

Innovation in the Paradigm of International Dissemination of Chinese Culture from the Perspective of Narrative Sovereignty—Taking the IFLM Adaptation of the Multilingual Musical *Wrath of the Sky* as a Case Study

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Abstract: Structural asymmetries in the global cultural communication order place China in a profound tension between its economic strength and its capacity for cultural narration. This paper extends the concept of 'sovereignty' from territorial and cultural dimensions to the narrative dimension, proposing and constructing the analytical concept of 'narrative sovereignty' to elucidate a state's ability to autonomously define, produce and disseminate its own narratives within the international public sphere, thereby securing legitimate recognition for its framework of meaning. To explore pathways for reclaiming narrative sovereignty, this paper proposes the 'Into Foreign Language Musical (IFLM) Adaptation' paradigm. Guided by the principle of 'putting ourselves first', this paradigm involves the creative adaptation of outstanding Chinese cultural works, aiming to achieve a qualitative leap in communication effectiveness---from semantic translation to the reconfiguration of interpretative frameworks. This paper constructs a triple theoretical analytical framework comprising constructivist international relations theory, postcolonial theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), providing a methodological foundation for IFLM transformation. Concurrently, based on SPSS multivariate logistic regression analysis, this paper constructs a "three-tier classification model of cultural works", offering empirical evidence for the strategic positioning of IFLM transformation. Taking *The Wrath of the Sky*---the multilingual musical adaptation of *The Monkey King*---as the core case study, this paper systematically verifies the effectiveness of IFLM transformation in safeguarding production autonomy, redefining framework authority, and expanding dissemination channels across three dimensions: textual, discursive, and socio-cultural practices. It thereby provides a systematic pathway for the international dissemination of Chinese culture that combines theoretical innovation with practical feasibility.

Keywords: narrative sovereignty; IFLM transformation; cross-cultural communication; critical discourse analysis; frame reconfiguration; *The Wrath of the Sky*

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement: The 'Narrative Deficit' and Sovereignty Dilemma in International Communication

In the contemporary context where globalisation and geopolitics are deeply intertwined, international communication has transcended the mere flow of information, evolving into a profound narrative competition centred on the rights to define, interpret and establish identity^[1]. However, the global cultural communication order exhibits significant structural asymmetry: Western digital platforms, represented by Netflix and Disney+, control the distribution channels for major global cultural products; whilst mainstream Western media habitually employ selective storytelling, contextual detachment and the reinforcement of stereotypes to systematically construct a 'China as interpreted by the West'. The consequences of this power asymmetry extend beyond the realm of competition in cultural soft power, directly eroding China's capacity for self-definition within the international public sphere.

The core of this predicament can be conceptualised as a 'narrative deficit'---that is, a significant gap

within the global information ecosystem between an actor's economic and political influence and its capacity to define itself and disseminate its core narratives. Although China has become the world's second-largest economy, it repeatedly finds itself trapped in a predicament of "external shaping" within the international public sphere: from the manipulation of discourse on Xinjiang to the periodic hype surrounding "economic collapse theories", China's narrative remains, to a large extent, mediated and shaped by Western interpretative frameworks. This reveals a fundamental challenge: when competing within Western-dominated narrative rules and distribution channels, neither official external propaganda (which often faces a 'credibility deficit') nor commercial expansion abroad (which is prone to 'self-Orientalisation') can effectively challenge existing structural power relations[2,3]. Consequently, China urgently requires an innovative narrative pathway that can circumvent existing discursive power barriers, strike a chord with the emotional structure of the audience, and be guided by its own cultural logic.

