

Study on the Influence of Games on the Communication of Regional Culture at Home and Abroad

—Taking Genshin Impact as an Example

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Abstract: China Central Television once claimed that game designing can be seemed as the ninth art since many game companies know how to show elements in reality to players and lead to discussion. The relationship between sender and receiver is an important way to spread and discuss the various kinds of regional cultures. Genshin Impact, which is an open-world adventure game designed by Mihoyo, is popular at home and abroad due to its presentation on different cultures. The paper explores three ways in Genshin Impact to spread and communicate different culture through a method of researching as much cultural communication-related paper as possible on China National Knowledge Infrastructure and summarizing into the three ways. The three ways are environment and plot designing, character designing and activity designing. Eventually, the paper finds that Genshin Impact using participatory culture to achieve cross-culture communication. Firstly, during the playing process, it can hold culture receivers and build community connections. Secondly, the interests and values it shows in the cultural presentation strengthen the meaning and value of cultural communication. Thirdly, Mihoyo company uses multi-channel and multi-form narratives across media, linking online and offline, to shape the communication environment of culture from the Internet to real life and encourage domestic and international players to develop multiple views and personalized thinking and create production and dissemination of new content related to the game on culture communication.

Keywords: cross-culture communication, regional culture, participatory culture, Genshin Impact

1. Introduction

As the economy of China is developing quickly, China also participates in global culture communication through the high technology of various media [1]. Chinese Xi Jinping once announced that it was important to enhance the ability of international communication, aimed to contribute to global culture communication with different regional culture, which can know more about other countries and have opportunities to communicate and promote relationships between countries. China Central Television once claimed that game designing can be seemed as the ninth art since a great number of game companies know how to show elements in reality to players and cause

discussion [2]. The relationship between sender and receiver is an important way to spread and discuss the various kinds of regional culture.

Genshin Impact, which is an open-world adventure game designed by Mihoyo, is popular at home and abroad due to its art and technological presentation of different culture. Its main plot talks about that players are given the name ‘traveler’ to travel seven nations on the land Teyvat, look for his or her missing sibling and experience what she or he had done. During the trip to the seven nations about different kinds of elements and topics, players enjoy a variety of entertainment and receive cultural information. Until August 2023, five nations have been open to players. According to the digital analytics website Sensor Tower, from January to July 2023, Genshin Impact gained revenue of about 4.7 billion dollars. More importantly, about 70% of the revenue comes from overseas. In the adventure game ranking, Genshin Impact kept the champion for seven months. The game’s name in the picture shown beyond is eliminated because it is in Chinese. These data show that the multicultural entertainment in Genshin Impact surely attracts both domestic and international players to enthusiastically participate. The paper explores three ways which Genshin Impact spreads and communicates different culture through a method of researching as much cultural communication-related paper as possible on China National Knowledge Infrastructure and summarizing these three ways. The three ways are environment and plot designing, character designing, and activity designing. Therefore, this paper aims to research the game’s influence on cross-cultural communication to let players know more about different regional cultures through participatory culture. It suggests a method to research regional cultural communication on media, more specifically games.

