

作为媒体实践的视觉田野方法^(*)

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〔摘 要〕视觉研究是近年来国内外学界比较关注的研究领域,但对视觉研究方法的讨论相对较少且集中在视觉文本、表征的分析之上。本文对视觉田野研究方法进行了初步的介绍,分析了新兴的视觉民族志、视觉访谈等方法与传统社会科学研究采用视觉手段的异同,并分析了视觉田野方法的发展前景与困境。

〔关键词〕视觉研究;视觉田野方法;视觉民族志;影像发声

一、从视觉研究到视觉田野方法

近年来在西方社会科学领域,所谓“视觉转向”风头正劲,不仅出现了视觉人类学、视觉社会学等新兴子学科,冠以“视觉研究”、“视觉文化研究”之名的跨学科研究也方兴未艾。在这股热潮之中,视觉方法特别是视觉田野方法的兴趣颇值得注意,不仅视觉文本、视觉表征往往与方兴未艾的大众传播媒体技术密不可分,更在于视觉田野方法本身也是一种媒体实践行为。

仅仅十年前,当视觉研究在英语学界崭露头角之时,已有学者意识到视觉研究不仅仅在于视觉理论的建构,同样也需要视觉方法论的引入。不过那时的视觉方法论主要还指的是对于视觉材料的阐释,如在最早冠以《视觉方法论》之名的专著中,所论及的方法就是内容分析、符号学、话语分析等等。(Rose 2001)也有学者提出了创意视觉方法的概念。(Burckingham 2009)

随着人类学、社会学背景的学者进入视觉研究领域后,情况开始发生变化。

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视觉民族志等参与式视觉方法开始被视作视觉研究的重要方法之一。Prosser在对视觉研究方法进行分类时指出,视觉研究方法有所谓四个 R 之称:即研究者发现的视觉数据(Researcher found visual data)、研究者创造的视觉数据(Researcher created visual data)、被研究者产生的视觉数据(Respondent generated visual data)、数据的视觉化和表征(Representation and visualization of data)(Prosser 1998)很明显,这四个 R 大致可分为两个维度,其中研究者发现的视觉数据以及数据的视觉化和表征这个维度主要是针对视觉文本的分析,研究者以及被研究者创造的视觉数据都属于所谓的参与式视觉方法。但这种划分也有问题,即将各种视觉田野方法作为视觉研究的数据收集阶段,而将视觉数据的分析等同于视觉表征的解读。

也有学者将对视觉材料的阅读(reading)和对视觉材料的制作(making)与展示(displaying)等量其观,将视觉观察和协同式视觉研究(collaborative visual research)纳入视野。(Banks 2001, Banks 2007)英国学者 Sarah Pink 则大力倡导视觉民族志,并提出了视觉田野研究(Visual field methods)的概念。(Pink, Kürti et al. 2004)

各类的视觉田野方法的源头均来自人类学传统,事实上人类学早有民族志电影的存在,影视人类学(Visual Anthropology)的传统源远流长。甚至早在电影诞生之前,人类学学科正式确立之前,便已有西方殖民者使用摄影技术纪录对“他者”进行“科学”的纪录与研究。当然这些当年作为追逐异域风情、强化刻板印象的传教士、商人、旅行家的作品留存至今已成为媒体史与历史人类学研究的重要资料。比如美国国家非洲艺术博物馆的“焦点内外”项目(In and out of focus)便是基于自 1895 年以来中非诸国的摄影作品。而(de Lange, Mitchell et al. 2007)英籍华裔摄影师何伯英(Grace Lau)所著的《影像中国》(Lau 2008, 何伯英 2008, Lau 2009)则是基于第二次鸦片战争以来西方摄影师在中国的摄影作品及其明信片所作的研究。英国布里斯托大学“视觉中国”(Visualising China)项目也曾出版过相关作品(Bickers, Ladds et al. 2007)。

摄像技术与人类学的结合,早在 1895 年,法国医生勒尼奥便拍摄了西非沃洛夫人制陶的影片,哈登爵士及其剑桥大学人类学考察队著名的托雷斯海峡研究项目中便采用了摄影机以及同步录音机。1922 年弗拉哈迪所拍摄的《北方的纳努克》则被认为是最早的民族志电影,尽管这部同时被作为纪录片经典的作品不少片段是为拍摄而作的表演。

