**the Role and Influence of Culture Hybridization in Game Design**

**ABSTRACT**

Cultural hybridization is a product of cultural globalization. It represents the entanglement and collision of different cultures in the present time, which are closely linked to each other in each country. In the past, the process of cultural fusion inevitably sacrificed some cultural characteristics and uniqueness, but in the process of cultural hybridization, new forms of culture can be bred. This new form of culture can preserve the characteristics of the local culture and make the local culture more suitable for the needs of the times, but also enable the culture to be more widely developed and transmitted in various regions of the world with different cultures. In this paper, we will discuss the cultural hybridization in the field of video games. Through the examples of Disney's Twisted Wonderland and Super Mario Odyssey, we will discuss the phenomenon of cultural hybridization in video games in the context of globalization. It will also explore and show the broad development prospect of the video game field through cultural hybridization.

**KEYWORDS**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The concept of cultural hybridization

The term hybridization is used in a wide range of fields.[1] In addition to traditional disciplines such as literature, anthropology, and sociology, it is also used in the fields of architecture, business, and economics. This is the result of globalization. And the process of globalization of culture is often given to the process of convergence or homogenization. This has also sprung up about the need for individuals to transcend countries and regions and develop global systems.[2] While voices in favor of globalization and uniformity collide with those in favor of multiculturalism, there are also scholars who argue that hybridization can lead to a third space.[3] In the process of cultural hybridization, the process of deculturalization, acculturalization and reculturalization usually takes place. According to Lee, "deculturalization" is the further division of the native culture into smaller elements in order to remove incompatible parts of the foreign culture with minimal loss. Then, through "culturalization", the native culture is integrated into the new culture and things.[4]

One of the main characteristics of cultural hybridization is its ability to create new forms of cultural expression that are both locally and globally applicable. In other words, hybrid cultures are able to appeal to a global audience while retaining their unique local identity. For example, in the music industry, genres such as hip-hop and reggae are prime examples of cultural fusion. Hip-hop originated in the African-American community in the United States and has since spread around the world, incorporating local musical influences and cultural references. Similarly, reggae originated in Jamaica but has since become a global phenomenon, drawing inspiration from a variety of musical traditions including jazz, blues and rock and roll.

Another important aspect of cultural hybridization is its ability to challenge existing cultural boundaries and hierarchies. The fusion of different cultural practices and beliefs can create new forms of identity and cultural expression that challenge traditional notions of culture, ethnicity and race. For example, the emergence of "global citizenship" that transcends national and cultural boundaries is the result of the increasing cultural fusion that is taking place around the world.

The phenomenon of cultural hybridization also has economic implications. The convergence of different cultural practices and values can create new opportunities for businesses to market their products and services to a global audience. For example, the worldwide popularity of Japanese anime and manga has created a thriving industry that spans multiple countries and cultures.

Cultural hybridization is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has important implications for the world of culture and beyond. It can create new forms of cultural expression, balance the local and global in its sphere of influence, challenge existing cultural boundaries and hierarchies, and create new economic opportunities. However, it can also lead to the loss of cultural identity and heritage and the commodification of culture. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, it is important to recognize and understand the impact of cultural hybridization and work to promote a more inclusive and equitable approach to cultural exchange.

1.2 How cultural hybridization affects game design and development

With the spread of the Internet and electronic devices, online games have been further developed. Games are often considered as "mixed media texts" and the birth of a game usually depends on the efforts of coproduction, format adaptation, and localization.[5] Due to the nature of fusion media in the game itself, both the content of the game itself and the player-generated content have higher requirements for cultural hybridization in the process of globalization.[6]

On the one hand cultural hybridization challenges developers and designers to be sensitive and respectful of culture. With the combination of multicultural references comes the responsibility of representing these cultures accurately and respectfully. This requires game developers to conduct thorough research and consult with experts from the cultures they are incorporating into their games. Failure to do so can lead to negative stereotypes, cultural appropriation, and offense to players from those cultures. Cultural hybridization also provides game developers with the opportunity to explore new and innovative game mechanics and design elements. By drawing on different cultural practices and beliefs, game developers can create unique and engaging game experiences.

