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## **Paradigm Shifts in the International Communication of Chinese Online Literature in the Context of Digital Civilization: A Review of *Crossing Digital Civilizations: A Tutorial on the International Communication of Chinese Genre-based Online Literature***

**Jiang Xinyan**

**Abstract :** This review engages with *Crossing Digital Civilizations: A Tutorial on the International Communication of Chinese Genre-based Online Literature* ( World Book Publishing Company 2025 ) , edited by Wu Changqing, by examining its contributions across three central dimensions: the global circulation of online literature, the restructuring of genre within platform ecosystems, and the pursuit of cultural resonance through expressive participation. Rather than following conventional paradigms of external communication, the book foregrounds the intricate interdependencies between genre fiction and the infrastructural logic of digital platforms. It brings into focus an emerging global communication ecology—where genre functions not just as content, but as a narrative vehicle; platforms act as both mediators and regulators; and user communities become engines of vitality and meaning production. Through strategies such as “re-gentrification,” platform localization, and the construction of full-spectrum IP chains, the book highlights the flexible, adaptive nature of Chinese online literature in transnational contexts. More than a technical manual, it outlines a fresh model for cultural dialogue in the digital age—one grounded in affective storytelling, community co-creation, and infrastructure-aware dissemination. At the same time, the volume

does not overlook the tensions embedded in this model. It raises critical concerns about the potential flattening of cultural depth under algorithmic pressures, and the risk that genre narratives may become increasingly formulaic in the pursuit of global appeal. The review emphasizes the book's call to preserve expressive subjectivity and safeguard cultural complexity—reminding us that in a time of rapid global flows, diversity is not a given but a responsibility to uphold.

**Keywords :** Chinese online literature; digital platforms; genre communication; *Crossing Digital Civilizations: A Tutorial on the International Communication of Chinese Genre-based Online Literature*

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**标题：**数字文明语境下中国网络文学国际传播的范式转向——评《跨越数字文明：中国网络类型文学国际传播教程》

**摘要：**本文评介了吴长青主编的《跨越数字文明：中国网络类型文学国际传播教程》(世界图书出版社 2025)，围绕“出海与出圈”“类型重构与平台机制”“文化共鸣与表达能动性”三大核心维度，系统分析了该书的学术洞见与实践价值。不同于传统的对外传播模式，书中强调网络类型文学与数字平台逻辑之间的互动关系，揭示了一种新的全球传播生态：类型叙事成为文化传播的媒介，平台机制构成联通内外的桥梁，用户社区则为传播注入持续活力。书中提出的“再类型化”“平台本地化适配”以及“全版权开发”等策略，展现了中国网络文学在跨文化传播中的高度适应性，并为数字时代的文明对话提供了全新路径。与此同时，作者亦提醒读者警惕平台逻辑可能带来的文化深度流失与内容同质化风险，强调在全球文化流动加速的背景下，维护表达主体性与文化复杂性的重要性。

**关键词：**中国网络文学；数字平台；类型传播；《跨越数字文明：中国网络类型文学国际传播教程》

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## 1. “Going Global” and “Breaking Through”: How Online Genre Literature Reshapes International Communication Narratives

The deep integration of digital technology into global communication systems has propelled Chinese online literature from a marginalized form of folk creation into a dynamic force in cross-cultural exchange. Emerging within this context, *Crossing Digital Civilization: A Guide to the International Dissemination of Chinese Online Genre Literature*, edited by Wu Changqing, systematically addresses the cultural realities and strategic imperatives of taking online literature “global.” Through a potent synthesis of theoretical frameworks and

case studies, this textbook asserts that truly effective global cultural dissemination hinges not merely on political willpower or linguistic translation, but fundamentally on grounding itself within the cultural logic, platform mechanisms, and audience affective structures of the digital age.

The textbook's first section, "Digital Culture and the Ontology of Online Genre Literature," situates the development of online literature within the broader vision of "Digital China" construction. It elucidates how this emergent literary form transcends being merely a new genre born of the internet; it possesses strategic significance for "civilizational exchange and mutual learning." This unique communicative power stems from the highly structured generic templates (e.g., Xianxia cultivation systems, Xuanhuan progression frameworks, Sci-Fi technological imaginaries) and the resilient embedding of cultural sentiments within the texts. On one hand, the rich reservoir of historical motifs and philosophical depth drawn from Chinese culture provides online literature with profound narrative scope. On the other hand, the propulsion of platform algorithms and community interaction mechanisms enables online literature to rapidly permeate the daily reading habits of global youth audiences with high frequency and engagement.