将摄像作为一种人类学田野工作的研究方式之一,则是从著名人类学家米德与贝特森在巴厘岛的工作开始,而他们关于摄影机使用上的“主观”“客观”论争也奠定了后来很长时期影视人类学的理论基础。米德认为,将摄像机放在固定的三脚架上就可以客观地观察与纪录下真实发生的一切。而贝特森则认为,摄像机可以让人更近一步地理解真实发生的一切,但这种理解无疑仍是主观的。(Mead and Bateson 2002)

也正是由于存在着对视觉方法客观性上的争议,在相当长的时期里采用摄影摄像等视觉方法仅局限于人类学的小众领域,难以为实证主义所主导的西方社会科学界所接受。

随着后现代主义以及建构论的影响,质性研究者已经认识到使用观察方法之时,即使使用了摄影、摄像这类表面上看起来“客观”的媒体技术,研究者是不可能具有选择性与主观性的,但这并不意味着研究就因此丧失了意义。而当研究者意识到了这种选择性是如何形成,并如何反映自己的主观观念之时,研究者反而能够更好地理解研究过程中生产出的这些视觉产品的本质与意义。因此从1990年以来,在英语学界视觉民族志等一系列视觉研究方法被视觉人类学、视觉社会学、文化地理学、教育研究、健康研究与消费者行为研究等诸多领域所采纳。

虽然目前在英语学界视觉研究方法被广泛采用,但在命名与分类上仍各行其事,多有重叠混搭。如稍加梳理可以发现,视觉研究方法包括基于表征与文本的方法,比如 Rose 所论及的各类视觉内容分析、视觉话语分析;此外也包括基于田野工作的方法,即 Sarah Pink 所言的视觉田野方法。视觉田野方法如从研究主体来进行划分,大致可以细分如下。

观察式视觉研究(observation visual research),主要是指以研究者为主体,使用视觉方法进行的参与式观察研究如视觉民族志及其派生出来的视频观察。

协同式视觉研究(collaborative visual research),这一研究方法需要由研究者与参与者协同完成,并使用视觉研究的各种手段,如视频访谈、视频旅游等。在这类研究中,研究者并不像传统的研究那样,将参与研究者视为研究对象与客体,而视为与自己共同完成研究的研究参与者与协作者。

主体式视觉研究(subjective visual research),在研究中由研究参与者自己作为行动主体制作出视觉材料进行研究,如视频日记、发声影像等。也有学者将此类方法称为参与式视觉研究(participatory visual research)而列为参与式行动研究(participatory action research)的一种。

二、观察式视觉研究方法

作为观察式视觉研究方法的代表,近年来西方学界视觉民族志方法方兴未艾,颇有几位学者从不同领域和学术立场大力推动(Pink 2001, Pink 2005, de Lange, Mitchell et al. 2007, Pink 2007, Pink 2007, Pink 2007, Prosser 2007, Pink 2008, Lammer 2009, Pink 2012)。特别是2000年来,媒体民族志、媒体人类学在西方学术界再度引起强烈关注,不少学者提倡人类学与大众传播媒体研究的结合(Spitulnik 1993),甚至直接提出视觉人类学与媒体民族志的结合(Murdock and Pink 2005)。还有学者直接提出使用数字媒体从事的民族志是“民族志2.0”。(White 2009)当然,另一个重要因素则是,数字影像技术、多媒体技术的发展。最近二十年来,信息技术、多媒体技术与数字影像技术的发展,

也使得数字摄影、摄像设备便携性大大增加,技术门槛与使用成本大幅降低。这些物质条件使得学者单人独马使用单反数码相机、手持式高清数码摄像机进行研究成为可能。数码设备的日常化,也可以减轻被研究者对于研究中使用这类技术设备的恐惧心理与戒备心理。

在当前的视觉民族志研究中有两种途径:其一,研究者可以在长期民族志的田野研究过程中的多个环节和多种方法中使用视觉设备,获取视觉材料。其二,在研究者进行民族志研究的同时,平行地另有民族志电影的拍摄。这一种方式更接近影视人类学传统。

