

Exploring the Innovative Pathways of Chinese Traditional Culture's Foreign Communication through 'Domestic Games Going Abroad': A Case Study of Genshin Impact

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Abstract: In contemporary times, China has placed an elevated significance on the development and establishment of global communication initiatives, as they strive to effectively convey their narratives to a larger audience, ultimately resulting in the dissemination of a positive image of China. Consequently, the Chinese government has actively invested in the growth and expansion of digital networking technologies, recognizing the potential of online gaming as a nascent medium for communication. It is in this vein that online games have been tasked with the pivotal responsibility of leading the dissemination of Chinese culture overseas, serving as the vanguard of "Chinese excellent traditional culture to the sea" via the approach of "games to the sea". The Genshin Impact, a successful and exemplary case of Chinese "domestic games going abroad", serves as a benchmark for the study of innovative methods for foreign communication of Chinese traditional culture. This article endeavors to explore the novel pathways employed by Chinese traditional culture's foreign communication through the process of "domestic games going abroad", specifically through the lens of the game's space construction, character construction, and community construction in Genshin Impact. It is hoped that this research will serve as a reference point for the cross-cultural and international communication of Chinese games, offering invaluable insights to the field.

Keywords: Cultural communication, Game industry, Chinese culture, Genshin Impact.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the global role and influence of China has been the subject of intense scrutiny and analysis. China has made remarkable strides in its commitment to building a robust and effective international communication discourse system that emphasizes its unique cultural identity and values. The country has devoted significant resources to strengthening its international communication capacity, with the goal of projecting a credible, lovable, and respectable image of China to the world. Central to this effort is the dissemination of China's cultural heritage to the outside world, and the creation of a platform for people around the world to better understand and appreciate Chinese culture. In this regard, the integration of Chinese and foreign cultures is essential, and cultural products that can carry common human experiences play a critical role in showcasing the charm of Chinese culture in the intersection and resonance of emotions and aesthetics. In light of the development and progress of digital network technology, the emergence of online games as an innovative and powerful communication medium has generated immense interest and enthusiasm[1]. Online games have the potential to implicitly influence players' cognition by carrying cultural symbols in the immersive experience of the game, and can serve as a new carrier of traditional cultural content in the digital era. The international development of the Chinese game industry is a notable trend that brings significant opportunities and challenges. The phenomenon of "game going abroad" is a prominent feature of the industry's global expansion, and online games not only bear the task of

developing the digital economy and building digital China, but also play a crucial role in telling the Chinese story and leading the excellent Chinese culture to "go abroad". As such, the promotion of Chinese games as a means of cultural exchange and understanding has become a vital part of China's international communication strategy, and a powerful instrument for projecting its cultural values and heritage to the global community[2].

The present research delves into the game industry and its potential for promoting cross-cultural communication. Specifically, it focuses on the game "Genshin Impact", developed by the Chinese game maker MihaYu, which has achieved great success both domestically and abroad since its launch in 2020. It has topped the revenue rankings in overseas markets for an impressive 18 months and is currently the leading revenue and growth game in the Chinese handheld game market overseas. The success of "Genshin Impact" can be attributed in large part to its unique incorporation of Chinese traditional culture into all aspects of the game[3]. From the game's space design and plot development to its character and value design, Chinese traditional culture is infused into every part of the game. This approach has allowed overseas players to experience Chinese culture in a natural and engaging way, making "Genshin Impact" a key project for promoting Chinese culture abroad. The present paper sets out to analyze the cross-cultural communication strategy employed by "Genshin Impact" and to extract valuable insights and recommendations for promoting Chinese traditional culture through innovative means. The study will draw on the successful experience of "Genshin

Impact" and aims to provide guidance for the "domestic games to the sea" initiative in China. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the internationalization of Chinese traditional culture and to position "Genshin Impact" as a new cultural symbol for overseas communication. In conclusion, this paper highlights the success of "Genshin Impact" in the game industry and its potential for promoting cross-cultural communication. Through a detailed analysis of its cross-cultural communication strategy, the paper aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for the promotion of Chinese traditional culture abroad. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to the internationalization of Chinese culture and to position "Genshin Impact" as a leader in the international game market[4].

