

ETHNOGRAPHIC ANIMATION: PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WITH THE LONGHORN MAIO

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Abstract

This research proposes animation as a form of ethnographic documentary, exploring animation's potential to document the underrepresented cultures (*e.g.* oral culture) of minorities. Drawing upon a critical analysis of the approaches and methods used in animated documentaries that involve minority issues, alongside preliminary studies of the Longhorn Miao, this project will result in an animated documentary that explores aspects of the cultural practices the group undertakes. This project's contribution to knowledge lies in expanding the use of animation as an innovative form of ethnographic documentary, defining an emerging territory of ethnographic animation and expanding of participatory design principles to represent the Longhorn Miao people.

Keywords: *Animation; ethnography; documentary; minority; voice; co-design, authenticity.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1978 Edward W. Said published the book *Orientalism*, which explored post-colonialism with political and cultural criticism and influenced various aspects of European academia including ethnology. This has shifted ethnographic research from observational recordings of cultural differences to the encouragement of minority groups to interpret their own cultural discourse. Consequently, there is a tendency for ethnographic representation to be exhibited from the cultural perspective of the social group at the centre of the project. For example, Paul Rabinow's *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977) and Jean Paul Dumont's *The Headman and I* (1978) reflect the anthropologists' reflection on themselves and mainstream discourse. Of course, this positional reflection affects not only the construction of writing ethnography but also the creation of ethnographic documentaries themselves.

With some filmmaker's exploration of academic and filming ideas, they began to try some participatory methods with local community members, aimed at making community members directly involved in the process of film production, rather than passively becoming a subject. The role of being an active film producer enables community members to articulate their own perspectives more directly and eliminate, to an extent,

cultural barriers or misunderstandings in the film. For example, Mitzi Goldman's *Chinese Take Away* (2002) and Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman's *Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids* (2004).

Meanwhile, some scholars suggest that using the conventions and techniques of alternative digital multimedia, including animation, breaks the limitations of the traditional filming discourse (Ruby, 2008: 1). For example, the specific content of cultural memories and oral culture (e.g. ancient folk songs) is difficult to express visually through a traditional live-action documentary. However, community members can use images to represent the content of oral culture and connect movements and narratives together through animation technology, so that the oral culture can be visually and directly illustrated by animated images. In this way, community members may eliminate the outside world's conjecture on the content of their oral tradition, borne from a lack of specific pictorial explanation.

This paper will first analyse the concept of post-colonialism to explain the issue of a region and explain the change of Longhorn Miao's wedding under the influence of mainstream culture. Secondly, it will detail the representational strategies of the animated documentary, as well as evaluate the accuracy and authenticity of animations' representations of minorities' perspective and

everyday experiences. Thirdly, the paper will explain concepts of participatory design and relative practices to evaluate the utility of this concept within ethnographic animation production.

THE INFLUENCE OF MAINSTREAM CULTURE ON CHINESE MINORITY

Ethnographic cinema communicates researchers' anthropological knowledge (Ruby, 2008: 2). In this way, the filmmakers' attitude and position to the subject will be represented in the film. Therefore, the reflection of self-discourse and a grasp of the political and cultural relationship between the ethnic groups can support the perspectives of the ethnic minorities which in turn can be conveyed more veritably and directly (Marcus & Fischer, 1999).

Since the 1970s, post-colonial criticism has been extensively introduced into the question of the nature of anthropological knowledge. The issue of the responsibility of the ethnologist has been subjected to post-colonial scrutiny from various aspects (political and ideological), regardless of whether its criticism comes from the previously colonised state or from the former Western colonists themselves (Marcus & Fischer, 1999). Criticism includes a debate on colonialism, which was mainly concerning the Western group's authoritative voice of the others' history, the control

of political units and the introduction of social and knowledge models (Ghasarian, 1997).

With the progression and conscious development of passing time, in the reflection of post-colonialism, what is firstly concerned is anti-colonialism, followed by its scope which is not limited to revealing Western imperialist ideology. Particularly evident in today's issues within specific regions/districts, post-colonialism has a broader meaning. For example, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak used postcolonial theory to explore the concept of Subalternity. In *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), Spivak disclosed that Indian women are restrained by Western white-centred and local male discourse.