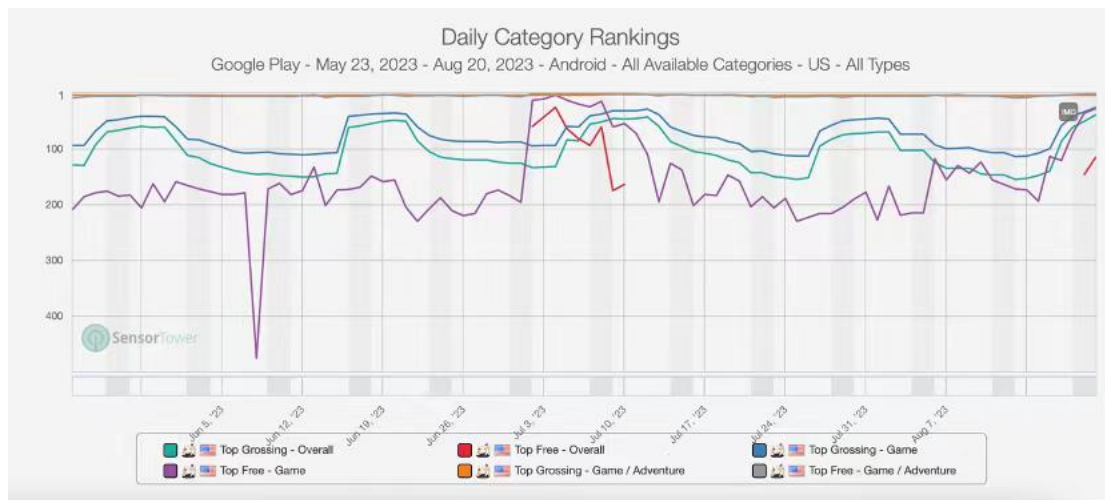


Figure 1: Different rankings of Genshin Impact on Sensor Tower website [3].

2. Environment and Plot Designing

The reason for researching the environment and plot designing of this game is that it is the basis to introduce the other two aspects of character and activities designing, which means the other two aspects are affected by environment and plot designing.

About the Teyvat world, there are seven nations and five of them have been open to players. Each nation represents one virtual elemental and one topic from reality. Thus, there are interesting characteristics in different nations to show their topics. They can attract domestic and international players to research more about different regional cultures. Players can comment, like and forward the information posted by the game official. Another way to communicate culture through media is that players can also participate in the production and dissemination of new content related to the game in a personalized way.

In Genshin Impact, Mondstadt, the nation of Anemo and Freedom, mainly refers to the Central European countries like Germany and the Netherland. In the city of Mondstadt, most of the houses are traditional residential buildings in Germany and the formal name is called Fachwerkhaus. These kinds of houses are wood frame houses, supported by wood. In addition, some cities in Germany are surrounded by long walls with towers. Mondstadt also learned this style.

Liyue, the nation of Geo and Contract, refers to China. The palace suspended in the sky above the city is called the Jade Chamber. From the aspect of function, the chamber in ancient China was generally used for book collection and religious places. For example, one of the functions of the famous Tengwang Pavilion is to collect books. More importantly, on YouTube, the Chinese opera video The Divine Damsel of Devastation Opera Performance posted by Genshin Impact official has received about 9.29 million views and 12,961 comments. User 'Ririchiyo Shirakiin' said that although she had never heard of Chinese opera before, the elements of opera in the piece were great. Besides, the derivative video The Divine Damsel of Devastation Opera Performance but its IRL (In Real Life) has received 1.88 million views and 2,624 comments. Most comments claim that they are moved by the Chinese culture and the performance in real life. From the two videos, we know that Chinese culture shown by the virtual opera performance in the game attracts both domestic and international players because this method belongs to participatory culture, which means players are communicate with others in a social circle. These personalized contents in the derivative works strongly promote the spread of Chinese culture and deepen international players' knowledge of Chinese culture. Compared with the official or local Chinese communication, the communication of Chinese culture by overseas players is from the perspective of other cultures, effectively integrating the Chinese and international cross-culture communication systems.

Inazuma, the nation of Electro and Eternity, refers to Japan in the Shogunate Period. Inazuma means the wife of rice and lightning in Japanese because ancient Japanese found that areas with lightning always had a great yield of rice. According to Japanese history, during the Shogunate Period, Japan applied a closed-door policy which meant the prohibition of external transportation and trade from most countries. In this way, Inazuma in Genshin Impact also has plenty of prohibition to create a depressing atmosphere in the main plot. The environment in Inazuma is distinctive as well. The main color is purple because of the lightning and puzzles are much harder to enhance the depressing feeling.

Sumeru, the nation of dendro and wisdom, refers to some ancient civilizations like ancient Egypt and ancient India so the nation is full of knowledge study. Sumeru in Sanskrit is a famous mountain in ancient Indian myth, which also provides a mysterious and ancient detail. The natural environment mainly includes the rainforest and the desert. The desert is like the Qaidam Basin in China. The wind erosion landscape is common there like the wind-eroded mushrooms. If the lower part of the rock is soft, after a long period of erosion, it may form the top larger than the lower part like the mushroom shape, known as wind-eroded mushrooms. About animals, like the mushroom pig in the forest represents one of the natural relationship called symbiosis. Mushrooms can consume dead skin on pigs to live and pigs can camouflage themselves by the mushrooms and their smell.