采用视觉民族志,在长期的田野研究过程中,一个较大的好处是发展出与被拍摄者更紧密的关系,也可以拍摄到不同的事件与行为。研究过程成为了一次媒体实践,而这种媒体实践不仅仅是作为研究过程中的某种技术性的方法运用,它所产生的媒体产品一方面可以丰富研究的维度,另一方面也可以丰富研究者对于媒体特性的理解,以及在林林种种的对于社会现象研究中媒体实践的参与所带来的影响。也正是在这个意义之上,视觉民族志还可以成为媒体与传播研究所关注的内容,纳入媒体与传播研究的范畴。而这种对于在研究过程中对于视觉(媒体)运用的自觉体认,实际上也就是当代质性研究上常说的反身性(reflexivity)的体现。正是由于具有在民族志操演过程中对于媒体的运用,民族志过程成为一次自觉的媒体实践过程。在这个意义上,视觉民族志在研究中的运用,无论研究对象是什么,它就已经不仅仅是单纯的一件民族志或是人类学研究,也是一次包含实践的对于媒体的研究,对于媒体与自己研究对象关系的研究,对于媒体与社会关系的研究。

曾有学者(MacDougall 1998)提出反身性具有不同的层次,通常基于文本书写的研究中,反身性思考往往是事件发生之后,对于研究体验加以反思,这是解释反身(explanatory reflexivity),而使用了视频的研究之后,由于录像即时纪录了研究当时的遭遇,研究者可藉此对他者提示自己的研究过程,因此是一种深度反身(deep reflexivity)。

有趣的是,有相当的人类行为与社会实践行为其实是以非语言形式发生的,而在传统的研究之中,对于此类行为只能通过文字加以描绘,而这种非语言行为与描述文本之间明显存在着巨大鸿沟,是经过了一次化约处理。而在研究分析完成之后,将研究成果展示之时,又是试图以文本形式出现,研究成果的读者则又需要在脑海中将化约的文本还原成社会实践行为。采用了摄影、摄像参与的视觉民族志,可以在一定程度上减轻这种影响。

另一种可能在于,在从事了较长时间的参与观察之后,研究者很可能出现对于田野工作的厌倦感,开始对被研究对象的一些行为与仪式熟视无睹。而采取了新的视觉方法之后,可以获得一些新的发现。或是由于采用了摄影摄像技术可以获得与以往不同的观察视角,或是可以通过慢放、放大等技术手段,获得通过肉眼观察难以获得的一些细节。

也正是由于存在这些因素,使得新兴的视觉民族志不能完全等同于原有的使用了媒体技术或视觉技术的人类学。主要在于,视觉民族志并不仅仅将视觉手段的使用当作获取研究数据和资料的一种手段或一个步骤,而将视觉有机地整合到研究本身,成为研究的一种反身工具,甚至将视觉作为一种方法。

在从事研究之时对于要观察的对象及其行为与行动除了进行肉眼的观察,可以同时进行摄影、摄像等视觉纪录。这个过程,既可以是由研究者自己独立进行,也可以由研究参与者、研究观察对象进行,并由研究者在过程中加以控制。不同于长期的视觉民族志,视频观察可以用在短期的研究之中,用来观察单一行为、特定场所的行为。

如果采用这种方法,既可以在人际间、组织内,甚至跨文化层面等各种行为发生的场合进行视频拍摄,也可以用于日常生活的各个环节。而更重要的是,视频观察的过程与成果,又是一个媒体产品,也可以再度资以研究使用,用以思考摄像机这一媒体在研究情境中的作为。借助这一方法,研究可以发现可视的物质情境之中,一些被常规观察方法所忽视的视觉细节。研究者可以用来研究人们的日常生活的行为,人们的选择与决策过程,人们在空间之中如何对于空间进行建构,并整合入日常生活。如有学者曾以此方法来研究医院中的工作过程。(Nøhr and Botin 2007, Høstgaard and Bertelsen 2012)

三、协同式视觉方法与主体式视觉方法

尽管对于视觉田野方法的分类与命名尚有争议,但由于视频访谈与视频旅行等方法需要研究参与者的协作,而被作为协同式视觉方法;而影像发声、视频日记等方法虽然也以研究者和研究参与者的协作才能完成,但其更强调研究参与者而非研究人员的主体性,因此往往被称为主体式视觉方法。

访谈也是常见的质性研究方法之一,在难以进行长期民族志和不便进行观察的情境之中,有时也可以采用视频访谈的方式。视频访谈与常规的访谈研究方法相同,只是由于增加了视觉的维度,可以更细致地收集到参与者带给研究者的各种视觉材料,当然也包括在常规访谈中难以捕捉的研究参与者的面部表情。有时还可以根据情况对于研究参与者进行重复视频访谈。Sarah Pink 的研究《家庭真相》(Home Truth)就是采用这一方法的典型,研究者通过视频访谈英国家庭生活中的妇女,研究者使用拍摄器材,由妇女引导研究者并向研究者展示自己的家庭陈列。研究者借以分析社会性别、家庭物件与日常生活之间的关系。(Pink 2004)

