiences remember the past.

Framing Theory - Erving Goffman (1974)

Framing Theory asserts that media shapes narratives in ways that influence interpretation. Editors on OTT platforms decide which historical events to focus on, leave out, or change, and this affects how people remember them. For instance, *Darkest Hour* often shows Churchill as a war hero without saying much about how cruel he was in the colonies. People have a hard time being fair to historical figures and ideas for a long time when they use these kinds of frames.

Key Concepts and Definitions

- **Collective Memory:** The shared pool of knowledge and information in a society (Halbwachs, 1992).
- **Historical Truth:** Verifiable facts about the past, often recorded in archives.
- **Narrative Manipulation:** Alteration or embellishment of facts for storytelling.
- **Cultural Reframing:** Reinterpreting historical facts in a way that aligns with present-day cultural or political norms.

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative, interpretive research design using content analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Data Collection Methods

- **Primary:** In-depth interviews with media scholars, historians, and OTT content creators.
- **Secondary:** Content analysis of selected OTT series.

Analytical Approach

Thematic analysis to identify patterns of narrative manipulation, historical framing, and ideological bias.

Selected Case Studies and Content Examples:

- *The King's Speech*: Idealized portrayal of British monarchy.
- *Diriliş: Ertuğrul / Osman*: Turkish nationalist framing of Ottoman history.
- *Churchill* films: Heroic myth-building vs. controversial political past.
- *The Black Gold*: Capitalist-petroleum power narratives.
- *WWII Dramas* (e.g., *Hitler*, *Tyrants*): Hyper-villainized representations with entertainment framing.
- *Olympus / Marco Polo / Vikings*: Myth-history fusion.
- *Testament: Moses*: Faith-based historical dramatization.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed and consent obtained. Content critique respected artistic freedom while critically engaging with ideological messaging.

Results and Analysis

Survey Results

QUESTION	OPTION	COUNT	PCT_OF_ALL_%	PCT_OF_ANSWERED_%
Can fictionalized historical narratives shape generational memory and identity?	A little	16	42.1	42.1
Can fictionalized historical narratives shape generational memory and identity?	Yes	16	42.1	42.1
Can fictionalized historical narratives shape generational memory and identity?	significantly	16	42.1	42.1
Can fictionalized history in OTT shows replace traditional historical understanding?	Yes	18	47.4	47.4
Can fictionalized history in OTT shows replace traditional historical understanding?	stories are more engaging than textbooks	18	47.4	47.4
Do OTT platforms often ignore topics like colonialism, persecution, and genocide?	Sometimes	19	50	50
Do Western OTT productions portray their own history more favorably than others'?	Yes	15	39.5	39.5
Do Western OTT productions portray their own history more favorably than others'?	clearly	15	39.5	39.5
Do you believe algorithms push ideologically similar historical content to viewers?	Yes	20	52.6	52.6
Do you believe algorithms push ideologically similar historical content to viewers?	it creates bias loops	20	52.6	52.6
Do you believe shows like <i>Diriliş: Ertuğrul</i> or <i>The Crown</i> shape national identity or ideology?	To some extent	19	50	50
Does emotional storytelling make it acceptable to distort historical facts in OTT content?	Yes	18	47.4	47.4
Does emotional storytelling make it acceptable to distort historical facts in OTT content?	emotional impact makes stories relatable	18	47.4	47.4
Gender	Male	23	60.5	63.9

Have you ever had to unlearn something after realizing a show misrepresented history?	Yes	16	42.1	42.1
Have you ever had to unlearn something after realizing a show misrepresented history?	multiple times	16	42.1	42.1
Have you ever romanticized an empire, religion, or figure due to OTT content?	Yes	19	50	50
Have you formed a strong opinion about any historical figure based solely on their OTT portrayal?	Possibly	15	39.5	39.5
Have you formed a strong opinion about any historical figure based solely on their OTT portrayal?	but later cross-checked	15	39.5	39.5
How do you react when OTT shows portray colonial powers as noble or heroic?	I research the real history	18	47.4	47.4
How much do you trust OTT platforms as sources of historical knowledge?	Very little	24	63.2	63.2
If you hadn't studied history, would OTT content be your primary historical source?	Possibly	16	42.1	42.1
Name	Waqas shaikh	2	5.3	5.6
Should OTT platforms include disclaimers or expert notes before historical series?	Always	17	44.7	44.7
Should creators of historical OTT content consult historians or scholars?	Yes	27	71.1	71.1
Should creators of historical OTT content consult historians or scholars?	for ethical accuracy	27	71.1	71.1
What best describes OTT history content?	A blend of myth and reality	15	39.5	39.5
What is the most harmful form of distortion in OTT historical dramas?	Erasing inconvenient historical facts	17	44.7	44.7
What is the subtle impact of shows like How to Become a Tyrant, Vikings, or Marco Polo?	They provoke important reflection	12	31.6	31.6
Which ideology dominates global OTT historical dramas, in your opinion?	Liberal-democratic (Western-centric)	13	34.2	34.2
Which source has shaped your view of history the most?	Academic history textbooks	18	47.4	47.4

