



Exploring Chinese Myth Representation in Video Games: A Case Study of Black Myth: Wukong

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Abstract

This study explores how *Black Myth: Wukong*, a Chinese AAA video game, reinterprets traditional mythology through narrative design, character development, and symbolic world-building. A non-commentary full-review gameplay video, 18 hours, 24 minutes, and 4 seconds in lengths, from the MKIceAndFire YouTube channel is selected as the sample. Content analysis is employed to examine six mythologically themed chapters and over 200 in-game characters, comparing their representations to the original mythology guided by Hall's representation theory. The findings reveal that the game transforms classical figures, such as Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, and Red Boy, into emotionally complex and morally ambiguous characters, while introducing the player-driven "Destined One" as a narrative bridge between myth and modern storytelling. Rather than offering a faithful retelling, the game reconstructs mythology as a living, interactive experience. The study highlights the potential of digital games as a medium for cultural expression. It suggests that immersive narrative design can enhance both player engagement and the global visibility of Chinese cultural heritage.

Keywords: Chinese mythology; *Black Myth: Wukong*; Cultural representation; Narratives; Video Games

Introduction

Myths in media function as systems of communication, conveying both literal and deeper meanings shaped by cultural, historical, and social contexts (Bignell, 2002; Kopaleishvili, 2020). In Chinese tradition, *shen-hua* closely aligns with Western definitions of myth as sacred narrative (Birrell, 1999), often reflected in structures such as the hero's journey. These mythic frameworks are frequently adapted into modern media, including films, literature, and video games, where they are modified to reflect contemporary values while preserving their essential narrative essence (Evans, 2018).

Released in August 2024, *Black Myth: Wukong* became China's first major AAA title, selling over 20 million copies. Developed by Game Science and inspired by *Journey to the West*, it boosted the domestic market and showcased Chinese culture globally, marking a milestone in cultural export and game development (Davies, 2025).

In the digital era, video games have evolved far beyond simple entertainment. They now serve as dynamic platforms for both cultural storytelling and technological innovation (Ferrer, 2017; Zheng, 2024). While traditionally excluded from notions of “haute culture” or fine art, video games have grown into a powerful global industry with considerable influence on popular culture (Aoyama & Izushi, 2004). Unlike passive forms of media such as film and television, video games enable players to engage actively, taking on roles, shaping narratives, and connecting with global communities (Jenkins, 2000; Wolf, 2000). Some games, like *Super Mario Bros* and *Pokémon*, have left lasting cultural impacts, not only shaped generations of players but also enhancing the international image of their countries of origin (Liang, 2024).

Commenting on *Black Myth: Wukong*'s success, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian expressed optimism: “Glad to see *Journey to the West*, a Chinese mythological novel from over 400 years ago, shine in the digital age and captivate gamers worldwide” (Chinese Foreign Ministry, 2024). Indeed, more than just entertainment, *Black Myth: Wukong* serves as a cultural export and soft power tool, signaling China's rising presence in a space long dominated by Western media (Xiang & Yuan, 2024). Given its profound mythological roots, the game presents an important case for exploring how Chinese mythology is represented and reimagined in the global gaming industry.

Luo and Han (2024) highlight that *Black Myth: Wukong*'s animation and visual design play a key role in representing Chinese mythology, using symbolic imagery and atmospheric aesthetics to bring cultural themes to life. Hou (2024), analyzing 4,000+ Steam reviews, found the game's landscapes and storytelling sparked interest in visiting China. Similarly, Zhao (2024) noted a tourism boost to Datong, linked to the game's setting. Mao (2024) identified five factors shaping international reception, including sensory experience and translation quality. Lu and An (2025) further showed that perceptions of the game's narrative and creators influence player engagement.