Similarly, an internal Orientalism became remarkable. In *Minority Rules: The Miao and The Feminine in China's Cultural Politics* (2000) Louisa Schein's description begins with the Chinese nationalist movement to the socialist movement of the Communist Party (*i.e.* establishing ethnic minority autonomous regions). Chinese society gradually formed both inside and outside of nationalist ideology: for inside nationalism, the emphasis is on the distinction between Han people and non-Han peoples, the latter for the impoverished, conservative (*i.e.* opinions and values) group that needs help and transformation; for outside nationalism, it is a combination of Chinese

nationalism, against Western imperialist colonial aggression (Schein, 2000:108-110).

In modern China, the history of closed policies and economic stagnation forced the Chinese people to reposition themselves and to pursue modernity. In the post-reform and opening-up 1979 era, the desire for economic development and affluence became the primary feature of modern demands and the main theme of the times.

As international communication improved, European and American cultural products were imported by China's major coastal cities. 80 years later, urban citizens (mainly Han Chinese) began to access these cultural products by modern media and began to become influenced by the mainstream European and American cultural ideas. Since then, urban Han people's living habits have gradually become Westernised. For example, a formal dress code within the workplace is also the standard in Europe and the United States. This also confirms the concept of deterritorialism proposed by some European scholars in the study of globalisation and modernisation.

The main features are manifested in spreading culture through modern means of science and technology (Papastergiadis, 2013), as well as an invasion of strong culture on marginal

culture, making local cultural characteristics lean towards homogeneity (Hopper, 2007). However, the modernisation of China and the level of European and American cultural impact on the region are not balanced. Due to living in remote areas, some ethnic minorities receive less influence from mainstream culture, their culture still retains obvious ethnic characteristics. This kind of minority culture, which is different from the mainstream culture, has gradually attracted the attention of mainstream cultural groups through the Han media reports. Their image and history were seen as an 'alien other cultural product and has been constantly imagined, created and controlled in current social life (Schein, 2000). Thus, the concept of post-colonialism will provide a new perspective and mode of thought for people to examine cultural interactions and to disconnect from the antagonistic relationship between the other and the self, thereby promoting the pluralistic development of culture.

Given the current specific situation of ethnic minorities in China (*i.e.* minority cultural identities have undergone certain changes under the influence of mainstream culture), it is essential to strengthen the study of minority cultural identities to ensure that we may more clearly understand the issues they encounter in terms of cultural inheritance, and support minority people to express their own voices and aspirations for the

impact of both Han culture and mainstream culture.

THE CHANGE OF LONGHORN MAIO'S WEDDING CUSTOMS

China's modernisation development influence from the coastal cities. This unsynchronised development has led to a divide between the level of modern and economic development within China. This is particularly evident in remote ethnic areas, notably the extreme agricultural conditions (i.e. the Karst Landform that consists of soluble rocks, mainly distributed in Guizhou, China. Precipitation or water will cause erosion of this kind of rock and it is therefore not conducive to the development of agriculture) and self-sufficiency of the traditional agricultural production model. The results of this gap, therefore, became obvious to some ethnic minority areas and cities in term of their economic and modern development.

In recent years, in order to improve the situation regarding development disparity, China's government began to emphasise the establishment of its communication system and formulate relevant policies to enhance the local economy and the modernisation level. Meanwhile, the mainstream culture and the differences in the economy are known by ethnic minorities through the network and television media. Under the stimulation of the mainstream

culture and in the pursuit of economic development, the minority's culture and customs have also undergone some changes.

As one of the least-populated ethnic branches in China, Longhorn Miao called themselves *Meng Rong*. Han scholars in the 1990s came to call them Longhorn Miao because their hair would be tied with a two to five-foot Longhorn-shaped wooden comb, and this distinguished them from other branches of Miao People. Longhorn Miao people live in the Guizhou mountain area, approximately 2000 meters above sea level, and are located in 12 villages; they amount to approximately 4,000 people.

Due to Longhorn Miao having no written word their cultural heritage is mainly based on word of mouth - the Miao oral language is a medium for organising folk songs and other cultural activities. In such a closed culture of internal circular transmission and with the lack of influence of the outside world, the production mode, religious beliefs and living customs of the cultural main body have maintained a stable pattern for a long time.

From the beginning of the 1990s some young men of Longhorn Miao began to travel out to work while broadening their horizons. Meanwhile, the establishment and opening of the Suojia Ecological Museum (living museum) began to

attract a large number of outsiders to the village. As a result, many customs of the Longhorn Miao, including weddings, are experiencing a recession, change, and reconstruction.

Longhorn Miao people have long adopted a relatively strict inter-marriage system. The long-term cohabitation and closure of the same ethnic minority has increased their awareness of internal cohesion against external forces, which has enabled many of their own ethnic cultural practices to be successively handed down. Therefore, wedding customs are an important part of Longhorn Miao Culture.