The new area opened in the version 4.0 is the fifth nation Fontaine, the nation of Hydro and Justice. It mainly refers to France and Britain during the Industrial Revolution. The name Fontaine comes from Fontainebleau Palace in France. The name in French means the beautiful fountain, which refer to the hydro topic, because there are many fountains in the palace. The main building in Fontaine city refers to the Palais Longchamp in Marseilles which was built to commemorate the freedom of access to water in Marseilles. About the cultural life, magic performances were famous at that time. Thus, in the game's plot, the magic show in Fontaine like an escape from the water tank and position exchange of people is related to this magic culture in France. Opera Epiclese is both the theatre and the courtroom. Theatre was popular at that time as well. The courtroom refers to the justice topic.

The main plot is also special because of some parts of reasoning to solve the cases. This may correspond to some detective fictions and writers like Arthur Conan Doyle and be related to the justice topic. The city is like the style of steampunk in literature. The breathtaking underwater scenes refer to the scenes described in the French novel *Leagues Under the Sea* at that time. About nature, the game designers in the foreshow video claimed that they imitated The Alps. About some signature plants that give different experiences from Mondstadt to players, like cedar, they appreciated some European oil paintings in the 18th century.

In conclusion, all the content above in Genshin Impact is related to both the elements in different nations and various regional cultures in reality. They make domestic and international players interested to research and communicating culture from personalized views.

3. Character Designing

In this kind of adventure game, each character has different characteristics that attracts players. Mihoyo also put some cultural details on the appearance and personalities of the characters. Currently, the names of the archons of the nations are from the 72 demons in the *Ars Goetia*. This provides some mystery to the main plot and reminds players of the sanctity in the first scene that the sibling was lost by the Unknown God.

In the main plot, besides the guide and friend Paimon, players first meet the anemo archon Venti which means wind in Latin. Venti's real name is Barbatos. Although his appearance may make players consider him a girl, players are interested in researching this appearance style and find it reasonable. This is known as the Baroque style, which was common for European aristocratic males to wear in the 16th century. The main features are the sense of religion and elegance, white shirts with dark drawstring waist, ribbons on necklines, lace on cuffs, and knickerbockers with white pantyhose. Although he is an archon, his characteristic is naughty and pleasant. As a troubadour, the same as that in ancient Europe, he sings for a living and drinks wine in spare time. These features lead players to communicate ancient European culture in international media.

The second archon is Zhongli, the geo archon. His real name is Morax. He wears a Chinese long shirt and armor on shoulders [4]. It integrates some western tuxedo designs to conform to Western aesthetic values and leads to the discussion on clothes culture in different countries in media related to him. As a retired archon, he wanders in cities and observes the history to remember the modern life managed by people, which correspond to one of the Chinese culture in Taoism to let natural lake take its course. The main plot attracts international players to research.

The electro archon is Raiden Shogun, which is called Beelzebul. On YouTube, when players are watching the character demo on her, most of them enjoy the background music and camera movement. The instrument includes Japanese traditional shamisen and drums to create beats make people satisfied. The style of camera movement is like another character demo on Kaedehara Kazuha who is a ronin warrior. This style is full of Japanese culture in kendo. One special scene in his demo is the black-and-white scene which seems like the old Japanese films. More importantly, his poem is a kind of classical Japanese short poem called haiku, which follows the rhythms of five-seven-five. These details encourage players to research and communicate with other players and people lack culture.

In Fontaine, although Furina is the hydro archon named Focalors, she likes watching shows in the theatre and farces in the courtroom. Players may be confused about it and learn some background culture on la Belle Époque in France. Another character Navia refers to naval in French which means fleets. Her appearance is a bubble skirt with an umbrella. She is like the middle-class women in Europe. In contrast, the Champion Duelist called Clorinde wears a French military cap, a purple cape and boots. She is like the neat musketeer in the novel *The Three Musketeers* written by Alexandre Dumas. These characters can lead players to think of some cultural works like literature and art.