Most studies on *Black Myth: Wukong* focus on visuals and tourism impact, using data like user engagement and search trends. However, they often overlook the game's narrative depth and cultural adaptation of Chinese mythology. Few examine how it reimagines traditional myths through interactive storytelling. A closer narrative analysis is needed to understand its balance between authenticity and creative reinterpretation. This leads to the following research questions: 1) Are the characters and plotline from the original *Journey to the West* still exist in *Black Myth: Wukong*, and 2) How Chinese mythology are represented through the game narratives and character, comparing the original myth to the game.

Research Objectives

- 1.To identify key characters and the plotline from Journey to the West in Black Myth: Wukong.
- 2.To analyze how Black Myth: Wukong represented Chinese mythology through narratives and characters by comparing it with the original myth.

Significance of The Study

This study would fill the gap in existing research by examining how Black Myth: Wukong applies storytelling techniques to reinterpret and modernize Chinese mythology within interactive narratives. It contributes to the academic field by advancing discussions on game narratology and myth adaptation, particularly in non-Western and culturally specific contexts. The findings could offer practical value for game developers, narrative designers, and cultural content creators seeking to integrate traditional culture into global digital platforms. Moreover, this research highlights the growing role of video games as tools of cultural diplomacy and soft power, demonstrating how interactive storytelling can enhance the global visibility and influence of Chinese cultural heritage.

Literature Review

1.Chinese Mythology

Myths have long been understood as narratives that explain fundamental aspects of the human experience. Traditionally regarded as sacred stories, they recount the actions of gods or ancestors, offering explanations for the origins of the world and humanity's role within it. Beyond entertainment, myths carry essential knowledge about human thought, emotion, and social structures, providing symbolic frameworks that validate and reinforce cultural norms across generations (Yang & An, 2008).

In Chinese tradition, the term shen-hua (神话) is commonly translated as “myth” and closely aligns with the Western concept of sacred narrative. The character shen (神) refers to the divine or gods, while hua (话) means speech or tale, suggesting myths as orally transmitted stories of higher powers (Birrell, 1999).

However, modern scholars have argued that myths are not strictly confined to sacred or divine themes. In many traditions, including China's, myths often extend to the supernatural, the marvelous, and even the everyday. This broader view is especially relevant when exploring how Chinese myths are adapted into contemporary media (Yang & An, 2008). Viewed in this light, myths are not static relics, but dynamic narratives shaped by historical and social contexts. Their transmission, from ancient oral traditions to modern video games, reflects ongoing cultural evolution (Yang & An, 2008).

2.Game narratives

Narrative media are typically defined by plot and storytelling, while non-narrative forms focus on action without story intent, but in video games this line is often blurred (Majewski, 2003). Games like Tetris lack narrative, while Space Invaders includes minimal context (Eskelinen, 2001). Non-narrative games emphasize points and action, narrative games reward story progression (Majewski, 2003). Though games may appear to unify gameplay and story in real time, narratives often occur in a different temporal frame. Unlike traditional media, games struggle to manipulate time flexibly, leading to a division between gameplay and cutscenes (Majewski, 2003).

3.Media Portrayal

Media portrayal refers to the way cultures, ideas, and identities are depicted through various forms of media, shaped by ideological perspectives and cultural contexts (Punnahitanond, 2018). Such portrayals influence how audiences interpret visual and narrative messages as well as symbols embedded in media texts (DeFleur & Plax, 1980). This study explores the cultural meanings conveyed through the game's storytelling and visual design, revealing how Chinese mythology is translated into a contemporary interactive medium.

