The Role of Narrative Expression in Ethnographic Films in the Mechanism of Aesthetic Communication: A Case Study of *"Free Goose".*

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to explore the influence of "Free Goose" in Guangxi ethnographic filmmaking field by observing the narrative expression and aesthetic features. In the narrative tradition of observing human culture and life, ethnographic films often present the existence of ethnic groups and regions in rough and simple film language. Individual gazes and their aesthetic expressions are skewed in the mainstream creative paradigm, but in ethnic culture, an increasingly multi-dimensional texture appears in its interpretation. This paper focuses on a selected research sample on the visual narrative language and aesthetic artistic characteristics of the ethnographic film "Free Goose". This paper is qualitative research that used the comprehensive observation and interpretation of anthropology, narratology, and film language to carry out a case study on the film "Free Goose". The study used in-depth interviews and text analysis in order to sort out the cultural significance of ethnographic films in Guangxi, China through aesthetic principles, and explore the reason and way that narrative mode can constitute aesthetic form. The study concludes the communication mechanism of aesthetic art is an important element that should not sideline.

Keywords:
Ethnographic film, narrative expression, aesthetic features, communication mechanism

INTRODUCTION

Aesthetics, as a branch of philosophy, has been developed since ancient Greece and its speculative nature has always existed and guided and fed back technology and academics (Cottingham, 2021). It has always followed the academic viewpoints of philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Adorno and so on-aesthetics belongs to the category of philosophy. The research questions which are studied in this article are based on the academic background of philosophical aesthetics and narratology that have academic foundations to follow in the field of ethnographic film production. Particularly, according to Pippin (2021), aesthetics cannot exist independently from the support of philosophy. Moreover, with the evolution of philosophy and the development of human industrial civilization, the birth of film art is accompanied by aesthetic characteristics and styles. The aesthetics of visual image art has always been a topic of concern and discussion by researchers, and this kind of research started from the beginning. Reason tilts toward later sensibility, and it also branches into various refined types of aesthetics and technical aesthetics (Waki, 2021).

To understand the situation from the making of this iconic film, this paper discussed the characteristics and contributing factors for shooting and editing the ethnographic film "Free Goose" by using data from in-depth interviews. The preliminary findings from the director who made this film in this in-depth interview found that an individual's observation and gaze play a crucial role in the formation of aesthetics. When it comes to content creation, dramatic conflict, and gender identity were mentioned by directors, it is concluded that audience acceptance is highly regarded with the protagonist's life-changing stories.

The ethnographic film "Free Goose" is a masterpiece of Guangxi ethnography film that has emerged in the Chinese ethnography film. The awards for this film "see the big from the small" incisively pointed out that it is an anthropological film and television language. The highlight of

narration and recording is the balance between individual gaze and ethnic culture. On the basis of the classic structuralist narrative, "Free Goose" is biased towards the narrative of spectacles. Its video narrative opens up a "gender identity" cut from the most basic traditional linear sketches, although the middle and later sections are interspersed with flashbacks of time and space relations, and it does not follow the narrative. Break away from the classic paragraphs, the core is always clear, and the narrative text is regular.

Its "spectacle" lies in the aesthetic indications of narrative ideology shown in the narrative text. This "spectacle" has nothing to do with elements such as imagination, surrealism, and absurdity. The director has no intention to make a record with ethnographic attributes. The film exaggerates the narrative level, and does not focus the narrative on queer stories, it is not the core of a typical Chinese transgender and homosexual popular story (Zhao, 2020). Besides, it is intended to use narrative reflexivity as a narrative driving force to drive the audience into the field of spiritual experience and empathy. This is not only different from the paradigm of an anthropological documentary showing the appearance of foreign cultures and customs, but also different from the previous focus of humanistic documentaries on the exposure and shouting of the bottom. Its signifier-"life" reflects the aesthetic image trend of ethnic culture in Guangxi minority areas. Field shooting and recording and observation of individual life growth give this film new aesthetic characteristics, "The transition of contemporary film narrative aesthetic experience from participation, context to 'hybridity' echoes the needs of audiences and the background of the times, and reflects multiple aesthetic meanings." (Ma & He, 2019, p.141).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review about the narrative element analysis and aesthetic concept of the ethnographic film began with the collection and assessment of relevant literature published in recent decades. For paper collection, CNKI academic websites were utilized and updated up to September 2022. The keyword search included "ethnographic film, narrative, aesthetic," and then the title (and abstract) was screened. Bao (2021) clarified the direction of this research path. He believes that from the macroscopic human language system to the appellation of family kin to the concern for human unity, anthropology is always exploring the path of exploration of the "human" object. Turning the perspective to the micro level, the German philosopher Husserl proposed the concept of "Life-World", putting life before the world. According to Husserl's phenomenology, life is the first, and life is the most precious thing. It can be said that this kind of thinking echoes the spirit of Chinese culture, such as the morality described in "The Analects". When you hear the news of the fire in the horse ring, you should first ask if the person taking care of the horse is hurt; as in the narrative style of "Historical Records", with characters as the center. How does Husserl's concept of the world of life be used in anthropology? Bao Jiang (2021) provides a path for the study of the life world of film and television anthropology, including topic selection, academic history combing, fieldwork, locking the protagonist of the film, starting shooting, and sharing with the public.

