The Overlap of Reality and Fiction: The Shaping of Virtual Ethnic Groups in Online Games

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Abstract

In recent years, with the improvement of network speed and the rise of mobile phone holding rate, games have gradually become a way of entertainment that can not be ignored by the public. Online games mostly set the story in a fictional world, with their own unique world outlook background stories. In order to reflect the richness of the world outlook, multiple races are often designed for players to choose, and tasks related to different races are set. In the game, there will also be a large number of "Alien Groups" as monsters, and most of them have strange shapes. With the increasing threshold of players' richness of game world view, the setting of these ethnic groups has gradually deviated from the early only modeling distinction. The design of background stories, languages, customs and habits of various ethnic groups will be gradually clear and specific, and even a large number of texts will be written for the settings of various ethnic groups in the game. The design of these virtual ethnic groups is inseparable from the ethnic groups in reality. The ethnic research results of realistic scholars have become the cornerstone of the design of virtual ethnic groups in online games. Taking the virtual group shaping in the Final Fantasy XIV of online games as an example, this paper reflects the real and fictional overlap of online games in the virtual group shaping through the rich group design in the game.

Keywords

Online Games; Virtual Groups; Fictional World.

1. Introduction

Final Fantasy XIV is a MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) online game launched by Japanese game company Square Enix in 2013, which can be played on computers and game consoles. The game takes place on a planet called Hydaelyn. As adventurers, players mainly take risks on this planet. As of the current version of the game (International Service 6.05), there are 8 kinds of races available for players to choose in the game, namely, Hyur, Elezen, Lalafell, Miqo'te, Roegadyn, Au RA, Hrothgar and Viera. Each race has two branches, and each branch has its own ethnic appearance, characteristics, customs and culture. These eight races are the "main nation" in the game.

Similarly, the Alien Tribes that will appear as monsters will be called "Beast". At the beginning of the game, Beast is a concept derived from the main continents of the game, Eorzea and Garlean Empire. It is used to refer to those speaking races (creatures with language) who act for false gods (Beast gods Eikon or other gods) not in accordance with the rules of civilized society but according to their beliefs. But in the other countries in the game, there is no saying of "Beasts". For them, it is just another race. In the early stage of the game (2013), the "Beast" mainly includes Amalj'aa, Sylph, Kobold, Sahagin, Ixal, Gigants, Mamool Ja and Qiqirn (version 2.0). With the update of the version in the past seven years, Gnath, Vanu Vanu, Moogle, Goblins, Dragon, Centaurs and Treelike (version 3.0). Kojin, Ananta, Namazu, Lupin, Matanga, Seeq,

Bangaa and Tengu (version 4.0). Pixies, Qitari (= Qiqirn), Nu Mou, Fuath, Mord (= Kobold), Ondo (= Sahagin) and Zun (= Amalj'aa) (version 5.0). Arkasodara and Loporrit (version 6.0).

2. Virtual Group Shaping in Final Fantasy 14

2.1. Virtual Group Shaping based on Real Group

In the game, players come to Azim Steppe with the development of the plot, which is a vast prairie. It is said to be the birthplace of Au RA, with a unique belief system of Dawn Father Azim and Dusk Mother Nhaama. Xaela, a branch of Au RA, has more than 50 tribes living in scattered areas. They still abide by the tradition and compete for the domination of the prairie.

When players come to Azim Steppe, they will find that most of the residents here live in yurts, and the name of NPC (Non-Player Character, a character that cannot be manipulated by players in the game) encountered by players is also similar to that used in Mongolia in the 15th century. Such as Baatu, which is a common Mongolian name, meaning strong; Ulan, means red. As an important NPC Cirina seems to be a fictional name, but the common Mongolian name Sarina means Moon Flower, while her grandmother Temulun, who has this name in history, is the sister of Genghis Khan.

