

**EXPLORING DIFFERENT STRATEGIES FOR REPRESENTING THE SAME
HISTORICAL EVENT:
RISE OF EMPIRES: OTTOMAN AND CONQUEST 1453**

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Summary

This sresearchng conducts a comparative analysis of two distinct media portrayals of the historical event, the conquest of Constantinople, in the East and the West. It aims to clarify, how genre-specific storytelling methods influence historical narratives. It uses comprehensive content analysis identifying vital narrative elements and compare their use and impact in each work. Firstly, the docudrama *Rise of Empires: Ottoman* (2020) follows the grammar of a documentary and combines historical reconstruction with the theatrical narration and objective expert interviews to anchor the narrative logically. The portrayal of the Ottoman and Byzantine sides as protagonists also underscores the balanced perspective, urging the audience grasping the intricacy of the historical event. Against this, the film *Conquest 1453* (2012), which allows the audience to empathize with the characters, presents the one-sided narrative, that glorifies Mehmed II, woven with nationalist sentiments. The storytelling method emphasizes binary opposition between the 'heroic' Ottomans and the 'villainous' Byzantines, urging the audience to elicit emotional engagement and national pride. Therefore, this comparative analysis contributes to the academic discourse on historical representation in visual media by serving as a practical guide for future content creation and emphasizing the importance of critical engagement with different storytelling methods.

Key Words: Representation strategy, historical event, storytelling, *Rise of Empires: Ottoman*, *Conquest 1453*

**AYNI TARİHİ OLAYIN TEMSİLİNDE FARKLI STRATEJİLERİ KEŞF ETMEK:
RISE OF EMPIRES: OTTOMAN VE FETİH 1453**

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Özet

Bu çalışma, Doğu ve Batı'da iyi bilinen tarihi bir olay olan İstanbul'un fethini ele alan iki farklı medya tasvirinin karşılaştırmalı analizini yapmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı, aynı tarihi olayı konu alan bu iki eserin kendi türlerinin özelliklerine göre kullandıkları farklı hikâye anlatıcılığı tekniklerini analiz etmektir. Kapsamlı bir içerik analizi kullanılarak temel anlatı unsurları belirlenmekte ve her bir eserdeki kullanımları ve etkileri karşılaştırılmaktadır. Öncelikle, belgeselin gramerini takip eden belgesel drama türündeki *Rise of Empires: Ottoman* (2020), tarihi yeniden canlandırmalar ile teatral anlatımı ve nesnel uzman röportajlarını birleştirerek anlatıyı mantıksal bir temele oturtmaktadır. Osmanlı ve Bizans taraflarının kahramanlar olarak tasvir edilmesi, dengeli bir bakış açısı kurgulayarak izleyicilerin tarihi olayın karmaşıklığını kavramalarına teşvik etmektedir. Buna karşılık, izleyicinin karakterlerle empati kurmasını sağlayan film türündeki *Fetih 1453* (2012), Fatih Sultan Mehmed'i kahramanlaştırmaya odaklanarak

milliyetçi duygularla örülmüş tek taraflı bir anlatı sunmaktadır. “İyi” Osmanlılar ile “kötü” Bizanslılar arasındaki ikili karşıtlığı vurgulayan hikâye anlatıcılığı yöntemi, izleyicilerin kahramanla kurdukları duygusal bağı güçlendirmeyi hedefleyerek milli gururu okşamaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu karşılaştırmalı analiz, farklı hikâye anlatım yöntemleriyle eleştirel bir etkileşimin önemini vurgulayarak ve gelecekteki içerik üretimleri için pratik bir rehber görevi görerek görsel medyada tarihsel temsile ilişkin akademik söyleme katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tarihsel olay, temsil stratejisi, hikâye anlatıcılığı, Rise of Empires: Ottoman, Fetih 1453

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ РАЗНЫХ СТРАТЕГИЙ ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЯ ОДНОГО И ТОГО ЖЕ ИСТОРИЧЕСКОГО СОБЫТИЯ:

На примере фильмов «Восход Османской империи» и «Завоевание 1453»