It is worth noting that the anthropological theory of the gaze and the particular treatment of the gaze in an ethnographic context are often in trouble because they are theoretically tied to reality due to the shortcomings of anthropological theory. They also often fail due to the opposite problem as they believe that they need to be anchored to extract abstract theoretical benchmarks and fail to take experience into account. This ambiguous oscillation often causes anthropological narratives to be discarded by philosophy and common sense, especially making any discussion about gaze meaningless (Hamzah-Osbourne, 2021). According to Li (2021) at the China Anthropology Conference Forum: "The development of academia is going step by step, marked by milestone events and films, and it is always supported by academics. There definitely will also be shortcomings of support from the industry such as the technical and economic constraints of television cameramen,

independent documentary directors, and ethnography workers." These challenges are then followed by a multi-modality formed by the confluence of academics and technology. In response, Francesco (2021) is more explicit in warning that on the whole, the current limitations partly stem from the curious contradictions within the discipline, because they are caught between a lack of concrete theory and a lack of abstract practice. This is a reminder that film, part of the context, has the social and cultural norms of film origin. However, based on the fact that film has the characteristics of interacting with individuals through language, these representations can be returned to society in a "digested" or "redefined" manner.

On the other hand, the language of cinema is composed of both the visual and the auditory. The use of visual narrative in ethnographic research is not only an observation tool, but also reflects and produces different knowledge processes, and well-designed methods can represent a unique writing style. Audio-visual narration is part of social reality and also of the process of establishing a collective identity. It itself is the object of anthropological research. These images are understood as part of social reality and capable of dialogue with cultural norms, directors, and researchers. Therefore, like other social reality norms, visual resources are not yet ready to operate and identify individuals. It is part of a complex process that is constantly updated. This kind of mutual influence has an aesthetic effect on the visual resources and the narratives and images that constitute the representation of the theme in its social reality. Visual resources in communication are acknowledged to be powerful in cognition and memory (Paivo, 1991), but they are not just transmitters of information; they are the products of cultural histories and the cognitive resources we use to create meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001; Mirzoeff, 1999).

Ryan（2019）explained that the term "aesthetics" comes from the Greek word "aesthetics" and refers to sensory perception. Until recently, the field of aesthetic inquiry in the Western philosophical tradition has been dominated by questions about the beauty and taste of art. Aesthetic philosophers have been committed to deriving the standards and principles for making correct aesthetic judgments. The foundation is that aesthetics constituted an autonomous value field, which should be isolated from social concerns, moral considerations, or power relations. Høgel (2018) believes that in the face of materials representing various forms, material conditions, and styles of different ethnographic fieldwork eras, we choose not to target any homogenization of materials. Instead, we try to highlight the aesthetic heterogeneity and diversity of the methodological discourse we encounter. The purpose of art is to convey the feeling of things because they are perceived, not known. In recent years, more and more art historians, sociologists and anthropologists have begun to pay attention to the aesthetics of ethnographic video art, to what role images and sounds would play in the field investigation of ethnographic films, they have begun to publish some noteworthy research results, especially in the aesthetic presentation.

According to Lee (2021), in film, the camera should be used as the same "light and shadow" brush as in painting, calligraphy, sculpture, poetry, music, opera, etc. It can be used to transform itself into something big or go into the depths, to show the realm of transcendence and earthly feelings, to look down on the vast and endless universe of heaven and earth, and to see all the active and rhythmic lives and their beautiful hearts. Lee further explains that "air" is the core direction of Chinese film aesthetics. This study extends this concept to the field of ethnographic cinema, as it embodies a poetic and anxious consciousness that assimilates the emotions of the largest audience and tries to guide the audience's mind. This is a very ideal state and a future-oriented spiritual aim of Chinese ethnographic film aesthetics, which exudes the light of Eastern humanism from the beginning to the end. Lu (2022) clearly asserts that ethnographic films fulfil the purpose of anthropology in three layered dimensions: visual, everyday life, and emotional, and provide an intuitive lifeworld. Their understanding and analysis of aesthetics emphasized the production process and artistic expression of influence. Hediger (2019) believes that the inconsistency of form is the reason for the definition of practical films as aesthetic means, which also makes them a model of film historical aesthetics. Although this is not a

view raised for ethnographic films, it discusses the rules of using audio-visual language skills in the production and editing of ethnographic films from a technical perspective.

