Impact of Covid-19 on Over the Top’s Algorithm to Sustain Representation of Heroine’s Journey in Film

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Abstract. Heroine’s Journey was born because Hero’s Journey was too patriarchal or masculine. Despite the fact that Hero’s Journey can be applied to a female protagonist, some female psychologists believe that a female protagonist cannot be compared to a male protagonist because the story does not depict what happens to a woman who embarks on a journey (Campbell 1949). Female characters are said to develop uniquely. These differences contribute to psychological variability in how men and women respond to story conflicts. According to Sustainable Development Goals number 5, it is urgent to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Due to Pandemic Covid-19, Over the Top (OTT) streaming platforms rose globally and shifting the streaming landscape. OTT is a video-on-demand service that provides streaming material as a single product and allows people to access content on numerous devices. With the emergence of technological influence, OTT platforms rely on algorithms and critical data to connect a film with its audience. This paper discusses the critical role of algorithms in shaping the Heroine’s Journey and increasing demand for films with female protagonists to sustain women’s representation in film.

1 Introduction

Maureen Murdock, a psychologist, eventually wrote Heroine's Journey in 1990. He developed the Heroine's Journey hypothesis by combining Campbell's theory with his personal experiences with psychology, psychoanalytic books, and mythology. Camy Tang (2014) said in her book that Heroine's Journey is the ideal blueprint for a female protagonist's Journey because it is more about inward awakening than the external awakening seen in Heroes' Journey. The initiation stage is where the Heroine's Journey and Hero's Journey differ the most. In Hero's Journey, the protagonist likewise believes that women's sexuality often jeopardizes the patriarchy's establishment, where they must be monitored and controlled.

Moreover, often a woman is regarded as a seducer or a motherly figure in a patriarchal culture. There is no reverse example; if the protagonist is a woman, will she think that a man is harming them or making them stronger? It makes several female psychologists, one of them Maureen Murdock, review what Campbell has done (Campbell 1949). The Heroine's Journey cycle evolves so that many films use it as the foundation for their immersion, and it is not limited to female characters. In some circumstances, there have been films where the male protagonist has chosen this concept over the Hero's Journey (Campbell et al. 1990).

Pandemic Covid-19 circumstances it has accelerated the growth of the OTT Platform. The provincial regulations to travel from governments worldwide since the beginning of the pandemic. Most of us stayed at home and had nowhere to go. OTT became one of the entertainment sources, and it has gained a massive subscription during a pandemic and changed the whole streaming landscape. As a result, famous OTT service providers like YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify have played a crucial part in data streaming, with video streaming apps increasing by 140 percent in Australia, India, Indonesia, South Korea, and Thailand (Garima and Komal 2021). As shown in figure 2, a report from marketer.com forecasts that the increasing OTT subscription will rise to 9.1% (approx. 157.1 million people) worldwide in 2022. However, it is considerably low compared to the beginning of the pandemic Covid-19 (25.5%).

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platforms. Although it is impossible to declare that the device to watch shows on YouTube, Netflix, Iflix, and other (Dimmick et al. 2004). Everyone has at least one smart to replace traditional media is becoming increasingly clear that are also more easily accessible. The internet's potential community mobility necessitates entertainment amenities for watching OTT content. It demonstrates that increasing and tailored material in this final phase (Steinkamp 2010).

platform becomes an independent media with its audience different techniques in today's world. The internet streaming traditional and online television is fighting it out through lower cost than traditional television (Stelter 2018). Finally, streamed live and even have a unique online version at a internet. Second, shows (including television programs) are internet, and some episodes were rebroadcast on the development. First, television programs promoted the platform, has gone through at least three periods of 2018). Since 2000, YouTube, the most well-known OTT such as YouTube, provide free content (Orescanin et al., 2018). 

Third-party suppliers provide OTT streaming services over the internet. Content is created by providers or acquired from media businesses and production houses and then supplied over the same cable infrastructure that data is carried over. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, HBO Go, VIU, and other OTT providers typically charge a monthly fee for their services that define which material and devices can be viewed. Various multimedia streaming platforms, such as YouTube, provide free content (Orescanin et al., 2018). Since 2000, YouTube, the most well-known OTT platform, has gone through at least three periods of development. First, television programs promoted the internet, and some episodes were rebroadcast on the internet. Second, shows (including television programs) are streamed live and even have a unique online version at a lower cost than traditional television (Stelter 2018). Finally, traditional and online television is fighting it out through different techniques in today's world. The internet streaming platform becomes an independent media with its audience and tailored material in this final phase (Steinkamp 2010).

