



Analysis of the Integration Application of Chinese Elements and Game Illustration in the Strategy Game *Arknights*

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Abstract. In today's world, more and more game manufacturers try to apply some nationalistic visual elements to the art design of games in order to create visual effects that are attractive enough to the masses. Under the influence of this general environment, many Chinese game manufacturers also choose to combine traditional Chinese elements into the art design of their games, in order to embody the traditional Chinese aesthetics and to spread their culture in the world. Given this, for the sake of further understanding of how to combine traditional Chinese visual elements with modernized minimalist design style into game, this thesis will analyze the tower defense game *Arknights* and discuss the Chinese elements shown in the character design and scene design through examples and comparisons. Through research methods such as examples and comparative demonstration, the author discusses the application of traditional Chinese elements in commercial cg illustration of modern games, and analyzes how the game combines traditional Chinese elements with game art style on the basis of modern visual style design to create a Neo-Chinese Style.

Keywords: Game Art; Traditional Chinese elements; Character design; architectural design

1 Introduction

China, as one of the four ancient civilizations, has a history of five thousand years. The origins of Chinese civilization can be traced back to ancient times, through multiple dynasties such as the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, each with its own unique culture and achievements[1]. The Chinese civilization is the only one of the four civilizations without interruption of culture. The five thousand years of civilization has given birth to countless splendid traditional cultures. These fine traditional cultures, which have been passed on through the accumulation and sedimentation of China for thousands of years, are the result of the national spirit and integrity of the China [2]. Chinese elements are the synthesis of various cultural things born in China's local areas in the long history of 5,000 years of appreciation. In 2004, the concept of Chinese elements was first put forward, and in the years of promotion and development, it has been extended to all aspects of life. Chinese elements usually refer to those symbols, patterns, colors,

styles and ideas that can represent or reflect Chinese cultural characteristics, historical traditions, national spirits and aesthetic tastes [3]. However, there are different definitions of Chinese elements. Some scholars divide Chinese elements into three parts: the first part is the inherent elements of China, such as China's territory (including 3 million square kilometers of territorial sea), Chinese, China's climate, etc.; The second is Chinese traditional cultural elements; The third is China's modern cultural elements, such as Beijing's Olympic spirit, China's aerospace spirit, China's film culture, and the culture of China's famous enterprises [4].”Besides, such Chinese elements as the Olympic spirit are very commonly used design elements by designers. In addition to having Chinese traditional cultural characteristics, the Olympic spirit is also more in line with contemporary design's pursuit of the new spirit of modern society. Some scholars divide Chinese elements into six categories and seventeen sub-categories, which are: symbols including: colors, images, graphics, musical notes, scenes, spokespersons; Culture including: language, allusions, calligraphy and painting, thought, architecture, opera and historical background including national conditions and history[5].

This Chinese element can be integrated into the design of game and expressed through different game forms, which will have a positive promoting effect on expanding the user group of Chinese games and expanding the Chinese game market [6]. People can use many Chinese elements in the game design, such as Chinese calligraphy, seal cutting, Peking Opera facial makeup, oracle bone inscriptions, Taoist Confucian cultural thoughts, auspicious cloud patterns, dragon and phoenix patterns of Weiqi and Chinese medicine, and give them new characteristics of The Times. To re-create the props in the game so that domestic games can not only meet the aesthetic and entertainment requirements of the new era, but also be endowed with profound Chinese traditional cultural connotation.

2 The Introduction to *Arknights*

Arknights is an independently developed and operated strategy-oriented real-time strategy tower defense game released in 2019 by Shanghai Hypergryph Network Technology. In the game, the player will play the role of doctor in the pharmaceutical company at “Rhode Island”, led a group of cadres looking for a cure for the ore disease.

In the game's world setting “Terra Continent”, there are many countries with different visual styles and regional cultures, and the political formations and traditional cultures of these countries, and even the names of some regions, can be found in the real world and history of the prototypes and references. For example, there is an empty country called Iberia in this worldview, which is an obvious reference to the Iberian Peninsula in the Mediterranean Sea, and the archetype of the region is exactly Spain, which is located on the peninsula, and many of the art details of the characters related to this country have a certain degree of relevance to its archetype. In the same way, there is also an empty country in this world that is based on China, and this country is the one that will be analyzed next - Yan.