Balázs (2010) pointed out that in the field of film, what we need is to understand film and such an aesthetic theoretically. It is not to draw conclusions from existing works of art, but to require or expect some kind of artwork. In response to this, Jin and Xu (2008) responded that in fact, this view is to explore movies from a cultural perspective, and cannot be regarded as a true aesthetic theory. As mentioned above, theorists such as Metz's discussion on film language is worthy of reference, because "classic film theory starts from the traditional aesthetic point of view as the expression of film as art." (Brown, 1994, p.166-167). And the change of artistic thought was not isolated at the time, it appeared with the advent of western social thoughts. Benjami recognized this change, cut into photography, analyzed the difference between classical art and modern art from the perspective of art manufacturing technology, and predicted that mechanical reproduction would lead to the emergence of popular culture. This is Benjamin's technical reproduction aesthetics. This aesthetic thought of his is mainly reflected in the completion of "Works of Art in the Age of Technological Copy" in 1936 (Mourenza, 2020).

Ethnographic films usually transcend the artistic or decorative sense of images and use them as cognitive tools to suggest abstract concepts. The discovery of real events aims to reflect as much as possible the opinions, experiences, and feelings conveyed by participants regarding a particular culture (O'Regan, et al., 2019), which will inevitably produce new aesthetic meanings and the study of cultural groups and individuals will produce the subjective aesthetic expression of the recorder himself. This will inevitably inspire new aesthetic meanings and trends: the study of cultural groups and individuals will produce subjective aesthetic representations of the chronicler himself. Although the director must objectively and emotionally distance himself from the subject in order to conduct effective research, and the new trend should focus on balancing cultural group and individual research, how to deal with all the photographic material captured is a process that reflects the recorder's aesthetic concept. (Zhu, 2019)

In ethnographic film communication, regions and ethnic groups would have differences in all aspects. Difference in language, culture, economics, religious beliefs, customs, etc., may exist between communities, groups, or individuals. From the perspective of the dynamic social impact theory of communication, the social space where people meet each other, know each other, and communicate with each other is a tangible space. In this tangible space, if people know each other or share the same identity, they would easily become a group. Otherwise, the further they are away from this space, the weaker the impact of the space may have and the less effective the communication would be（Hong, 2018）.

Based on the above research questions and literature review, this study, therefore, aims to identify and discuss aesthetic trends in ethnographic films in the context of narrative expression and aesthetics, and to dialectically discuss the contextual background that gave rise to this particular study, this article explores from the perspective of aesthetic communication It discusses how the ethnographic film "Free Goose" touches and empathizes with the audience in the communication mechanism.

Objectives—By collecting and analyzing relevant data, perspectives and narratives to answer the questions formulated below：

1. How does the narrative strategy of the ethnographic film "Free Goose" unfold?
2. How does the narrative of the ethnographic film Free Goose influence the aesthetic features?
3. What is the aesthetic transmission mechanism of the ethnographic film "Free Goose"?
4. What are the factors influencing the aesthetic communication of the ethnographic film "Free Goose" that can touch the audience?

The recorder in this study refers to the film director. It is a process to embody the recorder's aesthetic concept in how to deal with all the image materials shot, although the recorder must be

objective and emotionally distanced himself/herself from the subject in order to conduct effective and objective research.

METHOD

Based on narrative and aesthetic theories, this study adopts a qualitative research method through in-depth interviews from the perspective of audience reception in communication research. This study analyzes the narrative rhetoric of the ethnographic film "Free Goose" by carefully observing the dramatic conflicts of the characters' actions and plots. This paper discusses how the aesthetic characteristics produced by narrative influence the dissemination of aesthetics and ultimately reach audiences. Since this study focuses on the growth of characters and the aesthetic characteristics formed by the narrative of the story, the important elements that have received the most attention include plot, character growth and change, and the event setting. The resulting aesthetic features include the independence of the protagonist's personality, the emphatic meaning of individual gaze, and the coarse but authentic audio-visual language. In the process of these aesthetic features entering the communication mechanism and reaching the audience, the narrative strategy, the application of audio-visual language, the selection of the broadcast platform, and the communication between the communicator and the audience after the broadcast are important indicators to test the communication effect.

