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# INTEGRATION AND INNOVATION STRATEGIES FOR CHINESE CLASSICAL LITERATURE AND MODERN TRANSLATION

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**Abstract:** Chinese classical literature, rich in historical, philosophical, and cultural values, faces challenges in modern transmission due to globalization and digital media. This study explores how digital technologies, such as online platforms, virtual reality, and AI, provide new opportunities for the global dissemination of these works. It examines integrating traditional literature with digital media through cross-media adaptation and thematic re-interpretation while addressing challenges like language barriers and cultural differences. The paper also proposes strategies for content innovation, interactive experiences, and copyright protection to enhance the global reach of Chinese classical literature in the digital age.

**Keywords:** Chinese classical literature; Digital media; Modern transmission; Cultural differences

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Chinese classical literature has long been an essential part of Chinese culture, encompassing rich historical, philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic ideas. Works such as *The Book of Songs*, *Chuci*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, and *Journey to the West* embody thousands of years of cultural heritage and represent the artistic achievements of Chinese literature. These works remain invaluable to scholars worldwide. However, with the acceleration of globalization and the rapid development of digital technologies, the transmission of traditional culture faces unprecedented challenges. In the context of information overload and cultural diversification, modern society's attention to Chinese classical literature has gradually diminished, especially among younger generations, whose interest and identification with traditional literature have notably decreased [1]. Effectively conveying and promoting Chinese classical literature in the contemporary context has thus become a critical issue in cultural communication and academic research.

At the same time, the rapid development of digital media technologies presents new opportunities for the modern transmission of classical literature. Digital technologies, through diverse media forms, allow traditional culture to overcome geographical and linguistic barriers, reaching a broader audience. The widespread use of the internet and the development of mobile technologies have fostered emerging dissemination forms such as digital reading, online education, and virtual reality [2]. These technologies enable the fast transmission of traditional literature and promote its cultural re-creation and innovative reconstruction, thereby advancing the modern translation of Chinese classical literature in a globalized context. As such, combining digital technologies with Chinese classical literature to facilitate its effective global cultural dissemination has become a significant topic in both academic circles and the cultural industry.

However, while the emergence of digital media provides new opportunities for the modern transmission of Chinese classical literature, it also brings several challenges. These challenges primarily manifest in the following aspects:

### 1.1 Language and Cultural Barriers

Chinese classical literature, written in ancient Chinese, contains complex symbolism and cultural references that are difficult for modern audiences to understand fully [3]. The challenge is to preserve the original meaning while overcoming language and cultural gaps.

### 1.2 Artistic Creation in Cross-Media Adaptation

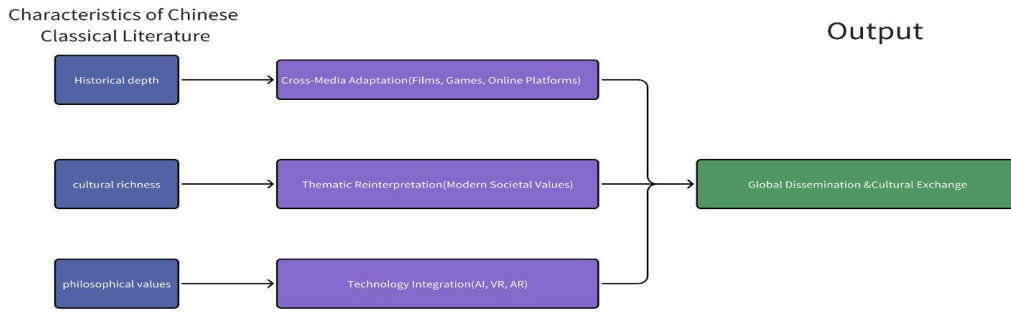
Adaptations of classical literature into films, TV shows, and games must balance staying true to the original text while integrating modern artistic elements [2]. The challenge is maintaining cultural depth while appealing to contemporary tastes.

### 1.3 Cultural Adaptation and Global Dissemination

Cultural adaptation involves conveying the values and contexts of the original works. Digital platforms expand the global reach, but cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings [4]. The challenge is to preserve authenticity while making it accessible worldwide.

To address these challenges and explore the role of digital technologies in transmitting Chinese classical literature, Figure 1 provides a conceptual research framework that integrates Chinese classical literature with digital media technologies. The framework highlights the various opportunities and challenges in cross-media adaptation, language

barriers, and global dissemination. As shown in Figure 1, the integration of digital technologies allows for the global reach of traditional works while maintaining their cultural essence.



**Figure 1** Research Framework for the Integration of Chinese Classical Literature and Digital Media

Facing these opportunities and challenges, this research will delve into how digital media technologies can drive the modern transmission of Chinese classical literature and analyze the multiple impacts of this process on cultural dissemination. This paper will explore how digital technologies integrate with Chinese classical literature, promoting global cultural dissemination through cross-media creative forms while addressing language, artistic creation, and cultural adaptation challenges.

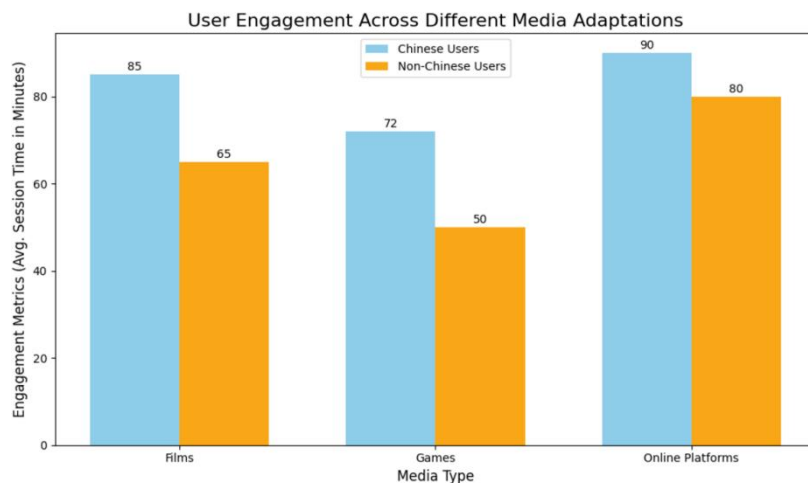
## 2 THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE MODERN TRANSLATION AND TRANSMISSION OF CHINESE CLASSICAL LITERATURE

With the rise of the digital era, the translation and dissemination of Chinese classical literature have encountered both new opportunities and challenges. Digital media and technological advancements have expanded the scope beyond traditional text translation, enabling diverse forms of cross-media integration, thematic reinterpretation, and technological enhancements. This chapter examines these changes in modern literary transmission, focusing on cross-media integration, the modernization of thematic interpretation, and the role of technological tools.

### 2.1 Cross-Media Integration: Diverse Forms of Transmission for Classical Literature

Cross-media integration has become a key feature in the modern translation and transmission of Chinese classical literature. With the expansion of digital platforms such as films, television series, animated adaptations, and video games, classical literature is no longer confined to print publications. Instead, it is reimagined and disseminated through multiple media formats, reaching wider audiences and providing more prosperous, immersive cultural experiences. For example, in Figure 2, *Journey to the West*, a quintessential Chinese classic, has been adapted into numerous films, TV shows, animations, and video games. These adaptations preserve the core elements of the original text while incorporating modern artistic innovations to appeal to contemporary audiences. By combining traditional literature with modern popular culture, cross-media integration offers new interpretations of the original works' cultural content and emotional depth.

However, challenges arise in maintaining the original work's essence across media formats. One significant issue is avoiding excessive commercialization or "entertainmentization" of the text, which may dilute its original values. Additionally, the artistic languages of different media—such as film's audiovisual elements versus literature's textual nuances—pose challenges in ensuring a faithful yet innovative adaptation.



**Figure 2** User Engagement Across Different Media Adaptations



2.2 Thematic Interpretation: Classical Literature from a Modern Perspective

Modern societal values and aesthetic shifts have also influenced the thematic interpretation of Chinese classical literature. As societal attitudes evolve, classical works that once resonated with earlier audiences may seem at odds with contemporary cultural sensibilities. This creates a challenge for modern adaptations: how to reinterpret these works while preserving the spirit and philosophical richness of the original texts.

For instance, recent adaptations of Dream of the Red Chamber in television dramas and online literature have modernized elements such as character development, plot structure, and emotional expression. These adaptations emphasize the humanistic concerns of the original work, focusing on themes of love, loss, and social conflict while aligning them with modern values. In some cases, adaptations highlight the tension between personal emotions and societal expectations, making the story more relatable to today’s audience.

However, modern reinterpretations risk distorting the original meaning of these works if contemporary values overshadow historical and cultural contexts. To avoid losing the classical text's cultural and philosophical essence, it is essential to strike a balance between modern relevance and respect for its original framework.

2.3 Technological Integration: The Role of Digital Technologies

The development of digital technology has provided new platforms and tools for the modern translation and transmission of Chinese classical literature. In particular, continuous breakthroughs in virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) have opened up vast opportunities for presenting and disseminating classical works. For example, VR technology has been applied to Journey to the West, allowing audiences to experience the mythical world of the original text in an immersive way [5]. Additionally, the use of AI in text analysis and translation has provided more efficient and accurate support for the translation of classical works, particularly in the digitization and cross-linguistic transmission of large volumes of classical texts.

However, integrating technology with classical literature also faces challenges. First, digital technology may overshadow traditional artistic forms of classical literature, particularly in some technology-driven adaptations where the work's cultural depth and artistic quality could be compromised [6]. Second, while technology can enhance the efficiency of dissemination, the varying degrees of acceptance of technological innovations across different cultural contexts mean that the design of digital transmission methods must consider diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

In summary, while significant progress has been made in modern Chinese classical literature's translation and transmission through cross-media integration, thematic reinterpretation, and technological applications, several challenges remain. Preserving the original work's essence during adaptation and meeting modern aesthetic demands remains a crucial issue for creators. Modernizing thematic interpretation requires balancing respect for traditional culture with contemporary values and emotional needs, which remains a delicate task. Technology integration with classical literature has opened new avenues for dissemination, but cross-cultural adaptation and the preservation of cultural depth remain pressing concerns.

3 THE TRANSMISSION STRATEGIES OF CHINESE CLASSICAL LITERATURE IN DIGITAL MEDIA

With the rapid development of digital technologies, digital media has become an essential platform for the modern transmission and reinterpretation of Chinese classical literature. By integrating online literature and modern art, classical works are reimaged, breaking traditional media boundaries and adapting more effectively to the needs of contemporary audiences. This section discusses the strategies for transmitting Chinese classical literature in digital media, focusing on online literature and modern art.

3.1 The Integration of Online Literature and Classical Literature

Online literature in China has become a powerful tool for spreading classical literature. Platforms like Qidian and Douban have given new life to traditional works by adapting them into modern formats (Table 1).

Table 1 Data from Online Literature Platforms and User Engagement

Platform	Media Type	Users (Chinese)	Users (Non-Chinese)	Average Engagement (mins)	Comments
Qidian	Online Novel	85%	15%	30	Popular for adaptations of "Journey to the West"
Douban	Discussion Forum	70%	30%	20	Active discussions and user reviews
WeChat	Mobile App	80%	20%	25	Short stories and daily posts

For example, Journey to the West has been reworked into numerous online novels with updated plots and modern elements that cater to contemporary readers' preferences [8]. This approach not only modernizes the classics but also broadens their appeal.

However, adapting classical works for digital platforms presents challenges, particularly in balancing innovation with the original text's cultural essence. Creators must find ways to maintain the integrity of the original work while appealing to modern tastes. Overemphasizing market demand or modern aesthetics can risk distorting the cultural depth of the original text, so a careful approach to adaptation is essential.

### 3.2 The Integration of Modern Art and Classical Literature

Modern art, particularly digital art, animation, and illustration, offers a fresh medium for reinterpreting Chinese classical literature. Works like *Dream of the Red Chamber* have been adapted into illustrations and animations, breathing new life into the characters and narrative through modern design and visual effects [7]. These adaptations enhance the cross-cultural appeal of classical literature, making it more accessible to contemporary and international audiences.

While these artistic adaptations bring a new layer of engagement, they also raise concerns about preserving the original works' cultural significance. Over-modernization or excessive artistic freedom could undermine the classics' historical and cultural depth. Balancing innovation concerning the original cultural context remains a key challenge in integrating modern art with classical literature.

Combining online literature and modern art, Chinese classical literature's digital transmission has become more dynamic and widely accessible [9]. These strategies offer significant opportunities for cultural dissemination but also require careful attention to preserve the original cultural values while appealing to a global audience. Future efforts should focus on maintaining cultural depth while meeting modern expectations.

## 4 INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF CHINESE CLASSICAL CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL MEDIA ERA

This paper proposes three key innovative strategies to better inherit and disseminate Chinese classical literature in the digital age and globally promote its global recognition and influence. These strategies not only focus on content and form innovation but also involve cross-cultural communication, copyright protection, and the commercialization of cultural industries. The aim is to revitalize Chinese classical literature digitally and push forward its transmission and innovation in a globalized context.

### 4.1 Content Innovation and Digital Presentation

Digital presentation is a crucial innovation in the transmission of Chinese classical literature. Traditional print forms are no longer sufficient to meet the modern audience's demand for interactivity and immersion. The application of digital technologies provides immense opportunities for the re-creation of classical literature. Through technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), classical literary works come to life and offer readers a new experience. For example, *Journey to the West* can be experienced through VR technology, allowing readers to enter an interactive mythical world where they can engage with characters like Sun Wukong (the Monkey King) and Zhu Bajie, experiencing the development of the plot and the presentation of cultural backgrounds [10]. This digital approach not only expands how classical literature can be transmitted but also attracts the younger generation's interest, making it easier for them to enter the world of classic works.

In addition, interactive reading platforms, intelligent voice reading, and digital libraries are also essential directions for content innovation. These platforms present classical literary texts in new forms—such as combining text with images, audio, and video—creating a more multisensory “new reading” experience. This innovative adaptation revitalizes the original works and enables cross-cultural and cross-linguistic dissemination, allowing the classic works to meet audiences' needs from diverse cultural backgrounds [11]. For example, *Dream of the Red Chamber* could be adapted into a digital interactive platform, allowing global users to experience its profound humanistic portrayals and social critiques in a digital environment.

### 4.2 Interactive Experiences and Educational Outreach

Interactive experiences are an innovative form of digital transmission and a vital way to attract modern readers, particularly the younger generation. With the development of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), gamified learning, and other technologies, digital platforms can offer users a reconstructed experience of literary works. Through role-playing, plot choices, and other interactive elements, readers can more actively participate in the story's narrative. This interactive experience transforms classical literary works from passive information into a dynamic, engaging cultural experience.

For example, an interactive or online role-playing game (RPG) based on *Journey to the West* could allow players to choose characters and engage in the progression of the classic storyline. This would enhance their understanding and emotional investment in classical literature. During this process, players experience the story's plot and understand the historical, cultural, and humanistic spirit behind the work through interaction. This innovative mode of experience turns classical literature from a static text into a dynamic cultural interaction, significantly increasing the younger generation's interest in traditional literature.

At the same time, digital educational platforms provide new pathways for the popularization of classical literature. Through specialized online courses, interactive learning platforms, and digital museums, digital technology makes classical literature more vivid and accessible. For global Chinese language learners, digital platforms can offer multi-language versions of literary works, lectures, and interactive learning, helping readers from different countries understand the unique value of Chinese classical literature. For younger audiences, engaging online learning tools, gamified learning environments, and diverse teaching resources allow them to access the essence of Chinese classical literature in a relaxed atmosphere, fostering their interest in and identification with traditional culture.

### 4.3 Copyright Protection and Commercialization of Cultural Industries

With the advent of the digital age, copyright protection has become a vital issue in the global transmission of Chinese classical literature. Traditional copyright protection models face numerous challenges in the digital media age, especially when digital content can be easily copied, shared, and distributed. Blockchain technology offers an innovative solution for digital copyright protection. The immutability and transparency of blockchain provide more secure and effective copyright protection for the digital content of classical literature, ensuring that the rights of creators and stakeholders in the cultural industry are not violated.

Moreover, with the widespread use of digital media technologies, the commercialization of Chinese classical literature has gradually become a reality. The diversification of the cultural industry provides new business models for the global transmission of classical literature, no longer limited to publishing and copyright transactions. The development of derivative products in films, animations, and video games has brought immense economic potential to classical literature. For example, the film adaptation of *Journey to the West* has achieved success in the domestic market and gained widespread attention internationally. Simultaneously, through the distribution on digital platforms, related derivative products (such as games, films, TV series, and animations) can form a production chain, driving both cultural and economic growth. This is particularly attractive to younger audiences, as digital media-transmitted cultural products often offer more interactivity and appeal, making it easier to spark their interest in traditional Chinese culture.

Overall, digital transmission addresses the issue of copyright protection and opens up more possibilities for developing derivative products, driving the commercialization of Chinese classical literature. This commercialization of the cultural industry helps expand the global influence of Chinese classical literature and creates more economic and cultural value for the global dissemination of Chinese culture.

In the digital age, content innovation and digital presentation, interactive experiences, educational outreach, copyright protection, and the commercialization of cultural industries are the three key strategies driving the modern transmission of Chinese classical literature. Combining traditional culture with modern technology, education, and industries provides a more diversified and interactive approach to the global transmission of classical literature while enhancing its competitiveness and attractiveness in the global cultural context. Through these innovative initiatives, Chinese classical literature can maintain its profound cultural heritage and revitalize in the context of globalization, becoming an essential component of world cultural exchange.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

This paper explores the modern translation and transmission of Chinese classical literature in the digital media era, analyzing the critical role of digital technologies in promoting cultural dissemination. We focused on the applications of cross-media integration, modernized theme interpretation, and the combination of technological methods in translating Chinese classical literature. We proposed innovative strategies based on digital platforms. Integrating digital platforms, interactive experiences, and cross-cultural communication presents unprecedented opportunities for the global transmission of classical literature. However, challenges remain in balancing creative reconstruction with preserving the cultural depth of the original works.