Smartphones and tablets are the most popular devices for watching OTT content. It demonstrates that increasing community mobility necessitates entertainment amenities that are also more easily accessible. The internet's potential to replace traditional media is becoming increasingly clear (Dimmick et al. 2004). Everyone has at least one smart device to watch shows on YouTube, Netflix, Iflix, and other platforms. Although it is impossible to declare that the internet has become the dominant entertainment and information medium, it is in everyone's hands. It has shown a symptom in the expected direction, with the old media gradually being abandoned. Thus, Netflix and Amazon Prime Video have seen tremendous growth. Netflix had 50 million customers in 2017, which grew to 57.38 million in 2018 (Park and Kwon 2019).

2 Literature Review

There are nine sequences of Maureen Murdock's Heroine's Journey cycle. First is Departure. In the Departure part, there are: First, Illusion of the Perfect World, which is the place of the protagonist's ordinary world. This place is also where the protagonist feels something is missing in his world. In this stage, the Heroine usually experiences internal and external stress. The second is the Separation from The Feminine. At this stage, an event becomes a "trigger" or cause to do something different. In the Hero's Journey, when the Call to Adventure occurs, the protagonist will reject the Call because he is unsure. However, in the Heroine's Journey, besides fighting with herself, she also must fight with culture, where she must reject the traditional concept of femininity around it. The third is the Identification with The Masculine. It is a phase when heroin successfully fights the conservative notions of femininity. The protagonist realizes that to become the person she wants to be, she must plunge into the world of "male" and identify with the masculine traits that have grown up in society, such as being strong, bright, and powerful.

The next step is Initiation, and it has three parts. The first one is The Road of Trials. After successfully crossing the boundary, the protagonist must face the trials. She is required to adapt to her new world. At this stage, she will also meet someone she considers a mentor. She begins to lose his original self and behaves according to the masculine values he just learned in the previous stage. The second one is The Illusory Boon of Success. In this stage, the protagonist is at her highest point. What she had done earlier was starting to pay off. However, when the protagonist feels that she has mastered the world of men and feels comfortable in it, this becomes just an illusion—followed by The Temporary Death. This stage is the protagonist's darkest moment because once she gets comfortable with his world, the protagonist realizes that this is not her main goal. The protagonist loses his original personality. The protagonist will usually be disappointed or abandoned by the people closest to him at this stage, which makes the protagonist feel like she is at the bottom and may not be able to get up again.

The last step is Return. The first part of Return is Reconnect with the Feminine. The protagonist realizes her mistake and tries to learn from it. She began to rethink her goals and apply the knowledge and experience he had gained. It is usually externalized by meeting the protagonist with another female figure who inspires him at this stage—followed by Reborn. The protagonist becomes a new person. Here, she is ready to face her world and fight against the antagonists, but this time she has a new weapon, namely
by combining feminine and masculine traits within her. In this stage, the protagonist manages to achieve his goal. Furthermore, the last part is the Integration of Masculine and Feminine. After understanding how the male and female worlds work, the protagonist can switch roles well, making her a master in both worlds.

3 Methods

In this paper, the authors use secondary data from the OTT streaming platform to show the growth of women’s protagonist stories over the years, especially in the past three years. Secondary data in this research also includes books, academic journals, websites, and news platforms. The writer used this data as a source of information to strengthen the idea, observe the problem, examine the validity, evaluate the knowledge, and conclude.

4 Data Collection

Before OTT became as popular as it is now, movie theaters were extremely limited. For decades, cinema, television, and video-on-demand have monopolized film distribution. Because of the limited screen, film producers choose to make only movies that will sell well. Similarly, cinemas will only show films that will appeal to many people, often pictures about heroic adventures already well-known in the community. Joseph Campbell used the term "Hero's Journey" to describe a protagonist's Journey. In his book Heroes with Thousand Faces, Campbell claims that a protagonist must go through several stages before accomplishing his goal. Most of the characters are men who embark on a life-changing journey. Stories that follow the Hero's Journey are well-received by many audiences (Campbell et al. 1990).