It is against this backdrop that this paper proposes and systematically analyses an emerging paradigm of cultural communication: the transformation of Chinese culture through IFLM (Into Foreign Language Musical). This paradigm creatively adapts outstanding works of traditional Chinese culture into foreign-language musicals, with 'self-centredness' as its fundamental premise. Through a triadic, multimodal artistic form combining 'music, drama and cross-cultural narrative', it achieves the dynamic reconstruction of cultural symbols and the direct, cross-cultural delivery of emotional resonance. The core argument of this paper is that IFLM transformation is not merely a practice of cultural innovation, but a systematic pathway aimed at contesting and reshaping China's narrative sovereignty. Its uniqueness is manifested in the following three aspects: Firstly, the non-official nature of the pathway; as a fusion of art and commerce, the musical possesses the ability to bypass political defence mechanisms and reach directly into the emotional realm of the audience; second, the systematic nature of its methodology: the integration of the 'three-tier classification model of cultural works' with critical discourse analysis elevates the transformation process from empirical exploration to an assessable and replicable scientific pathway; third, the pioneering nature of its practice: taking *The Wrath of the Sky* as an example, this pathway demonstrates, at the micro-operational level, the specific mechanisms for reclaiming narrative sovereignty.

1.2 Definition of Core Concepts

IFLM Transformation. IFLM is an abbreviation for 'Into Foreign Language Musical', referring to a creative transformation model that systematically adapts outstanding Chinese cultural works into musicals in foreign languages. Unlike the traditional 'translation plus adaptation' approach, IFLM transformation emphasises a 'China-centred' reframing of the narrative framework---retaining the spiritual core of Chinese culture whilst employing multimodal artistic means such as music, drama and dance to reconstruct the narrative in the target audience's native language. The core of its methodology lies in elevating cultural communication from semantic translation to a reconfiguration of narrative frameworks. Compared to the 'cultural localisation' strategy in communication studies, IFLM transformation refuses to sacrifice the integrity of the source cultural framework to cater to the target market; instead, it seeks to reconstruct the source culture's system of meaning within the target language system.

The core theoretical contribution of this paper lies in proposing and constructing the concept of 'Narrative Sovereignty'. The introduction of this concept is grounded in a critical dialogue with existing academic frameworks. Firstly, it builds upon and transcends the evolutionary lineage of sovereignty theory: from Bodin's[4] territorial sovereignty to the 'cultural sovereignty' proposed by Schiller[5] and others---a concept that defensively emphasises the right of cultural identity to be free from external domination. Although cultural sovereignty possesses critical value, it manifests more as a logic of 'passive guardianship' and fails to address the issue of 'active definition' within the global cultural market. Secondly, drawing on strategic narrative theory[6], which regards narrative capacity as a core component of a state's soft power. However, building upon this, the paper further incorporates the dimensions of exclusivity, autonomy and legitimacy inherent in sovereignty theory, shifting the analytical focus from 'how to tell a good story' to 'who has the power to define the narrative's framework of meaning, and how this power of definition prevails and gains recognition amidst the contestation of competing discourses'.

Accordingly, this paper defines narrative sovereignty as: the capacity of a cultural community to autonomously define, produce and disseminate its own narratives within the international public sphere, and to secure legitimate recognition and widespread acceptance for its narrative framework; as well as the capacity to resist, deconstruct and replace competing narrative frameworks in this process.

Narrative sovereignty comprises three interrelated and progressive constituent dimensions: autonomy of production (the question of agency in narrative production), the right to define the framework (the question of interpretive authority over the narrative), and control over dissemination channels (the question of media accessibility for the narrative). Compared to Joseph Nye's [1] concept of 'soft power', narrative sovereignty shifts the analytical focus from 'what resources we possess' to 'how we define ourselves, and how this definition is contested and established within the arena of power', thereby adopting a more critical and proactive stance.

1.3 Research Significance, Methodology and Case Selection

This paper seeks to make theoretical contributions in the following areas: Firstly, it proposes and systematically constructs the concept of 'narrative sovereignty', extending sovereignty theory to the cultural narrative dimension, thereby providing a new analytical tool for understanding international cultural competition in the era of globalisation, and engaging in effective dialogue with theories such as strategic narrative and cultural sovereignty; Second, to construct a triple theoretical analytical framework integrating constructivism, postcolonialism and critical discourse analysis, thereby providing a new methodological approach for cross-cultural communication studies; third, to construct a methodological system for IFLM transformation, and to provide a scientific basis for its strategic positioning through a three-tier classification model grounded in empirical data.