In response to the challenges of balancing creative reconstruction with preserving the original cultural depth, this paper proposes several strategies to promote the modern translation and transmission of Chinese classical literature. First, content innovation and digital presentation are vital strategies. Combining digital platforms with interactive technologies allows classical literary works to be innovatively adapted, developing interactive reading experiences that break traditional media limitations and provide a richer cultural experience. Second, the design of interactive experiences, such as the application of VR and AR technologies, allows readers to immerse themselves in the world of literary works, enhancing their sense of participation and cultural identity. Lastly, constructing cross-cultural communication platforms will facilitate global audiences' understanding of Chinese classical literature, promoting cultural recognition and dialogue.

Overall, as digital technologies continue to evolve, the global dissemination of Chinese classical literature will receive broader attention in the context of globalization. In the future, through digital platforms, classical literature will not only overcome the limitations of time and space but also play a significant role in global cultural exchange, becoming a bridge and link between different cultures. Implementing these innovative strategies will open up new prospects for the digital transmission of Chinese classical literature and contribute to the diverse cultural exchange worldwide.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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# TANG POETRY ROAD IN EASTERN ZHEJIANG: PRACTICES AND EXPLORATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL DISSEMINATION

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**Abstract:** This paper delves into the practices, achievements, and challenges of the international dissemination of Tang poetry from Eastern Zhejiang. With its unique natural landscapes and profound cultural heritage, the region has nurtured a rich reservoir of Tang poetry resources. In the context of globalization, the international dissemination of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang serves not only as a means of cultural preservation but also as a vital strategy to enhance the nation's cultural soft power. By employing methods such as literature review and comparative analysis, this study examines the historical development, dissemination models, and influencing factors of the international dissemination of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. It also proposes strategies including strengthening top-level design, deepening academic research, innovating dissemination methods, enhancing talent cultivation, and prioritizing brand building. The research aims to provide valuable insights for advancing the international dissemination of Tang poetry from Eastern Zhejiang and Chinese culture as a whole.

**Keywords:** Tang Poetry Road in Eastern Zhejiang; International dissemination; Cultural communication; Cultural soft power

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the wave of globalization, cultural exchange and dissemination have become crucial indicators of a nation's soft power. Poetry, as a treasure of human spiritual culture, transcends national boundaries to foster mutual understanding and respect among civilizations, thus driving the diversity and prosperity of global culture on a deeper level. Against this backdrop, the international dissemination of poetry assumes significant importance as it embodies not only the mission of cultural transmission but also the tangible expression of a nation's cultural soft power.[1]

Eastern Zhejiang, with its distinctive natural beauty, profound historical heritage, and abundant literary resources, has long been a favored destination for poets and scholars. During the Tang dynasty, known as the golden age of Chinese poetry, the poetic arts flourished in Eastern Zhejiang, culminating in the formation of the unique "Tang Poetry Road in Eastern Zhejiang." This cultural phenomenon enriched the essence of Chinese culture and bequeathed a valuable spiritual legacy to future generations. Exploring the practices and pathways of the international dissemination of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is thus an endeavor that deepens the excavation of historical culture while offering a meaningful experiment in contemporary strategies for cultural dissemination.

This study aims to explore the practices, achievements, and challenges of the international dissemination of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang through methods such as literature review and comparative analysis. By analyzing the historical trajectory, dissemination models, and influencing factors, it seeks to propose strategies aligned with current trends and characteristics of international cultural communication. The research holds significance in enriching the content and perspectives of Tang poetry studies, advancing the theory and practice of cultural international exchange, and contributing to enhancing the global influence of Chinese culture.

## 2 THE HISTORY AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF TANG POETRY IN EASTERN ZHEJIANG

The Eastern Zhejiang region has long been a cultural gem of China. Its unique geographical location, abundant natural resources, and profound historical heritage provided an unparalleled environment for the flourishing of Tang poetry. During the Tang dynasty—a peak era in Chinese poetic history—poetry thrived in this region, culminating in the distinctive "Tang Poetry Road in Eastern Zhejiang."

### 2.1 An Overview of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang

The Tang dynasty witnessed an unprecedented height in poetic creation, fueled by economic prosperity and cultural flourishing. The Eastern Zhejiang region, with its picturesque landscapes, abundant historical relics, and rich cultural atmosphere, attracted numerous poets and scholars. These literary figures explored the region, composing poetry that either celebrated its natural beauty, reflected on its historical legacy, or expressed profound emotions about life's joys and sorrows. [2] Their works captured not only the region's scenic charm and cultural richness but also conveyed their deep thoughts and unique artistic styles, leaving a lasting cultural legacy.

Eastern Zhejiang is home to numerous timeless masterpieces. For example, Li Bai's *Dreaming of Mount Tianmu While Departing Farewell* uses vivid imagination and bold expression to depict the magical scenery of Mount Tianmu, reflecting the poet's longing for freedom and unrestrained life. Du Fu's *Grand Tour* recalls his youthful travels, showcasing the magnificent landscapes and cultural vitality of Eastern Zhejiang. Similarly, Meng Haoran's *Lodging by the Jiande River* employs fresh and natural language to portray the serene beauty along the Jiande River, revealing the

poet's tranquil and detached state of mind. These works highlight not only the natural and cultural allure of Eastern Zhejiang but also the remarkable achievements of Tang poetry as an art form.[3]

## 2.2 Literary Geography and the Tang Poetry Ecosystem of Eastern Zhejiang

Eastern Zhejiang's distinctive literary geography—characterized by its integration of natural and cultural elements—offered poets abundant material and inspiration for their creations. The region's landscapes were more than just scenic wonders; they served as vessels for the poets' emotions and sources of their creative ideas. Poets engaged in a dialogue with nature and resonated with history during their travels and compositions, forming a unique poetic ecosystem in the region.

One of the defining features of this ecosystem was the harmonious coexistence between poets and nature. Through meticulous observation and profound introspection, poets infused their works with the beauty of nature, endowing their poems with vivid imagery and powerful emotional resonance. Moreover, the region's historical sites and cultural landmarks provided rich historical context and cultural depth for poetic creation.[4] As poets journeyed through Eastern Zhejiang, they not only admired its natural scenery but also immersed themselves in its historical and cultural splendor, drawing on these experiences as vital sources of inspiration.

## 2.3 The Far-Reaching Influence of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang

The dissemination and development of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang enriched the region's cultural essence and artistic forms, leaving a profound impact on its cultural heritage and innovation. On one hand, the spread of Tang poetry fostered the flourishing of literature and art in Eastern Zhejiang, cultivating numerous talented writers and inspiring outstanding works of art. [5] On the other hand, the philosophical themes and artistic styles of Tang poetry deeply influenced the cultural values and aesthetic preferences of the region, injecting new vitality into its cultural heritage and innovation.

Under the influence of Tang poetry, Eastern Zhejiang gradually developed a distinctive cultural style. This style embodied the extraordinary achievements and aesthetic aspirations of Tang poetry while incorporating the region's natural landscapes and cultural ethos. This unique cultural identity not only earned Eastern Zhejiang the reputation of a "land of culture" but also laid a solid foundation and provided expansive space for the transmission and innovation of its cultural legacy.

The historical and cultural foundation of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is profound and rich. It is not only an integral part of Chinese poetic history but also a vital symbol of Eastern Zhejiang's cultural identity. [6] Through in-depth exploration and study of Tang poetry in this region, we can better understand and preserve this invaluable cultural heritage, contributing to the prosperity and advancement of Chinese culture.

## 3 THE CUREENT STATE AND CHALLENGES OF POETRY'S INTERNATIONAL DISSEMINATION

In the age of globalization, poetry, as a crucial medium of cultural expression, has become an important indicator of a nation's cultural soft power on the international stage. Despite China's rich poetic tradition and profound cultural heritage, the global dissemination of Chinese poetry still faces numerous challenges and opportunities. This section delves into the current state of poetry's international dissemination, the role of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang within this context, and the associated challenges.

### 3.1 The International Perception of Chinese Poetry

Currently, global perceptions of Chinese poetry are diverse but remain relatively limited. On one hand, the implementation of China's "Culture Going Global" strategy has facilitated the translation of Chinese poetry into various languages and its presentation at international book fairs, literary festivals, and similar platforms. These efforts have attracted the attention of some international readers, offering them a unique window into Chinese culture through the artistic and philosophical richness of Chinese poetry. [7] On the other hand, barriers such as linguistic differences, cultural disparities, and constrained dissemination channels have limited the international visibility and influence of Chinese poetry.

Many outstanding works of Chinese poetry have not been adequately translated or promoted, leaving international audiences with a superficial understanding of this literary tradition. Furthermore, the reception of Chinese poetry by international readers is often influenced by their cultural backgrounds and aesthetic preferences, which may hinder a deeper appreciation of its unique charm.[8] Although Chinese poetry is still regarded as niche within the global literary scene, the growing international interest in Chinese culture is spurring curiosity about Chinese poetry, encouraging exploration by an increasing number of global readers.

### 3.2 A Multi-dimensional Examination of Dissemination Models and Channels

The international dissemination of poetry currently relies on several primary models and channels:

**Official Promotion:** Governments and cultural institutions organize international book fairs, literary festivals, and other events to showcase and promote Chinese poetry. These efforts are authoritative and large-scale, quickly raising the

international profile of Chinese poetry. However, due to resource constraints, official promotion often struggles to cover the vast array of excellent poets and works.

**Academic Exchange:** International conferences, seminars, and scholarly collaborations facilitate the exchange of ideas and research on poetry. [9] This approach helps to uncover the cultural and artistic value of Chinese poetry, enhancing its standing within academic circles. However, academic exchange is typically confined to specialists, limiting its reach to broader international audiences.

**Grassroots Initiatives:** Enthusiasts of Chinese culture, along with independent organizations, undertake grassroots efforts to translate, publish, and promote Chinese poetry. This model is flexible and innovative, allowing targeted dissemination tailored to specific cultural contexts and aesthetic preferences. However, such initiatives often face challenges due to limited funding and resources, making sustained impact difficult.

**New Media Platforms:** With the rapid advancement of internet technology, new media platforms have emerged as vital channels for the international dissemination of poetry. [10] Social media, online literary platforms, and digital content sharing allow Chinese poetry to reach audiences worldwide quickly and broadly. However, issues such as information overload and copyright concerns pose significant challenges to this mode of dissemination.

Each of these models and channels has its unique strengths and limitations. To achieve optimal results in the international dissemination of Chinese poetry, an integrated approach leveraging these diverse methods is essential.

### 3.3 Assessing the Current State of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang's International Dissemination

Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, as a significant component of Chinese poetry, reflects both the general characteristics of Chinese poetry's global dissemination and the distinct cultural attributes of the region. First, its international recognition and influence remain relatively limited. While some classic works, such as Li Bai's *Dreaming of Mount Tianmu While Departing Farewell*, have been widely translated and shared, Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang as a whole has yet to achieve substantial global impact. This can be attributed to the lack of systematic planning and promotion in its dissemination efforts, as well as insufficient funding and resources. Second, the international dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang faces linguistic and cultural barriers. The linguistic complexity and cultural nuances of Tang poetry often differ significantly from Western poetic traditions, making it challenging for international readers to fully understand and appreciate these works. [11] Additionally, the cultural backgrounds and aesthetic preferences of different regions further influence the reception of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. Nevertheless, recent efforts in Eastern Zhejiang to promote Tang poetry on the global stage have shown promising results. Initiatives such as international poetry festivals, the establishment of translation and research centers for Tang poetry, and enhanced collaboration with global poetry communities are gradually strengthening its international presence. Leveraging new media platforms has expanded its reach, while integrating poetry with cultural tourism has combined Tang poetry with the region's natural and cultural attractions, enhancing its global appeal and reputation.

In summary, the international dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang faces both challenges and opportunities. Future efforts must focus on intensifying planning and promotion, innovating dissemination models and channels, and strengthening collaboration with global poetry circles. Only through these measures can Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, as a valuable cultural heritage, shine more brightly on the international stage.

## 4 STRATEGIES AND PATHWAYS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DISSEMINATION OF TANG POETRY IN EASTERN ZHEJIANG

### 4.1 New Media Platforms and Communication Modes

#### 4.1 Strengthening Top-level Design and Building a Dissemination Framework

First, it is essential to strengthen top-level design and establish a systematic framework for the international dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. Governments and relevant departments should formulate long-term plans, clearly define dissemination objectives, tasks, and measures, and establish a dissemination mechanism that combines government leadership, societal participation, and market-driven operations. Furthermore, a cross-departmental collaboration mechanism should be established to integrate resources from various sectors such as culture, tourism, education, and diplomacy, working together to promote the international dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. [12]

#### 4.2 Deepening Academic Research and Uncovering Cultural Connotations

Academic research forms the foundation for cultural dissemination. There is a need to strengthen academic research on Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, delving deeper into its cultural connotations and artistic value to provide a solid academic support for its international promotion. By hosting international academic conferences, seminars, and other events, scholars from both China and abroad can engage in exchanges and collaborations to advance the transformation and application of research outcomes. Additionally, efforts should be made to enhance the translation and introduction of Tang Poetry, ensuring that international readers can accurately understand and appreciate its unique charm.

#### 4.3 Innovating Dissemination Methods and Expanding Dissemination Channels

In terms of dissemination methods, innovative approaches should be actively explored to broaden the channels for spreading Tang Poetry. On one hand, leveraging new media platforms, such as social media and online literary websites, is crucial to showcasing the appeal of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang through various formats, including text, audio, and video, attracting international readers' attention. On the other hand, collaboration with renowned international publishing houses should be strengthened to promote the overseas publication and distribution of Tang Poetry, thereby increasing its visibility and influence in international markets. Additionally, cultural tourism and educational exchange programs can be utilized to combine Tang Poetry with the region's natural scenery and cultural heritage, creating a distinctive cultural tourism brand that attracts international tourists to experience and learn.

#### 4.4 Strengthening Talent Development and Enhancing Dissemination Capabilities

Talent is key to cultural dissemination. Efforts should be made to cultivate and attract professionals in the international dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, establishing a high-quality, specialized team for promotion. Training programs, workshops, and seminars can be organized to enhance the professional skills and cross-cultural communication abilities of dissemination personnel. At the same time, efforts should be made to bring in experts with an international perspective and extensive experience to inject new vitality and momentum into the international dissemination of Tang Poetry.

#### 4.5 Focusing on Brand Building and Enhancing International Image

Brand building is crucial to enhancing the international influence of culture. The brand of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang should be strengthened through the planning and organization of a series of influential cultural activities, such as international poetry festivals and Tang Poetry recitals, to raise its international profile and reputation. Additionally, cooperation with internationally recognized cultural brands should be fostered to jointly build a globally influential cultural brand, thereby enhancing the international image of Chinese culture.

Therefore, the international dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang requires collective efforts from governments, academic institutions, media, enterprises, and society as a whole. By implementing strategies such as strengthening top-level design, deepening academic research, innovating dissemination methods, developing talent, and focusing on brand building, we are confident that Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang will shine on the global stage, allowing more people to understand and appreciate the unique charm of Chinese culture.

### 5 CONCLUSION

Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, as an integral part of Chinese culture, plays a crucial role not only in the inheritance and promotion of traditional culture but also in enhancing a nation's cultural soft power and fostering international cultural exchange and understanding. Given the challenges and opportunities in the current international dissemination landscape, we believe that the strategies outlined—strengthening top-level design, deepening academic research, innovating dissemination methods, developing talent, and focusing on brand building—will lead to significant progress in the global dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang.

Looking ahead, with the continued development of globalization and the increasing prominence of cultural diversity, the international dissemination of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang will encounter broader opportunities for growth. We anticipate seeing more exceptional works of Tang Poetry translated into multiple languages and reaching global audiences, allowing more international readers to discover the rich heritage and unique charm of Chinese culture. Furthermore, we hope that Tang Poetry will become a bridge connecting the hearts and minds of people from different countries and regions, facilitating the exchange and integration of world cultures. In this process, we must maintain an open and inclusive mindset, actively learn from international best practices, and continuously innovate dissemination methods and approaches to inject new vitality and momentum into the international dissemination of Tang Poetry.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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# THE EMOTIONAL CONNOTATIONS OF ZHANG YAN'S EROTIC LYRICS

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**Abstract:** Zhang Yan was an important poet during the transition from the Song to the Yuan Dynasty, and his erotic works, imbued with the feelings of a displaced person and the sorrow of the collapse of the millet, gave his erotic lyrics a unique charm. In terms of emotional content, although a small part of Zhang Yan's erotic lyrics did not break away from the grievances of predecessors and still inherited the implicit and graceful style, it is undeniable that most of Zhang Yan's erotic lyrics underwent a qualitative change due to the factors of the downfall of his family and the demise of his country.

**Keywords:** Zhang Yan; Erotic Lyrics; Displaced Person Identity; Emotional Connotations

## 1 INTRODUCTION

"Poetry is solemn, lyrics are charming, and lyrics are for the erotic. "From the beginning, lyrics focused on depicting the emotions between men and women, with a characteristic of gentleness and beauty. [1] Lyrics often depicted women such as young girls, wives, concubines, and courtesans. Among the 302 lyrics created by Zhang Yan, there are about 26 erotic lyrics, accounting for about one-tenth of his total lyrics. In Zhang Yan's erotic lyrics, apart from the longing for his wife and concubines, the poet depicted more often the courtesans he interacted with. Among Zhang Yan's 26 erotic lyrics, there are 14 that directly depict courtesans, except for "Yi Jiu You" (Feeling at the Old Residence), "Du Jiang Yun" (The Fragrant Silk is All Around), "Chang Ting Yuan" (Feeling at the Old Residence), and "Qi Luo Xiang. Xi Jian Dai Ren Fu Qing" (The Deep Lamp at Hou Guan), which are four works about missing wives and concubines, the remaining 22 are more or less related to courtesans. The courtesans who interacted with Zhang Yan include Shen Mei Jiao, Gui Qing, Xiao Qian, Che Xiu Qing, Su Liu Er, Ai Ju, Qing Qing, Yang Rou Qing, Yun Yu, Guan Guan, Shuang Bo, and others.