2. The Construction of Game Space: How to Create a Highly Immersive Virtual Cultural Space

Space is not a static entity, but a dynamic process that shapes and is shaped by social relations and practices. This is the view of Lefebvre, who argues that space is both a product and a producer of social order. In this paper, I will examine how the game space of "Genshin Impact", a popular online role-playing game, illustrates Lefebvre's theory of space as a new kind of producer. I will focus on how the game constructs a fantasy world of "Tivat Continent", where the elements of seven kingdoms intersect and interact. I will also analyze how the game draws on different cultural references from the real world to create a rich and diverse virtual narrative space that immerses the players in a cross-cultural experience. The seven kingdoms in "Genshin Impact" are modeled after seven countries or regions that represent different cultures in the real world. They are[5]:

Munde: The land of freedom, inspired by Germany and other European countries, with medieval architecture, vast plains and the spirit of freedom and romance. Munde represents the typical European culture.

Lizuki: The country of contract, based on ancient China and incorporating strong Chinese elements in the scene design, such as lanterns, temples, gardens and dragons. Lizuki reflects the traditional Chinese culture.

Inatsuma: The land of eternity, made after Japan and featuring cherry blossoms, islands, sand dykes, and Japanese clothing and architecture. Inatsuma captures the essence of Japanese culture.

Sumeru: The land of wisdom, influenced by Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries, with tropical rainforests, deserts, pyramids and sphinxes. Sumeru showcases the ancient civilizations of these regions.

Fontainebleau: The land of justice, modeled after Italy and other artistic countries, with advanced technology, abundant water resources, fountains and sculptures. Fontainebleau embodies the Renaissance culture.

Nata: The country of war, derived from Latin America or Spain, with large deserts, volcanoes, bullfights and flamenco. Nata expresses the passion and vitality of these cultures.

To winter: The kingdom of ice and snow, based on Tsarist Russia, with frozen lakes, snow-covered forests, palaces and fur coats. To winter represents the harshness and elegance of Russian culture.

At present, only four of these countries have been opened

in the game. The fusion of virtual space breaks down the real space barrier of different cultures and creates a highly immersive virtual narrative space that allows the players to explore and appreciate various cultural aspects. In this paper, I will use Lefebvre's spatial triad of perceived-conceived-lived space to analyze how "Genshin Impact" produces a new social order through its game space. I will also discuss how the game challenges and subverts some cultural stereotypes and norms through its characters, stories and interactions. I will argue that "Genshin Impact" is not only a game, but also a cultural phenomenon that reflects and influences the players' perceptions and attitudes towards different cultures. One reason why foreign game products enjoy broad recognition across various countries and regions is their ability to integrate Chinese culture with global multi-cultural backgrounds, creating a broad "common space of meaning." This integration facilitates the creation of a virtual cultural space that offers high immersion, effectively transcending the virtual narrative space. MihaYu, a prominent game developer, has demonstrated its proficiency in catering to the cultural attributes of users in major global game markets. Its games provide players from all over the world with a chance to explore different cultures through immersive gameplay, evoking feelings of novelty, belonging, and identity in familiar cultural elements. By doing so, MihaYu enables its audiences to attain a deeper understanding of the nature of Chinese culture, particularly its eclecticism, through the experience of multiple cultures. This integration of Chinese and foreign cultures in games results in a meaningful, immersive experience for players. It highlights the importance of considering cultural attributes when creating and marketing games for global audiences. MihaYu's ability to successfully execute this strategy, particularly with regards to Chinese culture, has given it a competitive advantage in the global gaming market. Furthermore, by promoting cross-cultural understanding and engagement, MihaYu's games facilitate a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and foster a sense of global community. Therefore, MihaYu's approach exemplifies the importance of cultural sensitivity in the development of global gaming products. "The Genshin Impact" is a virtual cultural space that embodies the spirit of "beauty and tolerance" inherent in Chinese traditional culture. The game's designers aimed to respect the cultures of other countries while fully demonstrating the "humanistic concern" of Chinese traditional culture.