4.Stuart Hall's Representation Theory

Stuart Hall's representation theory provides a framework for understanding how media constructs meaning by connecting culture and symbols through shared codes (Hall et al., 2003). Hall stated that meaning is actively produced and contested through processes of encoding by creators and decoding by audiences, based on their cultural backgrounds and experiences. Signes (2007) emphasizes representation as the construction of reality in media, while Šisler (2008) highlights how meaning is created through symbolic images and signs. In video games such as Black Myth: Wukong, cultural and mythical elements are conveyed through visual design, narrative, sound, and player interaction, which together form a complex text open to multiple interpretations (Galloway, 2004). Applying Hall's theory to analyze the Chinese mythology encoded and the ways audiences might decode these representations, acknowledging the dynamic interplay between cultural production and reception.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis to investigate how Black Myth: Wukong represents and reinterprets Chinese mythology. The analysis is guided by two main objectives: first, to identify the key characters and narrative elements adapted from Journey to the West; and second, to examine how these mythological components are reconstructed through the game's narrative structure and character development. Building on these objectives, the study adopts a comparative method to explore how Chinese myths are narratively reimaged in the video game, with a particular focus on character development and story representation.

1.Sampling

This content analysis focuses on the AAA video game Black Myth: Wukong, which is widely regarded as the first Chinese-developed title of its kind to achieve significant international recognition (Yang, 2024). For this study, a non-commentary full-review gameplay video from the channel called MKIceAndFire is selected as the sample to avoid the commentary bias and ensure the narrative continuity. Moreover, the view count on YouTube of this gameplay video was the highest amongst other gameplay videos at the time of this study. This full-review gameplay, with a total length of 18 hours, 24 minutes, and 4 seconds, is used as the primary material to identify key characters and plots within the game.

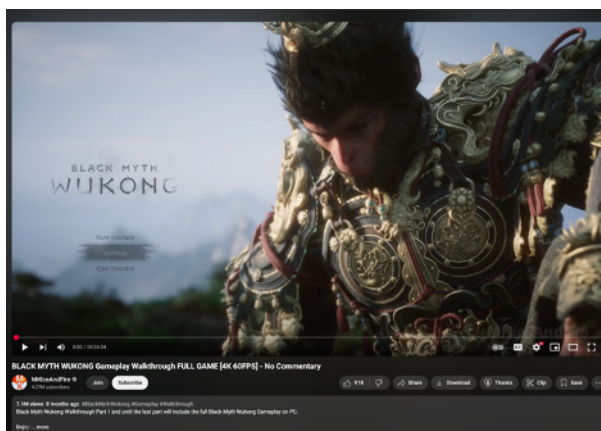


Figure 1: Screenshot of the full-review gameplay posted on MKIceAndFire’s YouTube channel
Source: MKIceAndFire (2024, August 22).

2.Procedure

This research was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, a content analysis of Black Myth: Wukong was carried out using a full-length gameplay review video with the highest view count on YouTube. This phase aimed to identify key characters and main plot points as presented in the video. To enhance reliability, 30% of the data was cross-checked by a second coder, an instructor at the school of Communication Arts, ensuring consistency in interpretation. The second phase focused on a comparative analysis between the game and the original myth Journey to the West, examining how Black Myth: Wukong represents and reinterprets mythological characters through narrative structure and character development. Attention was given to differences in role, tone, symbolic function, and emotional depth. The third phase explored the storytelling strategies observable in the video content, particularly character-driven narrative and structural design.

Findings

Black Myth: Wukong presents a vast and detailed mythological world, featuring a total of 203 distinct characters. These include 90 minor demons, 55 monster leaders, 26 demon kings, and 32 other figures such as immortals, deities, and guardians. While many of these characters are original creations or drawn from broader Chinese folk traditions, a significant portion are adapted from the classic novel Journey to the West. This chapter focuses specifically on characters that share direct origins or symbolic parallels with figures from the original myth.

1.Primary Characters in The Game from The Original Myth

In Black Myth: Wukong, Sun Wukong and the Destined One (天命人) are narratively intertwined, despite being distinct characters. While Wukong is rooted in classical mythology as the rebellious hero of Journey to the West, the Destined One is a player-driven protagonist, original to the game, whose identity and path remain deliberately ambiguous. However, textual and visual cues throughout the game suggest that the Destined One is not merely a bystander in Wukong's story, but a successor, reincarnation, or spiritual inheritor of his legacy. On the other hand, Destined One possesses skills and spells that are highly similar to those of Sun Wukong, such as stick techniques, immobilization techniques, copper head and iron arms, etc., which allows players to experience the same fighting pleasure as Wukong in the game.