## 2 INHERITING THE GRIEVANCES OF PREDECESSORS

Lyrics often depict women, and women inevitably become synonymous with "grievances." For example, a lovesick girl complains about her beloved's long absence; a young wife in the boudoir, lazy and coquettish, is lonely and hard to bear; a courtesan, after her old lover's change of heart, is left alone in the room, desolate and sorrowful. Zhang Yan's erotic lyrics also include some works depicting women's sorrows.

Before the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty, Zhang Yan only wrote two erotic lyrics, "Huan Xi Sha" and "Dan Huang Liu. Zeng Su Shi Liu Er," which basically followed the implicit and graceful style of previous generations. For example, in "Huan Xi Sha" :

Rhinoceros clasps the heavy curtains of the deep courtyard. Willow fluff pounces on the account during the day. Dreaming back, a lonely butterfly plays in the spring shade.

Suddenly reduced Chu clothes collect belt eyes, initially even Shang Ding irons fragrant heart. Swallows return and shake the flower protection bell.

In the luxurious deep courtyard, a sentimental woman, enslaved by love, longs for her lover and becomes thin. The term "fragrant heart" refers to a fragrant and clean heart. Yu Xin of the Northern Zhou Dynasty in "Shang Xian Si Xian Du Fu" and Li Shangyin of the Tang Dynasty in "Yan Tai Poems·Winter" both mentioned it. The deep environment, light longing, and sorrowful emotions run through the work. The work continues the style of the Hua Jian Ci with gorgeous rhetoric, gorgeous colors, and empty content. The female protagonist's form and spirit can be found in the erotic lyrics of predecessors at will.

After the fall of the Song Dynasty, Zhang Yan also wrote lyrics such as "Hao Shi Jin" (Gift to Xiao Qian), "Zhu Ying Yao Hong" (Listening to Songs Through the Window), "Die Lian Hua" (Gift to Yang Rou Qing), "Xi Hong Yi" (Gift to Prostitute Shuang Bo), "Pu Sa Man" (rui xiang does not love the pipa knot), and "Sheng Sheng Man" (Hair wet with fog), which are generally about flowers and grass. These lyrics still focus on the women's physique and expression, and all are filled with the heroine's unspeakable longing and light sorrow, not much different from the erotic lyrics before the Song Dynasty. However, some erotic lyrics, although still mainly about men and women's love, the poet has integrated the feeling of time passing quickly into it. For example, in "Zhen Zhu Ling" :

The sound of singing under the peach blossom fan is gone. How much sorrow. It feels that the flower shade is idle. Why not come back, why not come back early.

Don't sweep the courtyard full of flying flowers. Keep it for the thin sentiment to know. Afraid it's like flying flowers, and spring is old together.

This is a very typical lyric about longing. In the lyric, the woman has no heart for singing and dancing because of her lover's departure. "How much sorrow. It feels that the flower shade is idle." The poet merges emotions into the scenery, and the sorrowful woman attributes the natural withering of the flowers to her sorrow. "Why not come back, why not come back early" outlines the woman's eager expectation for her lover's return. After a long wait, "Don't sweep the courtyard full of flying flowers. Keep it for the thin sentiment to know." The woman, born out of love and hate, accuses the man of being unfaithful. The lyric's emotions and hatred run through it. However, "Afraid it's like flying flowers, and spring is old together." It swings the pen and ink, emitting a sigh of time passing quickly and the face is easy to age. Due to the change in the poet's identity, the lyric has a deep and heavy feeling in the strong longing, and the erotic component is thus diluted, and the artistic conception of the lyric is more profound. "Jing Meng Hui, Lan Shuo Xiang Si, after all, now old" in "Jie Hua Yu" (Singing While Walking in the Moonlight) also has a sigh about the fast passage of time.

In Zhang Yan's erotic lyrics, the identity of women is mostly courtesans. The poet, triggered by the charming and comfortable atmosphere, creates fragrant and soft lyrics on the spot, and the purpose is for entertainment and leisure needs, which should be the same as the purpose of predecessors. Zhang Yan's erotic lyrics mainly depict women's physique and expression, and the unspeakable longing and light sorrow run through them, inheriting the implicit and graceful style of predecessors. [2] Although a small part of Zhang Yan's erotic lyrics has a sense of time passing, making the artistic conception of the lyrics more profound, thus distinguishing them from general complaints, the writing techniques are still mainly in the style of grace and grace, and in the final analysis, they are still inheriting the grievances of predecessors.

### 3 EXPRESSING THE THOUGHTS OF INSCRIPTION ON RED LEAVES

Zhang Yan wandered between the green buildings, both lingering on courtesans and missing his wife infinitely. In "Inscription on Red Leaves," we can slightly explore Zhang Yan's emotional journey.

"Inscription on Red Leaves" is a story of love that uses red leaves as a medium, and under the condition of a coincidence, it leads to a touching love story. [3] The protagonists in the blueprint are scholars and palace women. In March of the first year of Deyou (1275), Zhang Yan's grandfather, Zhang Lu, killed the Mongolian envoy Lian Xi Xian during the defense of the pass. In March of the following year, the Yuan army marched south and violently retaliated against the Southern Song Dynasty, killing Zhang Lu and confiscating his family's property. Zhang Yan's wives and concubines were also confiscated in this disaster. The Yuan rulers often confiscated the property and wives of "criminals" and rewarded them to meritorious officials or punished them as official prostitutes; sometimes they even confiscated other people's property to seize others' wives and daughters. After Zhang Yan's wives and concubines were confiscated, they would inevitably end up in entertainment venues. In order to find the whereabouts of his confiscated wives and concubines, Zhang Yan had to often visit brothels and banquets held by officials, and spread his search for his wife through the circulation of "Inscription on Red Leaves" in public places.

The romantic Zhang Yan was attached to the green buildings and entertainment venues. The downfall of the country and the loss of his home left his emotions without a place to settle, and only in these romantic places could he find a trace of comfort and solace. At the same time, he hoped to hear about his wife's whereabouts here. For example, he wrote "Qi Luo Xiang. Xi Jian Dai Ren Fu Qing" at a banquet:

In the guesthouse, deep in the night, with the light dim,  
A broken feather in the vast sky, recent letters seem lost.  
In the blink of an eye, my heart aches, I'm too lazy to watch  
The remaining songs, the incomplete melodies.  
Just forgotten, yet still pondering,  
About to leave, how can I bear the parting?  
I only hate, the peach leaves on the empty river,  
Not as diligent as the thanked red leaves.  
On this fine night, who thinks of my choking sobs?  
Facing the incense burner, like a measure of the elephant's tread, idly accompanying the sorrow.  
Alone in the west wind, still remembering the old home season.  
Following slow steps, flowers hide the spring,  
Listening to whispers, willows sparsely resent the moon.  
Today, don't ask about the swallow's promise, the oriole's date,  
Dreaming, I wander, taking advantage of the butterfly's time.

In the dimly lit guesthouse, amidst the clinking of cups and the swirling dance of revelry, the poet, burdened with cares, pays no mind to the feast's splendor. Gazing at the silent sky, he is overwhelmed with sorrow as he thinks of the letters he has sent into the void, without a trace. Memories of sweet nothings whispered under the moonlit flowers with his beloved (perhaps his wife or concubine), and the promises they made to each other, now seem like a fleeting dream. "Standing alone in the west wind, still remembering the old days" could be a longing for his past lover (wife or concubine), a reflection on the rise and fall of his homeland, or perhaps both, leaving us to wonder. Yet, it is this "implying more than is said" that gives us boundless imagination, enriching the content of his poetry. The phrase "not as diligent as the red leaves" is derived from the allusion of "inscribed poems on red leaves." "Diligently thanking the red leaves, may they go to the human world" -to what end? Naturally, to seek out the wife or concubine lost due to

confiscation. Alas, "the fallen flower has intent, but the flowing water is heartless," and the word "not" reveals the poet's deep sense of disappointment. The arduous longing and the difficult search lead only to the despair of "to whom shall I send the inscribed red leaves?" One can only imagine the emotional turmoil of the passionate young master, Zhang Yan. Zhang Yan's quest to find his wife was not a fleeting endeavor; he also wrote many poems expressing his longing for her before and after his northern travels. For instance, in "Memories of the Past" (Feelings upon Passing the Old Garden), he writes, "The lotus in the mirror ages, where is she now?" The beloved's (wife or concubine's) visage fades with time, yet her whereabouts remain unknown. "To share the sorrows of exile, I know the path is barred by willows." He wishes to confide his wandering sorrows to his beloved, but the way is obstructed by the willows. In "The Grievance of the Long Pavilion" (Feelings upon the Old Residence), "Hate the west wind, it does not protect the cold cicada. It blows away all the leaves in the forest," he depicts the desolate scene of parting with his beloved. Zhang Yan frequented places of romantic encounters and expressed his yearning in abundance, hoping that through the singing of courtesans and the circulation of his poems at banquets, he might find his wife. Zhang Yan's "inscribed poems on red leaves" was a desperate measure as a commoner, but it was also the most effective way to spread his message. Another of his poems, "Crossing the River Clouds. In the Rhyme of Zhao Yuanfu," goes:

Brocade fragrance winds around the ground, deep lamps hang on the wall. The curtain's shadow slants like waves. After the wine boat returns, turning to the river bridge, where to recognize the patterned gauze. The promise of the mirror, still remembered, the qian jia of yore. Only the leaves inscribed can be sent, but they cannot reach to the ends of the earth.

Astonished, a decade of thoughts, a few tunes at the railing, thinking of the value of Xiao Niang's voice. Idle past the dusk, sparse willows and crowing crows. The river tide surges at night, the white sand flat, asking the broken goose, where has it fallen. The letter is far away, the empty river, a sliver of moon, and reeds in bloom.

The poet begins with "Brocade fragrance winds around the ground" to depict a warm and romantic scene, followed by "deep lamps hang on the wall. The curtain's shadow slants like waves" which leads us into a desolate realm. The phrase "the promise of the mirror" signifies the wish for a couple to be reunited, and "Qin Jia of yore" comes from the allusion of "Qin Jia's bright mirror," indicating a deep and caring relationship between husband and wife. This reveals that it is a poem reminiscing about his wife. Once so romantic and sweet with his wife, the poet is now in such a desolate state after their separation. "Only the leaves inscribed can be sent, but they cannot reach to the ends of the earth" -the poet wishes to find his wife, whom he longs for day and night, through the method of "inscribed poems on red leaves," but fate is merciless, insisting on keeping two lovers apart. "The letter is far away, the empty river, a sliver of moon, and reeds in bloom" -the poet, unsuccessful in his search, can only sigh alone facing the vast, empty river. In that era where one's fortune could change with a flick of a hand, individuals seemed so insignificant, and in the face of fate's caprices, all one could do was accept, lament, and feel powerless. The deep and bitter longing, the distant and profound expectations, the despair of a fruitless search, and the inexpressible sighs all give a sense of ethereal sorrow.

"Red leaves" symbolize the conveyance of affection. "Inscribed poems on red leaves" is a beautiful hope for "lovers to become a couple." [4]Zhang Yan, due to the confiscation of his family's wealth, also lost his wife in this process. Thus, his purpose in writing "inscribed poems on red leaves" was to achieve the reunion of husband and wife. Zhang Yan's journey to find his wife was arduous and long, and his longing for her in "inscribed poems on red leaves" is mournful and profound. On his journey to find his wife, the poet conveys his boundless longing with his delicate emotions.

Zhang Yan's method of using "Red Leaf Inscription" to search for his wife inherently carries a certain tragic hue. As a commoner, Zhang Yan's attempt to find his wife in the vast Yuan Dynasty was as difficult as finding a needle in a haystack, and the suffering he endured during his journey is beyond our knowledge. However, it was this extraordinary experience that, while allowing Zhang Yan to fully taste the bitterness of longing, also shaped the elegant and proper style of his poetic works.

#### 4 EXPRESSING THE SORROW OF THE SENTIMENTS IN SORGHUM AND MILLET

Zhang Yan's status as a remnant scholar is undoubted. He was deeply concerned with his fallen country, maintaining a refined and elegant character, preferring poverty and misfortune to flattering the Yuan Dynasty. [5]Although he experienced a period of traveling north to transcribe scriptures, it ultimately ended abruptly with the "thunderclap at the Jiefang Temple." From a wealthy noble to a destitute royal descendant, the stark contrast between his former and current life made him acutely aware of the bitterness of his fate. Decades of a rootless, drifting life further instilled in him the sorrow of a nation in ruins and a life adrift, akin to "rivers and mountains shattered like tattered catkins, a life buoyant and sinking like a duckweed in the rain" —a deep-seated hatred for a lost homeland. The upheaval in his identity, from a family's collapse to a nation's demise, inevitably found its way into his creative practice, and his romantic works are no exception. For instance, in "Guo Xiang" :

Orioles on the willow smoke embankment. Recalling the unchanted green fruits, once compared to the beauty of a maiden. Graceful and charming, slightly revealing the spring, with twin strands of green hair hanging down. Unaware that the immortal could not stay, no dreams were blown to the southern branch. Looking at each other, both adrift, covering their faces in shyness, afraid to speak of the past.

This lyric depicts a scene of a long-lost lover's encounter. The first part reminisces about the beautiful scenes of the past, where the elegant and wealthy Zhang Yan met the young, beautiful, and intelligent courtesan (Shen Meijiao) by the West Lake's "oriole on the willow smoke embankment." "Not yet chanting green fruits," Du Mu once wrote the poem "Sigh for the Flower": "It's my own fault that I seek spring too late, no need to feel melancholy or complain about the time.

The wild wind has fallen all the deep red, and the green leaves are shaded with full branches." Du's poem uses the technique of comparison, with the natural blooming and withering of flowers, the green trees shading and full branches, as a metaphor for the prime of a girl's youth having passed, and marriage and childbirth. Zhang Yan, in his verse, reverses this allusion, "not yet chanting green fruits" indicating that Shen Meijiao is in her prime, "once compared to a beauty" also uses an allusion, saying she is beautiful and intelligent, and Zhang Yan's fondness for Shen Meijiao can be imagined. The above allusions have no substantial feeling but have the wonder of emptiness. Now, when they meet again, they are both in a state of destitution, "looking at each other, both adrift, covering their faces in shyness, afraid to speak of the past." As the two meet against the backdrop of a nation in ruins and a home lost, the vast difference between then and now, they both experience the sorrow of the world and the feeling of being castaways at the ends of the earth, and the poet will surely integrate the "sorrow of the millet departure" into it. "Past dusk, still saying do not return" then "implies more than is said," and the reluctance of the two to part is self-evident. On Zhang Yan's way to the north to transcribe scriptures, he wrote another poem for Shen Meijiao, "Ruan Lang Gui," in which he says, "Drunk, I do not believe there are weeping orioles. Thirty years in Jiangnan." The loving couple did not believe they would part and return, little knowing that one parting from the lover would be for twenty years. While the poet is in pain and helplessness, he also infuses the reality of a home lost and a nation in ruins, causing the two to be separated by the world and difficult to meet for a long time, into his work.

Zhang Yan's romantic poems that integrate the "sorrow of the millet departure" are about 15 in number, accounting for a significant proportion of his romantic works. For example, in "Yi Wang Wang" (The Wu wa of Wind and Moon), "No one knows this meaning, and who is the bright moon for? The red dust rolls, and the old is beautiful," "Yi Jiu You" (Remembering the Makeup Leaning on the Fan), "Waiting to tell the sorrow of exile, knowing the road is separated by willows," "Chang Xiang Si" (The Heart of Coming and Going, the Short and Long Pavilion), "Both are people who have fallen to the ends of the earth," "Zhao Zhong Cuo" (The Rain is Clamorous during the Qingming Festival), "Picking a willow branch, returning to whom to insert," and "Nan Lou Ling" (The Wind and Rain are Afraid of a Different Country), "The bright moon half bed, people sleep, saying that it is cool in the middle of the night," etc., all have the contrast of the past and present, which is also due to the demise of the home and country. Zhang Yan's status as a remnant scholar inevitably stamps his romantic poems with the "sorrow of the millet departure."

The poet integrates the hatred of "the sorrow of the millet departure" and the sadness of a drifting life into romance, which not only dilutes the romantic elements but also enriches the content of the poem. Zheng en xiao, who also shares the status of a remnant scholar, commented on Zhang Yan's poetry in this way: "It can make the next thirty years of the West Lake's beautiful landscape still resonate, not allowing a bit of new sorrow to fly to the eyebrows of tourists. It naturally generates a kind of joy and pleasure." [6] The former prosperity and the former leaning on the red and snuggling the green are all fleeting, gone and not returning. What they can do is to create a spiritual homeland for themselves with infinite thoughts, to comfort a tired and wandering soul.

Zhang Yan's romantic poetry abandons the flamboyant and implicit style, integrating the "sorrow of the millet departure" with his special status as a remnant scholar. At the same time, he also infuses his own clear and elegant poetic thoughts into the poems, thereby diluting the romantic elements and enriching the content, bringing a reforming wind to the innovation of romantic poetry.

The status of a remnant scholar, the hatred for the home and country, and the infinite longing for his wife give Zhang Yan's romantic poetry a profound connotation, and the interweaving of various emotions make Zhang Yan's romantic poetry beyond the category of being made for "romance" and "feelings."

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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# THE INHERITANCE DILEMMA AND DEVELOPMENT PATH OF WUSHU INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ANHUI PROVINCE

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**Abstract:** Anhui Wushu intangible cultural heritage is an important part of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, carrying important values such as physical fitness and cultural inheritance. The article uses literature method and logical analysis method to study the inheritance and development of Anhui Wushu intangible cultural heritage. The study shows that Anhui Wushu intangible cultural heritage is facing the dilemma of aging population, the impact of extraterritorial competitive sports, insufficient publicity and promotion, and weak basic theoretical research, etc. The article puts forward the following development path: improve the basic theory of Wushu, and improve the quality of Wushu. The article proposes the following development paths: improve basic theoretical research; improve the inheritance mechanism and establish an incentive system; increase publicity; and play the leading role of local administrations.