The Heroine's Journey is still underestimated, with a patriarchal culture dominating the world and the international film industry. When we look at the history of films, in the beginning, especially in mainstream films, women were only used as companion figures for the main characters or even objects of sensuality. Women, in many cases, often function as sexual objects for men (Tuchman 1979). Furthermore, in various works, especially films, women are represented as sexual objects. Women often display gestures to fulfill men's desires (Mulvey 1975) and make women occupy the second class, while men play an essential role in many important events. Films with female protagonists are often not as popular as films with male protagonists. Although many filmmakers want to make films with female protagonists or female themes, many factors ultimately prevent these films from reaching a wider audience. Vanderwees (2014) said that woman and their activities in the eyes of men is interesting to discuss, at least in terms of gender. We can assume that gender is constructed, and our role is to make it equal.

Early 2000s classic Clueless, a film about Cher, a meddling Beverly Hills high schooler, gets more than she bargained for when she offers a fashion-challenged makeover in this film. Clueless was the most-watched film accessible on Netflix, according to data obtained from the Time Spent Streaming tool, which allows Netflix customers to input their Netflix data to get statistics about their viewing habits (Cook 2021). This film is one of many on Netflix that features a female protagonist.

Furthermore, Grey's Anatomy is still being produced and is on its way to becoming Netflix’s longest-running show (Aleksandar 2021). Grey's Anatomy is a well-known medical drama with female protagonists, including the main character in this film, Dr. Meredith Grey, the daughter of Dr. Ellis Grey, a well-known surgeon general. This series follows Dr. Meredith from her days as a resident doctor through her graduation as a surgeon. This information has aided the Heroine's Journey on Netflix with female characters. “The Queen’s Gambit”, “Glow”, “The Crown”, and other popular films and television shows have used the Heroine's Journey in recent years. It shows that Heroine's Journey cycle is applicable in feature films and series that appear on OTT, and people love it.
When OTT platforms enter the film industry, the landscape shifts. Many people have chosen OTT as a viewing medium because of the flexibility and dynamic ways to access the shows they want. Mordor Intelligence reported that in 2020, the OTT market was valued at USD 101.42 Billion, and it has forecast to reach USD 223.07 Billion by 2026, as shown in figure no. 3.

![Fig. 3. Over The Top Global Forecast Subscription](image)

Thanks to technical advancements, the transition from digital to internet viewing is happening quickly. According to Bury and Li (2013), the introduction of digital video recording (DVR) in 1999 had a significant impact and sparked the trend of watching digital video. In the early 1990s, Europe and North America had more internet connectivity than other regions, coinciding with the World Wide Web (Bury 2005).

Meanwhile, in 2000, video streaming services like RealPlayer, iTunes, and QuickTime recorded many downloads, causing numerous issues such as copyright violations (Schiesel 2004); on the other hand, this is a sign of how digital ecosystems are evolving over the world. According to a study undertaken by the World Advertising Research Center (WARC) using data from the mobile trade association GSMA, more than 1.3 billion people will access the internet via smartphone and personal computer by 2025.

The algorithm is one of the most significant aspects of OTT in choosing which content to show to viewers, and algorithms use a set of rules. Even though the accuracy is only 10%, these algorithms have developed metadata. The more detailed and richer the metadata, the more likely the recommendation engine will locate something the user would like to watch. However, users must be willing to offer something back to receive an acceptable recommendation. These algorithms also help films connect with their intended consumers.

5 Results and Discussion

Hero's Journey cycle with men protagonist has proven to be a formula that can be applied in feature films and film series with various episodes since the era of Hollywood. However, researchers argue that the Heroine’s Journey's structure can also be applied to a series of films with varied episodes and deliver a significance result by grabbing audience attention. Using Murdock Heroine's Journey cycle shown in figure 2, researchers will break down the structure of “The Queen’s Gambit”, Netflix original series produced and launched on October 23rd, 2020.
DEPARTURE STAGE
1. Illusion of the Perfect World
As explained above, this perfect world is an imperfect world for the protagonist. “The Queen’s Gambit” film begins when Beth Harmon, a little girl who lost her mother in car accident, is transferred to an all-girls orphanage. Every day the children and teenagers there are given two capsules of tranquilizers by the orphanage staff. Jolene, her best friend, told her that she could secretly keep one of the pills and eat it before bed. Beth did as Jolene said, but she became addicted to the drug because she found a new perspective on the hallucinations of the sedatives she was eating. This part is on half of episode 1.