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Аннотация

Данное исследование проводит сравнительный анализ двух различных медийных представлений исторического события — Завоевания/Падения Константинополя — на Востоке и Западе. Цель работы — выяснить, как жанровые особенности и приемы повествования влияют на восприятие исторического нарратива. Исследование базируется на комплексном контент-анализе, который позволяет выявить ключевые элементы сюжета и сравнить их использование и влияние в каждом произведении. Первый объект исследования — документальная драма «Восход Османской империи» (2020), которая следует жанровым традициям документального кино. Этот фильм сочетает исторические реконструкции с театрализованным повествованием и экспертными интервью, что позволяет создать взвешенный и обоснованный нарратив. Важным элементом является изображение обеих сторон — османской и византийской — как равноправных участников исторического процесса, что подчеркивает сложность и многослойность события, побуждая зрителей к более глубокому его осмыслению. С другой стороны, фильм «Завоевание 1453» (2012), предлагает зрителям пережить исторические события через персонажей. Однако этот фильм акцентирует внимание на односторонней интерпретации, в которой Мехмед II представлен как национальный герой, а сам нарратив насыщен националистическими элементами. Повествовательная структура основана на бинарной оппозиции: «героические» османы против «злодейских» византийцев, что создает эмоционально заряженное восприятие событий и усиливает чувство национальной гордости у зрителей. Проведенный сравнительный анализ позволяет сделать важные выводы для академической дискуссии о способах визуального представления исторических событий в медиапространстве. Результаты исследования подчеркивают необходимость критического подхода к различным методам повествования и предоставляют рекомендации для создания будущего исторического контента.

Ключевые слова: стратегия представления, историческое событие, повествование, «Восход Османской империи», «Завоевание 1453»

Actuality. This research is academically significant as it explores how the same historical event, the Conquest/Fall of Constantinople, can be represented narratively differently through distinct genres, offering insights into the scope of visual media interpretation. The study delves into the docudrama *Rise of Empires: Ottoman* (1) and the film *Conquest 1453* (2), analyzing their different storytelling techniques based on their respective genres.

Annotation. The study aims to clarify how genre-specific storytelling methods influence historical narratives in visual media. This approach can enhance creators' understanding of storytelling techniques in different genres and provide practical knowledge for representing historical events in future content creation.

Methods. This paper conducts a comprehensive content analysis to identify key narrative elements and evaluate their use and impact in the docudrama *Rise of Empires: Ottoman* and the film *Conquest 1453*.

Introduction. Understanding history is crucial for gaining insight into our present and learning from the past. In the 21st century, visual media has become the primary medium to convey history. Robert A. Rosenstone stated, “As long as screens, large and small, remain a major medium for showing and telling us about our world, then film will be one way of rendering the past[3; 139].” Visual history often reaches a broader audience than traditional written history.

The pivotal historical event of Mehmet II’s conquest/fall of Constantinople in 1453 was a significant moment that marked the end of the Byzantine Empire and heralded the dawn of the Ottoman Empire. This event, which is well known to the public in the East and West, has been portrayed in various media, including the docudrama *Rise of Empires: Ottoman* (hereafter *Rise*) and the film *Conquest 1453* (hereafter *Conquest*). These two works are not mere retellings of history but distinct and intriguing narrative attempts at this pivotal historical event.

According to Chatman Seymour (4), the core elements of narrative are story (content, events, characters, background) and discourse (expression, means of communication). Content analysis, a robust research method that involves identifying the “critical grammar” of each genre’s storytelling method, is suitable for this research. As Nathan Smith and Jenny Rock argue, understanding the ‘creator’s intention of creation’ is critical for accurate interpretation [5; 58-62].

Therefore, this paper embarks on a novel journey, delving into these two works’ unique and captivating genre-specific storytelling methods. It seeks to understand how the same historical event can be represented differently and to argue that these differences result from the distinct genres of the two works. Moreover, in a media landscape characterized by abundant platforms and content that often defies existing theories, this study paves a new path, expanding the horizons of visual media interpretation. It analyzes how the same historical event can be expressed differently through distinct genres, thereby highlighting the evolving nature of media representation.

The structure of this research is as follows: Chapter 1 will introduce the research subjects, *Rise* and *Conquest*, which depict the same historical event. *Rise* is a docudrama combining historical reenactments with expert interviews, while *Conquest* is a historical film focusing on a fictional character's personal journey during the event. Chapter 2 will then delve into the unique representation strategies used in each work by analyzing the storytelling methods of each work. This sequential approach ensures a comprehensive analysis of the two works and their distinct genres.