Whether it's from the text setting or the art style, Yan's design is full of traditional Chinese elements. For example, the imperial "dragon" is very different from the real historical emperor, and this racial element is also a symbol of the imperial family that is often used in traditional Chinese culture. As a matter of fact, most of the members from this country are based on some rare animals unique to China, such as the familiar giant panda and the equally representative protected animal, the white-necked long-tailed pheasant, and all these details emphasize the connection between this country and the reality of China. In terms of art style, the designers have also combined the basic framework of modern futuristic production with traditional Chinese elements in various forms, such as character costumes, scene design of the country's cities and publicity illustrations of events related to the country, to visually express the story of this hollow country modeled on China.

3 Chinese Elements Reflected in the Character Design of *Arknights*

Chinese elements can serve as cultural and spiritual support for virtual game design. Chinese elements are gradually accumulated and precipitated by the Chinese nation in the long historical process, with rich cultural and spiritual connotations. The application of Chinese elements to the design of game props gives new cultural and spiritual connotations to game props, which is exactly what the game design lacks.

3.1 The Chinese Elements in a Female Character Design

The most important part of all card games is the role, the designer will mainly through the clothing design, hair design and weapon design to express the specific identity of the role, and based on the particularity of the character set in the world view of *Arknights*, some regional representative animals will also be included in the character design criteria to distinguish nationality. The following analysis is based on the character in the game, whose nationality is Yan.



Fig. 1. The female character in *Arknights*



Fig. 2. The second form of female character

Although the overall costume design of this female character is very modern and even futuristic, such as the hooded cape, the functional strapped backpack and goggles, and the very industrial boots, the character designer cleverly added some traditional Chinese elements into the styles, such as the birds and red sun and auspicious cloud patterns on the cape, which often appear in ancient murals. What's more, the jade tablet, with the Chinese word "Ping An" engraved on it, is tied to the strap with a red Chinese knot. And the beads hold in the character's hand, and the panda doll lie in the bag strapped to her hip. All of these small details in the costume design also highlight her identity as a Yan. Besides, in terms of weapon design, the staff she is holding is covered in wooden plaques engraved with the Chinese word "Ping an". And, the classic

Chinese cabinet that she has placed in her hands is generally considered to be a place to store traditional Chinese herbal medicine, as evidenced by the green plants sprouting out of one of the drawers that she pulls out (shown in Figure 1).

Of course, as a card game, a character doesn't only have one form. After development, the character will unlock a second form (shown in Figure 2). In the second one, the background composition uses the black and white, which is resemblance to Taiji yin-yang diagram in traditional Chinese culture. Furthermore, the background also contains many common elements of Chinese landscape painting, such as auspicious clouds, mountains and rivers, fishermen boating, as well as very classic black calligraphy inscriptions and seal elements.

3.2 The Chinese Elements in a Costume Design

In addition to the initial character design of each role, the game will also sell some character costumes containing Chinese elements to provide players with fresh feeling, and the *Arknights* is more special is that its clothing is divided into brands, and different brands sell clothing are different styles and themes.

Among these brands, the "0011" series is a clothing brand with a design style that combines traditional Chinese clothing and the industrial style. Customer can feel the overall theme of combining the traditional elements and the modern trendy style in the logo and key visual design of this clothing brand. It also has a sub-brand, the "Yun" series, which also continues this improved Chinese style, from the brush art characters of the logo to the ink background. The brand will produce a new Chinese-style dress for a female character in *Arknights* during traditional Chinese festivals such as the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival.



Fig. 3. The new Chinese-style dress for a female character in *Arknights*

For this figure, the lotus pond in the background is inspired by the West Lake in Hangzhou, according to the character designer. It can be seen that the inspiration for this design is the water town of Jiangnan, China. The main character in this picture is wearing improved Chinese clothing, lying comfortably in a wooden boat rafting, which is the atmosphere created by this costume. In terms of costume design, this character is wearing a improved ancient traditional clothing, which is shown as the girl wearing a

silk cape to cover her body (shown in Figure 3). The silk cape is a traditional costume in ancient China, which lasted from the Han Dynasty to the late Ming Dynasty and was generally worn on important occasions [7].