On the other hand, as players, the range of games that can be accessed in the era of globalization is getting wider and wider. As the variety and number of games grows, the cultural experiences that games bring to players also grow richer. Game makers incorporate different cultural references into their games and players have the opportunity to explore and learn about different cultures through games. In this case, players not only have more innovative demands on the gameplay, but also have more expectations on the story background and the culture involved in the game. Cultural integration affects the game experience. Games that incorporate elements from different cultures often provide a unique and immersive gaming experience, unlike games that are limited to a single cultural influence. Players are exposed to different perspectives and experiences, which can enrich their gaming experience and broaden their understanding of different cultures. Also in the field of game derivation, local game culture and overseas culture will collide in players' derivative creation.[8] In the context of globalization, the stories and characters in the games will also have more hybridization and integration of local and overseas cultures, and the player communication will be expanded to a global scale.

**2 THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION ON GAME LOCALIZATION**

The new cultural connotations of hybridization can not only use other countries' cultures to create game characters and storylines that are more in line with their own, but can also help other countries' classic cultures to enter their own markets in the most appropriate form.

A good example is Disney Twisted-Wonderland, a mobile game designed for female players and launched by Japanese game company Aniplex and Disney. The game is a blend of card collection and cultivation, deduction and puzzle solving, music games and many other elements in the gameplay.

In terms of character design, Disney Twisted-Wonderland has a very obvious Disney story background. Its characters are taken from Alice in Wonderland, The Lion King, The Little Mermaid, Aladdin and other Disney classic animation. For example, Heartslabyul College, orange wears a symbol of the Queen of Hearts dress red and black armband, there is a tradition of compliance with the laws set by the Queen of Hearts. oCTAVINELLE College President Azul and his twins are the Little Mermaid villain Ursula the sea witch and his men Flotsam and Jetsam as prototype design. But from its essence is another Disney villain character turned into a Japanese magic academy high school students in the campus life of the story.

In Disney cartoons, villainous characters are rarely focused on. They may have a frightening appearance, strange personality and powerful magic. Their usual role is to create trouble for the prince and princess, but cartoons rarely focus on the motivation of these villains to do so. They are often labeled in such a way that the audience can sum up their story in just one word. But in Japanese school adventure stories, the characters usually abandon the so-called concepts of good and evil, each upholding their own different values. The characters just have different positions, not necessarily one side is absolutely righteous.

In this battle of cultural differences, the role of cultural hybridization is particularly important in order to better integrate the Disney characters into the Japanese game market. By way of deculturalization dismantling the Japanese school adventure story, Japanese players' love for such stories is mainly reflected in their love for the characters. Japanese players do not necessarily need a large and grand story, but rather the ideas and concepts reflected by the characters in the story. In a study of Japanese game design and Japanese players, it is easy to see that in today's environment of the local Japanese handheld game market, players do not demand much in terms of gameplay due to the modeling of mobile games. In Japan, secondary culture and mainstream culture go hand in hand, and players are more willing to spend more experience on game characters rather than game play. So in the Disney Twisted-Wonderland adaptation of these villainous characters, abandoning their inherent villainous label, more focused on the personal shape of the character is particularly important. For example, after the adaptation of Snow White in the Queen is a stunning beauty with outstanding looks, but also has its own most beautiful self-consciousness. Good at using magic to make a variety of cosmetics to highlight their beauty. Although still for beauty at all costs, but she will also have the same concept with her people do not spare their praise. On the one hand, the Queen's pursuit of beauty is not a wrong behavior, on the other hand, her ability to make various magic potions is also used to make their own beauty. In recent years Disney has also begun to abandon the "princess prince so happily ever after" early story model, the female protagonist has begun to break free as a woman, with a different story of growth. And as the villains of the animated characters in Disney Twisted-Wonderland can find a new story background, to show that they have the charm of personality. And this adaptation and integration is more suitable for the Japanese game market.