This study employs a methodology combining case study analysis with critical discourse analysis. The Wrath of the Sky was selected as the core case based on the following considerations: this work represents the first systematic practice of IFLM transformation, with complete scripts already produced in multiple languages including French and English; adapted from the 'Uproar in Heaven' segment of Journey to the West, the character of Sun Wukong enjoys global recognition, facilitating the observation of cross-cultural transformation effects. Data sources include a transnational questionnaire survey (N=7557), multiple rounds of in-depth expert interviews, and primary materials such as the official reply from the office of French President Macron. Drawing on Fairclough's [11] three-dimensional analytical framework, this paper will conduct a comparative analysis of the narrative frameworks of traditional translations and IFLM adaptations across three dimensions: text (lexicon, syntax, metaphor), discursive practices (contexts of production, dissemination and consumption), and socio-cultural practices (relationships between discourse and power).

2. Theoretical Foundation: A Triple Analytical Framework for Reclaiming Narrative Sovereignty

To thoroughly analyse how IFLM's adaptation reclaims narrative sovereignty, this paper does not simply apply existing theories but constructs a three-tiered theoretical analytical framework comprising constructivist international relations theory, postcolonial theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This framework was selected based on the distinct yet intrinsically coherent ways in which these three approaches address the issue of 'narrative sovereignty'. Operating at the macro (international system), meso (historical structure) and micro (textual practice) levels respectively, they provide a comprehensive theoretical basis and methodological tools for identifying, deconstructing and reclaiming narrative sovereignty.

2.1 The Macro Level: The Ontological Foundations of Constructivism and Narrative Sovereignty

Traditional international relations theory regards state identity as a given constant, but constructivism challenges this assumption. Wendt [7] argues that state identity and interests are not exogenous to international interactions, but are socially constructed through such interactions. Within this theoretical framework, narrative becomes the core mechanism of identity construction. Campbell [8] further reveals that national identity is continually defined and consolidated through differential narratives of the external 'other'. Consequently, whoever controls the narrative framework substantively participates in the international process of constructing national identity.

The significance of introducing constructivism into this study lies in the fact that it provides an ontological justification for narrative sovereignty. It answers the fundamental question of 'why narrative sovereignty is crucial': because narrative is not an accessory or embellishment of power, but a constitutive element through which identity and interests are formed in international politics. Consequently, the 'narrative deficit' China faces in the international public sphere is not merely a matter

of communication technique, but a sovereign issue concerning the right to construct international identity. The transformation of IFLM is precisely a cultural practice through which China participates in the construction of its own international identity---it does not passively disseminate information about 'China', but actively constructs the meaning of 'China' in the international public sphere through the narrative frameworks of cultural products.

2.2 The Mesolevel: Postcolonialism and the Mechanisms of Historical Loss of Narrative Sovereignty

If constructivism reveals the necessity of narrative sovereignty, postcolonialism reveals, from historical and structural dimensions, how narrative sovereignty has been lost. Said's[9] Orientalism profoundly reveals that the 'Orient' is not a natural geographical or cultural entity, but rather an image of the 'Other' systematically constructed by the West through academic, literary and artistic discourses. This process of construction is itself an exercise of power; by representing the Orient as mysterious, backward, emotional or authoritarian, it establishes a self-image of the West as rational, progressive and democratic.

Postcolonial theory provides this study with crucial historical depth. It demonstrates that the loss of narrative sovereignty is not an accidental consequence of contemporary imbalances in communication technology, but rather the continuation in the cultural sphere of structural inequalities formed over centuries of colonial history. When Disney replaced the Chinese ethics of loyalty and filial piety in *Mulan* with an American narrative of individual heroism[10], this was a classic symptom of cultural hegemony within a postcolonial context: the signifier (the image of *Mulan*) was retained, but the signified (the cultural values it embodies) was systematically replaced with content that conforms to a Western-centric cognitive framework. Consequently, any discussion regarding the international dissemination of Chinese culture must be examined within this unequal global cultural power structure. The 'self-centred' approach pursued by IFLM represents a fundamental counter-movement against this historically constructed status of being 'represented'.