This study had chosen the ethnographic award-winning film "Free Goose" as a sample. The film "Free Goose" is a story about the growth of a small-town youth and his way of making a living, as well as the formation of his own gender identity in the process. "Free Goose", directed by Zhuang writer Zhou Lei, tells the inspirational story of a young man Li Enping who perseveres in learning Tian Qin. Li Enping, a student majoring in music performance at a college in Tianjin, his father has been out for many years and is almost no longer responsible for his family; his mother raises his younger brother at home alone and takes care of the elderly. Li Enping, who has no family to rely on, can only rely on Tian Qin to make money to support his family and pay expensive tuition. In order to attract attention, the Tian Qin he performed was charming and enchanting and was often denounced as a "shemale", but he insisted on taking the reverse path of performance. This film is now in the collection of the China Ethnographic Museum. The reason is that this museum is the largest carrier that reflects the current ethnographic documentary in China with public screening media. With the largest collection of government units and the most intensive cultural protection, academic exchanges and the compilation of film and television materials and documents are relatively rich, inclusive, and diverse. They have become the academic tools and the largest platform for anthropological and ethnological investigation and research, and represent current China's status as the creative dynamics and trends at the forefront of ethnographic films. This film is a high-quality film that has won awards in the national academic exhibition of ethnographic films held by the museum which can be discussed from the perspective of narrative and aesthetics. It can be an item that researchers of Chinese ethnographic film history and Chinese ethnographic film history, the directors, artists, and anthropologists of front-line creation conduct academic research to provide space and topics for discussion. The textual content of this study is an in-depth interview with the director of the film. The interview was conducted for one and a half hours. The entire interview process was recorded and all interviews were compiled into texts for research use.

The location of this research is the area where the ethnographic film "Free Goose" is located. The creative concept is based on the development of "descriptive" and "expressive" shooting records under the cultural background of the nation. The narrative of the local context is true to the sample. "Deep description" has natural advantages for the regional culture and visual style (Zhu, 2019). The area where the protagonist was born and grew up in "Free Goose" is a small border town in Guangxi

that has strong ethnic characteristics in cultural form. The performance on which he lives is one of the most famous art forms of this ethnic group.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This paper reports the findings of an investigation into how the narrative strategy of the ethnographic film's award-winning "Free Goose" formed its aesthetic characteristics and entered the communication mechanism to finally reach the audience. They are divided into four themes according to the question:

The findings are based on the elaboration and discussion of the director's personal creation of the ethnographic film "Free Goose" compiled during the in-depth interview.

Findings for RQ1

How does the narrative strategy of the ethnographic film "Free Goose" unfold?

In this in-depth interview with the director, he believes that there are several clear themes in the narrative strategy of his film - ***personal story focus, scene selection, and editing logic***.

Personal Story Concerns

The rejection of alienated performances in regional culture constitutes the character arc and confrontation spirit of the protagonist Li Enping. The narrative structure abandons the grand and expressive narrative of national propaganda films and instead presents the plot conflict by entering the characters' life experiences through subtle glimpses of life. The film does not simply mention ethnic folklore such as funerals and divination, but as events in the character's storyline, the development of the plot is formed sequentially. The character growth is combined with the local culture, in line with the narrative logic of the inner perspective and the real observation.
The director emphasizes that his films are not about the group but the individual:

> *"Because the protagonist is a female sexually oriented person, and his family belongs to a disadvantaged category in society, then I plan to start from these two entry points, how to integrate them into society."*
> *When choosing the focus of his film, the director did not consider the relationship between the larger ethnic group, the community culture and the small individual life, he explained:*
> *"I didn't really think about it that way, because I had no experience with queer people before making this film. So my focus was always on Lee Eun-ping himself, and I didn't know there was such a huge community in our world until after the film was released."*

As Bao (2021) believes: "Filming is to try to present a person's life world as completely as possible in the limited audio-visual time and space. This is really difficult, requires creative work, and there is no ready answer, but it is worth exploring." (Bao, 2021, p.59). The "presentation" he proposed, from a practical technical point of view, refers to the selection of narrative topics and the perspective and method of penetration, the information details of the composition, and the narrative processing under the aesthetic concept of post-editing. The interview results reveal how the director completed the "presentation". The results show that imagery is the narrative strategy of the ethnographic film "Free Goose", where the director hides the psychology of empathy with the audience, and he focuses the narrative theme of the film on the emphasis and attention to the fate of individuals, which is an exemplary use of individual narrative and presents a poetic film language beyond the narrative itself. In other words, the poetry of this national film does not lie in the romantic and light-hearted narrative language, nor in the humanistic intentions captured by the camera, but in

the fact that Li Enping deals with his own spiritual growth alone, and the context of his life is the poetry itself. Bao (2021) believes: "Filming is to try to present a person's life world as completely as possible in the limited audio-visual time and space. This is really difficult, requires creative work, and there is no ready answer, but it is worth exploring." (Bao, 2021, p.59). The "presentation" he proposed, from a practical technical point of view, refers to the selection of narrative topics and the perspective and method of penetration, the information details of the composition, and the narrative processing under the aesthetic concept of post-editing. It can be found that image is the narrative strategy of this film, and the director hides the psychology of empathy with the audience. The poetry of "Free Goose" does not lie in the romantic and relaxed narrative language, nor does the camera capture the purpose of humanistic care, but Li Enping's alone coping with spiritual growth and his life background is the poetry itself.

