

How can image collection and visual juxtaposition be used to investigate how gender roles are constructed and transformed in national media storytelling?

I. Project Background and Motivation

My problem consciousness comes from the concern about how the national media participates in the construction of gender order. I am particularly interested in: Is there a fixed expression of "good women" and "good men" in these narratives? Do these visual patterns naturalize a gender function distribution? My goal is to how gender is systematically assigned and encoded within state visual culture.

I chose CCTV's Spring Festival public service advertisements as my main research material because:

- A. The Spring Festival is the most important festival in China.
- B. These advertisements are a concentrated reflection of national media discourse. Their content is spread nationwide, covering almost all age groups, and are highly authoritative and symbolic.
- C. They are mostly themed "family and country feelings", "family reunion", and "Chinese traditional virtues", and they focus on conveying the image and behavior of the "ideal Chinese" constructed by the country.
- D. Every Spring Festival, this kind of work tells family stories in a warm and simple way. It seems natural and warm, but in fact it implies a set of visual logic of social norms and gender order.
- E. These Spring Festival PSAs represent a highly centralized, state-directed form of media.

Therefore, I believe that CCTV's Spring Festival public service advertisements, as a product of emotional politics, are highly representative in shaping social values and gender roles.

II. Methodology

A. Visual Analysis

I will examine the images in the PSAs, focusing on:

1. What male and female characters are doing?
2. How they are dressed?
3. Where they are placed in the frame?
4. Their body language and facial expressions?
5. The use of light, color, and setting?

B. Discourse Observation

I will also observe spoken or written elements (such as voiceover narration and dialogue), in order to see how gender roles are reinforced through emotional language and symbolic framing.

III. Project Execution

A. I will collect around ten years of CCTV Spring Festival PSAs (from 2014 to 2025).

B. I will extract screenshots of every male and female character that appears.

C. I will create two parallel image books:

- One composed entirely of images featuring men

- One composed entirely of images featuring women

Through image juxtaposition, semantic labeling and structural comparison, it reveals how the two genders are separately constructed, functionalized and standardized in the national media visual system.