1. Overview of Research Subjects and Literature Review

1.1. Overview of Research Subjects

1.1.1. *Rise of Empires: Ottoman, Season 1. The Conquest of Constantinople*

The first season of *Rise*, titled “The Conquest of Constantinople,” is a docudrama with six episodes. Sultan Mehmed II of the Ottoman Empire is the protagonist. The plot is based on the last siege of Constantinople in 1453 between the Ottoman and the Byzantine Empires. The English narration was performed by Charles Dance, a well-known English actor, screenwriter, and film director. The main characters are Mehmed II, his adoptive mother, Mara Branković, and vassal Çandarlı Halil Pasha in the Ottoman Empire camp, and Constantine XI, the Genevan mercenary Giovanni Giustiniani, and vassal Grand Duke Notaras in the Byzantine Empire camp appear.

Rise was made available on January 24, 2020, through Netflix, which produces and distributes media as a global OTT (Over-the-top) platform. Because it was produced with the support of Netflix, it is Netflix Türkiye’s original content. The content description mentioned genres of this content as TV Dramas, Turkish, Historical Documentaries, TV Action & Adventure, and Military Documentaries (6). However, viewing this content as a docudrama is reasonable for the following reasons. First, the screen is not composed of only reenactments and historical materials; it provides a format that is neither a documentary nor a drama through

the codes of both documentary and drama (7). Secondly, the research and expert interviews on the historical event were preceded and reflected in the production (8).

The production company of this docudrama is Karga Seven Pictures and STX Entertainment, located in the USA. The distributor is Netflix. The script was written by Liz Lake, along with Emre Şahin and Kelly McPherson, executives of Karge Seven Pictures. The actors performed in English according to the script, and the content was directed by Emre Şahin, co-writer of the script (9). “The story of conquering Istanbul and becoming an empire has been on my mind for years. We started thinking about how to tell the story that we thought many people knew,” he said, emphasizing that the content must be local and expression must be international to meet international standards (8). These arguments are also found in Şahin's other interview with Barbaros Tapan. Şahin said he revealed that while growing up in Turkey, he continually realized that Turks had few opportunities to tell their stories to the world (10), which implies globalization in the interview.

In this context, the overall plot of the docudrama progresses according to the flow of a fierce siege between the two empires separated by the Theodosian Wall. Additionally, Mehmed II's past is occasionally featured in flashback scenes, the two Empires' urgent circumstances frequently appear, and elements that make the narrative rich and exciting are added to empty points in history. This multi-layered structure densely organizes six episodes provided to the audience. The titles and main event are as follows:

Table 1. Information of Six Episodes of *Rise*

Episode No.	Title	Main Events
Episode 1	The New Sultan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mehmed II inherits the Ottoman Empire's throne at 19 and begins the invasion of Constantinople. • The Byzantine Empire hires Giustiniani Longo, a Genoese nobleman and mercenary.
Episode 2	Through The Walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Basilica Cannon, made by Hungarian Orbán and the Janissaries, the elite Ottoman army, attacks the Byzantine Empire. • A Genoese mercenary group from the Byzantine Empire defends against attacks.
Episode 3	Into The Golden Horn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A naval battle happens between the Ottoman Empire and Genoa. • Political movements of the Balkan countries are seen.
Episode 4	Loose Lips Sink Ships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ottoman Empire forces move ships by land. • Genoese mercenaries and Byzantine soldiers do their best in the battle.
Episode 5	Ancient Prophecies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sorrow of the Byzantine Empire over having to sacrifice even the legacy of the Eastern Roman Church for the war. • Political actions of the two empire's dignitaries to seek a truce.
Episode 6	Ashes to Ashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No help comes from the Vatican for the Byzantine Empire. • The Ottoman Empire wins the war and conquers Constantinople.

In 2020, when *Rise* was released, Netflix did not provide information about the popularity of specific content. However, this work was nominated in 11 categories at the International Izmir Film Festival in 2020, the Ayakli Gazete TV Stars Awards in 2021, and even in the Best Digital Platform Series category of the Turkey Youth Awards in 2023, the third year of its release (9)—also, *Season 2. Mehmed VS Vlad* was broadcast on Netflix on December 29, 2023. It can be implied that Season 1 was successful enough to produce Season 2. In this respect, it can be concluded that

this docudrama has achieved a certain level of objective success, and the audience's interest is still valid.