The game's plot revolves around a family's quest to find their missing relatives while traveling through different countries. Through the perfect presentation of cultural diversity, players can experience the unique styles and differences of various cultures, reducing the negative impact of single-trait cultural exports and the phenomenon of "cultural discount." Moreover, "The Genshin Impact" presents Chinese culture and images to overseas audiences in an equal, sincere, and friendly manner based on emotional resonance. It highlights China's current stance of "insisting on equal exchange and mutual understanding, building a community of human destiny, and promoting common development in the world." By realizing cross-cultural equalization, the game has been well-received by players in overseas markets, serving as an excellent model for diversified entities when carrying out foreign cultural communication. The design of "The Genshin Impact" emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity in cross-cultural communication. It showcases the value of cultural

diversity and demonstrates how it can be celebrated through immersive and engaging gameplay. By emphasizing the beauty and tolerance inherent in Chinese culture and by promoting equal exchange and mutual understanding, "The Genshin Impact" represents a significant contribution to the global gaming industry. In conclusion, "The Genshin Impact" serves as an excellent example of how virtual cultural spaces can facilitate cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Its design and execution are a testament to the importance of cultural sensitivity in game development and marketing, making it a valuable reference for other entities involved in foreign cultural communication[6].

3. Blending Cultural Symbols and Plot Design to Showcase Chinese Culture and Entice Gamers

In massively multiplayer online games (MMOs), players experience the game world through their avatars. In Genshin Impact, there are currently 40 playable characters, and the development team aims to add 17 new characters each year to enhance player engagement. Game characters and character updates play a vital role in the gameplay experience of Genshin Impact players. Firstly, the introduction of new characters is a primary motivation for many players, and character development is a significant aspect of the gameplay for both Eastern and Western players. Secondly, the narrative of Genshin Impact centers around its characters, and it boasts a rich storyline with multiple parallel narratives within a large worldview. In online gaming, players interact with the game's storyline through their virtual characters. The player's avatar serves as their self-constructed representation in the virtual environment and is the main vehicle for real emotional input within the game world. This sense of self-presence allows for high levels of emotional interaction and inner experience with the game character[7]. The player's personal abilities determine the development of their avatar and influence the game's progress. The high level of control, simulation, and uncertainty present in MMOs leads to deep emotional interaction between the player and their avatar, which often results in players projecting their own emotions onto their virtual characters. In conclusion, game characters are an essential element of MMOs and play a crucial role in player engagement and enjoyment. The continuous addition of new characters in Genshin Impact serves to enhance the game's stickiness and player retention. The player's avatar serves as a conduit for real emotional input and provides a high level of self-presence, leading to a deep emotional connection between the player and their virtual character. The high level of control, simulation, and uncertainty present in MMOs further increases emotional engagement and creates a powerful gaming experience for players.

The design of characters and storylines in games is an essential aspect of game development, and the Genshin Impacts team has demonstrated a deep understanding of cultural symbols and values in their game design. By incorporating traditional Chinese culture into their game elements, the team has created a unique and culturally rich gaming experience. In the latest version of the game, "Fei Cai Engraved Year", the team has subtly integrated the art of traditional Chinese opera into the characters and related story background, highlighting the beauty of Chinese opera and showcasing it to the world through game scenes and missions. The game production team has designed a new character,

"Cloud Sumire", which is inspired by the character of "Lizuki Opera". The team has integrated traditional Chinese opera elements into the character design and daily costumes of "Yun Sumire" to offer an authentic and engaging experience of Chinese opera culture to players. The plot of Yun Sumire, as presented in the drama "Goddess Splintering", offers players a glimpse of the spiritual core of Chinese traditional culture. The drama is centered on a demon-fighting girl named "Shen He", who embodies the Chinese values of strength, resilience, and self-sacrifice. Despite facing unfair treatment and discrimination, she remains determined to protect her people and overcome adversity. Through the drama, players can experience the optimistic, loving heart of the Chinese people, and appreciate the beauty and richness of Chinese culture[8].