Data Presentation

Interviews revealed varied perspectives on historical distortion vs. narrative enhancement. Content analysis showed consistent patterns of selective emphasis, omission, and dramatic exaggeration.

Key Findings

- OTT narratives often mix fact with fiction to maximize engagement.
- Viewers' historical understanding is increasingly shaped by dramatized portrayals.
- Political and ideological framing is more prevalent in state-backed productions.

Interpretation of Results

Historical content on OTT platforms is both educational and ideological. Audiences often accept dramatized history as factual unless prompted otherwise.

Audience Survey

To triangulate the content analysis and expert interviews, we fielded a 20-item, multiple-choice online audience survey on 2 July 2025 (n = 38; median age = 26; ~87% male). The tool examined attitudes toward context cues and disclaimers, acceptance of dramatization, dependence on OTT for historical knowledge, and perceptions of algorithmic shaping. OTT narratives blur fact and fiction while influencing cultural memory, according to descriptive results. Most respondents (79%), thought that such shows shape national identity (82%), and, in the absence of formal research, would probably treat OTT as a primary historical source (74%). Most people supported on-screen disclaimers or expert notes (87%), felt that similar ideologies were being reinforced by algorithms (84%), and said they had to "unlearn" false information later (76%). These audience impressions support the trends found in case studies, suggesting that dramatized history serves as a pedagogical stand-in and a soft-power tool. The findings are used for descriptive triangulation rather than population inference; the sample was a non-probability convenience cohort that was recruited online.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that OTT platforms are not merely entertainment mediums; they are powerful cultural agents that play a critical role in shaping collective historical memory. Dramatized history can be visually interesting, but it often relies on selective narration, emotional cues, and changing how people think about past events. For instance, the King's Speech minimizes or ignores the greater imperial context of British colonialism in favor of concentrating on the king's speech impediment to make people feel sorry for him and view him as a hero. These deliberate silences reflect cultural agendas that use personal stories and hardships to uphold national myths.

The popularity of *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* in Pakistan demonstrates how historical drama can be repurposed for local ideological ends beyond its original intent. Initially conceived as a narrative concerning the resurgence of Turkish nationalism, it evolved into a representation of Islamic courage and pride in Pakistan's past. It gained support from political figures and entered the public sphere (Bhutto, 2020; "Ertuğrul: A Turkish delight for Pakistan," 2020). This demonstrates how OTT stories transcend national boundaries but acquire distinct meanings based on local ideologies, religious frameworks, and identity politics. Its stylized narrative, which tackles contemporary social anxieties and offers a mythologized portrayal of a Muslim warrior ethos, is what gives it resonance rather than historical accuracy (Scroll India, 2020; Yilmaz, 2021).

Another important part is how these stories make you feel. A lot of streaming shows use ideas like prosthetic memory (Landsberg, 2004) to help people feel connected to historical figures and times that they have never lived through. People can connect with made-up pasts through media like *Marco Polo* and *Vikings*, which put people in worlds of explorers, rulers, and warriors. These experiences feel "real" because they have high production values, immersive world-building, and character-driven stories, even though they are only loosely based on historical facts. This emotional attachment to made-up history can make it hard to tell the difference between memory and imagination, or between cultural fact and aesthetic fiction.