1.1.2. Conquest 1453 (Fetih 1453)

Conquest is a historical war film released in Turkey on February 16, 2012. It runs 165 minutes and deals with the same historical event as *Rise* (11). Like the previous docudrama, the film's plot revolves around a siege in 1453, and the narrative revolves around vital historical figures.

The main characters are Mehmed II in the Ottoman Empire; Ulubatlı Hasan, the sword that protects Mehmed II; Orban's adopted daughter Era, a Hungarian cannon maker who falls in love with Hasan; Çandarlı Halil Pasha, and Akshamsaddin. On the other hand, in the Byzantine Empire's camp, Constantine XI and Grand Duke Notaras stand out. There is a clear imbalance in the number of characters emphasized between the two camps because the film focuses more on the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, as it is a work of fiction, the dramatic aspect focuses on Mehmed II's wife and son, the love story between Hasan and Era.

The film's script was written by Melih Esat Acil, Atilla Engin, and Irfan Saruhan, directed by Faruk Aksoy, and produced by Istanbul-based Aksoy Film and Medyapım. When it was released in Turkey, Cinefilm handled theatrical distribution, and Tiglon handled DVD distribution (12).

It is also worth noting that it is the only historical genre film among the TOP 10. The film is the fourth most-watched film in Turkey since 1989, with 6,572,618 people coming to theaters to watch it during its 52-week run (13). It has been a distinguished success in terms of revenue as well. Faruk Aksoy, director and producer of the film, revealed on the TV program in March 2012 that the film almost broke even in Turkey with a budget of \$18.2 million and was sold to more than 26 countries abroad (14). However, despite the notable numerical success, the awards it received were limited. The film won only one award in 2012, the year it was released, at the Sadri Alışık Cinema Award. Ibrahim Celikkol, who played Hasan, received the Ekrem Bora Promising Actor Award (11).

As described above, two works were selected as research subjects because they approached the same historical event, "the conquest/fall of Constantinople," with different representation strategies. Before analyzing the representation strategies of the two works, it should be mentioned that *Rise* was produced in English in 2020 and screened on overseas-based global platforms, while *Conquest* was produced in Turkish in 2012 and was exposed mainly for screening in Turkey. It means they have a different target audience, which is also the point of comparison because production by the creator and acceptance from the public are essential features of cultural products.

1.2. Literature Review

At an academic level, the discussion on *Rise* is mainly about its fictionality, with critics arguing that the docudrama format compromises its historical accuracy. In contrast, discussions on *Conquest* focus on its political implications, with some scholars suggesting that it promotes a nationalistic discourse. These findings provide the basis for the following literature review.

On the one hand, while conducting a literature review on *Rise*, a docudrama that blends elements of documentary and drama, one proceeding and one film review entirely focused on *Rise* were found. In the proceedings, Seher Şeylan criticizes the fictional nature of the docudrama and focuses on the non-historical elements of the work (15). Şeylan analyzes the subject in the context of story/scenario, acting/character, and expert, emphasizing that the hybrid structure of the docudrama negatively affects the accuracy of information examined. However, in this study, which analyzes by accepting the docudrama genre, Şeylan's arguments are viewed in different contexts and thus irrelevant. The second document is a film review written by Molly Greene, a professor of Ottoman imperial history. Greene analyzes Seasons 1 and 2 together over four pages, and, given the nature of the film review, it mainly contains personal impressions rather than analysis. Additionally, there is a book titled *Five Principles of the Historical Film* (16). *Rise* is an example of a 'hybrid moving history,' one category researcher argues [17; 35]. This is another version of the interpretation of *Rise* but the applying docudrama.

On the other hand, some articles dealing with *Conquest* are also worth mentioning. First, Mustafa Aslan defines *Conquest* as an exemplary film that added nationalistic discourse to appropriate aesthetic elements that did not disturb the audience (18). Aslan's research inspired the storytelling interpretation of this study in blending religious signifiers. Next, Nermin Orta theoretically discusses the relationship between social memory, history, ideology, and film, taking *Conquest* as an example (19). Orta analyzes that emotionalizing and dramatizing history enabled society to remember the past through popular discourse rather than a professional perspective on history, which means the connection to neo-Ottomanism is discussed based on the event that the social function of the film implies the spread of ideology. However, Orta limits further ideological interpretation, citing an interview in which the director did not agree with the political interpretation. On the contrary, Chien Yang Erdem proposes the concept of Ottomentality as an alternative approach to the latest phase of neo-Ottomanism, and *Conquest* is used as a starting point and example for this discussion (20). In this perspective, Dilara Balçı Gülpınar compares three films that deal with the same historical event, including *Conquest*, and interprets that "in the transformation of historical representations of the films as the values of the society change" [21; 64]. Those discussions on politics inspired this research to suggest implications for the implied audience.