**Keywords:** Martial arts; Intangible cultural heritage; Inheritance; Development paths

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Anhui is one of the important birthplaces of China's prehistoric civilization, and is culturally compatible with the north and the south, consisting of Huizhou culture, the Huaihe River Culture and Anhui River Culture. Anhui River Culture Luzhou Culture. Anhui has a long history and is one of the cradles and birthplaces of martial arts in China. Anhui has a long history and a profound cultural heritage, and is one of the cradles and birthplaces of martial arts in China. Wushu is a treasure of Chinese culture, containing rich philosophical thoughts, moral concepts and aesthetic values. Through the promotion of Wushu, more people can understand and recognize Chinese culture. Anhui Traditional Wushu is one of the most important representatives of Chinese Wushu, which is a form of sports expression created and accumulated by the forefathers of the Chinese nation in the long-term production and labor, and is closely related to the life of human beings, playing the roles of fitness, competition, cultural inheritance and economic promotion, etc., and it is an item of great value for protection and inheritance. In 2011, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress voted to adopt the Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China[1], which laid a solid foundation of the rule of law for the sustainable development of China's intangible cultural heritage. The promulgation of the policy and the implementation of related measures have provided new opportunities for the inheritance and development of Anhui Wushu Intangible Cultural Heritage. However, with the impact of extra-territorial competitive sports and the acceleration of economic globalization, the intangible cultural heritage of wushu in China has been affected to a certain extent, and the environment for its survival has changed dramatically, and it is facing the danger of being destroyed, replaced, or even extinguished[2]. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the inheritance dilemmas and development paths faced by the Wushu intangible cultural heritage in Anhui Province, relying on how to rely on the state's supportive policies. It also helps to provide an innovative protection model for the development of intangible cultural heritage, so as to promote the excellent traditional culture of Anhui and enhance the sense of national pride.

## 2 OVERVIEW OF ANHUI WUSHU INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Chinese Wushu, like a bright pearl, has accompanied the development of China's history and civilization through thousands of years of wind and rain, and has become the spine that sustains the survival and development of this nation. Anhui Wushu intangible cultural heritage has a long history, its origin can be traced back to the ancient Warring States period, and its development has been thousands of years of history. In the long process of development, Anhui Wushu Intangible Cultural Heritage has absorbed the rich cultural elements and local characteristics of the region, forming a unique style and characteristics. Anhui Wushu Intangible Cultural Heritage is not only an inheritance of skills and techniques, but also carries profound philosophical thoughts and moral concepts. Its routines and stances are not only a display of martial arts skills, but also contain an understanding of the life force and the laws of nature.

Anhui Province actively implements the relevant requirements of the state, and has published six batches of provincial intangible cultural heritage lists, totaling more than 600 items, among which, there are more than 20 items of martial arts intangible cultural heritage. From the point of view of the regional distribution of the items, there are distributions in southern Anhui, central Anhui, northern Anhui and other regions, with a wide regional distribution. From the point of view of the types of projects, the types of Anhui martial arts intangible cultural heritage are mainly concentrated in the

fist and palm categories, and a small number of acrobatics and other acrobatics with local characteristics. The fist and palm types of wushu not only have profound accumulation in technology and theory, but also carry rich cultural connotation and historical background. As an important part of the intangible cultural heritage of Anhui, they are not only the transmission of martial arts skills, but also the transmitter of cultural identity and value system.

### **3 THE DILEMMA OF INHERITING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF WUSHU IN ANHUI PROVINCE**

#### **3.1 Aging of the Inheritors**

With the growth of the aging population in China, the problem of the aging of the inheritors of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu is becoming more and more obvious, and a series of challenges related to it will also come. For example, during the teaching process, due to ageing, the physical functions of the older generation of Wushu inheritors are gradually declining, and they may not be able to teach Wushu skills well enough to demonstrate some high-intensity Wushu skills. The difficulty in teaching, demonstrating or practicing the techniques over a long period of time may lead to the risk of loss of some martial arts skills in the future[3]. The older generation of inheritors are aging and are not able to perform their skills as they age. As the older generation of inheritors grow older and pass away, if there are not enough younger inheritors to continue the lineage, it will be difficult to continue, resulting in a gap in the transmission of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Some niche, family-oriented martial arts schools may be left uninherited due to the death of the older inheritors. Elderly inheritors are usually the main repositories and disseminators of specific skills and traditional knowledge, which may be permanently lost with the death of the inheritor if they are not recorded and protected in a timely manner.

#### **3.2 Impact of Extra-Territorial Competitive Sports**

In recent years, with the carrier of the Olympic Games and modern new media platforms, extra-territorial competitive sports have been emerging in various forms, and the survival environment of traditional wushu programs has been damaged in a steady state. Traditional Wushu emphasizes internal cultivation and the unity of body and mind, while competitive sports focus more on athletic performance and practical skills. The commercialization and media promotion of extraterritorial competitive sports have put traditional Wushu under competitive pressure, with commercialization as the goal. In addition, extraterritorial competitive sports are usually dominated by competitive performance and rules, whereas traditional Wushu emphasizes cultural heritage and internal training. This different value orientation may lead to an identity crisis of traditional wushu in modern society, especially among the younger generation, and the further promotion of extraterritorial competitive sports may affect the younger generation's cultural identity and identity of traditional wushu. In the context of globalization and cultural diversification, traditional Wushu needs to better position and disseminate its unique cultural values in modern society.

#### **3.3 Weak Basic Theory Research**

Basic theory research has a very important role in the inheritance of Wushu intangible cultural heritage, through which the historical value, cultural value and artistic value of Wushu intangible cultural heritage can be understood in depth. The weak basic theory research problems existed by the current researchers are mainly reflected in four aspects. First, there is a lack of relevant professional researchers in the research team. The number of scholars engaged in this area is relatively small, and the existing scholars in the field of intangible cultural heritage research may have insufficient professional knowledge of wushu, making it difficult for them to carry out in-depth theoretical research on the intangible cultural heritage of wushu. Second, the research content is not specific enough. The historical origin of wushu intangible cultural heritage items is not well sorted out, the cultural connotation is not deeply excavated, and the technical system is not well organized. This makes the inheritance and development of Wushu intangible cultural heritage lack of scientific basis and standards, and is prone to the situation that Wushu intangible cultural heritage items are lost. Thirdly, the research method is insufficient. Currently, the basic theoretical research of martial arts intangible cultural heritage mainly adopts traditional research methods such as documentation method and field investigation method, which have certain value but still have certain limitations and are not comprehensive enough, resulting in the lagging behind of the theoretical research of martial arts intangible cultural heritage[4], restricting the development of martial arts intangible cultural heritage in Anhui Province. Fourth, the research results are less. Due to various aspects of the problem, resulting in martial arts intangible cultural heritage basic theory research of high-quality results are relatively few, many research results are only simple descriptive analysis, lack of depth and innovation, it is difficult to martial arts intangible cultural heritage inheritance and development to play a substantive role in guiding.

#### **3.4 Insufficient Publicity and Promotion**

Doing a good job in publicizing and promoting the intangible cultural heritage of wushu and other related work is crucial to the protection and inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu. The current inadequacy of publicity and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu mainly focuses on four aspects. First, the publicity channels are limited. Although some of the Wushu ICH programs occasionally appear on traditional media such as TV

and newspapers, the overall exposure rate is low. In addition, the use of new media is not flexible enough. New media platforms have the advantages of fast dissemination speed and wide coverage. However, many martial arts intangible cultural heritage programs have not been fully publicized on the new media platform. Second, the publicity content lacks attraction. When publicizing the intangible cultural heritage of wushu, people often see only some dry text part of the introduction and some basic movements, the form is relatively boring. Thirdly, there is a lack of professional publicity talents. Wushu intangible cultural heritage of publicity needs to understand the relevant professional knowledge of martial arts, but also has the publicity and promotion skills of the talents. However, such a composite talent is very scarce. In the publicity activities, if there is a lack of professional talent planning and implementation, the publicity effect will be unsatisfactory. Fourthly, public awareness is low. In school education, the content of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu is seldom included in the curriculum, and students seldom have the opportunity to come into contact with this aspect of the content. At the social level, there are fewer publicity activities for the intangible cultural heritage of wushu, and they lack systematicity and continuity. It is difficult for people to come into contact with information related to Wushu ICH in their daily lives, and naturally, it is difficult to generate interest and concern.

## **4 DEVELOPMENT PATH OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF WUSHU IN ANHUI PROVINCE**

### **4.1 Improvement of Basic Theory Research**

The local administration should organize relevant departments to create a research base for the intangible cultural heritage of traditional wushu, and strengthen the research of basic theories. Regular academic exchanges and seminars should be organized, and a reward mechanism should be established to enhance the enthusiasm of academic researchers in their seminars, so as to explore more forms of existence, cultural connotations and contemporary values of traditional martial arts. Establish research institutions and projects, set up a special research institution or research center on the basic theories of traditional martial arts, focus resources on in-depth theoretical exploration and research, carry out systematic research projects on traditional martial arts techniques, historical origins, philosophical thoughts, etc., promote the accumulation and deepening of theoretical knowledge, and analyze the intrinsic value of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu in depth. At the same time, the traditional martial arts intangible cultural heritage of Anhui Province can also be introduced into the major universities in Anhui Province, the scientific interface between physical education and martial arts intangible cultural heritage in Anhui universities, which not only improves the depth of the basic theoretical research on martial arts intangible cultural heritage, but also further realizes the goal of promoting the reform of university sports.

### **4.2 Improve the Inheritance Mechanism and Establish an Incentive System**

Traditional martial arts as a culture not only need to be protected, but also need to be inherited. The inheritor is the transmitter of the wushu program, and the inheritor is always the main body of the inheritance. The inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu is mainly characterized by word and example, master and disciple inheritance, family inheritance, association inheritance and modern technology-assisted inheritance, etc., and the inheritor of wushu plays a vital role in the middle of this. In the long course of history, due to the infringement of the main body of the inheritors, countless traditional martial arts texts have been destroyed, resulting in the loss of countless skills and hindering the development of traditional martial arts. Therefore, there is an urgent need to innovate the mode of protection for the inheritors of wushu. We should break the original inheritance system, broaden the new development path and direction, and establish an innovative and effective inheritance system. In addition, an effective inheritance incentive system can be established. The local administration can improve the enthusiasm of the inheritors through financial support and honorary titles. Once the problem of the inheritors' immediate needs has been solved, a healthy ecosystem conducive to the inheritance of Anhui traditional wushu can be established to motivate more people to devote themselves to the study, teaching and promotion of traditional wushu, and ensure that it can be sustained in the modern society, so as to ensure its inheritance and development, and to enable the traditional wushu to stand firm and continue to flourish in the new era. Anhui traditional wushu can stand firmly in the new era, and then carry forward.

### **4.3 Increased Publicity**

As traditional martial arts programs are limited by geography, most of them are circulated in the folklore, and people's awareness of their main contents is low. For these problems, we can increase publicity by taking relevant measures. First, build a digital publicity platform. By building an online platform and developing a special website or application program, we can show the history, techniques and inheritance of Anhui Wushu intangible cultural heritage projects. And deliver detailed information and educational content to the public through illustrations and video demonstrations. Secondly, make good use of Internet marketing and social media to enrich the forms of publicity. The Internet has changed people's concept of time and space. With the help of the Internet, intangible cultural heritage of martial arts can get rid of the constraints of geography and natural environment, and then break through the restrictions of time and space, so as to win a broader space for the spread of intangible cultural heritage of martial arts[5]. Through social media such as Weibo, Tiktok, Xiaohongshu, WeChat short videos, etc., to produce exquisite promotional videos and short



films, fully demonstrate the charm and characteristics of Anhui Wushu intangible cultural heritage project, and attract young people and the general netizens to pay attention to and participate in the project. Furthermore, combining virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology to create an immersive experience, utilizing VR and AR technology to provide learners with immersive experiences, such as virtual reality training sites, skill demonstrations, etc., enhances the publicity effect and learners' sense of participation, and facilitates the teaching of traditional martial arts. In addition, cooperation between schools and communities can be strengthened. Through the cooperation between schools and communities, education and training activities on the intangible cultural heritage programs of wushu can be vigorously carried out, so that more young people of the new generation can understand and learn these wushu skills and pass on the intangible cultural heritage. In the learning process can also organize martial arts intangible cultural heritage project tournaments, through the form of competition to enhance the recognition and influence of Anhui martial arts intangible cultural heritage project, so as to attract more people to participate in and pay attention to. Finally, do a solid job of cultural tourism route planning. Wushu intangible cultural heritage projects into the planning and promotion of cultural tourism, the design of special tourism routes and experience projects, to attract more tourists and cultural enthusiasts to visit and experience.

#### **4.4 Utilizing the Management Role of Local administrations**

The inheritance and development of Anhui wushu intangible cultural heritage always need the support of local administration, and many facts are enough to show that if the local intangible cultural heritage protection and development can be vigorously supported by the administration, it can be developed very well. Therefore, the administration and relevant departments should play a leading role, pay attention to the declaration and management of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu, and actively organize the list of intangible cultural heritage of wushu at all levels. To do a good job of declaration management, we can do it through four aspects. First, do a good job in the investigation and screening of martial arts intangible cultural heritage projects, and prepare a list of intangible cultural heritage. Conduct systematic investigation and screening of traditional martial arts programs in Anhui Province, develop a detailed list of intangible cultural heritage, and establish the history of each traditional martial arts program, the characteristics of the techniques and their inheritance status. Second, to determine the protection and inheritance program and formulate protection measures. According to the characteristics of traditional martial arts programs in Anhui Province and the threats they face, develop corresponding protection measures, including the support of laws and regulations, the investment of special funds and the establishment of protection institutions. In addition, do a good job of establishing the system of inheritance plan and training. We need to make a detailed inheritance plan, including training of inheritors, organizing skills transfer, holding traditional martial arts training courses, etc., to ensure that the skills can be passed on continuously. Thirdly, the administration needs to provide financial assistance to the inheritors and arrange venue facilities. We need to clarify the will of the inheritors, with the public as the core, and create a place for them to learn theoretical knowledge. Regularly hold martial arts intangible cultural heritage festivals to enhance the public's ideological awareness. The administration's financial rewards for the inheritors should mainly focus on spiritual support and supplemented by economic support to avoid the phenomenon of "supporting" the inheritors[6]. Fourth, establish a resource guarantee system. Establish a sound resource guarantee system, including the provision of venues and facilities, the guarantee of equipment and the construction of talent teams, to support the daily operation and development needs of traditional wushu. The declaration and management of the intangible cultural heritage of wushu is well done, which can make the rich and diversified intangible cultural heritage of traditional wushu in Anhui not only show the diversity and deep heritage of local culture, but also provide important resources and references for the cultural inheritance and innovation of contemporary society. By strengthening the protection, inheritance and publicity, the influence and sustainable development ability of these intangible cultural heritage programs can be further enhanced, so that they can show new vitality and value in modern society.

#### **5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Anhui Wushu has an important position in Chinese traditional martial arts and represents one of the rich martial arts cultures in China. The intangible cultural heritage of Anhui Wushu is not only a treasure of Chinese civilization, but also an important symbol and practice of cultural self-confidence of the Chinese nation. In addition, it plays an important social function in local communities and folk life. It is not only an inheritance of physical skills, but also promotes social cohesion and cultural identity through forms such as master-disciple inheritance and collective performance. Anhui Wushu Intangible Cultural Heritage has incorporated a large number of folk stories and local legends in the process of inheritance, which not only pass on skills, but also convey values and moral ethics, becoming an important part of local cultural traditions. In today's society, with the emphasis on cultural diversity and the continuous improvement of regulations for the protection of intangible cultural heritage, the protection and inheritance of Anhui Wushu is particularly important. By strengthening education, research and cultural exchanges, focusing on the declaration and management of the intangible cultural heritage of martial arts, etc., and promoting the dissemination and popularization of Anhui Wushu in the whole country and even internationally, it not only helps to carry forward the diversity and uniqueness of Chinese culture, but also provides an important way for the world to understand and respect the traditional Chinese culture. The inheritance and development of the intangible culture of Anhui Wushu cannot be separated from our efforts, and everyone should contribute his or her part to its inheritance and development, and jointly

guard and pass on this precious cultural heritage, and work hard for the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

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# THE WEIGHT OF SIN: EXPLORING THE COMPLEXITIES OF GUILT AND MORAL REMORSE IN JOHN ARDEN'S SERGEANT MUSGRAVE'S DANCE

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**Abstract:** This paper examines how the play portrays guilt and remorse within the context of war and violence. Arden's play is set in a small English mining town. It unfolds against a backdrop of military tension and the atrocities of imperial conflict. The play reveals the complex inner turmoil that soldiers experience upon returning home. The purpose of this study is to analyse the internal and external conflicts that arise from the soldiers' actions. It explores how these emotions shape their identities, choices, and relationships. The study delves into moral accountability, a recurring theme in the play. It highlights the psychological impact of violence on soldiers and civilians alike. The research method uses a close textual analysis of key scenes, focusing on Sergeant Musgrave's inner struggle. Arden shows how a soldier's pursuit of justice can be corrupted by guilt and a thirst for revenge. Musgrave's guilt for the violence he has witnessed and caused drives him to take drastic actions. His remorse influences his decisions, pushing him to confront his past. This analysis shows how guilt and remorse affect not only Musgrave's sense of self but also the town's social fabric. It introduces an element of collective moral reckoning. The findings show that guilt and remorse powerfully influence the characters' actions. These emotions shape personal choices and affect community dynamics. This analysis suggests that *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* questions the morality of violence. It raises ethical concerns around justice, duty, and redemption. This paper argues that guilt and moral remorse are transformative forces. They impact individual and collective morality, making the play a compelling commentary on war and violence.