The connection is reinforced through shared combat abilities, symbolic imagery (such as the staff and transformations), and thematic parallels of fate, rebellion, and suffering. Wukong's apparent fall or absence positions the Destined One as the new bearer of myth, tasked with reliving, reinterpreting, or even correcting the path of the legendary Monkey King. This relationship creates a bridge between classical narrative and interactive storytelling, allowing players to engage with the myth not just as observers, but as participants shaping its future.

According to classical mythology, Zhu Bajie was once the “Marshal Tianpeng” before being banished to the mortal world due to misconduct. He was later subdued by Sun Wukong at the Chapter of Gao Lao Zhuang and joined the team. Upon completing the journey, he was granted the title of “Cleanser of the Altars” (净坛使者) by the Buddha. In the original narrative, especially in the Gao Lao Zhuang chapter, Zhu Bajie is portrayed as a comical, gluttonous, and lustful figure, symbolizing human weakness and worldly desires. In Black Myth: Wukong, Zhu Bajie undergoes a significant reinterpretation. His design is grotesque, his personality darker and more emotionally layered. The traditional humor associated with him is largely removed. Instead, he is positioned as a multi-functional assistant to the Destined One. He aids the Destined One (天命人) by providing combat support, healing, and strategic tips. Beyond gameplay mechanics, he also delivers emotional depth, offering stories, praising good performance, and sarcastically commenting on the player's failures. Notably, the game introduces a new narrative arc involving Zhu Bajie's past relationship with a character named Zi Zhuer (紫蛛儿).

This subplot is a complete departure from the original tale of the Spider Demoness, offering a more tragic and emotionally charged reinterpretation that adds complexity to his character and enriches the game's mythological world-building.

Unlike other core disciples, Sha Wujing does not explicitly appear in the storyline of *Black Myth: Wukong*. In *Journey to the West*, he is portrayed as calm, loyal, and morally grounded, a stabilizing force within the group. His absence in the game may reflect a narrative decision to focus on more emotionally volatile characters like Wukong and Bajie to link to the myth. It could also suggest a thematic shift away from collective harmony toward individual struggle, aligning with the game's darker, more introspective tone.

In terms of Tang Seng (唐三藏), In the original *Journey to the West*, Tang Sanzang leads the spiritual journey to retrieve the scriptures, serving as the moral and narrative anchor of the tale. However, in *Black Myth: Wukong*, this traditional narrative structure is subverted, Tang Sanzang does not appear directly, and the focus shifts from spiritual pilgrimage to mythic fragmentation and recovery. The game introduces a new storyline: after becoming a Buddha, Sun Wukong rejects celestial constraints and returns to Mount Huaguo, with Tang Sanzang resigning his post to support him. This rebellion provokes divine retaliation, leading to Wukong's defeat and the scattering of his soul. This repositions the classic narrative from a journey of enlightenment to one of resurrection and identity reconstruction, placing the player at the center of a myth retold through loss, conflict, and agency.

2.Secondary Characters in The Game from The Original Myth

Hei Feng Da Wang (Black Wind King), also known as Hei Xiong Guai (Black Bear Demon) in the original text, was a thief who stole Guanyin's cassock out of greed and was ultimately subdued and converted. In *Black Myth: Wukong*, he is visually redesigned with imposing armor and beast-like features, no longer just a petty thief but a formidable guardian of Black Wind Mountain. The game elevates his function from a minor antagonist to a regional boss with symbolic control over the theme of "spiritual theft" and corrupted guardianship, thus embedding a stronger moral and existential dimension to his character.