2. Separation from The Feminine
One day she was asked to clean an eraser in the basement and encountered Mr. Shaibel playing chess. Chess piques her interest, and she tries to memorize every chess move by Mr. Shaibel. Before going to bed, she drank the tranquilizer, and immediately when the tranquilizer kicked in, she saw the movement of the chess pieces on the ceiling. Beth returned to the basement to clean the eraser, and Mr. Shaibel invited him to play chess, and she lost. She then continued to study and explore the movement of chess pawns using the tranquilizer until, one day, Beth managed to beat Mr. Shaibel. Mr. Shaibel saw the potential for Beth’s tenacity in chess and introduced her to Ganz, a chess club coach. Since then, Beth has been persistent in playing chess and successfully against other chess players. Whenever Beth wants to compete, she continuously collects tranquilizers and eats them before the game so she can focus on fighting other chess players. Addicted Beth is desperate to steal hundreds of pills. Furthermore, she cannot play chess again because of an overdose. This part also closes episode 1.

3. Identification with the Masculine
Time passed quickly, and Beth had grown up. Spouses came and planned to adopt Beth. She left the orphanage and attended a high school. After leaving the orphanage, Beth returned to studying chess. One day when Beth was at home, Beth’s adoptive mother told her to buy a sedative. It turned out that the sedative was the same as the orphanages. She stole some of the tranquilizers for him to take. Beth, who had returned to chess, came across a chess tournament in the newspapers and planned to join it.

At the same time, Beth’s adoptive family’s finances are in a critical period because Beth’s adoptive father left them. Finally, Beth sent a letter to Mr. Shaibel to borrow 5$ and will return 10$ if she wins. While participating in the tournament, Beth wins against professional chess players like Townes on the first day. On the second day against Harry Beltik, Beth is afraid that she will lose, so she goes back to taking her sedatives to help her focus and win the game. If Beth wins this match, Beth’s adoptive mother will take her to the tournament in Cincinnati.

INITIATION STAGE
4. Roads of Trials
Beth then continued her career by winning tournaments in Cincinnati, and she gave her adoptive mother 15% of the money she won. Beth, who often skipped school because she participated in tournaments, returns to school with many chess achievements she had won. Beth returns to school more fashionable and popular. In 1966, Beth then continued her chess tournament at the US Open and reunited with Townes, who was already a journalist for the newspaper Lexington. At the US Open match, Beth meets the national champions against Benny Watts. Beth begins to lose her confidence because Benny shows Beth’s shortcomings against Harry Beltik. For the first time, he lost the tournament.

5. The Illusory Boon of Success
Beth wants to continue her chess tournament to fight against a great chess player with the nicknamed of the Russian Grandmaster named Borgov, so she prepares herself by learning Russian. After finishing class, she attended a party and smoked marijuana with one of the students. Then she was left alone in an empty apartment, and she indulged himself with alcohol and drugs. Beth graduates from high school and continues the tournament in Mexico City. Beth wins a tough match against Georgi Girev, a 13-year-old boy from Russia.

6. The Temporary Death
After winning the game, she overhears Borgov and his two friends discussing Beth’s playing strategy and her weaknesses in the full elevator. Borgov and Beth compete the next day, and she loses badly. When she returns to her hotel room, Beth faces the harsh reality that her adoptive mother has died of hepatitis from drinking too much alcohol. Beth’s adoptive father then inherits the house for Beth and Beth lives independently there because he does not want to deal with arranging funerals. A depressed Beth buys more tranquilizers from a pharmacy in Mexico and flies home to arrange for her adoptive mother’s funeral.

RETURN STAGE
7. Reconnect with the Feminine
Beth returns to Kentucky and has a relationship with Harry Beltik. Beltik lives with Beth at her adoptive parents’ house and prepares for the next tournament. On the night before the 1967 US championships in Ohio, Beth again runs into Benny Watts. Benny challenges Beth to play fast chess, with each match valued at 5$, but Beth loses badly. The next day during the US championship game, Beth beats Benny, and Benny helps him in the international competition against Borgov by mentoring him. Beth then trains at the Paris tournament with Benny in New York City. Beth and Benny Watts eventually become best friends. Benny helps Beth by training her to be ready to fight Borgov.