**Keywords:** Consciousness, Struggle, Knowledge, Dilemma, Violence, Remorse and Moral Growth

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Kenneth Tynan as a pivotal critic recognized and supported the theatrical revolution of the late 1950s and early 1960s in Britain. His contribution to the "formal advance of the British theatre by creating new languages for the stories they are concerned to tell" [1]. He is a "keen follower of the theatrical revolt led by Arden" whose *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* is a powerful play set in post-war Britain. It examines the moral dilemmas and psychological scars left by war. The story follows Sergeant Musgrave and his soldiers, who are sent to a northern English town. Their mission, initially for peacekeeping, quickly turns violent. The play delves into guilt, moral responsibility, and the consequences of sin. It critiques the societal indifference to the consequences of violence. The soldiers in the play wrestle with the impact of war on their actions and identities. Arden uses their inner turmoil to challenge societal complacency. The play reflects on the human psyche in times of violence. It also explores the difficulty of reconciling past actions with moral responsibility. The town's residents serve as passive witnesses to the soldiers' struggles. They mirror the larger societal indifference to the consequences of violence and sin. The play asks the audience to reflect on the moral dimensions of violence. It questions how guilt and remorse are felt both individually and collectively.

## 2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study explores the representations of guilt and moral remorse in *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*. It focuses on the internal and external conflicts faced by Sergeant Musgrave and his soldiers. The research problem centers on how the play constructs guilt as a psychological and social issue. The central question is: How does Arden depict the complexities of guilt, sin, and moral responsibility? This research aims to examine how guilt is portrayed both as a personal and societal burden. The study will explore how characters confront their guilt and what this reveals about moral responsibility. Arden's play addresses how guilt shapes both individual identity and the broader community. This study seeks to fill the gap in scholarship by analyzing guilt as a central theme. It will focus on its psychological and moral complexities. Previous studies have largely focused on the political aspects of the play. This research will offer a more focused analysis of guilt as a psychological and moral experience.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze guilt, sin, and moral remorse in *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*. The study will analyze the psychological burden of guilt in the character of Sergeant Musgrave and his comrades. It examines the tension between personal guilt and societal complicity, focusing on how the town and its residents reflect these issues. Investigate the interplay of remorse and redemption, exploring the characters' attempts to reconcile with their past actions. Evaluate the symbolic role of the town, which mirrors the characters' internal conflicts and reflects

the themes of moral responsibility. This study aims to provide a nuanced reading of the play, highlighting the moral and psychological dimensions of guilt and responsibility.

This study hypothesizes that *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* portrays guilt as a complex experience. It extends beyond the individual and implicates both personal conscience and societal indifference. Through Sergeant Musgrave, Arden explores how guilt becomes a collective burden. The play suggests that redemption is elusive, and moral responsibility is shared between individuals and society. The psychological weight of sin cannot be easily reconciled through individual efforts. It requires collective reflection and action. The play critiques both the individual and the society that perpetuates violence.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of moral and psychological themes in *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*. Most scholarship has focused on the political dimensions of the play. This study shifts attention to the emotional and psychological depths of the characters. It adds to the existing literature by examining how guilt is represented in the play. It also offers insights into Arden's portrayal of war's psychological toll. This research will deepen our understanding of the moral implications of violence. It will explore how guilt and moral responsibility are central to the play's critique of society. Moreover, it will contribute to broader discussions of redemption and responsibility in post-war contexts.

This study will focus on the theme of guilt in *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*. The main characters—Sergeant Musgrave and his soldiers—will be the central focus. Secondary characters and the town will also be analyzed for their symbolic roles. However, the study will not focus extensively on Arden's broader political critiques of war. It will focus specifically on the moral and psychological aspects of guilt. The play's social and historical context will be briefly noted but not the primary focus. The study will remain within the bounds of the text itself, with minimal reliance on external sources or performances.

This study will use qualitative methods, specifically close textual analysis. It will examine key scenes and characters in *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*. This approach will identify how guilt is represented through language, characterization, and symbolism. Secondary sources, including critical essays and academic articles, will provide context and support. The study will use psychoanalytic, philosophical, and literary theoretical frameworks. These will help deepen the understanding of guilt, moral responsibility, and redemption. The study aims to offer a comprehensive and focused analysis of guilt as the central theme of the play.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

John Arden indeed played a significant role in the development of socially engaged drama in the 1950s. "In the 1950s, he was arguably more important as a point around which supporters of a new socially engaged drama could congregate..." [2]. John Arden has a vision of theatre as a community-oriented. "Arden was ahead of his time. One of his dreams was of theatre as an all-day event that embraced the whole community..." [3]. John Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* deeply explores the psychological and moral consequences of war. The play probes the emotional burdens soldiers carry when returning from conflict. Arden aims a "more objective discussion of political issues than would be possible in a contemporary context" [4]. It highlights guilt, moral remorse, and the search for redemption. Musgrave expresses early on his internal struggle and the guilt weighing on him, stating, "There's a worm in my guts that turns" [5]. The characters, especially Sergeant Musgrave and his comrades, represent the personal and collective trauma of war. Musgrave "will demonstrate to the towns people the horrors of war and soldiery. He brings to the town the skeleton of Billy Hicks, a local recruit, to show what happens when one enters the Queen's service." [6]. Arden uses the play to examine the soldiers' internal conflicts and the broader moral implications of violence, power, and responsibility. Soldiers extend the symptoms of evils and horrors of war on the townsfolk passing through killing twenty-five of them [7]. A central theme of *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* is the psychological burden of guilt. In the context of war, this guilt is not limited to a singular event. It becomes a pervasive emotional condition in those who experience violence. Reflecting on violence Musgrave says, "Well, it's drove us mad-and so we come back here to tell you how and to show you what it's like." (Act III, I) Guilt shapes the characters' behaviour and defines their psychological journey. Guilt becomes a profound emotion that infiltrates the soldiers' consciousness. "A victim must be found, who can absorb guilt and save the community before it annihilates itself." [6]. This extended emotional state can lead to mental breakdowns, as Musgrave struggles with redemption.

Sergeant Musgrave's guilt is central to the play's exploration of war's psychological impact. Musgrave begins confident in his cause, but as the play unfolds, he unravels emotionally. His guilt is both personal and political. On a personal level, Musgrave faces the violence he committed during the colonial war. "You see, the Queen's Book, which eighteen years I've lived, it's turned inside out for me. There used to be my duty: now there's a disease (28). Initially, he justifies his actions as part of his duty, but as the emotional toll grows, this justification becomes hollow. Musgrave recognizes the violence as senseless and dehumanizing. His internal struggle between duty and morality intensifies. His guilt is shown both subtly and overtly. His behaviour becomes increasingly erratic as he seeks retribution. His obsession with justice is distorted by guilt, leading to self-destruction. Musgrave believes that retribution can cleanse him, but this belief is ultimately futile. He understands the violence he participated in was not isolated but part of a systemic problem. He becomes aware of how the military system betrayed him and those he fought against. Musgrave feels both

personally and socially betrayed, leading to a deeper moral crisis. His guilt becomes intertwined with a sense of powerlessness. Musgrave grapples with the consequences of his actions, acknowledging the violence he has been part of. He says, "We was soldiers for sure, but soldiering brought us no peace" [5].

While Musgrave's guilt is complex, the responses of other soldiers offer contrasting perspectives. Arden uses Attercliffe and Hurst's emotional responses to show varying ways soldiers process their involvement in violence. Attercliffe and Hurst also exhibit the lasting effects of trauma. Their inability or unwillingness to confront guilt shows the difficulty of processing moral failure. Arden suggests that some cope by suppressing their emotions. This avoidance comes at a cost, as seen in Attercliffe's numbness and Hurst's erratic responses. These portrayals highlight the psychological diversity of soldiers. Attercliffe avoids confronting his guilt. Musgrave internalizes his guilt, but Attercliffe is emotionally detached. He suppresses guilt and refuses to acknowledge the moral implications of his actions. This denial acts as a defence mechanism to protect himself from the psychological strain of guilt. Attercliffe's numbness serves as a survival strategy, but it prevents him from taking responsibility. Hurst's response to guilt is more complex. Unlike Attercliffe, Hurst does not deny the emotional impact of war. However, he expresses his guilt erratically. His emotional responses fluctuate between anger, frustration, and apathy. At times, he seems resigned to the violence of war. He desires a return to normalcy, but his longing is tinged with futility. Hurst's guilt is a source of inner turmoil, making it difficult to process. His emotional instability reflects the complexity of dealing with moral consequences. Hurst's journey represents the fractured state of the human psyche after trauma. Unlike Musgrave, who seeks retribution, or Attercliffe, who avoids responsibility, Hurst's responses mix resignation and anger.

The varying manifestations of guilt highlight that war affects more than just the body; it takes a psychological toll. Arden critiques war's emotional cost. Soldiers are not only physically scarred but also haunted by their violence. The play reveals the psychological fragmentation caused by the moral contradictions of war. Soldiers struggle to reconcile their actions with their sense of right and wrong. This fragmentation emphasizes the destructive effects of war on mental health. Musgrave's breakdown is a key representation of war's psychological devastation. His descent into madness symbolizes guilt's overwhelming nature. The more Musgrave seeks justice through retribution, the more his morality distorts. His actions, aimed at redemption, only lead to alienation and despair. Musgrave's guilt consumes him, and he sees no way out. Annie, a townswoman, challenges Musgrave's presence, stating, "You've got the death on you, and you bring it here" [5]. Her words force him to face the impact of his actions on innocent lives, intensifying his remorse and contributing to his desire for atonement. "You think you're the only ones who've suffered? There's plenty of graves here already, Serjeant." (80) His obsession with revenge is a metaphor for how guilt drives irrational and self-destructive behaviour. The play suggests that clinging to guilt without seeking atonement leads to psychological chaos.

#### 4 MORAL REMORSE: FROM GUILT TO ATONEMENT

Moral remorse is a deeper emotional experience than guilt. While guilt arises from perceiving wrongdoing, moral remorse goes further. It involves an intense reckoning with one's actions and their consequences. This remorse compels the individual to seek atonement or redemption, transcending mere guilt to grapple with the moral implications of their actions. As O'Hanlon observes, "a moral, social, political significance which implies possibility of change ..." is vital, both on a personal level and within the broader societal context [8]. In *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, this notion is vividly illustrated through the portrayal of moral remorse—not as a passive emotion, but as a powerful, albeit challenging, force for change. It involves a broader reflection on Musgrave's role in a morally bankrupt system. His remorse goes beyond the deaths he caused to his complicity in systemic violence. Musgrave's emotional journey is marked by self-realization and moral reflection. His remorse connects with his recognition that the violence he participated in was part of a larger, corrupt system. Initially, he viewed his actions as fulfilling his duty as a soldier. But his growing awareness of the system's violence forces him to confront the implications of his actions. Musgrave's remorse is thus tied to a moral awakening but also internal conflict. His search for redemption becomes a central part of his character arc. He longs for both vengeance and redemption, which creates a moral dilemma. His confusion between these desires shows his misunderstanding of true atonement.

Musgrave believes vengeance will cleanse him, but it only distances him from redemption. His pursuit of retribution against the townspeople becomes a metaphor for his struggle with responsibility. Arden uses this obsession to show how vengeance distorts morality and prevents healing. Musgrave's actions perpetuate violence, which demonstrates the futility of seeking redemption through revenge. Rather than finding justice or peace, he sinks deeper into emotional turmoil. The play shows that redemption requires introspection, not external punishment or vengeance. Musgrave's tragic journey emphasizes the impossibility of redemption through violence. In contrast, Musgrave's comrades, Hurst and Attercliffe, respond differently to their guilt. Their emotional responses highlight the varying ways individuals confront war's violence. Attercliffe appears emotionally numb, refusing to acknowledge his role in the destruction. His detachment is a defense mechanism, protecting him from the emotional burden of remorse. This denial prevents reflection and growth, showcasing how difficult it is for some to face their moral failings. Attercliffe's avoidance of atonement demonstrates his inability to process guilt.

Hurst's response to guilt is more complex. While, not as consumed by remorse as Musgrave, he is affected by the violence around him. His guilt is mixed with anger and frustration, revealing his inner conflict. Hurst longs for normalcy but is torn by a sense of futility. His emotional instability reflects the multifaceted nature of guilt and remorse. Hurst represents a character struggling with moral confusion, unable to reconcile guilt with his desire for peace. The differences between Musgrave, Hurst, and Attercliffe highlight the play's exploration of moral consciousness.

Musgrave is deeply introspective, while Hurst and Attercliffe are less aware of their moral roles. Their varying emotional responses reveal the complex nature of guilt and remorse. The play suggests that redemption is a personal journey, not a universal experience. The path to atonement is uniquely individual. Musgrave's profound remorse contrasts with Attercliffe's numbness and Hurst's emotional volatility.

Through these characters, Arden comments on the complexity of moral responsibility and redemption. He shows that the journey to moral clarity is fraught with contradictions and inner turmoil. Redemption requires confronting uncomfortable truths and taking responsibility. At a climactic moment, Musgrave condemns the very duty that led him to violence. He declares, "I spit on all the uniformed and ironed men that sold me this hate" [5]. Here, Musgrave begins to reject the justification of violence, marking a shift from guilt to a critical stance on institutional duty. Musgrave's inability to reconcile vengeance with redemption leads to his downfall. Characters like Hurst and Attercliffe live in moral ambiguity, neither fully redeemed nor condemned. *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* offers a nuanced portrayal of moral remorse. In a symbolic moment, Musgrave performs a "dance" representing his attempt to cleanse himself of guilt. He calls it "the soldier's last parade" [5]. This ritual signifies Musgrave's transition from guilt to a public act of atonement, as he grapples with his role in the cycle of violence. It shows how the emotional weight of war extends beyond guilt to moral reflection. The characters' responses invite the audience to reflect on the complexities of moral responsibility and redemption. In the concluding scenes, Musgrave openly acknowledges the cycle of violence he perpetuated, saying, "I tried to stop the blood, but blood breeds more" [5]. True redemption cannot come from vengeance or self-punishment but from understanding one's role in the moral framework of the world.

## 5 PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE PLAY'S SOCIAL COMMENTARY

In *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, John Arden intricately explores the psychological transformations of the soldiers as a way to critique not only the personal toll of war but also the systemic forces that perpetuate violence. These transformations are crucial to understanding the play's larger social commentary, which critiques the military-industrial complex, colonialism, and the dehumanizing effects of institutionalized violence. The emotional breakdowns of characters like Musgrave serve as metaphors for the disintegration of society's moral fabric under the weight of systemic violence, offering a searing critique of the political and military structures that dehumanize both the individuals who participate in war and the societies that enable it. Early in the play, Musgrave hints at his internal transformation when he states, "There's a worm in my guts that turns" [5]. This metaphor reveals his growing discomfort with the violent actions he once justified, setting the stage for his moral shift. "I signed up for glory, not for burying lads I called brothers." (25)

Musgrave's internal collapse is a central feature of the play, and it serves as a powerful metaphor for the broader psychological devastation caused by war. Initially, Musgrave is presented as a soldier who embodies duty, discipline, and the values of the military institution. However, as he begins to reckon with the moral implications of the violence he has enacted, he undergoes a profound psychological transformation. The guilt and remorse that consume him are not just responses to his individual actions but reflections of the larger, societal systems that perpetuate violence. As Musgrave becomes increasingly obsessed with the notion of justice and retribution, his internal conflict grows. His descent into madness symbolizes the breakdown of any coherent moral framework within the institution he served. Musgrave challenges the very principles he once served, expressing disdain for institutionalized violence. He declares, "I spit on all the uniformed and ironed men that sold me this hate" [5]. This statement underscores his transformation and Arden's critique of how militarism manipulates individuals. The more Musgrave seeks vengeance on the townspeople—whom he believes represent the corrupt system—the more he is consumed by his own guilt and the futility of his actions. His breakdown illustrates the destructive power of war, not only in physical terms but also in the moral disintegration it causes. Musgrave's attempts to reconcile his past actions with his need for redemption ultimately fail because his understanding of justice is warped by his guilt. Reflecting on the futility of violence, Musgrave admits, "We was soldiers for sure, but soldiering brought us no peace" [5]. This line highlights the psychological toll of war. Musgrave realizes his actions have led to turmoil and isolation, not glory. Malick argues that modern drama focuses on "the inner psyche and consciousness of the isolated individual" [9]. Musgrave's struggle reflects this shift in emphasis.

The portrayal of Musgrave's psychological transformation serves as a commentary on the moral decay of institutions that use violence as a tool of political or military ends. Initially, the soldiers are presented as mere pawns in a larger conflict. However, as the play progresses, Arden reveals their humanity, showing how deeply affected they are by the violence they have witnessed and enacted. Musgrave's breakdown, in particular, highlights the psychological toll of war—how soldiers, often seen as invincible figures of strength and authority, are profoundly damaged by the brutal, dehumanizing violence they are forced to partake in. This transformation underscores a central theme in Arden's work: the dehumanizing effects of institutionalized violence. Arden's critique of the military-industrial complex is palpable throughout the play. Musgrave addresses the townspeople, urging them to see the role they play in perpetuating violence. He states, "Don't look to me for salvation; look to yourselves!" 5[8](Arden, 49). This call for personal accountability reflects Arden's social critique, urging society to take responsibility for the systems of violence it sustains. The soldiers' struggles with guilt and remorse serve as a direct indictment of the system that dehumanizes both the soldiers and their enemies. The soldiers' emotional and psychological distress is an inevitable consequence of being enmeshed in such a system. Their inner turmoil reflects the ethical contradictions of war, where soldiers are asked to commit acts of violence in the name of duty, while simultaneously grappling with the profound moral consequences of those actions.

The emotional breakdowns of the soldiers also represent the breakdown of moral and ethical clarity. One of Musgrave's soldier's states that "All wars is sin, Serjeant..." (34) Musgrave, in particular, struggles to make sense of the violence he has enacted and witnessed. His inability to reconcile his actions with his moral compass becomes an overwhelming burden. His emotional unraveling highlights the futility of trying to achieve justice through violence. Arden suggests that the pursuit of revenge or retribution only exacerbates the moral confusion and psychological strain that war imposes on individuals. "What I brought here was no blessing, no salvation – but death, death in the name of justice." (85) Musgrave's quest for redemption through vengeance ultimately isolates him further from any meaningful sense of closure or moral resolution. Instead of achieving catharsis or atonement, his breakdown becomes a symbol of the impossibility of finding moral clarity within the chaos of war. Musgrave expresses his disillusionment with the military system that shaped him. He declares, "I spit on all the uniformed and ironed men that sold me this hate" [5]. This line reflects a pivotal moment in his transformation, as he rejects the military ideals he once embraced.