Scenario selection

The narrative line of "Free Goose" is clear, showing events and plots gradually in accordance with time, the external plot line is not cost-effective, and the spatial relationship expresses traditional regularity. The internal emotional line presents a metaphor with great imagination and insight. For example, there is a scene where the protagonist has an infusion at the clinic on the night of the Spring Festival. The voice of the news broadcast on TV is no different from any environmental sound to Li Enping. He looks at his mobile phone like all the mentally self-lonely young generations and suffers from physical suffering and endless fate. The ruthless presentation of reality in the documentary will make viewers feel ethical resistance. This segment has been criticized by the audience for being overly straightforward and rude on ideological issues. The narrative logic and metaphors for documentary films and the cruel life itself constitute a kind of landscape.

The director stated that,

"This scene was deliberately designed to move my camera that way. Because I believe this is a strongly contrasting narrative scene. Most of the audience watch from the perspective of human nature, while the minority of extreme viewers who stand out and challenge me are those who are influenced by the solidification of ideology. These two are in opposition. Then the normal mental and emotional judgment of most people is human. Those who are enslaved and enlightened by so-called knowledge always think that what is glorious, great and right is worth filming. This kind of audience is a "tool", which I think is pathetic."

The narrative is not deliberate, and the editing is not hypocritical. It naturally flows out of a series of narrative lines related to growth such as Li Enping's funeral to his relatives in his hometown, going out to study in different places, running to work and performing social relations, and dealing with social relations. The antagonistic dark lines hidden everywhere are the formation of Li Enping's personality that accentuates the technical expression of characteristics. There are two representative scenes of this kind of confrontation: the first is an interview with Li Enping. His self-report is a self-analysis of the Rejection of homosexual advances and confusion about heterosexual relationships, so the story is conveyed through the characters themselves. Although this is not a first-person documentary it is self-explanatory. The form of self-talking gives the audience a more conclusive sense of reality and the meaning of resistance is more obvious. The second confrontation scenario is the comparison of social identity and status between Li Enping and his peers. Li Enping's performance is defined as a kitsch or tacky performance that runs counter to tradition in the social evaluation and the merchant invites him to perform for the purpose of entertainment. While, Li Enping, who is looking for a way out of his livelihood, is noncommittal about his artistic expression because the essential problem lies in economic interests. However, the plot that appeared in this situation created a new confrontation and the organizer temporarily decided to cancel Li Enping's performance. Li Enping, who was well prepared in the background, responded calmly as the habitual

numbness would not make him feel dissatisfied. When young people of the same age gathered to sing and dance with joy and laughter, the camera turned to Li Enping, who was idly watching his mobile phone because of the cancellation of the performance. The viewer could not know that Li Enping's heart was as calm and indifferent as his behavior, but the two life states presented by the camera were self-evident.

Editing logic

From the interviews, it was found that the use of the material in the cuts gave the film a symbolic meaning to the characters and times. As Foucault (2003) said, "the main problem in today's society is resistance and obedience." The director's exposure to the characters' privacy is moderate and absolutely respectful, including the appearance of other sideline characters in the film, the presentation of some religious ceremonies, and family funeral scenes. The record and the expression of the character's emotional state always contain a kind of resistance. Each character lives with a certain resistance. In the editing logic, the director does not sell or expose. He prefers to delete and not abuse to make the film a more intriguing space for discussion. He emphasized that:

> "Hundreds of gigabytes（GB） of materials. I will choose to interview him where there is some real information in his shooting and fill in the information. I USED ALMOST 80% OF my footage. I chose representative shots, and deleted unused something that was repetitive information. I only used the most useful items. I haven't use anything that wasn't relevant to the overall theme of the film."

As an important audio-visual language processing tool, the director has done an excellent job of using visual narrative in his editing work for the ethnographic film. His camera is appropriately selected as a tool of observation, which maximizes the protection of the human rights of the film's subjects. Although the audiovisual narration is a very important means of expression in ethnographic films, the director still uses editing logic in the later stage to echo the content that cannot be reflected in the live shooting. Among them, the images in a large number of materials are indeed understood by the director as a part of the social reality, which reflects a cultural norm in the director's editing work. He uses audio-visual language to identify individuals and complete the discussion of social issues. At the same time, he also uses montage to constantly adjust audio-visual language into a clear narrative line. This interaction produces an aesthetic effect on audiovisual language and the narratives and images that constitute the subject representation in social reality.