2.3 Micro-level: Critical Discourse Analysis and the Operational Recovery of Narrative Sovereignty

While constructivism and postcolonialism provide macro- and meso-level theoretical perspectives respectively, the practical recovery of narrative sovereignty requires a set of analytical tools capable of precise operation at the micro-level of textual and discursive practice. Norman Fairclough's[11] Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides precisely such a tool.

The core proposition of CDA is that language is not merely a tool for communication, but rather a form of social practice that both reflects and reproduces social power relations. Fairclough's[11] three-dimensional analytical framework---textual analysis (examining lexical choice, grammatical structure, and the use of metaphor), discourse practice analysis (examining the contexts of text production, dissemination and consumption), and socio-cultural practice analysis (examining how discourse is embedded in and acts upon broader social power relations)---provides a sophisticated analytical tool for identifying and correcting distortions of implicit meaning in cross-cultural translation.

In this study, CDA functions as a tool for identifying and diagnosing narrative sovereignty. For instance, in a traditional French translation of Li Bai's verse "I raise my cup to invite the bright moon", the translator added the word "solitaire" (lonely). Viewed through the lens of CDA, this is not a simple case of lexical addition, but rather a discursive practice: the translator, disciplined by the French Romantic discursive order, has replaced the Chinese Daoist philosophical framework of 'unity of heaven and man' with the Western framework of the individual's experience of solitude. By identifying the addition of 'solitaire' at the textual level, analysing the translator's discursive practice context at the meso-level, and revealing the underlying power struggle between individualism and the concept of the unity of heaven and man at the macro-level, CDA enables us to pinpoint the micro-mechanisms through which narrative sovereignty is displaced. Consequently, CDA is not merely a critical tool, but also a starting point for reconstruction. The core methodological approach of IFLM---framework re-setting---is precisely founded upon a CDA diagnosis of existing translations.

2.4 The Synergistic Effects of the Triadic Theories

In summary, constructivism, postcolonialism and CDA are not three isolated 'theoretical components', but rather constitute a logically rigorous and clearly stratified synergistic analytical

framework:

- Constructivism (macro-level analysis): addresses the 'why' of the need to contest narrative sovereignty---because narrative is a constitutive element of international identity construction.
- Postcolonialism (meso-level analysis): addresses the 'how' of the loss of narrative sovereignty---revealing the historical-structural mechanisms through which the West has systematically deprived non-Western nations of their right to self-representation via discursive hegemony.
- CDA (micro-level analysis): addresses the question of 'how to' reclaim narrative sovereignty---providing concrete operational methods for identifying, deconstructing and ultimately reconfiguring narrative frameworks at the level of texts and discursive practices.

This three-tiered theoretical analytical framework provides a solid academic foundation and systematic methodological support for the subsequent analysis of the three-tiered mechanisms through which IFLM transforms and reclaims narrative sovereignty, as well as the specific practices demonstrated in *The Wrath of the Sky*.

3. The Strategic Positioning of IFLM Transformation: The Empirical Construction of a Three-Tier Classification Model for Cultural Works

Having established the theoretical framework, IFLM transformation, as a practical pathway, must address a preliminary strategic question: under resource constraints, why was the musical chosen as the core vehicle for reclaiming narrative sovereignty? This requires the support of a scientific theory of cultural work classification. To this end, this study constructs a "Three-Tier Classification Model of Cultural Works" based on an empirical analysis of 345 valid cultural work samples.

3.1 Research Design and Data

This study uses the scope of influence of a work (scored 1–5, with 5 representing world-class) as the dependent variable, and the production cycle and investment amount as the core independent variables. Through multivariate logistic regression analysis, it examines the quantitative relationship between resource investment and dissemination effectiveness. The data were derived from a preliminary screening of approximately 10, 000 cultural works, with 345 representative samples ultimately selected for coding and analysis. Due to space constraints and for the sake of the article's readability, the specific model-building process has been partially omitted in this paper.