视频访谈的一个新形式是采用视频对话设备或是视频即时通讯软件进行在线的即时视频访谈,并将访谈视频加以纪录。在非即时通讯手段如电子邮件出现后,乃至即时通讯软件如 MSN,QQ 出现后便有质性研究学者讨论过这类新技术对于传统访谈的影响。而即时通讯软件出现视频功能之后,尤其是可以进行视频通话的移动终端出现后,借助硬软件进行即时的视频访谈完全具备可行性,

而从访谈形式上看它们与面对面的访谈的差异已经越来越小。

视频访谈的另一种分支形式是视频旅行(video tour) ,传统的访谈过程中通常是在固定的空间进行访谈 ,近年来出现了所谓的行走访谈(walking interview) 在某些特定的研究中 ,研究者可以让研究参与者在接受访谈过程中边走边谈 ,介绍行进中的空间。而视频旅行就是在这一过程中进一步使用视频设备。(Pink 2007)

采用这一方法可以在短时间涵盖相当数量的研究参与者的个人体验 ,非常适合于理解个人与特定空间的关系。如果将此方法运用于媒体与传播研究之中 ,可以研究特定场所对于媒体使用的影响等领域。有学者认为 ,这种方法并不完全是研究者的参与式工作 ,而是研究者与研究参与者的协同式研究。因此 ,这一方法对于研究者的反身性要求更高。此外 ,不同于长期的民族志和田野研究 ,这类方法在相当程度上是对表征的表征进行分析。

影像发声是主体式视觉方法的代表 ,这一方法由 1990 年代以来美国密歇根大学的 Caroline Wang 和伦敦大学的 Mary Ann Burris 等人发起。她们 1992 年于云南创造了 Photo Novella 的概念 ,后来逐渐发展成影像发声(photovoice) 方法 ,主要应用于健康研究、社区研究。(Wang and Burris 1994 , Wang and Burris 1997 , Wang and Redwood - Jones 2001 , Wang and Pies 2004 , Wilson , Dasho et al. 2007) 这种方法是让研究参与者自行制作出影像 ,让研究参与者用图像发出自己的“声音” ,影像发声方法同时也被作为一种赋权方式(empowerment) ,换句话说 ,是一种公众参与的方式(Lorenz and Kolb. 2009) 。

影像发声也可以采取视频形式 ,并与电视节目制作结合起来。如 BBC 就曾推出过观众参与的节目 ,由观众自己拍摄日常生活片段并上传到在线社区 ,并从中选取素材制作成电视节目 Video Nation。(Carpentier 2003) 还有学者尝试使用类似的方法在南非举办关于有老师参与的艾滋病主题的纪录片工作坊 ,以促进社区对于社会问题的了解与认识。(De Lange , Olivier et al. 2008) 由于 Web2.0 技术的发展 ,近年来各类视频网站层出不穷 ,以视频为基础的影像发声的发展前景颇为可观。事实上 ,国内已开始有公益组织正在着手推广相关项目。此外 ,曾有研究者还采用过视频日记的方法 ,与影像发声也有颇多共通之处。这种方法将研究对象或研究参与者的日记作为研究数据引入质性分析 ,在诸多质性研究领域已是行之有年。而视频日记则是上世纪九十年代兴起的在西方媒体上十分盛行的电视节目类型 ,并被社会科学研究吸纳成为一种研究方法 ,目前主要在教育研究等领域被广泛采用。(Noyes 2004 , Buchwald , Schantz - Laursen et al. 2009)

四、视觉田野研究困境

尽管 ,作为新兴的研究方法 ,视觉田野研究以其新颖的手段与强烈的反身性被不少学者所青睐 ,也在西方学界引起反响 ,但由于其内在特性与现有学术机制

难以兼容,使得它们的发展前景面临着不少困境。

首先,从某种意义上来说,所有的视觉民族志都是合作性(collaboration)的研究。因为这类研究总要涉及到与被拍摄对象的关系,如果被拍摄者不予以合作,不加以配合,那么研究根本无法完成。如果在研究中确实遭到拒绝,那么采用了偷拍等方式,又会面临研究伦理上的问题。