To sum up, *Rise* and *Conquest* dealt with the same historical event and were analyzed under different topics despite the limited literature reviews. In *Rise*, discussions often focus on its fictional elements, such as portraying characters and events that may not be historically accurate. In contrast, discussions about *Conquest* mainly revolve around its political implications, such as neo-ottomanism. However, studies by established researchers have yet to deal with both works simultaneously. This could be due to each genre's unique grammar, including convergence genres like docudrama, which can be difficult when using traditional research methods. In this context, this study represents a novel approach to studying historical representation in visual media. It offers a comprehensive comparative analysis of the two works and their unique representation strategies.

2. Comparison of Representation Strategies of the Same Historical Event: How Could Mehmed II Conquer Constantinople?

The analysis frame begins with understanding the differences between genre grammars because they are related to "what and how you want to say" [5, 22]. Docudrama, which began appearing on television after World War II, is a drama that follows the grammar of a documentary. The grammar of the documentary is questions and substantive truth. So, the task of docudrama is to persuade the audience to take a view on a problem defined through research [7; 48]. These characteristics of docudrama lead the audience to follow the logic. It also means that docudrama is more vulnerable to the audience's doubts than realistic dramas [7; 189]. In contrast, the film's grammar prioritizes characters, plot, and emotions. Therefore, these characteristics of the film lead the audience to empathize with the characters. Because the two works are different genres, they choose "how to say" in different ways. It means there is a difference in the expression method. It is crucial to compare storytelling methods with the historical representation strategies of the two pieces.

2.1. Docudrama *Rise of Empires: Ottoman*: Storytelling Focused on 'Balance'

The core of *Rise*'s storytelling is 'balance,' which is accomplished in two ways. The first method uses narration and expert interviews, and the second involves the Ottoman and Byzantine empires as protagonists.

Utilization of Narration and Expert Interviews

Narration and expert interviews are the most notable storytelling methods in this content. Due to the nature of a docudrama, if the audience is too immersed in the story, the documentary's characteristics are offset. However, if the audience distances themselves too much from the story, the drama's characteristics are also offset. *Rise*'s narration and expert interviews are provided in harmony, encouraging appropriate immersion and distancing from the audience. The creator's

strategy of adjusting the distance between the recipient and the content is narratively meaningful (23).

First, the narration of this work requires the audience to become immersed in the story. The narrator is Charles Dance, a 73-year-old well-known performer. He recorded it as if he was acting like a voice actor. The words of the narration are also theatrical. The most representative examples are the last sentence of the intro narration of every episode, “For one empire rise, another must fall,” and the very last narration after the end of the last episode, “So, we begin.” The fall and revival of empires due to war is an event that appears countless times in history, and although there are various ways to express it, these examples are like lines of play. This dramatic narration helps the narrative progress. It appears repeatedly, explaining the historical background and characters of the time and establishing a framework for the progression of event. The narration almost seems like another character. Clear evidence that the creator considered narration important appears in the closing credits. The narrator’s name is the only name that appears before the Director’s in the closing credits.

Second, expert interviews distance the audience from the narrative. When the narration and dramatic reenactment immerse the audience, the creator inserts an expert interview scene to stop the immersion abruptly. For example, in the second episode, an expert interview appears before and after the spectacle-filled screen. Experts present information about the Ottoman and Byzantine Empires, Mehmed II and Giustiniani, and geopolitical and historical warfare facts. It interrupts the audience’s immersion and shares an analytical perspective with the audience. In addition, to ensure their credibility, the creator provides information about the name, affiliation, position, or famous works each time the expert appears. Additionally, the experts who appeared in each episode are listed as Historical Consultants in the closing credits.

The advisory group consists of 10 scholars and writers, most majoring in or researching the history of the Ottoman and Byzantine Empires. The nationality consists of three Turks and seven foreigners, with only two Turkish people teaching at universities in Turkey. It appeals to an audience that efforts were made not to be biased towards one side regarding nationality and affiliation.