Building on this foundation, the second section, "The Global Practice of Chinese Online Genre Literature," forms the empirical core of the book. Through detailed case studies of three representative genres—Wuxia, Xuanhuan, and Science Fiction—it offers detailed mappings of their reception patterns across diverse cultural spheres, including Southeast Asia, North America, and Europe. The key to the dissemination chain lies in the dynamic interplay of "text generation—platform distribution—user reproduction." The generative mechanism of online literature relies heavily on the autonomous writing of grassroots creators. This bottom-up content production, coupled with the clear narrative pathways and rewarding mechanisms inherent to genre fiction, ensures a lower barrier to cultural entry. Simultaneously, platforms like Webnovel and TapRead utilize intelligent algorithms for precise audience matching, while user-driven activities such as "fan self-translation" and "content adaptation" forge sub-channels of affective connection often inaccessible to official dissemination channels.

Consequently, *Crossing Digital Civilization* does more than provide vivid exemplars for "cultural export." It fundamentally transcends traditional "external propaganda" discourse. By leveraging platform logic as its fulcrum, it establishes a systematic dissemination pathway connecting text to user, and content to mechanism. Its value extends beyond being a textbook; it represents the construction of a digital communication paradigm within the context of cultural strategy.

## **2. "Genre Aesthetics and Platform Logic": Re-Genrification and Global Adaptability in Chinese Online Literature**

The global success of Chinese online literature is not merely a matter of "texts going abroad," but rather the result of a dual-track dynamic involving "genre reconstruction" and "mechanism embedding." *Crossing Digital Civilizations* astutely captures the structural transformations shaping contemporary cultural circulation:

it shifts the focus from the intrinsic charm of content to the coupling between genre logic and platform mechanisms, arguing that sustainable cultural dissemination in the digital age depends on the strategic mobilization of both technological infrastructure and global aesthetic preferences.

In terms of re-genrification, the book provides both theoretical insights and illustrative case studies. When Chinese online literature enters international markets, its original genre labels are often unfamiliar to foreign audiences. For instance, Xianxia has been reframed by translators and reader communities as “Cultivation Fantasy” or “Progression Fantasy,” while narrative forms such as “system flow” or “unlimited flow” have found acceptance under the influence of global gaming culture, functioning as interactive narrative mechanisms. These genre transcodings are not mere acts of translation; rather, they emerge from the combined effects of platform algorithms (e.g., click-through rates, recommendation volumes, completion rates) and user behaviors (e.g., ratings, reviews, derivative works), solidifying into new epistemic structures over time.

It is worth emphasizing that platform mediation has introduced a new infrastructural logic to the global dissemination of genre-oriented literature. The textbook delves into the ways in which platforms such as Webnovel shape content circulation—by leveraging algorithmic recommendations, amplifying visibility through leaderboard dynamics, and fostering sustained reader participation via community-building practices. However, platform-driven dissemination alone is not sufficient to ensure cultural relevance; meaningful localization remains essential. The textbook frequently highlights the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area as a key testing ground for online literature’s international reach, showing how local languages, audience receptivity, and targeted promotional strategies must come together to generate both cultural resonance and commercial growth.

Within this analytical framework, it becomes clear that Chinese online literature’s global communication strategy has shifted—from a model primarily driven by state narratives to a more decentralized system shaped by platform dynamics and genre-specific articulation. In this emerging paradigm, the process of re-genrification serves not simply as a flexible response to market demands but as a core logic underpinning cross-cultural meaning-making. Similarly, platforms no longer operate as passive conduits; they actively generate rules that structure cultural production and reception. This shift in infrastructure not only broadens the international adaptability of Chinese online literature but also presents a scalable model for circulating other culturally embedded media forms on the global stage.

### **3. Platforms as Bridges: Cultural Resonance and Expressive Agency in the Age of Digital Civilization**

The most compelling value of *Crossing Digital Civilizations* does not lie in the familiar question of whether Chinese online literature can “go global,” but rather in its interrogation of how such literature is interpreted once it crosses borders. This is not merely a matter of technological transmission; it speaks to a deeper civilizational issue—how meaning is negotiated and reshaped in cross-cultural encounters. Within the book’s analytical lens, digital platforms are treated not just as neutral carriers of content but as emerging cultural

infrastructures that participate in shaping meaning, building emotional connections, and managing communicative ecosystems.