The play's social commentary extends beyond the individual level, addressing the larger societal and political forces that enable war. The soldiers' struggles with guilt and remorse reflect the broader moral failings of the systems they serve. Musgrave's moral and psychological crises are not just personal issues; they are indicative of the failures of the military establishment and the larger political systems that perpetuate conflict. Arden critiques these systems by showing how they exploit the soldiers' humanity, forcing them to commit acts that go against their moral sensibilities, while simultaneously denying them the opportunity to process their actions or seek redemption. By focusing on the emotional and moral consequences of war, Arden challenges the audience to reflect on the ethical responsibilities of both the individuals who participate in conflict and the societies that enable such violence.

Arden's depiction of the soldiers' internal battles—Musgrave's intense guilt, Attercliffe's emotional numbness, and Hurst's fluctuating responses—serves as a microcosm of the broader societal and political malaise that war engenders. Through these psychological transformations, the play forces the audience to confront uncomfortable truths about the ways in which war dehumanizes individuals and perpetuates cycles of violence. Musgrave's journey, from a man seeking vengeance to one consumed by guilt and remorse, encapsulates the devastating effects of war, both on the individual and on the broader society. *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* serves as a powerful critique of not only the personal toll of war but also the institutionalized systems that perpetuate violence. Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, in which mutineer soldiers join those who would be appropriately separate from war destruction, are viewed in a dance of death [10]. Arden's portrayal of the soldiers' psychological transformations critiques the military establishment, the political forces that drive war, and the moral failure of societies that condone such violence. "Musgrave envisions the workings of his own plan to "perform God's dance" and thus to inform the world of the futility of violence and war." [11]. "What's left when the blood runs dry? Just ghosts—marching to the same beat." (100) "Musgrave's psychological unraveling in the final moments reflects his internal collapse and realization of futility. Serjeant Musgrave and his three soldiers, Attercliffe, Hurst and Sparky symbolise, "anti-war lesson." [12]. Through the characters' inner turmoil and breakdowns, the play critiques the destructive power of war, offering a poignant reminder that war is not just a physical battle but an ethical, psychological, and social one. His climatic change is seen in his mark, "And what if the dead rise up not as witnesses, but as accusers?" (65).

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

In *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, John Arden explores the psychological weight of guilt through his protagonist's journey. Sin and remorse are complex forces that drive self-examination and the desire for atonement. Musgrave's struggle is both a personal journey and a broader critique of violence justified by duty. His remorse evolves from paralyzing guilt into a force for change, illustrating Arden's nuanced view of morality within systemic injustice. Arden critiques institutional violence, exposing war's toll on individuals' psyches. Musgrave's inner conflict demands personal accountability. He challenges the glorification of war and urges a confrontation with structures that perpetuate violence. Arden suggests that true atonement requires both personal and societal moral awareness. These findings are significant to discussions on trauma and moral injury, especially in military and psychological contexts. Arden's work offers insights not only in literature but also for understanding guilt's effects on those involved in violence. It enriches interpretations of post-war narratives, showing how remorse can drive healing and social responsibility. One limitation of this study is its focus on Musgrave's personal experience, which may not capture diverse cultural responses to guilt. Arden's ambiguous view of atonement allows for varied interpretations, potentially affecting the generalizability of these findings. Future research could explore similar themes in other war literature or analyse how audiences from varied backgrounds respond to Arden's portrayal of remorse. Comparative studies could link these themes to real-life accounts of veterans and those affected by systemic violence. Ultimately, *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* offers a profound look at guilt and moral reckoning. By portraying atonement as a journey toward awareness and responsibility, Arden opens a dialogue on war's human cost and the complex path to redemption.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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# THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN MUSICALS ON CHINESE MUSICALS

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**Abstract:** This article deeply analyzes the influence of American musicals on Chinese musicals in terms of creative concepts, artistic styles, industrial models, and talent cultivation. By sorting out the development trajectories of musicals in both countries and conducting a comparative analysis of typical works and industrial practices, it reveals the opportunities and challenges brought by American musicals to the development of Chinese musicals. Furthermore, it discusses the coping strategies and development directions for Chinese musicals in the process of learning from American musicals, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical references for the continuous progress of Chinese musicals and promote the prosperity and development of the local musical industry.

**Keywords:** American musicals; Chinese musicals; Influence; Development strategies

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Musicals, as a captivating and dynamic form of stage art, have long been celebrated for their unique ability to weave together the diverse threads of music, dance, and drama into a single, harmonious tapestry. This multifaceted art form has not only captured the imaginations of audiences worldwide but has also left an indelible mark on the cultural and commercial landscapes of many nations. The United States, with its rich history and vibrant creative scene, stands out as a pivotal player in the global musical theater industry, particularly through the iconic institution of Broadway. This legendary avenue in New York City is not just a street; it is a symbol of the pinnacle of musical theater excellence, a place where the brightest stars of the stage come to shine and where the most innovative and influential musicals are born[1-2].

Broadway's musicals have transcended geographical boundaries, becoming a cultural phenomenon that resonates with audiences from all corners of the globe. The stories told through these productions, often a blend of the deeply personal and the universally human, have the power to move, inspire, and challenge viewers, regardless of their cultural background. This global reach has not only popularized American musicals but has also significantly influenced the development of musical theater in other countries, none more so than in China.

China, with its ancient and rich cultural heritage, has been experiencing a renaissance in its own musical theater scene, thanks in part to the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges and the progressive opening up of its cultural market. As American musicals have made their way into the Chinese cultural sphere, they have not only entertained but also served as a catalyst for change and innovation. The Chinese audience, once only familiar with traditional forms of theater such as Peking Opera, has now been exposed to the grandeur and spectacle of Broadway-style productions. This exposure has sparked a curiosity and desire to understand and emulate the elements that make these musicals so compelling[3-4].

The influence of American musicals on Chinese musicals is multifaceted. It encompasses not just the adoption of certain stylistic elements, such as the integration of song and dance into the narrative, but also extends to the broader creative and industrial practices that define the success of a musical. The narrative structures, character development, and thematic depth found in American musicals have provided a new framework for Chinese creators to explore and adapt to their own storytelling traditions.

Moreover, the industrial model of Broadway, with its focus on professional production values, marketing, and audience engagement, has offered a blueprint for the Chinese musical industry to follow. This includes the development of a robust infrastructure for the creation, production, and distribution of musicals, as well as the cultivation of talent in various disciplines, from performance and composition to stage management and production design.

However, the journey of Chinese musicals has not been one of simple imitation. Instead, it has been a process of creative adaptation and synthesis, where the essence of American musicals has been merged with the unique cultural sensibilities and artistic expressions of China. This has led to the emergence of a distinct Chinese musical genre that, while acknowledging the influence of its Western counterparts, remains true to its own cultural identity and creative vision.

The challenges faced by Chinese musicals in this process are not insignificant. They include the need to balance commercial success with artistic integrity, to navigate the complexities of cultural translation, and to develop a sustainable model for the production and promotion of musicals that can compete on the global stage. Yet, these challenges also present opportunities for growth and innovation, as Chinese musicals continue to evolve and mature as an art form[5-6].

## 2 THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AMERICAN MUSICALS

### 2.1 Development Process

The origin of American musicals can be traced back to the operettas and vaudeville shows in the late 19th century. After a long period of evolution and development, a unique style and a mature industrial system have gradually taken shape. The period from the 1920s to the 1940s was the golden age of American musicals, during which a large number of classic works emerged, such as "Show Boat" and "Oklahoma!". These works innovatively integrated music, dance, and plots, laying the basic style and artistic status of American musicals. Since then, American musicals have continued to develop, with themes becoming increasingly diverse, covering a wide range from historical stories to modern life, from romantic love to social issues. Meanwhile, technological means have been constantly updated, and stage effects have become more magnificent. Mega-productions like "Cats" and "The Phantom of the Opera" have caused a huge sensation worldwide, further consolidating the leading position of American musicals on the world stage.

### 2.2 Characteristics

#### 2.2.1 Diverse and integrated artistic styles

American musicals skillfully integrate various artistic elements. The musical styles are diverse, including pop, rock, jazz, and classical music. The dance forms are rich, such as ballet, modern dance, and tap dance. The dramatic plots are compact and full of tension. Through exquisite arrangements and performances, a highly infectious stage atmosphere is created, meeting the aesthetic needs of different audiences.

#### 2.2.2 Highly commercialized operation model

Broadway musicals are famous for their mature commercial operation. From production, promotion to performance operation, a complete industrial chain has been formed. Producers attach great importance to market research and audience feedback, precisely position the target audience, attract a large number of audiences to buy tickets through large-scale advertising campaigns, star effects, and long-term and stable performance schedules, aiming to maximize box office revenue. At the same time, they also focus on the development of derivative products, such as records and peripheral merchandise, to further expand profit channels.

#### 2.2.3 Strong sense of innovation

American musicals have always maintained an innovative spirit in theme selection, forms of expression, and technological application. They continuously explore new story themes, experiment with new music creation techniques and dance choreography forms, and actively apply advanced stage technologies, such as multimedia projection and special effects lighting, bringing audiences a brand-new audio-visual experience and keeping the art form of musicals full of vitality and attraction.

## 3 THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN MUSICALS ON THE CREATIVE CONCEPTS OF CHINESE MUSICALS

### 3.1 Expansion and Innovation of Themes

The rich and diverse themes of American musicals have opened up new ideas for Chinese musical creators. In the past, the themes of Chinese musicals were relatively single, mostly concentrated in the fields of traditional historical stories and folk legends. Influenced by the United States, Chinese musicals have begun to venture into themes that are closer to contemporary social reality, such as modern urban life, youth campus, and workplace struggles. For example, some musical works reflecting young people's pursuit of dreams and emotional confusion have emerged, making musicals more able to resonate with contemporary audiences, broadening the audience groups and market space of musicals.

### 3.2 Reference to Music Creation Techniques

The advanced music creation techniques of American musicals have brought new changes to the music of Chinese musicals. American musical music pays attention to the popularity and singability of melodies, and skillfully uses elements such as harmony and rhythm to enhance the expressiveness and appeal of the music. Chinese musical creators have begun to learn from and reference these techniques, integrating modern pop music elements on the basis of maintaining certain ethnic music characteristics, making the music more easily accepted and loved by the audience. For example, some musicals adopt more concise, lively, and rhythmic melodies, combined with electronic music sound effects, creating a fashionable and dynamic musical atmosphere and improving the overall music quality of musicals.

### 3.3 Emphasis on the Logic and Attractiveness of Plots

The meticulous construction and refinement of plots in American musicals have made Chinese musical creators attach more importance to the logic and attractiveness of scripts. In the past, some Chinese musicals had problems such as simple plots and unreasonable plot developments. However, American classic musicals attract audiences with their exciting and suspenseful plots. In the process of creation, Chinese musicals have gradually learned from American experiences, strengthening the creation and modification of scripts, focusing on the shaping of character images, the setting of plot conflicts, and the transitions of stories, making the plots fuller, more coherent, and more fascinating, thereby improving the artistic quality and enjoyment of musicals.

## **4 THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN MUSICALS ON THE ARTISTIC STYLES OF CHINESE MUSICALS**

### **4.1 Diversification of Dance Choreography**

The rich variety of dance choreography in American musicals has promoted the diversification of dance styles in Chinese musicals. American musical dances integrate the characteristics of multiple dance schools and are flexibly applied according to the needs of plots and characters, creating unique visual effects. Chinese musical dance choreography has begun to break away from the traditional single ethnic dance mode, actively introducing elements of modern dance, jazz dance, street dance, etc., making the dances more energetic and expressive, better integrating with music and plots, and enhancing the rhythm and visual impact of stage performances, bringing audiences a more wonderful visual feast.

### **4.2 Modernization of Stage Design**

The advanced concepts and technological applications in stage design of American musicals have promoted the modernization process of stage design in Chinese musicals. American musical stage design focuses on creating a realistic scene atmosphere and fantastic visual effects, using high-tech means such as 3D projection and automated stage devices to make stage pictures more vivid, vivid, and hierarchical. Chinese musicals have gradually learned from the United States in stage design, increasing investment in stage technical equipment, adopting advanced lighting designs, multimedia displays, and creative props to create more exquisite stage pictures, improving the overall artistic texture of musicals and enabling audiences to better immerse themselves in the world created by musicals.

## **5 THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN MUSICALS ON THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE MUSICALS**

### **5.1 Enlightenment from Commercial Operation Models**

The highly commercialized operation model of American musicals has provided valuable experience for the development of the Chinese musical industry. Broadway musicals have mature strategies in market positioning, marketing promotion, and ticket sales. The Chinese musical industry has learned from its experience and begun to pay attention to market research. Based on the needs and preferences of audiences in different regions and age groups, targeted marketing promotion plans have been formulated, brand building and publicity and marketing efforts have been strengthened to improve the popularity and influence of musicals. Meanwhile, in terms of ticket sales, diversified sales channels and flexible ticket price strategies have been adopted, such as online ticket sales, membership systems, and package ticket discounts, to attract more audiences to enter the theater and promote the prosperity and development of the musical market.

### **5.2 Expansion and Improvement of the Industrial Chain**

The complete industrial chain model of American musicals has inspired the Chinese musical industry to develop in a diversified direction. Besides the performances themselves, American musicals have rich practical experience in copyright operation, derivative product development, and integration of culture and tourism. The Chinese musical industry has gradually realized the importance of expanding the industrial chain and has begun to strengthen the protection and operation of musical copyrights. Through authorized performances, transfer of adaptation rights, etc., the value of musical works has been maximized. Meanwhile, derivative products related to musicals, such as music albums, commemorative albums, and dolls, have been actively developed to increase income sources. In addition, some regions have also attempted to combine musicals with the tourism industry, creating musical-themed tourist routes and scenic area performances, further expanding the development space of the musical industry and promoting the coordinated development of related industries.

## **6 COPING STRATEGIES FOR CHINESE MUSICALS IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING FROM AMERICAN EXPERIENCES**

### **6.1 Maintaining Local Cultural Characteristics**

In the process of learning from American musicals, Chinese musicals must adhere to their own cultural roots and ethnic characteristics. China has a long history and cultural tradition and rich artistic resources, such as traditional operas, folk songs, and folk stories, which are unique creative materials and cultural deposits for Chinese musicals. Chinese musical creators should deeply explore the connotations of local culture and skillfully integrate traditional cultural elements into the creation of musicals, making the works have a distinct Chinese style and cultural identity, avoiding the phenomenon of "wholesale Westernization" in the process of learning, and thus creating original Chinese musical brands with international competitiveness.

## 6.2 Strengthening the Construction of the Talent Training System

The development of American musicals benefits from its complete talent training system, which has cultivated a large number of outstanding musical professionals. For Chinese musicals to achieve long-term development, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the talent training system. On the one hand, in colleges and universities, the curriculum settings of musical majors should be optimized, practical teaching links should be strengthened, and attention should be paid to cultivating students' comprehensive artistic literacy and innovation ability. On the other hand, social forces should be encouraged to participate in musical talent training. Through holding various musical training classes, workshops, and master classes, more learning and communication opportunities should be provided for musical practitioners to improve the overall level of Chinese musical talents and provide solid talent support for industrial development.

## 6.3 Encouraging Originality and Local Innovation

Based on learning from American experiences, Chinese musicals should vigorously encourage the creation of original works and local innovation. The government and relevant institutions should increase support for original musicals, set up special funds and awards, etc., to stimulate the enthusiasm and creativity of creators. Meanwhile, creators should be encouraged to go deep into life, take root among the people, pay attention to contemporary social reality and the emotional needs of the people, and create musical works with the spirit of the times and local characteristics. In addition, research on the theory and practice of musical creation should be strengthened to explore musical creation methods and styles suitable for China's national conditions and promote Chinese musicals to move forward continuously on the road of originality.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The influence of American musicals on Chinese musicals is multifaceted and profound, bringing new opportunities and challenges to Chinese musicals in fields such as creative concepts, artistic styles, and industrial development. By learning from the successful experiences of American musicals, Chinese musicals have achieved certain progress and development in aspects such as theme selection, music composition, stage performance, and commercial operation. However, during the development process, Chinese musicals should also maintain a sober mind, attach importance to inheriting and promoting local culture, strengthen talent cultivation and the creation of original works, and explore a development path for musicals with Chinese characteristics.

Looking ahead, with the vigorous development of China's cultural and artistic undertakings and the deepening of international cultural exchanges, Chinese musicals are expected to continue to grow and develop through learning and innovation, form unique artistic styles and industrial advantages, shine more brightly on the world musical stage, make positive contributions to enriching the global cultural and artistic treasure trove, and also bring more high-quality musical works to Chinese audiences to meet the people's ever-increasing spiritual and cultural needs. In conclusion, the influence of American musicals on Chinese musicals is a testament to the power of cultural exchange and the universal appeal of storytelling through music and dance. As China's musical theater scene continues to grow and develop, it stands at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, Eastern and Western influences, ready to carve out its own unique path in the global musical theater landscape. The future of Chinese musicals holds great promise, as they draw inspiration from the best of what the world has to offer while remaining steadfast in their commitment to their own cultural heritage and creative expression[7-8].

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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# THE ARTISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ZHANG YAN'S EROTIC POETRY

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**Abstract:** Zhang Yan, a prominent lyric poet during the Song-Yuan transition, infused his amorous works with personal tribulations and a profound sense of "Shuli zhi bei" (the grief of national subjugation) due to his identity as a loyal adherent of the fallen dynasty. This unique perspective distinguished his 26 amorous ci poems from traditional counterparts. In terms of artistic features, his works exhibit three notable characteristics: thematically, they dilute carnal desire while intensifying emotional depth and thematic richness; stylistically, they replace sensual flamboyance with an elegant and restrained diction to elevate poetic refinement; technically, his nostalgic lament for the fallen regime and personal misfortunes manifests through melancholic imagery and subdued emotional tones. The attenuation of eroticism, cultivation of refined elegance, and employment of desolate imagery collectively construct an ethereal aesthetic realm that transcends conventional amorous poetry. Such artistic innovations establish Zhang Yan's distinctive departure from traditional amorous ci through his spiritually resonant rather than physically indulgent creations.

