

On the Relationship between Subject and Object in Documentary Production Based on the Theory of “Intersubjectivity”

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Keywords: Intersubjectivity; subject; object

Abstract: In the process of documentary shooting, it will be influenced by the relationship between the subject of the photographer and the object of the subject. Because the documentary is authentic and objective. In shooting a documentary, the relationship between the subject and the object of the field investigation will directly affect the final result of presentation. Under the influence of the context of the new media, the change of this kind of relationship becomes even more obvious. In this paper, the “Intersubjectivity” theory of philosophy is taken as the main research topic. And the change of the subject-object relationship between the photographer and the subject in the documentary field investigation is taken as the main analysis object. And the aim is to discuss the influence of the transformation of the subject-object identity in the documentary field investigation on the final presentation of the documentary and the reflection on the cultural identity in the documentary shooting.

1. Introduction

In the process of making a documentary, we need to learn from the investigation methods of folklore and anthropology. And the documentary goes through the “in-depth observation” and “participation interview” in field investigation, and finally with images to present. The image can present some real scenes of social and cultural life and folk performance that cannot be accurately presented by language or words along with its space and time. There has always been a puzzle of the relationship between the perspectives of subjective and objective in the field investigation during the documentary shooting. The involvement of other people, a key part in the early “anthropological” investigation, always makes the presentation of documentary and the objective interview of subjective investigation doubt the authenticity of the records which are finally recorded by the researchers.

2. Philosophical interpretation of “Intersubjectivity” and problems in field investigation

“Intersubjectivity” is an important concept in the phenomenological system of Husserl. The phenomenology defined by Husserl includes not only conscious activities, but also conscious objects involved as a result of conscious activities. The binary opposition between the subject and object in traditional philosophy is overcome in the subjectivity of Husserl. “Intersubjectivity” is an important strategic concept in the phenomenology of Husserl. Intersubjectivity refers to the fact that in the essential structure between self and conscious experience, self and others are linked together. Therefore, the world for me is not only for myself, but also for others. It is formed by me and others. Husserl's theory has four stages from self to others. The first stage is the definition of self to Koerper. The second stage is the definition of self towards the body (Leib). The third stage is the definition of self towards the body of others. The fourth stage is the definition of self towards the body and the mind of others. That is to realize that the body of others is not only the “body” of others, but also the “other” with another consciousness.

According to the analysis of the four stages of “Intersubjectivity” and the cognition of Husserl, when it is employed in the documentary making, these four stages also appear, especially between the subject and object of the documentary. This phenomenon still exists in the documentary shooting. In order to successfully finish the shooting and keep the authenticity of the shooting

expression, it is necessary to continuously carry out in-depth understanding and communication to the subjects or interviewees. On this basis, many scholars put forward the concepts of “insiders” and “outsiders”, which is the so-called subject and object by Husserl. As an independent cultural expression, the interviewee or the subject requires the photographer to treat the interviewee or the research object objectively, that is, to record the subject in a relatively objective way. At the same time, they also require to be guided as the “insider” to realize acceptance and recognition of the relevant shooting topic. In the whole process, the identity differentiation between the subject and the object is very vague, and there is no absolute differences between the subject and the object.

3. The complexity of the subject-object perspective in the field investigation of documentary production

According to Husserl's “Intersubjectivity” theory's four stages, the interactive relationship between the perspectives of the subject and object is very complex in the documentary:

3.1 Objective self-presentation of the photographer

Self-presentation is the first stage in Husserl's theory. This stage is purely objective presentation in Husserl's concept, without the involvement of mind and spirit. In the shooting of documentaries, this stage refers actually to the photographer's own objective record of the subject and the understanding of the subject without any personal emotions. The whole process is the photographer's investigation and preliminary understanding of the subject. It means that the photographer, as a subject, preliminarily understands and observes the subject.