However, the day before the final match, Beth again drank alcohol and drank until unconscious. She awoke the next day and hurriedly prepared himself to stagger back.
against the Borgov. Although using sedatives, Beth cant focus and lose badly against Borgov. She returns to Kentucky only to find out her adoptive father intends to sell the house. Beth then bought her house with the proceeds of her winnings. Beth is stressed and addicted again. Her life began to crumble slowly, and, in the meantime, she also reunited with Jolene.

8. Reborn
Beth gets word that Mr. Shaibel has died. Jolene and Beth go to attend his funeral and visit an orphanage. Beth just realized that all this time, Mr. Shaibel had followed her match career until he died. On the other hand, Beth refuses funding from Christian Crusade to go to Moscow against Borgov. As a result, he asks Benny to fund it. In the last game against Borgov, Beth played a Queen's Gambit pawn lineup, with the game postponed for forty moves. Before the match, Beth meets with Townes, who became a Lexington journalist.

On the other hand, Beth receives a phone call from Benny in the US. Benny has brought together national chess players such as Beltik, Matt, Levertov, Mike, and Wexler to help Beth defeat Borgov. The game resumes at night, and Beth can analyze her chess pieces without the sedative. With Beth's tenacity, she finally manages to beat Borgov. All the journalists and Muscovites congratulated her.

9. Integration of Masculine and Feminine
The next day, while Beth was on her way to the airport, Beth got out of the car and headed for the local park, where the local men were busy playing chess. The local men immediately recognize her and ask her to play chess. Beth finds her true self. She was able to play chess without any sedatives.

According to Nielsen (2020) data, "The Queen Gambit" show gained 1,373 billion views from November 09th to 15th, 2020. At that time, "The Queen Gambit" ranked top 10 Netflix in 63 Countries and set Netflix's highest viewing record. Netflix identifies and targets users by reaching audience recommendations differently. According to the algorithm's official website, Netflix did not use demographic information (such as age or gender) in the decision-making process. However, Netflix's suggestions include information about the titles, such as their genre, categories, performers, release year, and information about the audience's viewing history and how they rated other titles on our service.

The algorithm data also includes how long the audience views, what time of day they watch, and what device they use. Algorithms in OTT have already developed since the beginning of the business. Even though the result was not satisfying enough, OTT invested money in perfecting its algorithm. The top OTT platforms of India are investing in high-powered AI (Artificial Intelligence) systems to meet the constantly changing consumer interests, genre choices, and viewing habits/patterns. Some of the critical elements of the customization journey include knowing the customer and prospect profiles (demographics, expressed or shared interest). They know the customer’s history (actions, play, buy) and reach the viewer with the suitable product recommendation at the right time (preferences/interests). Delivering customization based on their individuality, location, and the time of the year, including a feedback action plan to be reinforced back into the OTT algorithm.

6. Conclusion
Although many filmmakers aspire to develop films with female characters or subjects, several obstacles prohibit these films from reaching a wider audience. The Hero's Journey with a female protagonist is not as famous as the Hero's Journey with a male protagonist in films. Women's representation in cinema is limited by the distribution system previously monopolized by cinema and television within the patriarchal culture.

The success of woman protagonist series like “The Queen’s Gambit” proves that Heroine's Journey cycle is applicable in feature films and series on OTT's platform. The difference is only the length of each cycle presented on the screen. In feature films, the cycles are divided into a sequence, and in series, the cycles are categorized by episodes. In the feature film, the Heroine's Journey cycle is more compact. However, in series audiences have more time to relate with story and character journey.

With the rise of OTT platforms that provide more options, Heroine's journeys with female protagonists are becoming increasingly popular. Movie and TV shows with Heroine's Journey are achievable since an algorithm exists. Increased demand impacts the number of films made about the Heroine's trip. The representation of women in cinema is becoming more diverse as the number of films depicting Heroine's Journeys increases. This research can also open several future studies, such as how Heroine's Journey cycles in series with different episodes. New Study of how filmmakers make new Heroine's Journey cycles according to the story's needs and the media. Last is profound research on how OTT uses data and analytics to develop content and direct personal preferences.

COVID-19 has changed the culture of watching movies. OTT is proliferating, with most cinemas closing due to social distancing during the pandemic. However, the rapid development of OTT is also expanding the market, and algorithms will help movies reach audiences more efficiently, and it is an opportunity for the Heroine's Journey to develop. With the demand for films with a Heroine's Journey theme supported by the OTT algorithm, the film industry can sustain the representation of women and achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Among other things, the significance of female filmmakers in the movie industry are also sprouting.
References