其次,呈现方式上的困境。这恐怕也是从事视觉研究的一个共同困境。由于主流学术界仍是“文本主导”的形式。学术作品的发表与评议均是基于文本的形式而进行,因此即使采用了视觉研究方法,最终的学术成果呈现不免要有所折衷,很难完全再以视觉形式呈现,而只能将视觉研究方法的成果作为研究报告或是发表作品中的插图形式出现,或是在学术会议上展示视觉研究过程中生产出的视觉作品。当然,另一种选择则是将学术研究的成果以纪录片、多媒体产品、电视节目的形式出现,使得学术成果的受众突破象牙塔,而面向更广泛的受众。

此外,由于视觉田野研究的主要数据均为视觉性,特别时至今日,大部分数据可能是以电子媒介存在,因此对于这类数据的分析也很难以传统的方式进行。如象传统的田野工作之后的分析,将录音访谈转写成文本形式再加以分析,很明显就丧失了视觉田野研究的意义。而近年来兴起的计算机辅助质性分析软件(Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis Software, CAQDAS)在一定程度上弥补了这一缺憾。

目前运用较为广泛的计算机辅助质性分析软件主要有 Nvivo, Atlas. ti 等。Nvivo 的前身是由澳大利亚 La Trobe 大学计算机科学系教授 Tom Richard 为帮助从事社会科学研究的妻子 Lynn Richard 而编的软件 Nudist, Nudist 系 Non-numerical unstructured data techniques of Indexing searching and Theorizing 的简称,即数值、非结构性索引搜索及理论化技巧。最高版本目前是 10.0 版。Atlas. ti 是由德国柏林科技大学(Technical University of Berlin, Germany)研发的,其开发初衷是服务于一个跨学科研究计划 ATLAS(Archive for Technology, the Life-world, and Everyday Language)。在软件市场上一向与 Nvivo 难分仲伯,竞争激烈,且早于 Nvivo 多年就推出了多媒体文件编码的支持。

这两种软件都可以将视频文件进行编码(Code):即用恰当的概述性文字对内容的某一部分做出标记。编码后形成一个节点(Node)。对于节点也可进行编码,并形成树状节点(Tree node)或其它的关系节点(Relation node)。随着分析研究者对于材料的不断熟悉可以将属相同概念的节点总结起来,形成主要节点,或者在不同节点之间建立逻辑关系,将原始的材料与最终的概念之间形成枝与叶、树与枝一般的关系。再配之以材料本身的属性(Attribute),就可以建立与不同因素、范畴与节点、原始材料之间的矩阵关系。

近年来,随着诸学科科学者的共同努力,视觉田野研究正逐步不断完善成为成熟而有创见的学术研究利器。但由于当代视觉研究的诸多理论与实践都源自西

方世界中视觉实践问题意识,从某种程序上说具有所谓的欧洲中心主义。如果中国学者在视觉方法的运用上有所借鉴并结合中国自身的视觉实践加以考察,或可对视觉研究的发展有所增益。

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tion. His attitude was prudent welcome and reservations. His method was not rigorous objective statistical analysis and research but with a special thinking way: dialectical image.

Dialectical image has another name “Dialectics of Standstill”. The main part of Benjamin’s method was not “dialectics” but “image”. He used “image” to replace “concept” and emphasized the value of “present” to know history. Both of these factors made it different from Hegel’s dialectics and Marx’s dialectics.

Surrealism is another important source on arcade study. From 1926 to 1927 was the important transformation period on Benjamin’s thought. He successively receipted Marxism and surrealism. He was deeply shocked by Paris bumpkin written by Aragon which made Benjamin strongly interested on Paris’s arcade study. It is easy to understand that Benjamin’s arcade study was more Marxism than surrealism, more sociological than literary. His key categories of thought were visual image. That is the reason why Benjamin thought that arcade was a kind of dialectical image developed by capitalist: both monument and ruins. More important is that it had been ruined before it became monument.

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Visual Field Methods as Media Practices

Abstract: As an emerging site of academic inquiries, the visual studies has been heated discussed in recent years, anyhow the debates on visual methodologies focus mainly on visual texts or representations. In this article, the author introduces the visual field research methods, analyses the difference between visual ethnography, video interview and the traditional visual methods applied within social science, and observes the future and dilemma of the visual field methods.