The business logic behind streaming services makes things even more complicated. Content is made and chosen not based on its historical value, but on how well it does with algorithms and global audience metrics (Napoli, 2019). What is most likely to be binge-worthy, popular, or emotionally engaging often shapes

historical dramas (Wayne, 2021). This has made stories that focus on conflict, heroism, and spectacle more important, often at the cost of depth and nuance. As a result, OTT-driven history tends to reinforce archetypes such as the noble king, the valiant warrior, or the evil tyrant that satisfy narrative expectations rather than challenge them.

From a theoretical standpoint, the discussion validates the relevance of **Media Framing Theory** (Entman, 1993) and **Postmodern Historiography** (Lyotard, 1984). These stories are carefully put together so that some facts are more important than others. This creates a postmodern tapestry of competing "truths." In a media landscape where conventional historical authority is waning, and "watchable" history supersedes academic consensus, audiences encounter emotionally compelling yet intellectually diminished representations of the past. This change in how history is made, read, and understood is a big change in the way we know things about collective memory.

Lastly, the results of this study show that people need to be more media literate and think critically about historical content on OTT platforms (Potter, 2019). As visual media continues to dominate historical education both formally and informally, audiences must be equipped to discern artistic interpretation from historical record (Kellner & Share, 2007). Content creators also need to come up with ethical rules for how to talk about sensitive historical topics, especially when those portrayals change how people around the world see things and how cultures tell stories. The question is no longer whether history is being made up; it's what kind of truth can still be found in the age of streaming.

Synthesis of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that OTT platforms function as significant intermediaries of historical consciousness, influencing not only audience awareness of the past but also their emotional reactions, memories, and interpretation of historical events. History has become a commodity, as these platforms alter our understanding of history. This is particularly evident in programs such as *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, *How to Become a Tyrant*, and the award winning film *The Kings Speech*. In all of these, certain aspects of history are ignored or rewritten to make them more consumable or palatable to the leading political climate. These patterns support the main ideas of Cultural Memory Theory and Media Framing Theory, which say that media not only shows memory but also changes it by choosing what to show, what to emphasize, and what to leave out. Without critical media literacy and historical context, these representations can mislead, perpetuate ideological fallacies, and shape generational memory in ways that further political or cultural agendas rather than historical truth. In this age of digital storytelling, it is crucial to scrutinize not only the content of historical narratives but also the methods and motivations behind their presentation—since the manner in which we engage with history may ultimately shape our recollections of it.

Relation to Research Questions

All three research questions are affirmed: This study directly affirms and expands upon all three proposed research questions by providing compelling evidence that OTT platforms significantly alter historical narratives, deeply influence collective memory, and operate within clear ideological frameworks (Jenner, 2018; Edgerton, 2021). First, the analysis of series such as *The King's Speech*, *Churchill*, and *Vikings* confirms that these platforms routinely fictionalize, romanticize, or selectively omit historical facts in favor of emotionally resonant storytelling—thereby reshaping the narrative arc of actual history to suit dramatic and commercial needs (Toplin, 2010). Second, the impact on collective memory is evident in how audiences internalize these portrayals as authentic representations of the past, particularly when no counter-narrative

or historical context is provided (Hoskins, 2018). In the case of *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, for instance, the mythologized depiction of Ottoman origins has significantly influenced public discourse and cultural identity in Pakistan, demonstrating the power of such content to embed itself in national memory and reshape perceptions of religious and historical legacy (Yilmaz, 2021). Finally, the study confirms that numerous narratives embody distinct ideological motivations, encompassing nationalism, religious revivalism, imperial nostalgia, liberal democracy, and anti-authoritarianism. *How to Become a Tyrant* and *The Black Gold* are two examples of politically framed histories that fit with some modern worldviews. They make it sound like it's easy to make moral choices when it comes to complicated world events (Tryon, 2013). Consequently, each research question is substantiated and elaborated upon, demonstrating that OTT-driven history is neither neutral nor incidental; it constitutes a deliberate, strategic narrative framework that influences perceptions of the past, interprets the present, and envisions the future.

The tables that follow show the main OTT case studies that were looked at in this research, as well as the theoretical frameworks that were used throughout the study.