When the player completes the main plot task in the Azim Steppe, the plot will require the player to participate in the Naadam and win in each tribe. Obviously, the prototype is the Mongolian festival Naadam. Naadam, also known as "Nair", means "entertainment and game" in Mongolian to express the joy of harvest. Naadam Congress is a traditional festival with a long history in Mongolia, which plays an important role in the life of the Mongolian people. There are horse racing, wrestling, archery, chess, song and dance competitions at the Naadam conference.

2.2. Virtual Group Shaping of Fantasy

In contrast, the Beast is a fictional fantasy group. The commonalities between these tribes are non-human. They appear in the image of orcs. Their characteristics can also be seen from the name (in fact, there are also Orc image races in the "main group"), which also appear in the field map of the game as monsters and will take the initiative to attack players. In the description of the Beast in the game plot, they summon the Eikon, and new powerful monsters appear, forming a Quest game with challenge difficulty and rich rewards for players to form a team to challenge. Similarly, the Beast has branches like the main group. One is belligerent and believes in Eikon, while the other branch will advocate cooperation with players, provide players with tasks that can collect production materials, and open the Beast Tribe Quest. After completing the task, players can buy unique Beast props in the Beast tribe of the Beast tribe.

Take Amalj'aa, the first Beast in the game as an example. The Amalj'aa lives on Paglth'an, a desert grassland in Ul'dah. Although there is no book system for players to collect in the game, the official publication of the game setting encyclopedia entity book allows players to understand the world outlook that can not be seen in the game plot. The Amalj'aa are a race of nomadic beastmen who made their home in Paglth'an. Every member of their species is trained in the arts of combat and hunting, and any who stands in their way are scourged with fire and steel. They are nomadic Beast on Paglth'an. They mainly live on grazing. Their bodies can adapt to dry land life and mainly feed on meat, but they have no special preference for the type of meat. They look for water and grass resources in different seasons and migrate. The Amalj'aa is managed by the United chiefs of the seven tribes. The chiefs of the seven tribes form tribal councils to discuss and decide important matters. It can be seen that the setting of Amalj'aa is to absorb the characteristics of primitive tribes of desert grassland nomads. The United Emirates system, grassland grazing, raising sheep and adapting to drylands are similar to those of grassland nomads in reality.

In the plot, the player encounters Ul'dah's businessman and army in collusion with Amalj'aa, and is captured as a sacrifice for Amalj'aa to summon Ifrit. After Eikon appears, the Amalj'aa cult will ask the Beast god to turn the human beings present into his followers. Eikon will exert his divine power. After discovering that his power can not make the player become a believer, Ifrit will think that the player is blessed by other wild gods, so as to open the game multiplayer Quest. The words of Amalj'aa sacrifice are similar to the mantra of tribal sacrifice in reality. Pray that the gods they worship can hear their wishes and pray that the gods use their powerful power to solve the enemy.

When the player defeats Ifrit, the player will encounter another branch of Amalj'aa: Ring of Ash. Ring of Ash is an Amalj'aa village united under another Amalj'aa leader. They despise other Amalj'aa's behavior of inviting Eikon and think that inviting Eikon is a sign of weakness. Ring of Ash inherits the proud tribal spirit, pursues its own strength, and continues to fight with other Amalj'aa. Players can complete Amalj'aa Beast Triple Quests to improve their reputation. After obtaining Amalj'aa currency, they can trade with Amalj'aa, and finally become allies, they can get rich rewards.

These Beast Tribe Quests are not only simple task systems, and Beast branches choose to cooperate with players for a reason. For example, Ixal, who believes in Garuda in the game, will meet Sezul Totoloc, a branch of their tribe, after the player defeats the Ixal Eikon that is called Garuda. He understands the player's vigilance, but their The Ehcatl Nine are all made up of craftsmen. They are only interested in Balloon-Airship (Flying vehicles in the game) manufacturing and don't care about people or Eikon. The mission is also to let players create materials that can make Balloon-Airship. When delivering materials, they will thank players for their help. The reason for their efforts to travel in the sky is that it is said that Ixal's ancestors lived on a floating continent called Ayatlan, where they defended the sky as sacred soldiers of Garuda. However, one day, the evil spreading in the ground began to rise and gradually invaded the sky. To this end, Garuda sent her servants to the ground to purify all these filth, and has been stationed there as a guard, so that the sky is no longer threatened. Since that day, Ixal has multiplied on the ground and looked forward to ending their sacred mission and returning to paradise lost in the clouds.