3.2 Subjective shooting of the photographer

Husserl declares that the process of consciousness and spirit are integrated into the body, which has already been explained in Husserl's research that consciousness begins to direct and operate the body. So it is the same in documentaries. In the process of documentary fieldwork, apart from the observation from the objective, the main participant is the subject. However, the two methods cannot be totally separated in the process of fieldwork. And the complex situation occurs between the subjective and objective. This kind of situation runs through the whole investigation. The subjective part has been presented by the photographer's own thoughts and motives. In this process, the selection and the presentation of the subject are all carried out according to the topic and relevant shooting contents of the research selected by the photographer himself. The subjective shooting is still carried out according to the relevant records of the photographed, but the photographer has selected the corresponding expression and a more appropriate presentation.

3.3 An objective record of the photographed.

In Husserl's research, this stage is no longer a simple process of self-subjectification, but a combination of self and other people's observation. In other words, in the process of the shooting, with the conscientiousness and mind of the photographer, the behavior of the photographed is also observed and recorded. During the shooting of the documentary, this stage is the complete recording of the object without any subjective elements, that is, the real presentation and intuitive expression of the photographed. The so-called authentic record is also a record of the subject's physical presentation, which does not show more spirit or ideological presentation. At this stage, it also involves a problem that the subject who shows as the object is actually presented in the whole shooting process from the perspective of the subject.

3.4 The photographer subjectively selects the content presented by the photographed.

This stage has not only stayed in self-cognition, but also realized that others have the same consciousness and spirit through observation and study of objects. As to the shooting of the documentary, it is to make subjective selection of the shooting content and effectively select the content to be presented according to the photographed. The two elements in this stage are as the two interactive subjects. It means that not only the photographer appears on the shooting as the

subject, but also the subject participates as another subject.

4. The Exploration of Subject and Object in Documentary Shooting

4.1 The relationship between subject and object

In the documentary shooting, the research on the relationship between subject and object is mainly from how to judge the relationship between them. Emic research is mainly to leave the subjective cognition and understanding of the researcher, and it is to understand the local culture and social content as far as possible from the perspective of the local people. And the analysis and description of the researcher are taken as the final judgment standard. However, etic study is mainly reflected by the observation of cultural outsiders. Researchers should study the research materials from a comparative and historical point of view and analyze alien cultures scientifically and objectively. During the shooting, the correlation between subject and object is not completely separated, but analyzed and studied from different angles. The final presentation will vary greatly depending on the perspectives.

4.2 Beyond the Expression of Subject and Object

The transcendence to be discussed here is based on an anthropological analysis. Documentary can record the photographed in a relatively objective way due to its objective camera language. It is consistent with the ultimate ideal of early anthropology, that is, the absolute and objective expression of cultural characteristics. However, absolute objectivity does not exist in fact, and the camera is still controlled by the subjective choice of the photographer himself.

In order to be able to get rid of the limitation of the etic, people start shooting from the perspective of the native or the cultural holder. This kind of expression has its own limitations, because even the cultural holders in a cultural system cannot fully express all the cultural concepts of a certain culture. In order to surmount the difficulties and obstacles of this kind of expression, the documentary is filmed in the form of “dialogue” and carried out in the form of “dialogue” text. The photographer and the photographed are together in the film to form a unified relationship between subject and object, breaking the separation of pure subject and object.

5. Summary

Documentary is a way to transform a series of symbols such as social culture and religious belief into concrete visual presentation in the form of film and television arts. Not only is it an expression of an artistic form, it is also an expression of a culture. Language and words, as the textual expressions, cannot show all the matters in culture in a visual way. The involvement of the image in it gives more symbolic representation of cultural concretization.

In the new media context, the relationship between the subject and object of documentaries will see new changes due to the joint influence of media integration and the development of new media. Media changes in the interactive era will also provide more chances for the improvement of documentaries. On the issue of how to effectively provide cultural chance, media interaction will also have new ideas on the changes of subject and object in documentary production. At the same time, the development and transformation of new media will also give more input to the relationship between the subject and object arising from field investigation.

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