Findings for RQ2

How does the narrative of the ethnographic film Free Goose influence the aesthetic features?
The themes that emerge from this research question are – ***Patriarchy, Female image.***

Patriarchy

"Free Goose" has an aesthetic experience in the sense of true construction. The narrative of the film is set aside in the contradictory situation of individual growth, and the character's spirit is castrated and resisted to achieve reconciliation in his growth. The classic narrative routines used in Hollywood fictional films still have a heavy aesthetic texture in the context of ethnographic films, which not only follows the narrative ethics but also does not break away from the aesthetic poetic boundary. For the aesthetic drive and core elements of ethnographic documentaries, the key to transformation is human, human existence in society, human spiritual and emotional appeals in the family, and human self-contradictions and struggles. The group nature behind people forms a cultural state, only reflections and discussions can be achieved. The paradoxical situation of people in "Free Goose" always takes documentary aesthetics as the prerequisite, and is slowly reflected in the essence of life, resulting in

an increasingly sharp aesthetic expression. The director has very clear intentions for his aesthetic formation:

> *"The original intention of my shooting is to present the problem between a weak man and his native family and social relations. He has the contradictions and struggles at the bottom, but the social level which suppresses such a weak man strongly is complex."*

In Li Enping's family ethics structure, the image of the father is always absent. The reality contrast of running away from home many times and having family responsibilities replaced by the son constitutes a symbolic spiritual reference through the perspective of the father on the motorcycle dodging behind the door frame in the picture. However, the film does not use the father as a hostile image as a narrative strategy, patriarchy is a signifier that reflects Li Enping's personal growth. Li Enping frequently supports his father financially and this inverted funder status conversion brings Li Enping not to "killing". "Father", but his inner sympathy for the mother to help her regain the integrity of the family and her own return to the identity of the "son" drive, so Li Enping's patriarchal "Oedipus complex" structure is not released in the film. But weakness does not mean passing away, like his father, who returns from time to time for reasons such as "can't hang on" or "come back for the holidays", makes Li Enping desires a kind of stability and peace of mind on the psychological level, but he clearly knows that the essence of patriarchy is hidden for him. On the negative side, he put aside this patriarchal dilemma. His father is a functional figure. The way he strives to get rid of the predicament is to face and solve all problems by himself. It is worth thinking about that, despite this, patriarchy will inevitably have an impact on Li Enping's gender context, and it can even be said that such patriarchy is an accomplice that leads to the vague self-recognition of Li Enping's gender.

From the above information, we can conclude that the confrontation with the patriarchy is one of the aesthetic significance of this film. It embodies one of the most poetic humanism in life that remains even in the face of an anxious consciousness of the family structure. This spiritual goal absorbs the emotions of the largest audience and tries to guide their thoughts. This is a very desirable state and future-oriented aesthetic endpoint of the previous research view on the aesthetics of Chinese ethnographic cinema, that is, an anthropological purpose that is achieved on three levels: visual, daily life, and emotional, providing an intuitive life-world. This gives scholars an opportunity to remind them to revise the long-standing parochialism of the cognitive objects of anthropological research and the arrogance of insisting on a single cognitive approach, so as to examine the lifeworld of living individuals both rationally and poetically, and to recognize a more comprehensive heterogeneous culture in a more holistic way.

Female image

There are three female images in "Free Goose": the first two is closely related to Li Enping within the ethical relationship between his mother and grandmother. The third one is the "female image" given to Li Enping by social evaluation, this type is the ambiguous "female image" in Li Enping's self-evaluation. Li Enping's mother and grandma's female images are traditional and suffer from life. For Li Enping's grandma, "child filial piety" is blank, and for Li Enping's mother, her husband's betrayal has put her marriage to shame, and she longs for loyalty and family integrity, all "fortune-telling seeking method". Starting from the family structure, the collapse of his father's "male image" castrated Li Enping's spirit from the side, but he was well versed in the masculine voice of society and the law of survival of the family, so he himself was duty-bound to play the self-reconstructed "male image". This "male image" is absurdly based on female consumption. Li Enping makes full use of male scrutiny and transforms his stage appearances into images of feminine characteristics to achieve gender consumption.