**Keywords:** Zhang Yan; Erotic poetry; Remnant scholar - gentry status; Artistic characteristics

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In ancient China, the term "yanqing" signified eroticism and illicit romantic relationships. The earliest work to explicitly use "yanqing" in its title was *Yanqing dai Guo Shi zeng Lu Zhaolin* ("A Poem of Amorous Sentiments Composed on Behalf of Lady Guo for Lu Zhaolin") by the Tang poet Luo Binwang. This poem narrates the story of Lady Guo's love affair with Lu Zhaolin, who later betrayed her by pursuing another romantic entanglement, illustrating "yanqing" as extramarital passion. Over time, the semantic scope of "yanqing" expanded to encompass all forms of romantic relationships between men and women. Thus, in its broadest sense, "yanqing ci" refers to lyric poetry that explores diverse manifestations of romantic love, often interwoven with depictions of feminine beauty and amorous sentiments.

From the late Tang and Five Dynasties to the end of the Southern Song, "yanqing ci" gradually transcended its early characterization as "enslaved by passion, devoid of elegant and refined tones"[1]. Poets purified the romantic themes within these works, elevating them into expressions of refined elegance and moral integrity conveyed through gentle and restrained aesthetics. By the late Song period, "yanqing ci" shed its preoccupation with carnal desire and sentimental longing, instead amplifying the poet's subjective consciousness, enriching thematic depth, and ultimately achieving a poetic realm that balanced softness without coquetry and accessibility without vulgarity.

As a ci poet spanning the Song-Yuan transition, Zhang Yan's amorous compositions were deeply influenced by Jiang Kui's style. Building upon Jiang's legacy, Zhang further refined his works through an ethereal yet substantial aesthetic. Through continuous innovation and refinement, Zhang's poetry attained a lucid and flowing tone, spacious and expansive imagery, and ethereally elegant diction, thereby achieving an unprecedented degree of literary elevation. This artistic evolution solidified his unique contribution to the tradition of "yanqing ci," transforming it into a vehicle for both emotional resonance and intellectual sophistication.

## 2 THE DILUTION OF EROTICISM

Erotic poetry often emphasizes "gentle beauty", depicting love, parting, and pleasure. Early Dunhuang folk songs expressed love and hate directly, and "Flower - between School" poetry followed a tender style. There were also purely erotic works in the mid - and late Song Dynasty. However, Zhang Yan's erotic poetry lacks explicit eroticism and direct emotional expression, replaced by nostalgia and complaints.

Zhang Yan's erotic poetry mainly deals with love setbacks, closely linked to his personal and national tragedies. Before the Song Dynasty fell, Zhang lived a luxurious life, loved by his wives and concubines and admired by courtesans. After the fall, he lost his former glory, living in poverty and separation from his loved ones. His poetry mainly expresses. For example, in "Remembering Old Travels" (Passing by the Old Garden with Feelings ), the first part recalls past sweet moments with his wife and concubines, while the second part depicts his current bitter and lonely life and longing for his loved ones. Zhang's love tragedy, caused by the nation's fall, is intertwined with his longing for his homeland.

Zhang Yan's identity change also brought a sense of contrast to his erotic poetry. As a former noble and current, the contrast between his past and present life is reflected in his works. In "South Tower Order ", he sighs at the autumn scenery in a foreign land, recalling his past behavior in the pleasure world. The description of his scene with a courtesan is very bold, but after indulgence, he falls into deep thought, and his emotions shift from indulgence to melancholy. The stark contrast between his past and present life, due to the fall of the nation, has erased the of his erotic poetry, leaving only the.

Most of Zhang Yan's erotic poetry is not purely about eroticism, "but is intertwined with the feeling of contrast and the rise and fall of the nation" [2]. In "Long Pavilion" (Feelings on the Old Residence), the first part describes the present scene and the poet's mood. The appearance of the former residence is still beautiful, but the people have changed. The poet recalls the past and feels heartbroken. He can't help but think of the past when he parted with his lover, a scene that is hard to forget. The poet's life has changed dramatically due to the family's downfall, and the contrast between past and present makes him feel even more sorrowful about the destruction of his home and nation.

In "Leaning on the" (Writing Sentiments for Someone at a Banquet), "National Fragrance" (Orioles, Willows, and Smoky Dikes), and "Memory of a Fair Lady" (The Beauty of the Wind and Moon), although they are erotic, they all contain endless longing for lovers. However, the strong contrast between past and present has diluted this longing, allowing feelings of melancholy and the to arise spontaneously. Zhang Yan's erotic poetry, both in content and expression, has diluted the element of eroticism, incorporating feelings of personal and national tragedy. This has enabled him to transcend the limitations of writing about love for its own sake, adding depth and emotional intensity to his works.

### 3 REFINED TASTE

In the Southern Tang and early Northern Song periods, poets began to infuse their personal awareness into erotic poetry, leading to a reduction and internalization of its overtly sensual elements. This paved the way for a new style of writing about tender emotions with refined elegance. Zhang Yan's erotic poetry stands out for its clear, elegant, and proper style, moving away from the softness and vulgarity of earlier works. It also shifts the focus from personal emotional entanglements to a broader sense of national and familial tragedy, thus elevating the tone of his works to a higher, more refined level.

Most of Zhang Yan's erotic poems are marked by deep, implicit, and elegant emotions, offering a fresh and sophisticated aesthetic that is truly thought-provoking. Take his "The Beauty of Yu" for example: "Your eyebrows, like painted emerald, gather the traces of spring. It's hard to cut off the source of sorrow. The broken silk thread can't bind the beauty of youth. It follows the fallen petals and drifting water to the ends of the earth. I once mistakenly recognized it as Zhang Tai, but it turned out to be Yang Pass. I'll carry my new hatred with the willow catkins. I wonder which family's yearning is just a tiny bit." Here, the poet uses the willow as a metaphor, suggesting that past vows have faded like smoke, leaving him in solitary longing. Even if he breaks the willow branch, he can't reclaim his youth. The allusions to "Zhang Tai" and "Yang Pass" both signify places of parting. The lines "I'll carry my new hatred with the willow catkins. I wonder which family's yearning is just a tiny bit" express his uncertainty about where his loved one has married. By linking a speck of willow fluff to a trace of yearning, the conception is truly ingenious, giving rise to a sense of melancholy. The poem's tone is clear and elegant, with deep-felt emotions, yet no trace of vulgarity.

Zhang Yan rejected the subtlety of the Flower-between-School and the lyricism of Liu Yong. He advocated a refined style to counteract the prevailing trends of vulgarity and lewdness, strongly promoting the principle of "discarding the vulgar and the lewd, and being joyful without excess." By integrating the elegance and depth of the refined style with the boldness and breadth of the unrestrained style, Zhang Yan developed his own clear and proper lyrical voice. In the face of harsh reality, his erotic poetry no longer experiences drastic emotional fluctuations but focuses on recalling past moments of happiness. Thus, when writing about erotic themes, Zhang Yan is not enslaved by emotions but can, at a certain level, convey a sense of the rise and fall of nations. For instance, in "The Return of Ruan Lang" ("Drunk, I don't believe there are cuckoos crying, Twenty years in the south of the Yangtze River"), "The Peaceful Joy" ("The flower-gatherer is gone"), and "Treading on the" ("On a suburban outing, I come across a girl throwing a flower into the water, and I get it, so I jokingly write this"), all erotic works, it's hard to find elements of eroticism, only a strong sense of sorrow for the fallen nation permeates them.

Having fallen from a life of wealth and leisure to one of wandering and hardship, Zhang Yan, like Bai Juyi, developed a sense of empathy for women of the lower classes due to their shared experiences and circumstances. For example, in "Memory of a Fair Lady" ("The Beauty of Wu") ("Sighing at myself, I am among the reeds and bamboo, ten thousand miles away at the ends of the earth") and "National Fragrance" ("We looked at each other, tears streaming down our faces, covering our faces with shame, afraid to speak of the past"), the works are named erotic but are actually refined erotic poetry. The poet mainly stands on the side of unfortunate women to express his boundless sympathy for them, and this feeling of sympathy has lost its erotic basis. Take "The Longing" ("Farewell to Xiao Qian") as an example: "Coming and going heart, short and long pavilions. Only a cloud separates them in between. I wonder where to look for it. Sullen and frowning, Hating and angry, We are both fallen people at the ends of the earth. This feeling is as deep as the mist and water." The first part of the poem follows the traditional style of erotic poetry, but the second part, with the lines "We are both fallen people at the ends of the earth, This feeling is as deep as the mist and water," conveys a sense of personal history and offers a new perspective. The poet, due to the destruction of his home and country, wanders about, while the woman in the poem has fallen from her previous life of song and dance into poverty and. The impoverished and faded courtesan makes the poet think of his own dramatic change in status, thus generating a feeling of empathy. The woman in the poem therefore becomes more three-dimensional, approachable, and respectable. She has shed the heavy makeup of her past and appears before us as a woman who has tasted the hardships of life.

Compared to the superficial and vulgar erotic poetry of Liu Yong, Kang Yu zhi, and others, Zhang Yan's erotic poetry contains no lewd or shallow elements. It is more about a pure appreciation for beauty. For example, in the three erotic poems "Butterflies and Flowers" ("Gift to Yang Rouqing"), "Memory of a Fair Lady" ("The Beauty of Wu"), and "Good

Things Near" ("Gift to Xiao Qian"), all contain the word (pretend), depicting the shy demeanor of a loving woman trying to conceal her feelings. If the poet viewed these women who earn their living by selling smiles through colored glasses, it would be hard to discover their endearing qualities. It's only because the poet experienced the earth-shaking changes of the fall of the Southern Song Dynasty and his own dramatic personal changes that he can view the courtesans, who share a similar fate, as equals. This leads him to feel sympathy for them and to re-examine these women who have fallen into the dust with a respectful gaze. As a result, his erotic poetry becomes a refined version in terms of emotional identification.

In conclusion, Zhang Yan's erotic poetry, "with its clear and proper writing style"[3], portrays the poet's emotions while incorporating a sense of national sorrow, thus diluting the erotic elements and eliminating any trace of vulgarity. The dramatic change in Zhang Yan's status also enabled him to feel a sense of empathy for the lower-class courtesans, thereby broadening the ideological scope of erotic poetry and enriching its content. In Zhang Yan's erotic poetry, "the writing style is elegant, and the emotions are even more so"[4].

#### 4 DESOLATE TONE

After the fall of the Song Dynasty, Zhang Yan's love poems were marked by his longing for his homeland and his personal experiences. The pleasure-seeking and enjoyment in his works were merely a facade to cover his loneliness and emptiness. He no longer had the leisure and elegance of a wealthy man. His difficult life, emotional emptiness, and national and family hatred weighed heavily on him, and all these emotions were poured into his poetry. Thus, reading Zhang Yan's love poems, we can sense his desolate writing style, low-spirited emotions, and deep sadness, even when he writes about joyous occasions and grand banquets.

In the "Court Medium" written during the Qingming Festival: "During the Qingming Festival, the rain falls heavily, and the tide floods the sandy head. I am coldly watched by pear blossoms as I bitterly yearn for distant lands. Swallows dart behind curtains, orioles flit among households, clouds fill windows, mist veils terraces. On waking from drunkenness, crows cry. I break a willow branch, but on returning, for which home is it meant?"

The first two lines depict the poet traveling in the rain to dispel his loneliness during exile. The Qingming Festival is usually associated with drizzling rain, but the poet uses the word (loud rain) to create a lively scene that contrasts with his lonely heart. The phrase "I am coldly watched by pear blossoms" reverses the usual perspective, making the pear blossoms seem to coldly observe the poet. This "cold" gaze highlights the author's miserable situation in the rain and his longing for home. The poet's unspoken bitterness, sorrow, and hatred can only be silently endured by him. In the following lines, "Swallows dart behind curtains, orioles flit among households, clouds fill windows, mist veils terraces. On waking from drunkenness, crows cry," the poet tries to alleviate his loneliness by visiting a pleasure house and drinking, but the loneliness returns after the drunkenness wears off. The last two lines, "I break a willow branch, but on returning, for which home is it meant?" show that the poet, realizing he has no home to return to, feels desolate and helpless. Liu Xizai said, "Zhang Yutian's poetry is clear, profound, desolate, and lingering." [5] This assessment aptly captures the essence of Zhang Yan's work.

Under the poet's pen, love poems have lost their charm and allure, presenting instead a scene of pain and desolation. For example, "Leaning on the Luo Xiang" (Writing Sentiments for Someone at a Banquet) would likely be filled with a luxurious and passionate style if written by Liu Yong or Wen Tingyun, but Zhang Yan's version is filled with heartbreak and choking desolation. The lively banquet scene fails to dispel the poet's loneliness and only adds to his misery and sorrow.

In "Memory of a Fair Lady": "Fair maiden in the moonlight, I recognize her carriage in the willow shade. Her spring-deep makeup is less bright, her eyes flow like water, reflecting blooming flowers. Her oriole-like voice slips through patterned. People praise her low singing. Afraid of misleading Zhou Lang's drunken eyes, she leans on her fan and pretends to hide. Why must the red be shattered? Listen to the end of the tune, is it not worthy of sighs? No one knows this feeling, which bright moon belongs to which home? Dust rolls on, old age approaches. Entrust emotions to the pipa. I sigh at myself, among the withered reeds and bamboo, ten thousand miles away at the ends of the earth.

The first part depicts a charming and talented courtesan. The poet once wandered here, enjoying a life of luxury and song. However, time has been unkind, and the past are gone, with the former lover's whereabouts unknown. Only "Dust rolls on, old age approaches. Entrust emotions to the pipa." remains. How can this not make one feel and? The phrase "I sigh at myself, among the withered reeds and bamboo, ten thousand miles away at the ends of the earth" [6] uses desolate imagery to convey a sense of loneliness and sorrow.

In Zhang Yan's love poems, there are other desolate works, such as "South Tower Order" ("Fearing the autumn wind in a foreign land") with the line "I hear that it is cool at night," where the cool night reflects a cooler heart. In "Crossing the River Cloud" ("In the land of brocade fragrance"), the line "Books are far away, only a slice of moon and reeds on the empty river" depicts a vast river with only a sliver of moon and reeds swaying, creating a desolate and cold atmosphere. In "Long Pavilion" ("Feelings on the Old Residence"), the line "Hate the west wind for not sheltering the cold cicadas, sweeping away all the leaves in the forest" uses the metaphor of the Yuan dynasty's brutal suppression of the Han people, evoking sympathy. The words "hate" and "sweeping away" both carry a desolate meaning. In "Reduced Word Osmanthus" ("Locked Fragrance Pavilion"), the line "Who accompanies my lonely chanting. Breaking chrysanthemums shatters my heart" conveys a sense of coldness and broken heart.

Zhang Yan proposed in "The Source of Poetry: Clear Emptiness: "Poetry should be clear and empty, not solid and substantial." [2] Clear emptiness leads to ancient elegance and steepness, while solidity and substantiality lead to



stagnation and obscurity." Zhang Yan not only summed up the Song poetry experience in theory but also drew on the strengths of many poets. While inheriting Jiang Kui's "clear emptiness" style, he transformed Jiang's lean hardness into steepness and lightness into desolation, giving his love poems a desolate beauty. Zhang Yan often uses words with a low - spirited emotional tone, such as "sorrow," "emptiness," "clarity," "coldness," "chill," "distance," and "depth." He also employs cold - colored imagery like fallen leaves, west wind, autumn sounds, empty rivers, and dusk to convey his state of mind and pour out his desolate emotions. This shows the "steepness" of his writing.

Zhang Yan's love poems, with their strong contrast between past and present, evoke a sense of the "sorrow of the millet and the" The element of eroticism is diluted, replaced by a clear, elegant style that moves away from softness and vulgarity. The poet, with an equal status, reviews this vulnerable group and pours in endless sympathy, making the love poems more elegant in both writing and emotion. The desolate writing style and low - spirited emotions create a non - vulgar and non - obscene world, distinguishing his work from traditional love poetry.

The Ciyuan (The Origins of Ci Poetry) asserts: "To engage with 'the breeze and moon' is to refine one's moral character," [7] emphasizing that depictions of romantic themes should serve to "cultivate temperament" rather than merely chronicle amorous affairs. It further declares: "Ci poetry must strive for elegance and uprightness . When one's aspirations are enslaved by passion, the work loses its refined and dignified tone." [7] Even when portraying romantic love, poets must avoid being dominated by mere sentiment, instead "discarding frivolous ornamentation to achieve joy without indulgence ." Only works embodying "elegance and uprightness" were deemed exemplary.

Following the fall of the Song dynasty, Zhang Yan's amorous ci poetry became imbued with "the grief of millet's growth" — a metaphor for lamenting dynastic collapse — and profound reflections on personal tribulations. This infusion of historical gravity and existential depth endowed his amorous compositions with a solemn richness, enabling them to transcend "the conventional categorization of ci as a genre fixated on amorous themes" . By intertwining political allegory with emotional resonance, Zhang Yan's works elevated the traditionally marginalized "yanqing ci" into a medium for both lyrical beauty and intellectual contemplation.