Overall, the character details in Genshin Impact encourage global players to think of similar images and impressions in other social works like literature, art, and emotion. In this way, they can participate in communication and spread of different cultures to others from personalized views through media. However, the balance of entertainment and cultural experience is also important.

4. Activity Designing

The activity on Genshin Impact in the paper can be divided into two parts—online activities and offline activities.

Online activities including some festivals and activities in games and on media like Lantern Rite and Sumeru college celebration [5]. To research cross-culture communication in festivals and ceremonies, the ritual view of communication is an appropriate framework. From the ritual view, the final goal of communication research is to enhance human communication, rather than empirical research techniques and methodology dominated by the transmission view of communication. The dominance of the transmission view in communication studies before the development of the ritualistic view of communication has led to a strong hierarchy meaning in communication [5]. However, in real society, there are not only politics and economics, but also personal emotions and beliefs, which the ritual view of communication interprets. To be specific, one of the most significant differences between the ritual view and transmission view of communication is the issue of the roles of the transmitters and the receivers in the two processes. In the transmission view, the roles are clearly defined as transmitter and receiver, whereas in the ritual view, everyone is a participant, and all are in the same dimension. In the communication view of rituals, the virtual festivals and ceremonies are observed through the construction of rituals, to share and communicate emotion and culture. In this way, global players, as participants, get different cultural experiences. In the Lantern Rite, players participate in different activities full of Chinese culture like shadow play, lanterns and fireworks. These virtual elements of Chinese New Year can be presented to players who do not familiar with Chinese culture. Take the previous example, the video on Chinese opera posted by Mihoyo is approved and appreciated by global players. Thus, several uploaders started creating derivative works like the performances in real life and Chinese culture introduction. It is beneficial to shape the culture circle and spread to the overseas. The environment in the game and on media is supported for players to achieve cross-culture communication. Like in the Sumeru college celebration, players can experience activities based on different kinds of culture and academic knowledge. The plot of the celebration is like the league construction involving most of the characters in Sumeru to encourage many players to participate in the environment and communicate. In addition, Mihoyo announced that they will cooperate with Ufotable, which is a famous animation company in Japan, to start Genshin Impact Animation Project as a long-term art work. This leads to a heated discussion on animation and art culture [6].

After that, offline activities include some exhibitions and linkages. Offline activities can close the gap between the virtual characters and players, also between different cultures. These activities allow players to experience culture from game to real life. For example, Genshin Impact Festival was held in Shanghai during August, 10-13, 2023. Participants can experience tasks in the game and interviews with character voice actors and workers in Mihoyo on the scene and get interested to communicate culture from their personalized views [7].

To conclude, online activities enhance human communication to give them different cultural experiences and offline activities allow players to closer the gap and communicate culture more conveniently.

5. Conclusion

Ultimately, the paper finds that Genshin Impact uses participatory culture to achieve cross-culture communication. Firstly, during the playing process, it can hold culture receivers and build community connections. Secondly, the interests and values it shows through the environment, plot, characters, and activities in the cultural presentation strengthen the meaning and value of cultural communication. Thirdly, Mihoyo company uses multi-channel and multi-form narratives across media, linking online and offline, to shape the communication environment of culture from the Internet to real life and encourage domestic and international players to develop multiple views and personalized thinking and create production and dissemination of new content related to the game on culture communication. However, the balance of entertainment and cultural communication is important as well. The paper just discusses and analyzes the influence of games on cultural communication instead of making suggestions. If there is more entertainment, players may enjoy themselves and ignore the cultural details. The designs above should be based on regional culture, not just for business. If there is more cultural presentation, players may feel puzzled and bored, which leads to less communication. Currently, Mihoyo company uses methods like participatory culture and the ritual view of communication to ensure balance and attract global players and people interested in regional culture to communicate.

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