However, female scrutiny also appears in this shelving. As a female audience, what kind of attitude, pastime, or sympathy, as a female audience toward male actors' assimilation performance,

is unknown. What is clear is the ambiguity of Li Enping's male self-spiritual portraits and the phantoms of psychological symptoms that formed the film "Female". The establishment of the aesthetic level of consciousness. Li Enping's artistic expertise in making a living stems from the traditional art forms in Longzhou. In the context of cultural protection and social norms, what the locals have criticized him is the appearance of gender identity and the pressure on him and society by public opinion. The male coveted and even sexually harassed his "female" flattery putting Li Enping in a conflict of contradictory beasts. He is unwilling to give up feminine performances and refuses to flatter women. The way of human nature and hesitation of position achieve aesthetic images in the narrative of the film. In particular, the beginning of the film's growth narrative is the isolation of luxurious and noisy hotels and restaurants and the streets of the square. The lens language of hand-held photography is simple and has a strong on-site openness. And the little girl who imitated Li Enping's dancing under the stage, which was suddenly and accidentally captured in the camera, replaced the director to complete the transition of the film's aesthetic meaning, which the director called the "stroke of the gods":

> *"In the film, at the banquet hosted by the successful businessmen, they sing songs praising the good life, and at the same time, they observe the weak people who perform for them through the glass, which is bound to produce a strong contrast relationship. I didn't expect the scene to come out so neatly."*

However, it is worth discussing that the ambiguity of the male mirror image in "Free Goose" does not mean that the "male image" is completely broken. The three "female images" have played a back-feeding effect on Li Enping's self-identity and gender recognition. Li Enping's deconstruction of self-gender awareness and the construction of "male images" should be based on the above three "female images".

Findings for RQ3

What is the aesthetic transmission mechanism of the ethnographic film "Free Goose"?

The director who just shot his first ethnographic film, frequently mentioned three key themes that influenced the film's communication during the in-depth interviews. These three key themes clearly explain the distribution mechanism of the film - ***Film festival, Economic benefits, and New platforms.***

Film festival

The director admits that currently participating in film festivals is one of the usual communication channels for filmmakers. Compared with the way commercial films enter the capital market through cinemas, at present, ethnographic films with small investments, long production cycles, and relatively simple teams are mostly transmitted in China through film exhibition projects of museums, film festivals organized by folk scholars, and some academic film exhibitions. He explained that:

> *"Cause I am shooting an ethnographic film, I've always pay special attention to the ethnographic film's updates, official accounts and so on. In the process of information crossing, I found this film exhibition. Because when the movie is over, I have to think about where it's going, what the promotional way it's going to go."*

Film festivals and exhibitions are one of the most traditional and reliable transmission mechanisms for this ethnographic documentary. As for his experience as a director, he said

> *"I also shortlisted in the Guangxi Ethnographic Film Festival which I was participated, but I was not shortlisted the FIRST Film Festival in Xining I supposed that the reason possible was the*

rough production. I also participated in an independent documentary film exhibition organized by Zhang Xianmin, a professor at the Beijing Film Academy."

Economic benefits

One of the most important factors in the communication mechanism is economic benefits. The director said:

> *"My film was also played on a self-media video platform called iQiyi, but it was taken off the program soon. Maybe they thought there was something inappropriate about the film. I submitted the film to them myself because I could get a share of the box office from it, but the amount of money I got was so small that it wasn't worth mentioning."*

New platforms

The director provides a variety of examples of possible ways in which ethnographic films could be communicated in addition to film festivals and he also emphasizes the importance of constant experimentation. He claims:

> *"I submitted the film to CATHAYPLAY, an independent arthouse film platform in Singapore, where it is currently being screened. It was also shortlisted for the Beijing Aiku Film Week, which is a film project focused on queer group. For the screening, they felt that the aesthetic core of my film was very suitable for a film platform with a very clear theme like theirs."*

From his description, it can be found that more media platforms try to spread ethnographic films to the maximum extent, and the expectation of such a communication platform depends on judging whether the aesthetic preference of the platform is consistent with the aesthetic expression of the film.

Findings for RQ4

What are the factors influencing the aesthetic communication of the ethnographic film "Free Goose" that can touch the audience?
The themes that emerge from this research question are – ***Aesthetic proposition, Platform development***

Aesthetic proposition

Yan (2020) explained that western art studies rely on existential aesthetics. The philosophical attributes of aesthetics make it exist in the form of artistic philosophy for a long time. It is only in recent decades that scholars have begun to think about establishing real Art research methods. Aesthetics studies art from a philosophical level, and its research has philosophical implications. Aesthetics research is more speculative and abstract. When art studies art, it only involves the scope of aesthetics to a certain extent or to a certain extent and has an unconscious aesthetic nature. Art is more empirical and specific, and it pays more attention to artistic practice than aesthetics. Television and other specific artistic issues are the most notable feature of drawing conclusions through the inductive deduction of a large number of artistic phenomena. This is exactly what this article will discuss and determine. As the director defends his aesthetic claim:

> *"What I mainly want to discuss mainly is from the social level and between individuals. I want to present a sense of contrast and contrast. In the peaceful and prosperous times of singing and dancing, there will be difficulties of the weak. It was a deliberate expression on my part."*