In recent years, due to the impact of mainstream culture, almost no one in the Longhorn Miao Village has held a traditional wedding ceremony with the complex processes and boisterous atmosphere they traditionally entail. More young Longhorn Miao people choose a relatively quiet and simple Western-style wedding or simply go without a wedding.

However, it should be noted that while some wedding customs have become extinct, others have remained to this day. For instance, according to the dictation of the elderly in the village, Daqin¹, the traditional wedding ceremony disappeared after 1950. In addition, compared with Guge (Miao traditional folk songs), today's popular music is

more welcomed by the young Longhorn Miao people, which means that very few young Longhorn Miao people can accurately sing Guge. According to the survey results attained by the author of this research, at present, there are only three people in the village who can sing Guge about marriage. Nevertheless, the tradition of Suanjigua² has always been used in the weddings. Even though the wedding of an increasingly Western-style, Suanjigua is an indispensable aspect. The above examples illustrate that under the impact of mainstream culture, the culture of Longhorn Miao has declined and changed internally.

Other external forces have also influenced the current state of the Longhorn Miao culture. These external influences on the Longhorn Miao people are mostly caused by government and business people. In order to promote the development of local tourism, some policies have directly led to the reconstruction of Longhorn Miao Culture. For example, on the Dragon Boat Festival each year, Longhorn Miao Village holds a large-scale cultural performance called Tiaohuapo. In its publicity, it advertises that girls and boys will sing folk songs and find their ideal mate. Consequently, huge quantities of tourists will travel to see the performance of looking for a mate. However, according to interviews with the local elderly population, Tiaohuapo has been derived from the past Zuopo tradition in recent years to attract

tourists. Zuopo translates to a girl and boy singing for each other on the mountains. In addition, in the past, many of the long-horned Miao population would look for partners in the busy farming areas or in markets, rather than by participating in Zuopo or Tiaohuapo.

It seems that the combination of ethnic culture and tourism has promoted economic benefits for the local community, which has publicised the ethnic culture. The purpose of this combination since its onset has been economic development, so it can be said that the cultural performance here is disjointed from the Longhorn Miao's authentic lives and culture. From this perspective, this so-called cultural revival of today's Longhorn Miao traditions is actually a kind of rediscovery of cultural behaviours, stimulated by mainstream culture, and there remains a potential crisis of cultural decline underneath.

Due to this influencing impact of mainstream culture, outside researchers who work with Longhorn Miao's must have a better understanding of post-colonialism, orientalism and ethnological cooperation in order to ensure that their rights and culture are respected in the study. In addition, in the study, it is necessary to distinguish between their natural cultural state and the packaged or reconstructed culture, so that Longhorn Miao's culture can be accurately interpreted and expressed.

To demonstrate this natural cultural state and an authentic cultural perspective, it is necessary to explore an appropriate recording method to aid them in visually conveying their cultural identity and understanding while eliminating outsiders' misunderstanding of their culture.

AN INVESTIGATION INTO ANIMATION AS ETHNOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY

The animated documentary is able to combine documentation with visual expression, and existing animated documentaries have shown a number of significant advantages over live-action films, particularly in their unique representational strategies. These representational strategies have been analysed by Annabelle Roe in her *Animated Documentary* (2013), which considers the contexts of evocation and non-mimetic and mimetic substitution. It is the ability of the animated documentary to successfully convey the perspectives and culture of the minorities using these three representational strategies that will be discussed in this chapter.

Evocation is an important representational strategy that conveys emotional expression, which animation can achieve in a different manner from live action documentaries. Roe states:

Animation is increasingly being used as a tool to evoke the experiential in the form of ideas, feeling and sensibilities. By visualising these invisible aspects of life, often in an abstract or symbolic style, animation that functions in this evocation way allows us to imagine the world from someone else's perspectives (Roe, 2013:25).

A is for Autism (1992) is an example of an evocative animated documentary. In order to convey these struggles, director Tim Webb utilised paintings created by the interviewees and animated them using a motion animation technique, thereby conveying the emotional activities and unique thinking of the autistic subjects to the viewers. Similarly, evocation can be used as a medium to visualise the picture in the human brain in a visual form. The minority people could also use paintings to represent their understanding or remembered images of ancient folk songs and cultural memories and connect them together through this animation technique.