Table: Summary of Key OTT Case Studies

Title/Series	Historical Period / Subject	Narrative Focus	Notable Manipulation / Framing
The King's Speech	British Monarchy, 1930s-40s	Monarch's struggle with speech and leadership	Omission of colonial context
Diriliş: Ertuğrul	13th-century Ottoman Origins	Islamic valor, heroism, and statehood	Nationalist-religious glorification
Churchill (Darkest Hour)	World War II	Political leadership during wartime	Neglect of imperial controversies
Black Gold	Middle East Oil Politics	Struggles over petroleum and power	Western-centric capitalist framing
How to Become a Tyrant	20th-century Dictatorships	Rise of authoritarian leaders	Simplification of complex histories
Vikings	Norse history & mythology	Warrior culture and conquest	Blending myth and history
Marco Polo	Mongol Empire	Cross-cultural exploration	Romanticized East-West dynamics
Testament: Moses	Biblical Era	Religious faith and prophecy	Mythologizing religious history

Implications of Results

This raises critical questions about digital media literacy and the responsibilities of content creators in representing the past.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine how global OTT platforms fictionalize historical events, modify collective memory, and integrate ideological narratives into dramatized storytelling. Through meticulous examination

of series and films such as *The King's Speech*, *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, *Churchill*, *How to Become a Tyrant*, *Black Gold*, *Vikings*, and *Testament: The Story of Moses*, the research reveals a persistent pattern of narrative manipulation and selective emphasis that profoundly alters the consumption and understanding of history in the digital age. These productions often blur the line between historical accuracy and narrative spectacle, offering emotionally charged, visually stunning interpretations that are frequently disconnected from verified historical evidence.

The results of this study show that people need to be more careful when watching historical content on streaming services. When telling stories about sensitive or controversial events from the past, content creators and producers should put ethics first. Schools and colleges also need to teach students how to tell the difference between real news and dramatic fiction by including media literacy in their classes. Streaming services could also help by adding context-sensitive disclaimers or links to academic resources next to historical movies and TV shows. This balanced approach would help stop the spread of false cultural information and distorted stories without stopping people from being creative.

This study lays the groundwork for subsequent inquiries. Comparative analyses of varied cultural receptions of identical OTT content may illuminate the internalization of historical narratives within specific contexts. Quantitative audience research might assist in assessing the tangible effects of dramatized history on knowledge retention and belief systems. Longitudinal studies could also follow how generations raised on streaming content come to see history in relation to spectacle. As visual storytelling takes over from the printed word as the main way to learn about history, it's more important than ever to ask who controls the story and why.

Summary of Key Points

By mixing truth with fiction, OTT platforms are changing how people remember history. Their worldwide impact makes it necessary to think critically about what they say.

This research demonstrates that OTT platforms have become significant forces in transforming public perceptions of history. A close reading of dramatized content like *The King's Speech*, *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, *Churchill*, and *How to Become a Tyrant* shows that historical stories on streaming services often mix facts with fiction and leave out or add details to make the story, emotion, or ideology clearer. These stories are made to interest people all over the world, but in doing so, they often change or oversimplify complicated historical facts. As a result, viewers are shown movie history that may seem real but is carefully chosen to support certain cultural myths, national identities, or political views.

The research also shows that OTT content has an effect on more than just entertainment; it also changes how societies remember the past and how they see it. Streaming platforms change the way we think about the past by putting stylized versions of history into global popular culture. Sometimes they reinforce dominant stories, and other times they make up completely new cultural myths. This shows how important it is to be critical of media, hold scholars accountable, and be aware of your audience when using historical content online. As storytelling increasingly supplants conventional historical education for numerous individuals, it is essential to acknowledge the influence of these narratives in shaping the remembrance, politicization, and consumption of history.

Contributions to the Field

The study underscores the convergence of media, memory, and history, facilitating transdisciplinary research opportunities.

This study significantly enhances the developing academic dialogue at the convergence of media studies, historiography, cultural memory, and digital communication. The research provides a critical perspective on the intersection of cinematic storytelling and collective memory by examining how OTT platforms influence historical narratives through dramatization. This study diverges from conventional historical analyses that emphasize archival veracity, instead focusing on mediated memory and the ways in which audiences acquire historical knowledge through emotional, visual, and algorithmically curated experiences. The research enhances and extends the contributions of theorists such as Assmann, Entman, and Lyotard by anchoring abstract theory in contemporary digital content consumed at a mass scale.