The list of scholars is as follows: Dr. Emrah Safa Gürkan (Associate Professor of History, İstanbul 29 Mayıs University), Dr. A. M. Celâl Şengör (Istanbul Technical University), Dr. Michael Talbot (Junior Lecturer in Ottoman History, University of Greenwich), Dr. Marios Philippides (Professor Emeritus of Classics, University of Massachusetts Amherst), Dr. Tunc Şen (Assistant Professor of History, Columbia University), Dr. Tom Papademetriou (Professor of Historical Studies, Stockton University), and Dr. Karen Barkey (HAAS Distinguished Chair, UC Berkeley). The list of authors is also as follows: Jason Goodwin (Lords of the Horizons), Lars Brownworth (Lost to the West), and Roger Crowley (1453).

However, it is worth noting that while conveying information, experts may also interject their personal opinions. For example, Dr. Şengör, a geology professor, “is not called upon to speak to the geological implications of the siege; his inclusion is undoubtedly due to his charisma on camera and his enthusiastic zeal for the Ottomans [17; 88].” It is essential to acknowledge that without the creator’s consent, such opinions would not have been shared with the audience.

In this context, narration and expert interviews are this content's most notable storytelling methods. Narrations that encourage immersion further emphasize the dramatic aspect through expert interviews, while expert interviews that encourage distancing gain further authority and trust through the narration. As a result, the audience experiences the development of more balanced storytelling.

Portrayal of the Ottoman and Byzantine Empires as Protagonists

The second storytelling method emphasized in *Rise* is maintaining a balance between the Ottoman Empire and the Byzantine Empire. To this end, the content brings both empires as protagonists in the storytelling. The creator strives to maintain an objective perspective and provide equal opportunities for both empires to speak up. First, the people of the two empires are presented in similar proportions. Next, the expert interview provides both sides’ historical

materials and detailed explanations. Lastly, elements that emphasize that the war between the two empires is international, not a religious war, are present throughout the content. It emphasizes Mara Brankovic's role in connecting the Ottoman Empire and the West, the situational dynamic between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan countries, and the conflict between the Byzantine Empire and Catholic powers in a balanced manner. In conclusion, by featuring both empires as protagonists, the creator allows the audience to understand their desperate desires.

2.2. Film *Conquest 1453*: Storytelling Focused on 'One-sided.'

The core of *Conquest*'s storytelling method is 'one-sided storytelling.' It is accomplished in two ways: the heroization of Mehmed II and the apparent opposition between good and evil.

Heroization of Mehmed II

The film shows Mehmed II as a gentle and holy monarch, unlike the protagonist in the docudrama. Mehmet II's heroization is completed in several ways.

First, religious mythology is utilized in the story. The film begins in Medina in 627. After the Hadith prophecy is presented from the prophet's point of view, the audience, following the eagle and transcending time and space, sees the birth of Mehmed II. In the year Mehmet II was born, the Ottoman Empire was prosperous, and a comet fell on the Byzantine Empire, adding to the mythological statement that this was considered a "sign of the country's destruction" in the film. In addition, Sultan Murat II prays, "I gave you the name, but I hope Allah will give you the fate." From the scene explaining the point of his birth, Mehmed II is a hero given to the Ottoman Empire by God. Mehmed II, who was declared a hero by God, meets Osman, who laid the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, in a dream and is told, "You are the one who will create a stronger empire," and is given a ring. Even through the advice of a spiritual leader, he is able to find a solution to win the war. It is well known that the important cities that the Ottomans wanted to conquer in Europe were called "red apples." In this context, when he conquers Istanbul, the Red Apple, and enters Hagia Sophia, his face shines as if God is incarnated (24).

The second way of heroization is to emphasize his abilities. Mehmed II lays the foundation for the conquest of Constantinople step by step. Through his generosity and dignity, he is able to persuade the vassals to his side. His wisdom prevents local powers from revolting. His strategic thinking coordinates Europe with Emperor Constantine. Moreover, his martial arts skills are so good that he never fires a wrong arrow; he even had the artistic ability to write poetry.

Lastly, the director continues to heroize Mehmed II by emphasizing his tolerant personality even after the conquest of Constantinople. It implies that Mehmed II was a hero not only to the people of the Ottoman Empire but also to the people of the Byzantine Empire. Mehmed II said to the Byzantine citizens gathered in Hagia Sophia, "Do not be afraid. Your life, your fortune, and your destiny are with us. Let your faith be free." As a result, the face of the religious leader of the Eastern Roman Orthodox Church brightens, and the people rejoice.