Huang Feng Da Wang (Yellow Wind King), In *Journey to the West*, is a minor role, a yellow-furred weasel spirit who blinds Tang seng with poisonous wind and is quickly subdued. His role is brief, and the narrative treats him as a disruptive but ultimately insignificant figure. In *Black Myth: Wukong*, he is reimagined as "Huang Feng Da Sheng," a powerful elemental being who once served as a royal advisor after defeating insect demons. He later takes command of Yellow Wind Ridge, using the destructive "Samadhi Divine Wind." No longer a single-scene enemy, he becomes a key boss with political authority and thematic depth. This shift transforms him from a simple moral obstacle into a complex representation of natural power and fallen heroism, aligning with the game's darker, more layered narrative tone.

Hundred-Eyed Daoist adapted from the novel's Centipede Spirit, appears in Black Myth: Wukong's the Webbed Hollow (盘丝洞). In the original Journey to the West, the Hundred-Eyes Demon is a minor antagonist who attempts to poison Tang Sanzang out of selfish desire for immortality. His role is brief, and he is ultimately defeated with divine help. In Black Myth: Wukong, the character is reimagined as a powerful former ally of Sun Wukong who later turns vengeful. After being betrayed and exiled, he returns with a holy relic and violently attacks Wukong's former supporters. This version shifts him from a deceptive trickster to a tragic and vengeful figure, adding emotional depth and aligning with the game's darker, morally complex narrative tone.

Hong Hai Er or Red Boy (红孩儿), in the original Journey to the West, is depicted as the spoiled and arrogant son of the Bull Demon King (牛魔王) and Princess Iron Fan (铁扇公主). He uses deception to capture Tang Seng and often bullies local deities, embodying youthful rebellion and impulsiveness. After being defeated by Sun Wukong, he is subdued and eventually becomes a disciple of Guanyin. In Black Myth: Wukong, Red Boy is reimagined as a more tragic and emotionally conflicted character. Born from Princess Iron Fan under coercive circumstances and estranged from his father, he harbors deep resentment toward both his family and the Heavenly Court. His refusal to lend the fan to Sun Wukong and the resulting conflict led to his physical defeat and emotional rupture with his mother. Later, disillusioned even under Guanyin's guidance, he chooses to leave and seeks revenge against Wukong, no longer as a mischievous child, but as a hardened fighter shaped by betrayal and isolation. This shift transforms Red Boy from a mischievous trickster into a symbol of intergenerational trauma and unresolved vengeance, aligning with the game's darker, psychologically driven narrative.

Figures like Erlang Shen, in the original mythology, is portrayed as a righteous and powerful deity who upholds celestial order and occasionally assists the pilgrimage from a distance. He represents divine justice, discipline, and heroic strength. In Black Myth: Wukong, however, Erlang Shen is reimagined as the game's most formidable antagonist. No longer a distant protector, he becomes the key enforcer of the Heavenly Court, leading the assault on Mount Huaguo and ultimately defeating Sun Wukong. This transformation shifts his role from heroic guardian to oppressive force, symbolizing the corruption or rigidity of divine authority. This stark contrast reflects the game's broader theme of power inversion, where divine figures become threats rather than saviors. Erlang Shen's portrayal invites players to question traditional hierarchies and explore mythology from the perspective of rebellion and resistance.

Black Myth: Wukong reinterprets both main and secondary characters from Journey to the West with greater emotional depth and narrative complexity. Sun Wukong is portrayed as a tragic, introspective warrior, while Zhu Bajie becomes a bitter, fallen figure. The addition of the Destined One introduces a player-driven character that inherits and reshapes myth.

3. Narratives Representation

Black Myth: Wukong is structured around six chapters: Black Wind Mountain (黑风山), Yellow Wind Ridge (黄风岭), The New West (小西天), The Webbed Hollow (盘丝洞), Flaming Mountains (火焰山), and Mount Huaguo (花果山), each drawing inspiration from and reinterpreting scenes from the classic novel Journey to the West.