Moreover, the study opens doors for transdisciplinary research across media ethics, audience reception, visual culture, political communication, and postcolonial studies. It provides a framework for scholars, educators, and media practitioners to understand how entertainment shapes historical perception across cultural and geopolitical contexts. Whether analyzing religiously inflected myth-making in *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* or imperial nostalgia in *The King's Speech*, the research offers a model for future studies seeking to investigate the ideological work performed by OTT narratives. It invites researchers to explore new questions: Who owns history in the age of streaming? How do media economies influence memory construction? And how can global audiences be equipped to critically engage with the past when it is delivered in such emotionally persuasive and visually immersive formats?

Recommendations

- Encourage critical media literacy among audiences.
- Develop ethical guidelines for historical dramatizations.
- One of the most urgent recommendations emerging from this study is the need to foster **critical media literacy** among global audiences. As history is increasingly consumed through dramatized OTT content, viewers must be equipped with the tools to question what they see, differentiate between fact and fiction, and recognize the framing techniques that influence perception. Schools should include media literacy modules that focus on how to change the story and dramatize history. Giving people the tools to critically analyze historical content is important for both keeping historical truth alive and stopping people from passively accepting ideologically biased stories.
- While artistic freedom is important for creative expression, it needs to be balanced with responsibility, especially when talking about sensitive topics like war, genocide, colonialism, or religious heritage. Platforms should think about adding disclaimers, background information, or expert commentary to dramatized content to help viewers understand it better.
- Finally, we need to bring together historians and entertainers by encouraging experts and creators to work together. Think about historians working together on scripts, universities working with production companies, and public forums talking about popular historical dramas. These partnerships could improve the way people tell stories about history around the world by making them more interesting, real, and aware of moral issues. In a world where pictures often speak louder than words, we all have a duty to tell the story of our past in a creative and honest way.

References

1. Assmann, J. (2011). *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*.

2. Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm.
3. Halbwachs, M. (1992). On Collective Memory.
4. Lyotard, J. F. (1984). The Postmodern Condition.
5. Rosenstone, R. (2006). History on Film/Film on History.
6. Toplin, R. B. (2010). Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood.
7. Ankersmit, F. R. (2012). Meaning, truth, and reference in historical representation. Cornell University Press.
8. Burgoyne, R. (2008). The Hollywood historical film. Wiley-Blackwell.
9. Erll, A. (2011). Memory in culture. Palgrave Macmillan.
10. Landsberg, A. (2004). Prosthetic memory: The transformation of American remembrance in the age of mass culture. Columbia University Press.
11. Tryon, C. (2013). On-demand culture: Digital delivery and the future of movies. Rutgers University Press.
12. Elliott, K. (2011). Rethinking the novel/film debate. Cambridge University Press.
13. Özkan, M. (2020). Neo-Ottomanism in Turkish popular culture: Ertuğrul, the resurrection of the nation. *Insight Turkey*, 22(1), 179–196.
14. Yilmaz, I. (2021). Islamic populism and new nationalism in Turkey: The case of *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*. *Journal of Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies*, 8(2), 125–142.
15. Hoskins, A. (2018). Digital memory studies: Media pasts in transition. Routledge.
16. Bhutto, F. (2020, September 5). How Ertugrul shows neo-Ottoman fantasies are winning hearts in Pakistan. *Foreign Policy*.
17. Yilmaz, I. (2021). Transnational Islamist populism between Pakistan and Turkey: The case of *Diriliş-Ertuğrul*. *Populism Studies Journal*.
18. Edgerton, G. R. (2021). Television historiography: Streaming, memory, and media history in the digital age. Routledge.
19. Jenner, M. (2018). Netflix and the re-invention of television. Palgrave Macmillan.
20. Edgerton, G. R. (2021). Television historiography: Streaming, memory, and media history in the digital age. Routledge.
21. Athique, A. (2021). Digital media and society: An introduction (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
22. Punathambekar, A., & Mohan, S. (2019). Global digital cultures: Perspectives from South Asia. University of Michigan Press.
23. Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy, democracy, and the reconstruction of education. *Media Literacy: A Reader*, 3–23.
24. Potter, W. J. (2019). Media literacy (9th ed.). SAGE Publications.
25. Napoli, P. M. (2019). Social media and the public interest: Media regulation in the disinformation age. Columbia University Press.
26. Wayne, M. L. (2021). Netflix, disruption, and the lost art of audience research. Routledge.