Video text is used as a symbolic construction medium, and the artistry of ethnographic narrative language itself originates from the independence of people. "Free Goose" emphasizes the narrative strategy of individual observation, which benefits from the geographical relationship between the creator and the subject of the same race, and the video record of the individual life experience is undoubtedly engraved with the symbols of individual ideology in the collective narrative of the nation. Although the lens language of this film is still rough, it has successfully focused the narrative perspective on the time and plot development of the characters. The film's unexpected narrative entry point is different from the mainstream way of focusing more on groups in ethnographic filmmaking but instead focuses on the independence of the protagonist as an individual person. The biggest difference in creative techniques between documentary and ethnographic film shooting is the difference between active and passive. Documentaries can participate, can intervene, and control, while ethnographic films follow the record passively. In such a creative context, personal field shooting will be somewhat helpless and restricted. Regarding this aesthetic composition, the director explains his aesthetic proposition:

> *"There's another scenario, it is his mother on the border, help smugglers carrying contraband, although I was not allowed to enter but his mother used her mobile phone to help me shoot a lot of footage and clips, oh my! You know what? Hundreds of people were carrying smuggled goods across the border just like ants on the Sino-Vietnamese border, on the border line full of quagmire and thorns, they breaking through the bottom line of the law and the system in order to live. But when I attended the film festival, this clip was asked to delete because it involves a politically sensitive issue, they explained that although this is a good production of the film, but consider the broadcast platform, It was better to delete. I don't think it detracted from the overall narrative or the aesthetic point I was trying to make, so that's what I did."*

The narrative center of "Free Goose" lies in the process of survival and growth of the photographed subject with national identity and social attributes, and it has indeed completed a kind of individual and common information transmission. Individuals independent of the national collection are the starting point that is more worthy of artistic language expression. It is not so much that "Free Goose" records the cultural state of the national collective, but rather the director experiences the individual in the collective state through the camera lens and his life philosophy of the subject.

Platform development

Based on the text of this in-depth interview, ethnographic film, as a piece of important information, has entered the communication link, and its aesthetic value can successfully reach the audience, which is a very important highlight -- the great role of the communication platform. As in the director's work "Free Goose", he describes the initial opportunity of his work:

> *"It was when I watched the short video that I found his performance was very special, a boy who tried to show his charm by acting in a feminine way, but was despised by the neighborhood. He is willing to insist on this way to earn tuition for himself. The short video is only five minutes long, but it has millions of views. I found him to be a good choice, can take me through communication with the boy told him about his own identity, and ask him if he can shoot a film for him, he very readily agreed, because he made it clear he after graduation to be an artist, he needs more awareness and exposure, he thinks, My shooting will be helpful to his future career. In fact, I shoot with the perspective of literature and the language of the lens. After all, I have rich experience in literary creation and writing. After my shooting, I participated in the film week with the theme of the third gender group. The exhibition made by this platform allowed my film to be seen by the audience and the same people. In my opinion, the broadcast is a way to express, and only by expressing can we*

> *discuss and reach the audience. Otherwise our film will be locked in a closet and what's the point? In order to maintain the integrity of artistic expression, but lose the opportunity to communicate with the audience, this is pyrrhic, because the film needs to consider the appropriate artistic and political context."*

As mentioned earlier, in terms of the dynamic social impact theory of communication, the social space where people meet, know, and communicate is a tangible space. The director did not lose the opportunity to communicate with the audience in order to maintain the integrity of artistic expression, because that is a very unsuccessful approach. It is important to consider the appropriate artistic and political contexts in ethnographic filmmaking. In a physical, tangible space where people know each other or share the same identity, it is easy for them to become a community. The director's appreciation and recognition by third-gender audiences after the film's broadcast is based on such a communication platform. They provide feedback and emotional resonance through comments. The platform gives them an exclusive space, a space that has a strong impact on the audience and profound and effective communication.

CONCLUSIONS

The formation of the gender aesthetic image of "Free Goose" is based on the long-term follow-up and the delicate capture of the lens. It also benefits from the director's keen and careful consideration of editing. As the leader of Guangxi's ethnographic film works, this film is invisible. The media brought a kind of enlightenment and "little wave" to the local ethnographic filmmakers in Guangxi. Can we "deeply describe" the identity of people behind the ethnic groups more artistically and patiently? For the current context of ethnographic films, exploring the relationship between people and ethnic minorities and the relationship between people and social culture is the meaning of ethnographic films. The gaze of individual living conditions will inevitably continue, but this is why the aesthetic image of the novel is worthy of further exploration. In the direction and path of creative expression, there is no doubt that it is necessary to follow objective and true narratives. However, what kind of presentation styles documentary aesthetics may have, how to highlight this style through narration, and whether it can be formed in the creation of ethnographic filmmaking will be issued for further studies. The new context is one of the questions that ethnographic films will continue to think about in future record shooting and editing creation, and it is also a new way of extending the expression direction of ethnographic filmmakers.

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