Key words: visual research; visual field methods; visual ethnography; photovoice

In nearly a decade, the “Visual Turn” sweeps across various disciplines in English-speaking social sciences. Not only is visual used as a preposition in so-called visual anthropology, visual sociology, but also cross-discipline visual research, visual studies, visual cultural studies emerge. Within the trend, visual methodology might be particularly of importance. This is because, the visual text and visual representation closely related to the mass media technologies, furthermore the visual methodologies themselves are media Praxis.

In fact ,there are scholars realize the construction of the visual theory as well as the introduction of visual methodologies and visual methods. Prosser used what he named as 4 Rs: researcher found visual data ,researchers created visual data ,respondent generated visual data ,representation and visualization of data. The categorization merely considers the visual methods in the data collection ,and the analysis of visual data only as the reading of visual representation. Other scholars evaluate the reading ,making equally with displaying of visual materials. They emphasized the concepts of collaborative visual research ,even visual field methods.

The visual field tradition can be traced to anthropology ,even before the invention of the film ,and the photography.

One of the major arguments among the early visual anthropologists is the objectivity camera. Mead fully supports that the camera on a tripod can objectively observe and record everything truly happening while Bateson doubts that although the camera could let people understand closely the reality but understanding it is still subjective. Due to the debate of the objectivity ,visual methods involving camera and camera recorder are limited in the anthropology and excluded from the mainstream of the western social science dominated by the positivism. After the postmodernism and constructivism influencing the social sciences ,scholars began to go beyond the perspective of objectivity. When using the media technology seeming objective ,researchers are still inevitably highly selective and subjective. Anyhow ,it is not meaningless. When the researcher realizes the formation of the selectivity and how it reflects the researchers' own subjectivity ,the researcher can better understand the nature and meaning of the visual materials and the process of producing them. Thus ,since 1990s ,visual field methods such as visual ethnography have penetrated into different areas.

The classification of visual field methods based on the subjects of the research is as follows:

1. Observation visual research
2. Collaborative visual research
3. Subjective visual research

The visual ethnography is the typical observational visual research. There are scholars' claims that the visual ethnography is the ethnography 2.0. The rapid development of the digital technology makes the cost and technology barrier of the photography and camera recording much lower. It is possible for researchers to use the handy equipments in their field. The everyday usage of the equipments reduces the recipients' awareness of them during the research process.

There are two approaches of applying visual ethnography: first ,the researcher can use the visual equipments at different stage with different ways to acquire visual mate-

rials. Second, the researcher can use parallel action the ethnographic film during their fieldwork that is close to the traditional visual anthropology.

To use the visual ethnography in the long-term fieldwork, the researcher can develop a close relation to the recipient as well as record different events and behaviors. The research process is at the same time with a media practice. The practice itself is not only the usage of a certain technology. The visual product can add a new dimension of the research as well as understanding the nature of the media they applied. In this sense, the use of the media technology can be seen as a process of reflexivity. The ethnography becomes a conscious media practice; in this sense, whatever the research aim, the research itself is not only ethnography or anthropological research, but also a media studies with practice, the research on relation between media and research and between media and society. Some scholars arrange different levels of the reflexivity. The reflexive thinking happens after the research based on the text that is an explanatory reflexivity. However, in the research involving visibility, especially the camera and camera recorder, the video records the live process of the research, and the research can have a so-called deep reflexivity.

Research shows quite a number of human behaviors and social practices happen in the non-verbal form. Traditionally, researchers tried to use text to describe the non-verbal behaviors. There is obviously a great gap between the text and the behaviors. Inevitably, there would be a reduction. What's more, after the completion of the analysis, the researcher would use the text again to display the research results. The reader of the research had to recover the reduced text version of the social behaviors back into life. One of the advantages of the visual ethnography lessens the effects. That is why the visual ethnography is not one hundred percent equivalent of the anthropology with media or visual technologies. The visual ethnography is not used the visual way to acquire data or information, but integrated the visual into the research as the way of reflexivity. All in all, it is the visual as method.

Another important way of observational visual research apart from visual ethnography is visual observation. Observation is a major method in the qualitative research. It can be done with bare eye, and of course, it can be recorded with recording or photography. This process can be done independently by researchers, but also by respondents supervised by the researchers. It is different from visual ethnography; the visual observation can use in the short-term research to observe single behaviors in particular sites.