"Family and national misfortune make poets fortunate." [8] The fall of the Song Dynasty gave Zhang Yan the identity of a remnant scholar - gentry. The "sorrow of the millet and the" and his personal experiences enriched the of his poetry. Influenced by various factors, Zhang Yan's love poems are not merely about eroticism but involve more rational thinking.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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# THE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS AND STRATEGIES OF BLACK MYTH WUKONG FROM A HIGH-LOW-CONTEXT CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of digital technologies driving the deepening globalization of culture, video games have emerged as a critical medium for the international dissemination of high-context cultures. This study employs Edward T. Hall's high/low-context cultural theory to analyze the cross-cultural communication practices of *Black Myth Wukong*, a Chinese AAA action role-playing game based on the classic literary work *Journey to the West*. Through textual analysis and case studies, the research reveals that the game achieves adaptive transformation of the classic narrative from high-context culture to low-context markets via strategies such as "explicit metaphorization" and "semiotic translation." This provides a three-dimensional pathway—"technological empowerment, cultural translation, and audience empathy"—for the digital dissemination of Chinese culture. The study expands the explanatory boundaries of Hall's theory in digital media contexts and offers theoretical insights for innovating China's international cultural communication strategies.

**Keywords:** High/low-context culture; Cross-cultural communication; *Black Myth Wukong*; Cultural translation

## 1 INTRODUCTION

With the rapid advancement of digital technologies, video games have evolved into a significant medium for cultural dissemination, dominating not only the entertainment sector but also emerging as a core tool for showcasing national cultural soft power. In this context, Chinese game developers are increasingly recognizing the potential of video games in promoting Chinese culture and fostering international dialogue. *Black Myth Wukong*, developed by a Chinese team as the country's first AAA action role-playing game, has garnered global attention and cultural resonance through its visually stunning graphics, intricate narrative logic, and profound cultural depth, rooted in the classic Chinese literary masterpiece *Journey to the West*.

*Black Myth: Wukong* not only challenges the long-standing Western dominance of the global AAA game market but also pioneers new pathways for disseminating Chinese culture through digital entertainment[1]. While showcasing traditional Chinese cultural elements, the game employs innovative storytelling techniques to ensure that its core values resonate with global audiences, making it a pivotal case for studying digital cultural communication and cross-cultural exchange.

Within the theoretical framework of cross-cultural communication, the success of *Black Myth Wukong* reflects the collision and integration of high-context and low-context cultures. Edward T. Hall's high/low-context cultural theory, which emphasizes differences in information transmission across cultures, provides a critical lens for understanding the game's communication strategies. As a representative high-context culture, China prioritizes implicit information and shared contextual knowledge, whereas Western low-context cultures favor direct, explicit communication. By innovatively transforming cultural elements, *Black Myth Wukong* bridges these contextual divides, offering a replicable model for cross-cultural adaptation and mutual understanding.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Hall's High/Low-Context Cultural Theory

#### 2.1.1 Core concepts and implications for cultural communication

Edward T. Hall's high/low-context cultural theory, introduced in his seminal work *Beyond Culture* (1976), provides a critical framework for analyzing cross-cultural communication dynamics. Hall posits that cultures differ fundamentally in their reliance on contextual information during communication. High-context cultures (e.g., China, Japan) prioritize implicit messages, shared background knowledge, and nonverbal cues, whereas low-context cultures (e.g., the United States, Germany) emphasize explicit, direct verbal expression[2]. This theory shifts the focus from language-centric models to a broader understanding of how cultural norms shape information exchange, offering a novel lens for interpreting cross-cultural challenges in digital media.

#### 2.1.2 Key characteristics of high- and low-context cultures

High-context cultures are characterized by: **Implicit Communication:** Information is embedded in context, requiring shared cultural knowledge for interpretation. **Nonverbal Emphasis:** Gestures, silence, and relational harmony often convey meaning more powerfully than words. **Collectivist Values:** Prioritization of group cohesion and social

interdependence. In contrast, low-context cultures exhibit: Explicit Communication: Reliance on clear, literal language to transmit information[3]. Individualist Values: Focus on personal autonomy, directness, and transparency. Reduced Contextual Dependency: Minimal reliance on situational or historical background for message decoding. These distinctions influence how cultural content is encoded, transmitted, and decoded across borders. For instance, *Black Myth Wukong*'s narrative, rooted in Chinese high-context traditions, necessitates adaptive strategies to bridge gaps for low-context audiences.

## 2.2 High/Low-Context Dynamics in Cross-Cultural Communication

### 2.2.1 Encoding and decoding challenges

High-context cultural products, such as *Black Myth Wukong*, often employ symbolic imagery, philosophical subtexts, and historical references that demand prior cultural literacy. For example, the game's reinterpretation of Journey to the West integrates Daoist and Buddhist philosophies through metaphors like the "eighty-one trials," which symbolize spiritual ascension. However, low-context audiences may struggle to decode these layered meanings without explicit guidance, risking misinterpretation or disengagement[4]. Conversely, low-context media (e.g., Western games like Counter-Strike) prioritize straightforward objectives and linear narratives, aligning with audiences accustomed to explicit information delivery. This dichotomy underscores the necessity for cultural translation strategies that balance fidelity to source material with accessibility for global audiences.

### 2.2.2 Collectivism vs. individualism in cultural representation

High-context narratives often reflect collectivist values, emphasizing communal harmony and symbolic unity. In *Black Myth Wukong*, Sun Wukong's transformation from a rebellious figure to a harmonized "Great Sage" mirrors Confucian ideals of balance and societal duty. Conversely, low-context narratives favor individual heroism, as seen in Western titles like *Assassin's Creed*, where protagonists embody personal agency and autonomy. To achieve cross-cultural resonance, *Black Myth Wukong* strategically blends collective symbolism (e.g., the "Mandate of Heaven" theme) with individualized player agency, allowing global audiences to engage with both cultural specificity and universal themes of growth and self-discovery[5].

## 2.3 Theoretical Gaps and Innovations

While Hall's theory illuminates contextual disparities, it inadequately addresses digital media's role in reshaping cultural transmission. This study expands the framework by introducing digital contextualization—the use of technology to mediate high-context content for low-context audiences[6]. For instance, *Black Myth Wukong* employs interactive tutorials and visual cues to decode implicit cultural symbols (e.g., burning incense as a save mechanic), transforming passive consumption into active cultural learning.

# 3 CULTURAL VALUE AND CROSS-CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF BLACK MYTH WUKONG

## 3.1 Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Game Narrative and Background

### 3.1.1 Reimagining journey to the west: from high-context culture to global accessibility

*Black Myth: Wukong* adapts the Chinese literary classic Journey to the West through innovative reinterpretation, transforming its high-context narrative into a globally accessible framework. The original text, deeply rooted in Buddhist and Daoist philosophies, employs implicit symbols such as the "eighty-one trials" to symbolize spiritual enlightenment—a concept requiring cultural literacy for full appreciation[7]. To bridge this gap, the game redefines the protagonist as a player-avatar ("Mandated One"), simplifying complex cultural references while retaining core themes. For example, religious metaphors are downplayed in favor of character-driven growth and conflict-driven storytelling, aligning with international audiences' expectations for relatable narratives. This approach preserves cultural essence while enhancing global resonance.

### 3.1.2 Implicit expression of Chinese philosophical thought in game narrative

The narrative of *Black Myth Wukong* subtly embeds Chinese philosophical concepts such as "harmony between heaven and humanity" and Daoist "non-action". Players engage with these ideas through gameplay mechanics; for instance, the act of "burning incense to save progress" symbolically mirrors traditional rituals of reverence for nature and spirituality[8]. Such implicit expressions align with high-context communication, where meaning emerges through symbolic interaction rather than explicit explanation. To aid low-context audiences, the game integrates contextual prompts and visual cues, ensuring players intuitively grasp the cultural logic behind these mechanics.

## 3.2 Visual Translation of Cultural Symbols and Cross-Cultural Role Adaptation

### 3.2.1 Reconstructing sun wukong: a globally resonant fusion of divinity, simian traits, and humanity

Sun Wukong, a quintessential Chinese cultural icon, is reimagined in *Black Myth Wukong* as a multidimensional character balancing divinity, simian instincts, and human vulnerability. Unlike his traditional portrayal as a rebellious hero, this iteration emphasizes introspection and spiritual conflict—traits that resonate with modern global audiences. For example, scenes depicting Sun Wukong in meditation or grappling with existential dilemmas reflect Confucian ideals of self-cultivation while aligning with universal themes of identity and redemption[9]. This reconstruction

transforms the character into a transcultural symbol, bridging Eastern philosophical depth and Western narrative archetypes.

### 3.2.2 *Blending eastern aesthetics with modern technology*

The game merges traditional Chinese aesthetics—such as ink-wash landscapes, classical architecture, and martial arts choreography—with cutting-edge technologies like Unreal Engine’s photorealistic rendering. Combat sequences, for instance, combine the fluidity of traditional wuxia movements with dynamic camera angles and particle effects, creating a visual language that is both culturally authentic and technologically immersive. This synthesis not only showcases the elegance of Eastern art but also meets low-context audiences’ demand for visceral, visually driven storytelling.

## 3.3 Cultural Reproduction of Game Scenes and Architectural Symbols

### 3.3.1 *Digitizing traditional Chinese architecture and its cultural significance*

*Black Myth: Wukong* meticulously recreates historical landmarks like the Dule Temple in Tianjin and Mount Wutai in Shanxi, embedding them into its narrative as interactive cultural artifacts[10]. These structures, characterized by their emphasis on spatial harmony and collective symbolism, reflect high-context values of unity and tradition. Players interact with architectural elements such as altars and statues, which serve as conduits for cultural immersion. For example, lighting incense at a shrine not only advances gameplay but also subtly teaches reverence for spiritual and historical continuity.

### 3.3.2 *Metaphorical expression in high-context culture and symbolic translation for low-context markets*

While the game’s architectural and ritualistic symbols are rich in cultural meaning, their metaphorical nature poses challenges for low-context audiences. To address this, *Black Myth Wukong* employs "symbolic translation" strategies. Explicit Guidance: Tutorials and cutscenes contextualize actions like incense-burning. Visual Metaphors: Environmental storytelling (e.g., decaying temples symbolizing lost traditions) conveys abstract ideas through intuitive imagery. Cultural Footnotes: In-game lore entries provide concise explanations of historical and philosophical references. These strategies strike a balance between preserving cultural depth and ensuring accessibility, enabling global players to engage with high-context content without prior knowledge.

## 3.4 Challenges and Strategies in Cross-Cultural Communication

### 3.4.1 *Adaptability challenges of high-context features in low-context markets*

The game’s reliance on implicit storytelling risks alienating audiences accustomed to direct narratives. For instance, the symbolic significance of "eighty-one trials" may be lost on players unfamiliar with Journey to the West. To mitigate this, the game uses quest-driven progression to frame these trials as tangible challenges, translating abstract philosophy into actionable gameplay.

### 3.4.2 *Risks of cultural misinterpretation and simplification*

Cross-cultural translation carries the danger of oversimplification. For example, reducing the Daoist concept of "non-action" to mere passivity could distort its philosophical nuance. *Black Myth Wukong* counters this by embedding layered interpretations—players experience "non-action" through strategic combat pauses, where reflection leads to tactical advantages, thereby teaching the principle through interactive design.

### 3.4.3 *Strategic pathways for effective communication*

Hybrid Narrative Design: Combine high-context symbolism with low-context clarity. For example, Sun Wukong’s internal monologues during cutscenes explicitly articulate his moral dilemmas, bridging implicit and explicit storytelling. Multimodal Engagement: Leverage audio-visual elements (e.g., traditional instruments in the soundtrack) to evoke cultural ambiance without relying solely on textual explanation. Community Co-Creation: Encourage fan-generated content (e.g., lore explanations on forums) to foster organic cultural exchange and deepen audience understanding.

## 4 CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

### 4.1 Challenges in Cross-Cultural Adaptation

#### 4.1.1 *Adaptability challenges of high-context cultural features in low-context markets*

*Black Myth: Wukong*, rooted in high-context Chinese culture, relies heavily on implicit narratives and shared cultural knowledge. For instance, the game’s symbolic mechanics—such as burning incense to save progress—carry profound philosophical meanings tied to Daoist and Buddhist traditions. However, low-context audiences, accustomed to explicit storytelling and direct instructions, may struggle to decode these metaphors without prior cultural familiarity. This disconnect risks diluting the game’s cultural depth and reducing player engagement[12]. To address this, the game employs adaptive contextualization. Quest-Driven Guidance: Framing abstract concepts like the "eighty-one trials" as tangible in-game challenges with clear objectives. Visual-Textual Synergy: Combining environmental storytelling (e.g., decaying temples) with minimalistic text prompts to convey narrative subtext.

#### 4.1.2 *Risks of cultural misinterpretation and oversimplification*

Cultural translation in cross-cultural communication often faces the pitfall of oversimplifying complex symbols. For example, reducing the Daoist principle of wuwei ("non-action") to mere passivity could strip it of its nuanced

philosophical significance. *Black Myth Wukong* mitigates this by embedding layered interpretations: Interactive Pedagogy: Players experience wuwei through combat mechanics that reward strategic pauses and reflection, teaching the principle through gameplay rather than exposition. Lore Archives: In-game codex entries provide concise explanations of cultural references, balancing accessibility with depth.

## 4.2 Pathways and Strategies for Cross-Cultural Communication

### 4.2.1 Multifunctional cultural transmission: integrating narrative, visuals, and sound

*Black Myth: Wukong* exemplifies how video games can serve as multifaceted cultural ambassadors. Narrative Syncretism: The protagonist's journey mirrors universal themes of redemption and self-discovery, while retaining culturally specific motifs like the "Mandate of Heaven." Audiovisual Immersion: Traditional Chinese instruments (e.g., guqin, pipa) in the soundtrack evoke cultural ambiance, while ink-wash art styles and martial arts choreography visually anchor the game in Chinese aesthetics. Mechanical Symbolism: Ritualistic actions (e.g., bowing to statues) are gamified to teach respect for tradition through interaction.

### 4.2.2 Constructing a global communication matrix via digital platforms

The game leverages digital media and global platforms to amplify its cultural reach. Global Distribution: Launching on Steam, Epic Games Store, and consoles ensures accessibility to international audiences. Social Media Virality: Cinematic trailers on YouTube and TikTok garnered over 50 million views, sparking global discourse on Chinese mythology. Cross-Industry Collaborations: Partnerships with brands like Starbucks China for themed merchandise blend virtual and real-world cultural experiences.

### 4.2.3 Localization strategies for cultural precision

To enhance cross-cultural resonance, *Black Myth Wukong* adopts a glocalized approach. Linguistic Nuance: Translators prioritize cultural equivalency over literal translation. For example, Mandated One is rendered as "Chosen One" to align with Western heroic archetypes[13]. Regional Customization: Tailoring difficulty curves and tutorial pacing to match regional player preferences—fast-paced combat for Western markets, narrative depth for East Asian audiences. Community-Driven Localization: Encouraging fan communities to create supplementary lore guides, fostering organic cultural exchange.

## 4.3 Theoretical and Practical Implications

### 4.3.1 Redefining "cultural premium" in digital media

The success of *Black Myth Wukong* challenges the notion of "cultural discount," demonstrating that high-context narratives can generate cultural premium—added value derived from authentic cultural representation. Neuroaesthetic studies reveal that players exposed to the game's ink-wash visuals and traditional music exhibit heightened emotional engagement, validating the efficacy of culturally rooted design.

### 4.3.2 Policy recommendations for sustainable cultural export

Government Support: Establish funding initiatives for culturally significant games, akin to South Korea's support for K-pop and K-drama. Industry-Academia Collaboration: Develop training programs for translators and designers specializing in cultural adaptation. Ethical Frameworks: Implement guidelines to prevent cultural appropriation, ensuring respectful representation of source material.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

This study, grounded in Hall's high/low-context cultural theory, provides an in-depth analysis of *Black Myth Wukong* as a vehicle for disseminating Chinese culture. By examining the game's narrative, character design, visual aesthetics, and scene construction, the research highlights the potential and challenges of high-context cultural communication in a globalized context. Key findings are summarized as follows. First, *Black Myth Wukong* demonstrates the international viability of high-context culture through innovative cultural expression. By reinterpreting the classic Journey to the West narrative, the game translates complex cultural connotations into accessible and tangible forms, enabling global players to grasp the core values of Chinese culture. This fusion of traditional depth and modern storytelling not only enhances China's cultural influence but also fosters international audiences' understanding and identification with Chinese cultural identity. Second, Hall's high/low-context cultural theory offers robust analytical support for cross-cultural communication strategies. High-context cultures emphasize implicit information and shared background knowledge, whereas low-context cultures prioritize explicit expression and direct messaging. Applying this framework, the study explores *Black Myth Wukong*'s practices in information encoding/decoding and cultural adaptation between collectivist and individualist values, proposing solutions to address communication barriers and misunderstandings. This theoretical lens is not only applicable to *Black Myth Wukong* but also offers universal insights for analyzing other cross-cultural communication cases.

### 5.2 Future Directions

As digital technologies and globalization continue to evolve, the international dissemination of Chinese culture will witness further innovation and transformation. The success of *Black Myth Wukong* sets a benchmark for the global promotion of Chinese cultural products. However, broader exploration is needed across other media. For instance, comparative studies of games like *Genshin Impact* could reveal diverse strategies for cross-cultural adaptation. Additionally, research should extend beyond gaming to include film, animation, and virtual reality, analyzing their synergistic roles in cultural dissemination. The digital age presents unprecedented opportunities and challenges for cultural transmission. Future research could investigate how cutting-edge technologies—such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI)—can enhance immersive and interactive cultural experiences. For example, VR reconstructions of Chinese heritage sites could allow global audiences to engage with cultural artifacts in unprecedented ways. Furthermore, leveraging social media and short-video platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube) for targeted, high-impact campaigns remains a critical area for exploration. Future efforts should focus on constructing a cohesive global communication system that integrates gaming, film, tourism, and education under a unified cultural strategy. Tailored approaches for different regions, informed by local cultural preferences, could foster a “diverse yet harmonious” model of global cultural exchange. For instance, blending localized visual symbols with Chinese cultural essence in game design could enhance cross-cultural resonance.

### 5.3 Concluding Remarks

*Black Myth: Wukong* exemplifies the immense potential of Chinese cultural communication while underscoring the pivotal role of high/low-context dynamics in cross-cultural interactions. By integrating theoretical insights with practical innovations, future research can amplify the efficacy of China’s cultural outreach, contributing to a more open, inclusive, and interconnected global cultural landscape.

### COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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