Through this heroization, Mehmed II is depicted as a destined monarch with the qualities to 'conquer' Constantinople. Hasan, who mainly appeared in the spectacle scene, has already been erased from the audience's memory after his death. There is no hero other than Mehmed II.

Apparent Conflict Between Good and Evil

The apparent opposition between good and evil structures enables storytelling that distinguishes "me (us)" from "the other" and gives legitimacy to "me." There is a contrast between Mehmed II and Constantine XI. When Mehmed II is featured as a ruler who cares for his people, is always ahead of his opponents, and has a good sense of international politics, Constantine XI is described as enjoying pleasure, cunning, and making mistakes in decision-making. When the good Ottoman Empire soldiers sacrifice themselves at the risk of death, the Byzantine Empire waits for support from the Hungarian army and Catholic forces and puts pressure on the Genoese mercenaries.

The apparent dichotomy is converted into a religious war frame at the level of individuals and empires. At the individual level, soldiers who comply with martyrdom by 'Allah's will' appear. When soldiers of the Byzantine Empire provoke, "These people seem to go to heaven if they die in battle, let us kill them," the captured Ottoman Empire soldiers quietly recite a prayer,

“Allah is the only God.” At the imperial level, united Islam and divided Christian forces are depicted. Notably, the Byzantine Empire urges Catholic forces to “cooperate against infidels,” and the Catholic Vatican participates in the war for its benefit.

In conclusion, the core of the storytelling strategy in *Conquest* represents the historical event of the conquest of Constantinople, which is all ‘one-sided.’ Heroizing Mehmed II justifies only him, not anyone else, to conquer Constantinople. The audience, admiring his heroism, is asked to feel a sense of sympathy and rejoice at his accomplishments and to psychologically agree with the Ottoman Empire’s conquest of Constantinople, which plays the role of ‘good’ in the apparent conflict between good and evil.

Chapter 2 attempted to compare how *Rise* and *Conquest* portrayed the same historical event according to genres’ grammar. *Rise*’s storytelling approach was based on “balance” achieved through narration and expert interviews, presenting both empires as protagonists. This approach is similar to the distancing effect used in Bertolt Brecht’s narrative theater. On the other hand, *Conquest*’s approach was to take a one-sided perspective: heroizing Mehmed II and contrasting good and evil to establish narrative unity. This approach is reminiscent of American mainstream western movies, which glorify heroic figures from the Wild West era and depict battles with Native Americans.

Conclusion. This research aims to understand how the same historical event, the Conquest/Fall of Constantinople, can be represented differently due to the distinct genres of the two works, broadening the scope of visual media interpretation and offering practical insights. Specifically, the study delves into the differences in storytelling based on the grammar of each genre, examining the Netflix original series *Rise of Empires: Ottoman* (2020) and the film *Conquest 1453* (2012).

The Docudrama *Rise of Empires: Ottoman* presents a ‘balanced’ perspective, exploring the question through various storytelling elements: “How was Constantinople conquered/fallen?” These include theatrical narration, objective expert interviews, and balanced protagonists. In contrast, the film *Conquest 1453* offers a more personalized viewpoint, focusing on the central character, Mehmet II. This ‘one-sided’ and binary storytelling approach centers on “how Mehmet II conquered Constantinople, the Red Apple?”

While this study may be critiqued for not extensively discussing historical facts, its primary aim was to compare how different genres of video depict historical events. Therefore, such critiques may fall outside the scope of this study. Rather than simply reflecting on these criticisms, this research has the potential to pave the way for future studies. First, examining the public response to how the two works were received and evaluated provides deeper insights into producing historical representations that connect with the implied audience—second, examining spectacle scenes, especially given the war-based nature of these pieces, to understand how such spectacles are depicted and what this reveals about the characteristics of the works. These areas offer exciting opportunities for further exploration and discovery, igniting the spark for future research.

Overall, this study’s analysis is a significant venture into uncharted territory, comparing the representation strategies of two different genres—docudrama and film—regarding the pivotal historical event, the Conquest/Fall of Constantinople. This unique approach can improve the creator’s understanding of storytelling techniques in different genres and provide insight into representing historical events for future content creation, which is practical knowledge. This study can also educate the audience on various strategies in visual media storytelling, such as narrative framing and character development. This study is sure to pique the interest of academic researchers, historians, and visual media professionals.

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