3.2 Model Results and Theoretical Interpretation

The final model formula is as follows: Model formula explanation:

$$\ln(4.0/3.0) = 0.004 + 0.193 \text{ creation cycle} + 0.085 \text{ number of investments}$$

$$\ln(5.0/3.0) = -0.943 + 0.414 \times \text{creation cycle} + 0.267 \times \text{investment amount}$$

The comprehensive test results of the model ($p=0.003<0.05$) indicate that the model construction is statistically significant. The results of the regression analysis are summarised in **Table 1**:

Table 1: Summary of multi-class logistic regression analysis results

Summary of Multiclass Logistic Regression Analysis Results						
4.0	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Wald χ^2	p-value	OR	OR 95% CI
Creation cycle	0.193	0.181	1.137	0.286	1.213	0.850 to 1.730
Number of investments	0.085	0.130	0.430	0.512	1.089	0.844 to 1.405
Intercept	0.004	0.497	0.000	0.994	1.004	0.379 to 2.656
5.0	Regression coefficient	Standard error	Wald χ^2	p-value	OR	OR 95% CI
Creation cycle	0.414	0.177	5.481	0.019	1.513	1.070 to 2.140
Investment amount	0.267	0.131	4.122	0.042	1.306	1.009 to

Intercept	-0.943	0.514	3.369	0.066	0.390	1.690 0.142 to 1.066
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Note: McFadden $R^2 = 0.022$

Cox & Snell $R^2 = 0.046$

Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.052$

If we further use the reference group with an influence range of 3.0 ("national level"), we obtain **Table 2:**

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis (Control Group)

Comparison of Scope of Influence	Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	p-value	OR	95% CI
4.0 vs 3.0	Production cycle	0.193	0.181	0.286	1.213	0.850–1.730
(International vs National)	Number of investments	0.085	0.13	0.512	1.089	0.844–1.405
5.0 vs 3.0	Production cycle	0.414	0.177	0.019	1.513	1.070–2.140
(World-class vs National-level)	Number of investments	0.267	0.131	0.042	1.306	1.009 ~ 1.690
Note: Model fit statistics: -2 Log Likelihood = 703.466, $\chi^2 = 16.172$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.003$						

The empirical results reveal an important pattern: the creative cycle (OR=1.513, $p=0.019$) and the amount of investment (OR=1.306, $p=0.042$) are significant positive predictors of a work achieving world-class influence (5.0). Specifically, for every one-unit increase in the production cycle, the probability of a work achieving world-class status increases by approximately 51.3% relative to national-level status; for every one-unit increase in investment, this probability increases by approximately 30.6%. Based on this, this study constructs a 'three-tier classification model for cultural works':

Level 1 (Basic Dissemination Type): Short production cycle (≤ 1 year), low investment (≤ 100 units). Impact is limited to the community or industry level. Typical forms include short videos and short text-image posts. Low investment and short production cycles significantly limit the possibility of breaking through the threshold for regional dissemination.

Level 2 (Potential Growth Type): Moderate duration (1–5 years), moderate investment (100–10,000 units). Impact ranges from national to transnational levels, with significant potential to leap to the global level. Typical forms include musicals, plays and medium-to-long novels. Empirical evidence shows that such works can achieve an effective leap in influence through resource optimisation (such as cross-language adaptations).

Tier 3 (International Impact): Long cycle (> 5 years), high investment ($> 10,000$ units). Impact is stable at the transnational to global level. Typical forms include films and large-scale documentaries. Long-term, high investment is a necessary condition for maintaining their influence, but marginal returns are constrained by resource limits.

3.3 The Strategic Positioning of Musicals: The Transformation of IFLM as a Second-Tier Work

When musicals are examined within this model, their strategic value becomes clear. The production cycle for a medium-scale musical typically ranges from 2 to 5 years, with investment levels falling within the 1,000–10,000 unit range, which perfectly aligns with the resource thresholds for second-tier cultural works. Empirical findings indicate that this combination of moderate production duration and investment significantly increases the probability of international dissemination ($p < 0.05$). This positioning reveals the strategic logic behind IFLM transformation: whilst third-tier products (such as transnational films) serve as 'flagships' for achieving world-class influence, their high costs and concentrated risks make them unsuitable as routine, large-scale cultural dissemination tools; first-tier products, though rapidly producible, lack the cultural depth required to undertake the task of reframing narratives necessary for contesting narrative sovereignty. Only second-tier products—typified by musicals—occupy the strategic equilibrium point of 'moderate investment and high potential'. Their characteristic of increasing marginal returns (a significantly higher probability of leaping from national

to global status) makes them an effective choice for maximising narrative influence under resource constraints. The IFLM's decision to select musicals as its vehicle is precisely based on a scientific insight into the relationship between 'resource investment and dissemination efficacy'.