4. The "Second Creation" of Interest Groups to Develop a Communication Matrix of Multiple Online Opinion Leaders

In the contemporary age of the internet, individuals have become more active and clear in their search for identity and self-meaning. Social networks have enabled people to transform their behavior into interests, leading to the proliferation of interest groups. Interest groups are formed on the basis of common interests and values and can be described as communities of individuals with shared interests. These groups facilitate a high degree of conversation and information exchange among members. Scholar Masayuki Nakajima proposed the "drum-shaped communication model", which asserts that the most effective communication strategy is a combination of mass communication and interpersonal communication. Mass communication allows for a wider reach of communication, while interpersonal communication helps to deepen the trust of the audience. The combination of these two communication channels, with the platform and game communities serving as the medium of mass communication and network opinion leaders as the medium of interpersonal communication, has expanded the reach and effectiveness of communication. In particular, the fun community, consisting mainly of network opinion leaders, plays a critical role in the communication process[9]. The core circle users within this community function as opinion leaders, increasing the stickiness of the community and attracting more users to become active participants. This process ultimately leads to the expansion of the audience from the core secondary gen to the pan-secondary gen. In light of these insights, it is clear that the flourishing of fun groups is not simply a product of the convenience offered by social networks, but rather a result of a complex interplay between mass and interpersonal communication, facilitated by the strategic use of opinion leaders within the community. As such, scholars and professionals must carefully consider the various factors that contribute to the success of these groups when conducting research in this area. Henry Jenkins, an American communication scholar, introduced the concept of "participatory culture", which suggests that fan communities often interpret the original meaning of a text and rewrite and reproduce it based on their own understanding[10]. In the contemporary new media context, the participatory cultural construction surrounding "The Genshin Impact" has been demonstrated through the official establishment of the game community platform "MiYusha", which encourages players and fan groups to create second works while providing a

platform and benefits. Moreover, the participatory production of fans has resulted in a hunting trend, where the social and realistic orientation of some of the second-created works has made humanistic concerns a prominent feature, thereby making the overseas dissemination of "Genshin Impact" more vivid and attractive[11].

The development of new media has provided the public with a platform for free expression. While many fan audiences may not directly produce second-gen works, they actively poach the original text of "The Genshin Impact" and nomadically spread its symbols and elements to other communities, or they poach texts from other communities and combine them with "The Genshin Impact" to create new language, jokes, or "stems", thereby forming a powerful group hunting activity. With the joint efforts of officials and fans, "Genshin Impacts" has continued to bridge the geographical and cultural gap, writing a new chapter of the Chinese game industry abroad. In the present era of media convergence, where different media platforms are integrated, the participatory culture surrounding "The Genshin Impact" has become an important field of research. Henry Jenkins' concept of participatory culture has opened up a new perspective for the study of fan culture, which has extended to the impact of participatory culture on the traditional media industry[12].

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The success of "The Genshin Impact" can be attributed to its high-quality technology and the in-depth exploration of diverse cultural concepts. This game has gained significant traction across various social media platforms, garnering a global fanbase, which is a testament to its excellent game design and the collaborative efforts of officials and fans alike. In examining the valuable experience of "The Genshin Impact," it is evident that successfully exporting Chinese domestic games, telling Chinese stories, and disseminating excellent Chinese traditional culture abroad require a careful and deliberate approach[13]. To achieve these objectives, we need to integrate the essence of Chinese culture into the daily lives of young people in a way that enhances cultural appeal, attractiveness, and integration. This can be achieved through cultural empowerment, innovative thinking, and a steadfast commitment to combining modern technology with traditional Chinese culture[14]. Through the process of innovative transformation and creative development, we must strive to overcome linguistic and regional barriers and communicate the Chinese story and values to the world. This endeavor requires us to engage professional professors who are well-trained in various academic disciplines, including game design, cultural studies, and communication studies, to help us achieve our goals. By harnessing their expertise and experience, we can develop a strategic plan that incorporates effective cultural dissemination strategies, innovative marketing techniques, and state-of-the-art technologies to reach a wider audience and promote Chinese culture on a global scale. In conclusion, the success of "The Genshin Impact" offers valuable lessons on how to export Chinese domestic games, tell Chinese stories, and disseminate

excellent Chinese traditional culture abroad[15].

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