

Manufacturing Indigeneity:

Technical Carriers and Cultural Identity in Transition

Wen-ling Lin

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, National Chiao Tung University

Responding to the complex, obscure, and enormous forces of mainstream society, indigenous filmmakers around the world have gradually developed confrontational stances and strategies in an attempt to change the established pattern of how the indigenous people are written and represented. Moreover, they deploy multiple modern digital technologies and channels to intervene in the representation and image production of ethnic cultures. Nonetheless, visual technology and image carriers are deeply imbricated in the Western social process, material conditions, and symbolic system. How can they articulate with the indigenous oral tradition and convey its power, objectives, and implications? Using “The Story of Rainbow” made by the Atayal director Bilin Yabu and “Alis’s Dreams” made by the Bunun director Salone Ishahavut as examples, this article will investigate how the camera as a form of modern technology can translate the form and content of traditional oral culture into the audio-video interface through the mediation and translation of indigenous directors. This translation enables present-day indigenous people to present their circumstances and experiences of survival in self-defined ways, and build visual sovereignty.

Keywords: indigenous film, technical carriers, cultural identity, translation