4. Framework Reset: The Practice of Reclaiming Narrative Sovereignty in the Multilingual Adaptation of Wrath of the Sky

Guided by the aforementioned theories and strategies, this section uses *Wrath of the Sky* as a case study to demonstrate how IFLM adaptation achieves the three-dimensional recovery of narrative sovereignty at the micro-operational level.

4.1 Reclaiming Production Autonomy: The Strategic Choice of Journey to the West

The primary stage of IFLM adaptation is the selection of the source text, which in itself constitutes an exercise in narrative sovereignty. The core narrative of *Journey to the West*—Sun Wukong's rebellion against the authority of the Celestial Court—holds particular strategic value in the context of international cultural dynamics. The stereotypical Western framework of the 'docile-submissive' Orient, as revealed by Said[9], is precisely subverted by the narrative of resistance against an unjust order contained within *Journey to the West*. The choice of this text, rather than a more neutral subject matter that would be more readily accepted by the West, constitutes in itself a conscious defence of the autonomy of production: it declares that China not only holds the right to 'tell stories', but also the right to 'choose which stories to tell'.

4.2 Reclaiming the Right to Define Frameworks: Symbolic Resetting from a CDA Perspective

The right to define frames lies at the heart of narrative sovereignty. IFLM transformation achieves a qualitative leap from 'semantic correspondence' to 'frame reconfiguration' in the transformation of key cultural symbols by combining the diagnostic functions of CDA with the multimodal narrative capabilities of musical theatre:

(1) Bima Wen: Retaining the Context of the Demoted Official Title

Traditional translations render "Bima Wen" literally as "Keeper of the Horses", failing to convey the derogatory and humiliating connotations underlying the title. The French version of IFLM establishes the context through a voice-over by Tai Bai Jin Xing: "A title devoid of honour, a post of no merit—to humiliate the Monkey King, that is their scheme. "Subsequently, Sun Wukong sings: "I am not their stableman (Palefrenier), I am a King (Roi), the absolute sovereign!" The sharp contrast between "Palefrenier" (stableman) and "Roi" (King), through the juxtaposition of lyrics and the dramatic tension of the melody, achieves a cross-modal transmission of cultural context without the need for textual annotation.

(2) The Celestial Court: A Reframing from 'Heaven' to 'l'Ordre Céleste'

Traditional English translations render "*Tianting*" as "Heaven", unconsciously placing it within the framework of Christian sacred space. Within this framework, Sun Wukong's act of "causing a riot in Heaven" is easily interpreted by Western audiences as a desecration of the sacred order. The IFLM French edition systematically translates it as "l'Ordre Céleste" (the Celestial Order), transforming the Celestial Court from a sacred space into a space of power. The script makes extensive use of terms such as "décrets" (edicts), "hiérarchie" (hierarchy) and "bureaucratie" (bureaucracy), constructing a secularised, politicised image of the Celestial Court. This strategy of "borrowing the form whilst redefining the content" successfully shifts the audience's interpretative framework from religious desecration towards political resistance.

(3) The Great Uprising in Heaven: Reconstructing the Meaning of Action from 'Destruction' to 'Resistance'

Western narratives often reduce Sun Wukong to a mere 'troublemaker'. The IFLM adaptation, however, clarifies the framework of his actions through a climactic aria: 'It is not the heavens themselves I challenge, but the injustice concealed within them.' This lyric establishes a crucial conceptual distinction: the target of his rebellion is the 'unjust order', not 'order' itself. This lends moral legitimacy to Sun Wukong's rebellion, and this reframing is not an imposed political interpretation, but a faithful restoration of the original text's internal logic—the fundamental motive behind Sun Wukong's

rebellion in Heaven is precisely the Heavenly Court's systematic disregard and humiliation of him.