Moving on from evocation, mimetic and non-mimetic substitution is vitally important in animated documentaries as explained by Roe, 'In both mimetic substitution and non-mimetic substitution, the animation could be considered a creative solution to a problem: the absence of filmed material' (Roe, 2013:24).

These two expressions will provide important assistance in the future study of restoring the history of ethnic minorities. It is necessary to identify the differences between the two; mimetic substitution utilises technical methods to reduce the missing image to a level of plausibility and photorealism, whilst non-mimetic substitution aims to make the image realistic (Roe, 2013:24). For example, the first historical animated documentary, Winsor McCay's *The Sinking of the Lusitania* (1918) and Dennis Tupicoff's work *His Mother's Voice* (1998) are good examples of this. By this point in time, animation was used for the purpose of restoring reality rather than a form of expression.

According to the concept of mimetic or non-mimetic substitution of the animated documentary minorities' history is at risk of being lost can also be restored and reproduced by a representational strategy of mimetic or non-mimetic substitution. The main reason for a resulting historical gap in some minority cultures is that a number of these ethnic minorities do not have written words; history is passed between generations orally. There is a danger that these oral accounts can become distorted, thereby creating a disconnection and misrepresentation of history. There is also a fear that the new generations of minority groups are not interested in these historical traditions. As such, the government is now making audio recordings

of minorities' histories. However, this is only being used as an audio record of history and is not being used as a more effective transmission tool for younger generations. Audio recordings do not accurately convey the historical content of migration and war to young people. However, it is possible that animations based on those audio recordings could utilise mimetic or non-mimetic functions to convey this as a visual historic archive for education and museums, thereby encouraging the wider spread of oral tradition and the minorities' histories.

This analysis of the three expression strategies has demonstrated that animated documentaries can be effective in portraying the mental and psychological activity that cannot be recorded by camera and can utilise visible images to record history. However, when an ethnographic documentary director and subject are born in different cultural groups, it becomes necessary to consider the methods of cooperation with the community members to ensure that the content of the film can be accurately conveyed with the views of community members.

STRENGTHENING THE USER'S PERSPECTIVE THROUGH PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

If the purpose of this ethnographic documentary is to help community

members to record their own cultural memories and the understanding of the community culture, then this documentary could be seen as a product with service functions for them. This product should meet the needs of the beneficiaries (community members). Therefore, their experience and feedback on this product will directly influence the judgment of the success of the product.

Of course, a design process is required when creating a product with service functions. Additionally, it is necessary to create a reasonable design approach that unifies the internal quality improvements of the developer and the customer's needs and satisfaction (Hermann, 2000). The most effective way to achieve this is for the developers to maintain an open attitude and directly cooperate with users. This concept is highlighted in Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) article *Co-creating Unique Value with Customers*. Therefore, Participatory Design (PD) will be the focus of the study.

PD is a maturing field of research and an evolving practice among design professionals (Kensing & Blomberg, 1998: 167). PD combines users' ideas into the design process with their co-interpretation of the research being an essential part of the process (Kensing & Blomberg, 1998). As such, the user becomes the product designer and the designer observes and coordinates

to achieve the required product. As a concept, although the specific practical methods will be adjusted by different projects, the practical principles of PD must be followed in each project. In *Routledge International Handbook of Participatory Design* (Simonsen & Robertson, 2012), and *Organising Principles and General Guidelines for Participatory Design Projects* (Bratteteig, Bødker, Dittrich, Mogensen, & Simonsen, 2012:117), the approach uses IT design as a case to enforce the four principles of PD, respectively Coherent Vision for Change - Genuine User Participation, Firsthand Experience with Work Practices, and Anchoring Visions.

These four principles include the planning of a sustainable development plan at the beginning of the project, the qualifications of the participants, training and information sharing for the participants, and the collection of feedback on the prospective beneficiaries in practice. The authors, through analysis of several cases, further describe that some problems could be solved by following the four principles in practice. For example, in order to ensure that the final product meets the needs of users, participants can not only provide information but also effectively participate in all stages of product development. The selection of participants should focus not only the managers or executives of a group but also any person who demonstrates enthusiasm for the project and the desire

to learn about project development so that participants and developers alike can form an interactive and mutual learning relationship to support the project development. Moreover, to avoid the influence of the perspectives of the developers, the participants should have the right to have full project disclosure, equal participation, and the authority to contribute their own first-hand experiences, rather than become a worker in the project.

If the practical principles of PD can be applied into Chinese ethnographic animation, allowing internal members who are interested in minority culture and the technology of animation documentary to be directly involved in the production of the animation could prove beneficial to the overall authenticity of the film, if fully reflected. Including community members' perspectives and understanding of their own culture would also contribute to the authenticity.