However, in later Quest, players will find that Ixal is actually a synthetic creature made by the ancient empire. Kezul of the Ixal tribe will walk with the player. When he learns the truth, he will be depressed. His master Sezul Totoloc teaches him that even if Ixal is a creature created, the passionate soul in pursuit of paradise lost can not be created by others. No matter who is qualified to pursue his dream, Kezul vowed to build Balloon-Airship in the future, pursue the Ayatlan in his heart, and be determined to become a great mechanic. By participating in the task of the whole Ixal story, players experience the game and shape Ixal's spirit of pursuing flight through a rich plot. Their understanding of Ixal is not limited to the initial "Beast", but a more distinctive group image.

2.3. Eikon Prototype

Eikon summoned by Beast is not all fictional gods in the game, and some of them have their own mythological sources. For example, the prototype of Ifrit summoned by Amalj'aa is a kind of Jinn, an elf in the Middle East. In legend, people are produced by earth, jinn family is produced by fire, and angels with the highest status are produced by light. The Ifrit clan with the ability to control fire is the demon with the highest mana. The Garuda summoned by Ixal is based on the giant divine bird Garuda in ancient Indian mythology and legend. It is the mount of Vishnu. Also from Indian mythology is Lakshmi summoned by the Ananta tribe. The prototype is the Lakshmi who can bring happiness and wealth, also known as the goddess of merit. It is a common phenomenon to absorb characters in real myths and legends into powerful copy monsters or summoning beasts in the game.

3. Conclusion

It can be seen that the purpose of the virtual group in Final Fantasy XIV is to enrich the integrity and richness of the game world view plot and setting from the side of the game, and the use of text or dialogue interspersed in the game is a very simple and low-cost method. It only needs to write relevant texts to arouse the curiosity of players. If we can create tasks and multiplayer Quest based on the text, we can improve the player's attention and adhesion to the game.

At the same time, these text designs are inseparable from the realistic ethnic culture. The virtual groups as monsters are mostly set in the form of primitive society. They live in the wild area of the game in the form of primitive tribes. Their main way of life is farming or nomadism, and they have their own unique handicraft technology. The social structure is dominated by chiefs, shamans and members with strong force. The gods they believe in have the characteristics of natural worship, rather than the gods actually recognized in the game world outlook, and will use alien human sacrifices to worship their own gods. The whole shows the image of an uncivilized primitive tribe. In the game, people living in formal towns and countries will avoid them.

As a virtual group that players can choose, they will have the same degree of civilization as the initial place of the game, believe in God actually existing in the world outlook, and have their own customs and culture. These settings have the characteristics that in early anthropology and ethnology research, researchers believe that their own level of civilization is higher and the alien groups are in the state of "Beast". However, this concept is no longer needed in today's era, so the alien groups in the game will eventually be found by the players. In fact, they are not much different from their original groups, creating an ideal fantasy world in the minds of the players.

The game is a virtual world, but it is not constructed out of thin air. The research of ethnology and anthropology in reality has an obvious impact on the setting of virtual nations, countries and ethnic groups in the game. These myths, stories and customs based on real existence serve as the source of creation and stimulate the inspiration of designers. Everyone weaves his own web of meaning. People's fantasy cannot appear out of thin air and can find its source in reality. With the technological upgrading in the field of visual technology and the development of VR, AR and other technologies, the design of these virtual groups will be more modern and perfect, creating more fantasy worlds based on reality for players.

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