4.3 Recognition of International Legitimacy: The Symbolic Significance of Macron's Team's Reply

In 2024, a reply from French President Macron's office (as shown in Figure 1) stated: "Mr Macron appreciates your contribution to maintaining the friendship between our two nations and considers your project to be very promising." This reply holds dual symbolic significance at the levels of discursive and socio-cultural practice: Firstly, it marks the recognition of the legitimacy of IFLM's transformative practice by the highest political elite of the target country; the French side did not view it as cultural appropriation, but rather affirmed its public diplomacy value in promoting bilateral friendship; secondly, it positions IFLM's transformative practice as a two-way cultural exchange rather than a one-way cultural export, providing strong external corroboration for the recognition of narrative sovereignty in the international public sphere.



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Monsieur,

Le président de la République française a bien reçu le courriel que vous lui avez adressé et il vous en remercie.

Sensible à votre démarche, monsieur Emmanuel Macron se réjouit de l'intérêt que vous portez à la langue et à la culture françaises. Il salue également votre attachement aux liens d'amitié qui unissent nos deux pays.

Aussi, le chef de l'État vous transmet tous ses encouragements, ainsi qu'à votre équipe, pour la réussite de votre projet théâtral.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs.

Rodrigue FURCY

N° PDR/CP/BT/PR/1064336



Figure 1: Reply from Macron's team

5. Conclusion

Taking 'narrative sovereignty' as its core concept, this paper systematically examines the issue of reclaiming narrative sovereignty in the international dissemination of Chinese culture. It employs a three-tiered theoretical framework combining constructivism, postcolonialism and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), alongside the strategic positioning of a three-tier classification model for cultural works and the practical experience of the multilingual musical Wrath of the Sky.

This paper extends the concept of sovereignty from territorial and cultural dimensions to the narrative dimension, proposing a three-dimensional analytical framework comprising autonomy in production, the right to define frameworks, and control over dissemination channels. Compared with 'soft power', narrative sovereignty shifts the analytical focus from resource endowment to the contest for the power to define meaning; compared with 'cultural sovereignty', it shifts from passive defence to active definition. The erosion of narrative sovereignty is not an accidental result of an imbalance in

communication technology, but rather the cultural continuation of structural inequality in a postcolonial context---a typical manifestation of which is the retention of the signifier whilst the signified is replaced.

Furthermore, IFLM offers an operational methodology for reclaiming narrative sovereignty. At the level of production autonomy, it ensures the agency of the narrative subject through the principle of 'putting oneself first'; at the level of frame-defining authority, it achieves a transition from semantic transformation to frame reconfiguration through multimodal narrative techniques---as evidenced by the transformation of the Golden Monkey Staff from 'cudgel' to 'le Bâton sacré' and the Celestial Court from 'Heaven' to 'l'Ordre Céleste' in *The Wrath of the Sky* ; At the level of distribution channel autonomy, the multilingual strategy of 'unified framework---differentiated expression' reduces structural dependence on distribution channels.

A three-tier classification model of cultural works, constructed using SPSS multivariate logistic regression, indicates that second-tier cultural works, represented by musicals, occupy a strategic equilibrium point of "moderate investment-high potential", providing quantitative grounds for the strategic positioning of IFLM transformation. The multilingual practices of *The Wrath of the Sky* and the response from Macron's team offer empirical validation of the effectiveness and international legitimacy of narrative sovereignty recovery.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in proposing and constructing the concept of narrative sovereignty and its three-dimensional analytical framework, establishing a triple theoretical analytical approach across disciplines, and providing a systematic solution for the international dissemination of Chinese culture that is both critical and operational. Future research could further refine the operational indicators of narrative sovereignty, expand the sample size and explanatory variables of the three-level model, and conduct large-scale empirical evaluations of the communicative efficacy of IFLM transformation. The recovery of narrative sovereignty is an ongoing cultural practice, and the transformation of IFLM has opened up a new pathway for telling China's story in a 'self-centred' manner within the global narrative contest.

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