In addition to recruiting community members to participate in the specific process of animation production, it is valuable to conduct staged screenings of the animation to the local community to collect feedback from other community members. In doing so, ethnographic animation can reflect a common view of the members of the community rather than merely reflecting the views of the participants.

Besides understanding the principles of PD in practice, it is important to consider the mutual respect requirements for different knowledge and related ethical issues, if the practice is to be conducted in ethnic minority areas. Such considerations will assist in eliminating the sense of estrangement between the filmmaker and participants who are from different cultural backgrounds, ultimately supporting participants' point of view to be substantially conveyed through minority animated documentary filmmaking. For this point, *Participatory Research Maximises Community and Lay Involvement* (Macaulay, Commanda, Freeman, Gibson, McCabe, Robbins & Twohig, 1999: 775) summarises collaborative relationships and steps in practice, which are outlined by The Royal Society of Canada

Attributes of researchers and community members contributing to a successful partnership and outcome include ability to build respectful relationships and engender trust; awareness of political issues; self-awareness of biases and perspectives; tolerance for complexity, unpredictability, and conflict; seasoned group process skills and commitment to equality of relationships and conflict resolution.

Of course, the specific method of participatory design is not changeless, and ethnographic filmmakers must consider the local specific situation to explore and adjust their approach to participation and cross-cultural cooperation. Recently, some minority-themed animations have emerged through different cooperative methods with local participants, which will provide guidance to minority-themed animated documentaries.

THE PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PRINCIPLE IN ETHNOGRAPHIC ANIMATION

To clarify, if the subject of an ethnographic documentary is from a different cultural group than the filmmaker, then the filmmaker should consider the cross-cultural communication to give a voice to the community members, in addition to the filming itself.

At present, the idea of participation and cooperation with community members has been applied in minority-themed animations. Nina Sabnani's *Tanko Bole Chhe (The Stitches Speak, 2009)* is an animated documentary which celebrates the art of the Kutch artisans associated with Kala Raksha. Through the conversations and memories of four voices that share their involvement in the evolution of a craft tradition, a definition of their identities is produced, alongside an explanation behind the forming the Kala

Raksha Trust and the School for Design. The film uses the narrative art of applique and embroideries which they use to articulate their responses to life the events thereof, such as a traumatic earthquake and more joyful moments, like flying a kite.

Sabnani's role as the animator was not 'shaped' by a personal style, she developed storytelling techniques from her engagement with the minority people (Sabnani, 2012). She attempted to tell the stories in the way the subjects wanted them to be narrated, using their own visual language. As such, the film exclusively uses the Kutch's own embroidered style and narrative content to highlight their experiences and memories of earthquakes and migration.

It could be said that this animated documentary is a strong, positive example of co-design with local community members in animation production. However, it should be mentioned that not all key actors possess ethnic drawing skills or knowledge of animation production processes and that not all researchers can use the local language to communicate with the narrators. In this case, the narrator and the animation designers could be chosen separately from the community. Furthermore, recruiting bilingual gatekeepers as a medium of communication is necessary in the fieldwork.

According to the PD method of narrowing the gap between product and customer satisfaction in the cooperative process mentioned above, in the process of making the ethnographic animated documentary, allowing community members to be directly involved in the production, and the need for staged screenings in the community to collect feedback from other community members, the researchers and participants should continue to improve the production of animated documentaries based on feedback, thus ensuring that the minority perspectives conveyed by the documentary are universal rather than those of the participants and researchers.

In my project, two groups of Longhorn Miao participants, varying between 10 and 100 people in size respectively, were to be recruited in Longhorn Miao resident areas in Guizhou province, China. The first group (G1) consisted of 10 undergraduate Miao students, the 10 participants were required to involve themselves in the animation design since one of the research purposes is to verify the validity of Participatory Design in ethnographic animation. Therefore, understanding the perspectives of the Miao undergraduate students assisted in the design of the animation by reflecting their own culture, which is essential to the research programme, especially to the aforementioned participatory design part. In addition, the 10 Miao

students are members of Longhorn Miao community, acting as gatekeepers to increase the local people's trust and assurance during the investigation. The participants of my second group (G2) consisted of a total of 100 subjects who were surveyed and interviewed by G1. Then, through a group discussion and vote for their answers and communication in the survey, 3 (two elderly individuals and a young man) of these 20 participants and their anecdotes respectively became the prototypes and sources of the fundamental material of the ethnographic animation.