Black Wind Mountain (黑风山), in the original myth, chapters 16-17, the Black Bear Demon steals a sacred cassock from Tang Sanzang, serving as a light-hearted tale of greed and redemption. In the game, transforms this figure into Hei Feng Da Wang, a solemn, armored guardian haunting a decaying temple. Here, the original theme of theft is reinterpreted as spiritual collapse what was once a tale of recovery becomes a meditation on lost purpose and fallen sanctity.

Yellow Wind Ridge (黄风岭), Chapter 20 in the original myth setting, features a demon who blinds Tang Sanzang with poisonous wind, only to be defeated through divine intervention. In the game, the ridge becomes a hostile, open battlefield where storms obscure visibility and the Yellow Wind King commands elemental forces. The story shifts from divine rescue to chaotic confrontation, transforming spiritual blindness into sensory overload and environmental danger.

The New West (小西天). In the original myth, Journey to the West features several episodes where Tang Sanzang and his disciples encounter false Buddhas and corrupted Buddhist kingdoms, such as the tale of the False Western Heaven (假西天) in Chapter 87. In this story, the pilgrims are deceived by a group of demons posing as enlightened monks who attempt to usurp the legitimacy of the real Buddhist West. Black Myth: Wukong transforms this satirical moral lesson into a darker, more symbolic experience. The New West is populated by corrupted monks and divine impostor figures like the “Monk from the Sea” and other pseudo-holy bosses, who perform the outer forms of enlightenment but exude violence and madness.

The Webbed Hollow (盘丝洞), Chapter 72 of Journey to the West, is a short moral tale where seductive spider spirits attempt to deceive and eat Tang Sanzang, symbolizing lust and distraction. Sun Wukong exposes their illusion and defeats them, reinforcing a clear moral order. In Black Myth: Wukong, Webbed Hollow is reimagined as a dark, horror-infused space filled with grotesque insectoid bosses like the Scorpion Lord and the Hundred-Eyed Taoist Master. The theme shifts from temptation to corruption and psychological horror, creating a more immersive and emotionally intense narrative. This transformation reflects the game’s move from moral allegory to symbolic and emotional storytelling.

Flaming Mountains (火焰山), The myth of this fiery region explores family conflict between Red Boy (红孩儿), Princess Iron Fan (铁扇公主), and the Bull Demon King (牛魔王). In the game, Red Boy is no longer a mischievous child, but a tragic figure driven by rage and abandonment. The flames become symbolic of generational trauma, and the battle is framed not as an allegory but as a deeply personal confrontation with emotional wounds.

Mount Huaguo (花果山), traditionally the birthplace of Sun Wukong and a symbol of untamed rebellion, Mount Huaguo is reimagined in the game as a ruined and somber landscape. Figures such as the Old Monkey and Erlang Shen appear as echoes of a fading mythological past, suggesting the weight of legacy and the consequences of defiance. Rather than evoking pride, the setting invites introspection, prompting players to consider what remains when memory, power, and purpose begin to decay. Notably, the Destined One engages in battle sprites of Sun Wukong. Instead, the narrative shifts toward multiple interpretations and successors, reflecting a world where myth is fragmented and roles are constantly renegotiated.

These narrative choices reflect modern storytelling trends that emphasize emotional complexity and moral ambiguity. Characters like Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, and Red Boy are no longer one-dimensional archetypes, but reimagined with psychological depth and internal conflict. Perhaps the most notable narrative invention is the Destined One, a player-driven character who stands outside the original canon yet embodies its legacy. As an undefined figure, the Destined One is shaped by player action but linked symbolically to Wukong's story, sharing combat abilities, traits, and thematic burdens. This positioning allows the game to explore a constructivist approach to myth, where meaning is co-created between text and player. The myth becomes not just something to witness, but something to live through and rewrite.