It is not easy to draw a red line to distinguish the collaborative visual research with the subjective visual research. Generally, the video interview and video tour are considered collaborative visual research methods due to the collaboration with the par-

ticipants in the research. Photo voice (videovoice) and video dairy also involve the participation of the participants in the research. However ,it emphasis the participants rather than the researchers' subjectivity ,thus it is named as subjective visual research.

The interview is also one of the major research methods in qualitative research. In some case ,it is not convenient to observe ,not to mention the ethnography; in – depth interview is a better choice. The interview of cause can be done in the visual way. Like the normal interview ,the video interview adds the visual dimension. More detailed will be collected ,especially the subtle facial expressions.

A more recent way to use video interview is to use real time chat or messenger softer to interview remotely. Technically ,the interview via QQ ,MSN and Skype is not different with a face – to – face interview. Another variety of video interview is video tour. Tradition interview happens within the closed and fixed space. In recent years , the concept of walking interview is rather popular. In certain cases ,the researcher could ask the participants to be interviewed while walking. They can introduce the space during the walking. The video tour is just the walking interview with visual e– quipment.

The video tour can cover the mass amount of participants in a short time and it is particularly useful for the understanding of the relation between the participants and certain spaces. Some scholars argue ,this method is not complete work made by the researchers but the collaboration with the participants. Thus ,it requires the high reflexivity. It also needs to be concerned that this kind of methods differs from ethnography or video observation; in some sense ,it is still the analysis of visual representation.

The photo voice derived from the photo novella created in 1990s. This method is widely used in health studies ,community studies right now. This method allows the participants to produce their own images ,still image or moving images. It is a way in which the participants give their own voices with images. It is also a way of empowerment ,a way of public participation.

The photos can use the form of video and walk into the television programme production. The video diary is quite similar to photo voice. The participants' diaries are used as the qualitative materials in the research.

Researchers welcome the visual field research method ,which ,due to its own nature ,is not fully compatible with the existing academic institutions. In some sense ,all visual field researches are collaborative. They result from the collaboration between the researchers and the participants. In this sense ,these kinds of researches have always been concerned with the relation between the one taking the image and the one in the images. If someone does not allow to be taken into the images ,the research

cannot begin at all. In other cases if the request for a video is rejected the researchers have to use camera secretly; he or she may face the research ethics issues. The representation or the display of the research result is another problem needed to be tackled. The mainstream of academia prefer to the text. The evaluation of the academic research is based on the textual forms. If the visual methods are applied the final research result is rather difficult to be displayed in visual form at all. The researcher has to convert his or her research into textual form. At its best he could use illustration in the academic thesis or to present visual form in the academic conferences. Of course there is another option. The researcher could choose to convert his or her research into documentary multimedia products or television programmes. In this case the academic research walks out of the ivory tower and faces the mass audiences. Since the visual field research data are in visual form or in electronic form in recent days it is rather difficult to analyze them in a traditional way. In the traditional filed works the researchers need to transcribe the recordings of the audio interviews into textual form. If in the visual filed researcher we obsess to the traditional way it may become meaningless to use the visual method at all. Anyhow the emerging computer assisted qualitative analysis software can make up of it. The widely used computer assisted qualitative analysis software includes Nvivo Atlas.ti etc. Nvivo used to be a software called Nudist which is invented by the computer science professor of La Trobe University in Australia Tom Richard for his wife social scientist Lynn Richard. Nudist means Non numerical unstructured data techniques of indexing searching and theorizing. The highest version of Nvivo is 10. Atlas. It was designed by Technical University of Berlin Germany. It is a cross discipline project named as an archive for technology the life world and everyday language.

They both can code the video materials. That means the researchers can use summarized text to mark a certain sequence of the video. After code there will be a node to refer to the original sequence. The node itself can be coded as well. Thus there will be web of nodes called tree node or relation node. After the researchers get familiar with the materials he can then connect all nodes with the same attribute or summarize them into the same concepts. Then the researchers can find main nodes or construct logical relations between nodes. Based on the matrix of the nodes attributes catalogues the researchers finally can theorize the materials.

One of the major problems for the Chinese visual researchers is that the existing visual theory is based on the western visual practices. The visual theory itself is in some sense Euro centrism. The visual field research methods provide a powerful tool to analyze the visual material with high reflexivity. If Chinese scholars can borrow these methods and apply them with China's visual practices they can contribute to the visual studies.

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