In the animated production, as described above, Longhorn Miao students animated according to the interviewer's exposition and recall of traditional culture. In addition, according to the practice method in the participatory design, the products should be improved through collecting feedback and opinions of beneficiaries so that the final product meets the user's need. In this process, we regularly invited the Longhorn Miao participants who were recorded as protagonists, to see our progress and comment on the works. We respected their comments and modified the animation.

Based on current practice results, the involvement allowed the Miao students to modify the animation accordingly and resultingly attained a relatively accurate portrayal of the culture. For example, in the interview, it was learned that in

a traditional wedding the bridegroom needed to hold an umbrella when welcoming the bride. According to the current documentary about the Longhorn Miao wedding and the pictures of local museums, the wedding umbrellas are shown in red. Therefore, when designing the colours of the umbrellas, we initially designed them as red, but in the subsequent collection of opinions, the older participants of the village suggested that the colour of the umbrella should be to black or green because the old wedding umbrellas would only be black or green, not red. Based on this information, we revised the design of the colour of the umbrella in the animation. It is noteworthy to mention that this occurrence reflects how that the Longhorn Miao culture has been re-packaged in some documentaries and pictures to cater to the aesthetic interests of the mainstream cultural groups (Han people) because red is the main tone of Han traditional weddings.

In addition, through discussion with the Miao students and protagonists, I recorded the protagonists' current life circumstances and current cultural transmission of ideas and plans by mean of images to depict my observation of the Longhorn Miao people. It is evident that the Longhorn Miao's perspective and the author's observations are equally interspersed throughout the film. This method allows ethnic minorities to use their own ethnic art style to

interpret their cultural traditions and cultural memories, while allowing external researchers to use their own art style to express their observations of minorities' contemporary cultural life, it is possible that the emic and etic viewpoint could establish contact and contrast in the film. The community's culture can be represented from multiple perspectives in this way.

The project within ethnographic animation has several benefits in young people's participation. Recruiting participants for animation production and prototypes animation respectively will lead to a cultural commutation between new and old Miao people that promotes young minority people's understanding of and attention towards their own unique culture. This project will have a meaningful legacy for the community in that 10 local students have learned how to create animation, and this will continue to benefit the local community in their cultural heritage protection, cultural communication, museum, education programmes, and other wider fields.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this paper was to explain the three aspects that are involved in ethnographic animation. The first part relates to orientalism within post-colonialism in explaining the issue of the region and explaining the change of Longhorn Miao's wedding culture

under the influence of mainstream culture. In the second part, through analysis of the different visual expressions of three representational strategies of animation documentary, the limitations to representing authenticity through an animated documentary are discussed. The third part has analysed the feasibility of cooperation in ethnographic animation by studying the principle of participatory design. Through the analysis of the above three parts, the main conclusions are as follows:

Firstly, with the influence of postcolonialism, ethnographers have begun to move the focus of ethnography from recording cultural phenomena and differences to conveying minorities' own voices and reflecting the discourse away from mainstream cultural perspectives. From the beginning of the 1990s, under the influence of tourism development and dominant culture, Longhorn Miao's wedding customs have changed, been reconstructed, or have disappeared entirely.

Secondly, the three representations of the animated documentary can articulate the legend, memory, and history of the minority, substituting for the lack of live action film.

In addition, participatory design can be an effective cross-cultural co-operative approach that can be applied to the production of ethnographic animations.

This means that ethnic minorities actually participate in visualising their own oral cultures, creating images based on their personal memories that convey their own sense of cultural understanding and their voices therein to the larger public. Adopting with respect the recommendations of ethnic minorities as a prerequisite adds a certainty to a researcher's records regarding the current life circumstances of the given minority. This contributes a subjective perspective and creates a sense of balance in the depiction.

To conclude, with the increasing interest in postcolonial concepts, ethnographic animation will be presented as an emerging form of ethnographic documentary, which allows minorities' oral cultures and historical memories to be uniquely visualised, especially for those minorities with no written language. Moreover, ethnographic animation can potentially become a visual record of the culture of ethnic minorities for the purposes of cultural heritage protection, education, cultural exchange, and museums display.

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Endnotes

- 1 In the traditional Longhorn Miao wedding, the bride's maiden family gently strokes the groom before the bridegroom greets the bride in order to detect the groom's sincerity and loyalty. This process is called Daqin.
- 2 Suanjigua is a divination ritual before the wedding ceremony. The elderly will use chicken bones for divination to see whether the men and the women are suitable for marriage.

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