4 Chinese Elements Reflected in the Architectural Design of *Arknights*

Traditional cultural elements contain deep cultural deposits in our country. If we want to integrate them reasonably with modern architectural elements, we need to grasp the constituent elements and forms of traditional cultural elements and apply them in a targeted and innovative way, so as to realize the perfect integration of traditional elements and modern architecture [8]. In *Arknights*, some architectural styles successfully incorporate traditional Chinese elements.

4.1 Chinese Elements Reflected in the Street Scene of *Yan*

The Yan country in the *Arknights* is an aerial country that combines traditional Chinese elements and modern technology, and its setting reflects rich Chinese characteristics. The political system of Yan mainly refers to the Ming and Qing dynasties in Chinese history. Under such cultural environment, its architectural style also reflects the characteristics of traditional Chinese elements.

Of course, in terms of game scene cg, Yan is also very special. Like the combination of traditional and modern in the design of the dryads' costumes, the scenes of Yan are also designed in a style that blends ancient Chinese architecture with modern architectural styles. The next step is to explain the scene design style of Yan by comparing it to the scene cg of a country with a completely different design style than that of Yan.



Fig. 4. The scene of European



Fig. 5. The scene of Yan

On the left is a scene from a city modeled after a European country, while on the right is a street scene from a mountainous city in Yan. As you can see, even with pretty much the same color palette, the two scenes give off completely different feelings. The one on the left looks like a park in a western city, as it has a very European style retro railing and fountain as the main elements of the scene (shown in Figure 4). The one on the right is a modified version of a traditional Chinese building, with the classic tiled roofs and red lanterns to give the scene a sense of hierarchy (shown in Figure 5). Of course, combining the traditional elements of the worldview setting with modern style, the whole scene will also appear a lot of modern architectural features. For example, in the picture, the combination of glass and ancient wood-framed walls on the first floor of the building increases the texture of the picture and emphasizes the period characteristics of the worldview.

4.2 Chinese Elements Reflected in the City Scene in Yan

Architects need to make use of traditional shape elements to balance the aesthetics of the building. Under the joint action of many architectural elements, the building has completely different temperament and style, and gives people different sensory influences. These elements jointly determine the charm of the building [9].



Fig. 6. The modern city scene in Yan

This picture is also a city scene in Yan. This picture mainly shows the characteristics of modern architecture, but its overall tone and shape also reflect traditional Chinese elements. From perspective of color,, the walls are simple earthy yellow and brown and the distant houses are also relatively low, like a reference to the rural countryside housing color scheme. From the perspective of building materials, although this building is very modern, with each rice paddy resembling the design of a decorative pool in a modern minimalist building, the houses were built from concrete or some kind of expensive wood, which is always used in Chinese traditional building. From the perspective of architectural form and structure, especially the very large brown building, which is structured like a reference to the ancient Chinese Lu Ban locks and mortise and tenon joints, which is shown on the right of the picture (shown in Figure 6). This combination of tradition and modernity, and the ability to conceptualize the specific function of the scene's scenario design is also one of the game's very good aspects.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis takes *Arknights* as an example, and through examples and comparative arguments, analyzes in detail the visual style of the empty country "Yan", which is based on China, and how to integrate the modern clothes with traditional Chinese clothes' patterns and features to create a unique new Chinese visual style, from the three aspects of character design and scene. It also analyzes in detail the visual style of Yan, an imaginary country reference to China, and how to integrate modern clothing with traditional Chinese clothing patterns and features to create a unique new Chinese style. The visual design of the whole game is full of fashion sense, but also reflects the characteristics of traditional Chinese aesthetic elements. It not only forms a unique

Chinese aesthetic style in the field of game art, but also plays a positive role in publicizing traditional Chinese aesthetics and positive cultural dissemination to the world.

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