Platforms have redefined the very terms of cultural reception. On global-facing sites such as Webnovel and MoboReader, algorithmic recommendation systems do more than simply match readers with books—they dynamically sort, rank, and circulate content based on behavior-driven feedback loops. This data-centric logic doesn't just enhance visibility; it also influences how authors write, nudging them toward faster pacing, clearer narrative structures, and more easily recognizable character arcs. In this ecosystem, platforms have moved beyond their traditional function as distributors to become active gatekeepers of narrative form and storytelling conventions.

The textbook underscores that genre storytelling has become a kind of emotional lingua franca in digital culture. Through detailed analysis of key genres like Xuanhuan, Wuxia, and Science Fiction, it illustrates how recurring narrative patterns—such as the rise from obscurity, the pursuit of justice, and self-transcendence—carry a resonance that travels across linguistic and cultural lines. What makes this possible is not only the universality of certain themes, but also the emotional immediacy and payoff that genre fiction provides. Translation, in this sense, goes beyond language; it involves a shift in perceptual and affective frameworks, often enabled by shared fan cultures and participatory communities.

A particularly insightful contribution of the textbook is its emphasis on user participation as a driving force in cultural adaptation. Fan translators, online forums, and derivative creators do not just passively receive or distribute content—they actively co-create meaning. The choices they make in vocabulary, annotation, or even tone can subtly reshape how stories are interpreted in different cultural settings. Meaning production, as the book convincingly argues, has become a collaborative act, one in which reader communities play an increasingly decisive role.

In its concluding chapters, the textbook turns to the long-term strategy of full copyright development. Here, the transformation of Chinese online literature into a robust cultural-industrial system comes into focus. By constructing an IP-centered chain that spans novels, TV dramas, animation, gaming, and merchandising, Chinese platforms have moved from simple export models to building an integrated cultural ecology. This shift is not just about expanding content formats; it's about establishing a sustainable, scalable infrastructure for global cultural exchange—one that hinges on genre adaptability, long-term platform governance, and consistent community engagement.

Importantly, the textbook does not shy away from difficult questions. In a platform-dominated, algorithmically curated cultural environment, are we trading depth for accessibility? Could the flexible grammar of genre become rigid under market pressure? And as “global readability” becomes the benchmark for success, is there a danger that creative expression will devolve into formulaic accommodation? *Crossing Digital Civilizations* does not offer easy answers. Instead, it invites the reader to reflect on the fragility and

value of cultural subjectivity, reminding us that true global resonance can only emerge when diversity is not smoothed out, but preserved.

### **Conclusion: From “Content Going Global” to “Civilizational Resonance”**

*Crossing Digital Civilizations: A Tutorial on the International Communication of Chinese Genre-based Online Literature* is a text of multifaceted value: a strategic manual tailored for practitioners, a theoretical platform for academic inquiry, and—perhaps most significantly—a cultural manifesto for the digital age. Using online literature as its focal point, the book excavates the complex and dynamic interplay among digital platforms, genre logic, and global communication practices.

What the textbook proposes is not a unidirectional model of cultural export, but rather a co-constructive framework of cultural engagement, wherein platforms serve as bridges, genres as media, communities as instruments, and industries as infrastructures. Within this architecture, cultural dissemination shifts from “I speak, you listen” to “co-participation,” from “label-driven output” to “co-construction of meaning.” The textbook departs from conventional, state-centric notions of soft power and instead maps out a paradigm of “soft landing” through algorithmic precision, emotionally resonant genre forms, and participatory user practices.

Viewed from a global perspective, the international spread of Chinese online literature is catalyzing an emerging pathway of cultural exchange—one no longer anchored in nation-states, but instead structured around interest-based communities, narrative typologies, and platform ecologies. In this sense, it redefines both the means and the metrics of “telling China’s story well.”

It is precisely in this broader context that *Crossing Digital Civilizations* must be understood: not merely as a textbook, but as a bridge—linking Chinese online literature with the world—and as a critical annotation on the transformation of cultural communication paradigms in the age of digital civilization.

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### **Reference**

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