In addition to the plot story of the game, Disney Twisted-Wonderland as a game itself also reflects the new way of Disney as a global product in integrating the local culture of each country. Japan is a country that is very tolerant as well as loving of secondary creations. In Japan, whether it is a novel, anime or movie, there is a very large audience and readership that uses the characters and story settings to create secondary adaptations and creations. These secondary works are often posted on the Internet. Both other readers and authors are very welcome to these secondary works. Disney Twisted-Wonderland itself is also a game with the nature of secondary creation. It is presented in front of Japanese players in the form of Disney's second creation, which can resonate with players who know Disney and make players who do not know Disney more tolerant of Disney characters and animation stories.

**3 THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION ON THE GLOBALIZATION OF GAMES**

In their article, Wang and Yeh mention two different forms of hybridization, one is the integration of overseas cultures into a seemingly local story, and the other is the use of a story with overseas origins into a globalized classic system;[9] Disney Twisted-Wonderland is typical of the integration of Disney characters into a local story setting. Another Super Mario Odyssey is the integration of local cultural stories from around the world into the Mario universe.

Mario itself is a global product, an American plumber with a Mexican beard and an Italian accent, designed by a Japanese. Regardless of which Mario's main story is the classic Western story with the theme of saving the princess. In Super Mario Odyssey this work continues to be the main story. Players need to operate Mario and partners in the game to go to various areas of the game world to find the princess lost items, and finally save the princess from the hands of the villain.

Odyssey's special features are reflected in the beautiful level design. For players around the world, each level can be seen full of exotic cultural scene design and NPC character design, but there is always a level can bring the player back home feeling. Whether it's the New Donk City based on New York and London, or the Tostarena based on Mexico and Egypt, every scene in Odyssey is designed from the cultural elements extracted from each country. The game does not purely copy the specific appearance of a city, this is still Mario's world, but the roadside NPCs wearing Mexican straw hats and bright Mexican costumes, Mario in the same skyscrapers like New York and London see through, or swim in the Atlantis-like underwater world. So the cultures in Odyssey reached a harmony, and for the global players, the exploration in the game is like the process of discovering one culture after another from different regions. This new form of cultural presentation allows players to maintain the freshness and excitement of foreign cultures in the process of exploration, but also in the discovery of their own values of their own culture is very moving. From this point of view, the game's cultural hybridization makes it easier for players from different regional cultures to accept the existence of differences in culture, while also in the more diverse culture more gently and quickly spread to the world.

**4 THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CULTURAL HYBRIDIZATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF GAMES**

Cultural hybridization brings great advantages to game design and development in the world, but there are also many hidden dangers lurking behind this advantage.

The main risk in the process of cultural hybridization is cultural appropriation. This happens when developers do not have respect for the cultural elements used, or do not know enough about that culture. Developers may intentionally or unintentionally use elements of culture that contain stereotypes or are incorrect. This behavior can hinder the benign spread of the culture, while the game can be resented by players, which can also damage the reputation of the game and its developers. Secondly, if the fused cultures are too superficial, or if the developers do not have a proper understanding of cultural hybridization and simply use a simple splicing method to fuse the cultures of two regions, it can also lead to a lack of authenticity in the game.

In addition, another disadvantage of cultural hybridization is the possibility of cultural imperialism. This occurs when the dominant culture's influence overshadows or obliterates the lesser or non-dominant culture. In the context of game development, this can lead to a homogenization of game cultures, where all games look and feel the same, regardless of their cultural origins. This can be limiting for players interested in experiencing different cultural perspectives through games.

Cultural hybridization may be limited by market pressures and expectations. In order for games to be successful, they must appeal to a broad audience, which may sometimes require developers to sacrifice cultural authenticity or complexity in favor of more accessible or popular elements. This can be frustrating for players who are looking for more meaningful or nuanced cultural expressions in their games.

**5 CONCLUSION**

As a product of the development of modern electronic information technologies, games have a special place in the globalization of culture. The nature of convergent media gives games more opportunities and possibilities to present new forms arising from the process of cultural hybridization. It is undeniable that globalization will inevitably bring about cultural homogenization to a certain extent, but hybridization can help each region's culture retain its own shining points as much as possible. Hybridization will help local cultures to be known and recognized in more parts of the world, and it will also help to integrate the best cultures of other regions into local cultures, helping millennia-old cultures to adapt to new times and new values. Such a process will also help the world's diverse cultures to exude more vitality.

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