In doing so, *Black Myth: Wukong* does not simply retell *Journey to the West*, it reconstructs it. Through chapter-based design and character reinterpretation, the game turns ancient legend into a personal, emotional, and interactive experience, preserving the myth's essence while reimagining its meaning for contemporary audiences.

Discussion

Following the concept of media portrayal (Punnahitanond, 2018; DeFleur & Plax, 1980), the game's portrayal of Chinese mythology shapes how players interpret and engage with cultural symbols and stories embedded within digital worlds (Rianto, 2024). By combining goal-oriented game mechanics (Yang, 2024) and emotionally immersive visuals (Ma, 2025), *Black Myth: Wukong* not only entertains but also actively encodes layers of Chinese mythology and philosophy, constructing a complex representational text.

Applying Stuart Hall's Representation Theory (Hall et al., 2003), the game's depiction of iconic mythological figures such as Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, and Red Boy moves beyond fixed, static symbols toward emotionally nuanced characters shaped by internal conflicts. This reflects Hall's idea that meaning is produced through encoding by creators and subject to varied decoding by audiences across cultural backgrounds, illustrating how representations in media are contested and dynamically constructed.

Each of the game's six chapters draws from familiar scenes in *Journey to the West*, yet reframes them through darker, introspective storytelling. These regions function as symbolic landscapes of cultural memory, transforming moral parables into emotional narratives that address identity, power, and belief.

The introduction of the Destined One further localizes myth within interactive experience. Players are no longer passive observers of Chinese mythology but active participants in reshaping it. Even revered divine figures like Erlang Shen and Maitreya are reimagined with ambiguity, challenging traditional hierarchies and encouraging critical engagement with inherited narratives.

In doing so, *Black Myth: Wukong* revitalizes Chinese cultural heritage in a globally accessible format. It bridges ancient stories with contemporary sensibilities, turning classical mythology into a playable, emotional, and culturally resonant experience that invites reflection on history, identity, and the evolving meaning of tradition.

Conclusion

1.Summary of Findings

This study finds that *Black Myth: Wukong* engages in a complex reinterpretation of classical Chinese mythology by transforming iconic figures and narrative structures from *Journey to the West* into emotionally layered, visually symbolic, and interactive experiences. The game's reimagining of characters like Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, and Red Boy emphasizes psychological depth and moral ambiguity, reflecting a broader trend in modern game design that prioritizes immersive storytelling over traditional didactic functions. Through its six regional chapters, the game reconstructs mythological spaces not as static backdrops, but as narrative environments filled with introspection, trauma, and symbolic conflict. Moreover, the introduction of the player-controlled "Destined One" offers a participatory lens through which myth is no longer just retold but reshaped.

2.Implication

Black Myth: Wukong is more than a visually impressive game; it's a powerful example of how traditional mythology can be reimagined through modern game design. By turning familiar legends into emotionally rich, interactive experiences, the game offers a new model for cultural storytelling in digital media. For developers, it highlights the value of moving beyond surface-level references and embracing deeper narrative adaptation. Myths, when treated as evolving stories rather than fixed symbols, can connect with players on both emotional and cultural levels. This approach not only enhances player engagement but also creates new opportunities for sharing cultural heritage with global audiences.

3.Suggestions

Future research could employ a survey or an interview method to explore how different player demographics, such as Chinese vs. international players, perceive the reinterpretation of the mythology which leads to the practical application of game developers to better understand how cultural representations in games are perceived across different cultures, enabling them to create more authentic and resonant narratives. A cross-game narrative analysis could be conducted for comparative studies between traditional and in-game myths, both for Black Myth: Wukong and other myth-based games (e.g., God of War, Hades) could also reveal how cultural context shapes myth adaptation across different gaming cultures. Moreover, deeper interdisciplinary approaches, combining media studies, cultural theory, and game design could further illuminate how games function not only as entertainment but as evolving platforms of cultural expression and dialogue.

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