

Visual analysis of a photograph from a television drama: big love



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Four white adults, three women and one man, are sitting on the bed. They are all naked, but they cover their body with the same quilt. All adults look at the camera directly. One woman has golden hair, while others have black hair. The man is strong with a lot of muscles. In the background of the photograph, there are two lamps with green stands separately. One is on the left desk, and another is on the right desk. Moreover, there is a flowery wall behind the bed. 2. Composition The camera angle is direct in the horizontal view, and the photographer is presumably standing at eye level with four adults.

All of them are in the center of the frame, but there is only limited space on its four sides. According to the gestalt law of similarity, three women are grouped separately from the man because of different biological sex. Or else, the woman with golden hair is grouped separated because of different color in her hair. Since all adults appear to be on the same horizontal plane, their proximity is identical, and the sensation of depth is reduced (Lester 46). Furthermore, the two separate lamps that are only shown in half of its image can be imagined as their shape continues to the left or to the right.

The law of common fate is not applicable to this photograph because all adults look in the same direction. 3. Visual Cues The photograph is colorful, but with limited types of color because the white color of the quilt occupies most space of the frame. In the form of the image, there are a myriad of dots in the bed heads, and the shape of flowers on the wall is irregular. For the depth, the image also provides the stark contrast between subjects and the background since the light intensity of four adults is stronger than that of the flowery wall.

Besides, because the man exposes his nipples without covering with the quilt, he seems to be the central focus of the image and the most important element. In the light of movement, the moment captured is static because all adults are sitting on the bed without action. 4. Semiotic signs and codes The photograph itself is an iconic sign because all adults are accurately portrayed (Lester 120). The fact that all adults are naked on the bed is an indexical sign that perhaps the man is going to have sex with three women. The only man is a symbolic sign of male polygamy and his dominance over women since he has more than one partners sleeping with him. 5.

Cognitive elements If a man is currently dating with multiple partners, the photograph may be interesting to you because it may evoke his memorable scenes like how to deal with phone calls when his partners call him at the same time. The image does not have projection with anything because the shape of all objects is not bizarre. For the selectivity, it is no denying that all four adults can catch people's eye, but the woman with golden hair who covers her body with the quilt slightly lower than other women and the unique man are the most noticeable in the image.

In regards to habituation, if a man is used to dating with one partner, the image will be attractive to him because he never tries to date with more partners. For the salience, if you have a friend who has three partners, you will be reminded of him when you see the image (Lester 65). There are no distractions from the main focus of the image as all subjects are clearly portrayed. Since all adults are living in Utah, it contradicts the culture of the United States because the practice of polygamy is illegal in all 50 states. 6.

Purpose of the work The photograph might have been taken in a hotel room or a bedroom.

With the only man and other naked adults, the image appears to be an informal shot used by the media company to promote the concept of polygamy. 7. Image aesthetics Since naked adults are sitting on the bed, people are easily associating with the idea of sex. Therefore, many people, especially men, may find it seducing and attractive, and it makes them know more about the artists' work by watching their drama or searching for more information about their profile. The only element that makes the photograph more beautiful is the flowery wall as a background. 8. Personal Perspective

Personally, I like the photograph because it obviously reflects most men's desire. There are three main reasons why I like it. First and foremost, the man no longer feels bored since there are three wives available to him for sex. Even better, he may feel more excited and happier when having sex with all his wives together. In other words, sexual pleasure is much greater in polygamy than in monogamy. Secondly, it is possible for the man to take advantages of his wives for his living. Since three women are sharing the same husband, they may compete with one another to ingratiate themselves with their husband.

For example, they are willing to spend a lot of money in playing, shopping and eating with their husband alone because they can occupy him completely. As a consequence, the man can obtain free food, entertainment and gifts without any efforts if he is financially supported by his wives.

Thirdly, the man feels more relaxed because more people share housework and childcare. In simple, the more wives the man has, the more leisure time

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he has. All in all, if polygamy was legal in the United States, it would bring many advantages to men. 9. Historical Perspective

From 1995 to 2003, Yahoo and Google were two of the most popular websites among people when they were using the Internet (Wauters). In 2004, with the advent of social networking websites, the pendulum has swung the other way (Wauters). These websites such as YouTube and Facebook gave people a flexible way of communicating with each other and sharing information (“ New Trends in the Internet”). Most importantly, these websites greatly helped media companies to promote new products, TV shows and movies. Every image posted on the Internet had a link.

If people shared the link on their Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest or other blogs, more and more people would see that image and even re-share it with their friends. As a result, it formed a perpetual cycle of sharing. All this reveals the Internet plays an important role in spreading information nowadays. The picture of four adults was posted on the Internet. When the picture was taken, social networking has been dominating the Internet already as there were several options for sharing the link in the bottom of the web page like “ Share,” “ Tweet” and “ reddit” (Corrigan).

The style of the picture was straight-on with the main subjects in the center of the frame aware of the camera (Lester 124). 10. Technical Perspective

The colorful photograph should be made using normal lens and a medium-sized aperture with fill-in flash as the brightness of the center is greater than the background. For example, people can recognize the depth of the quilt is decreasing from the bottom to the center of adults’ body. The production value of the image is low. To begin with, good acting is one of the most <https://assignbuster.com/visual-analysis-of-a-photograph-from-a-television-drama-big-love/>

important factors to determine an image's production value (" How to Add Production Value").

However, all four adults are still in the image. Moreover, since the image is taken in a small location and the background is quite plain, this shot doesn't look like a big production and let people feel expensive (" How to Add Production Value"). Despite its low production cost, the overall quality of the image is quite good. From the quilt in the front to the flowery wall in the background, all four adults are easily seen and in clear focus because of the reinforcing brightness in the center of the image. 11. Ethical Perspective

The golden rule in marriage is, " if you are ever caught cheating on your spouse the marriage is over" (Layton). As a result, the image violates the golden rule because it is difficult, if not impossible, for a woman to tolerate her husband to have a mistress, not to mention allowing him to get married to two more women. In addition, polygamy is forbidden in the United States.). Further, according to the golden mean philosophy, the image is a compromise between all totally naked adults and not showing any parts of their bodies by covering with the quilt completely.

In other words, showing only few parts of their bodies is a middle way because it can either prevent the image from becoming erotic or avoid removing the close relationship with one another. 12. Cultural Perspective

The only man is a symbol of male polygamy and male dominance. The three women seem submissive to him since they do not mind sharing the same husband with one another. Even better, all women probably enjoy the practice of polygamy because they are smiling in the picture. Also, the four adults' smile is a metaphor of a happy ending of polygamist families.

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Unfortunately, these symbolic signs go against current cultural values because polygamy is illegal in the United States and males no longer dominate over females. Nowadays, “ the strong, dominant position of men has been successfully challenged by feminists and with female suffrage, university education and the expansion of job opportunities, the grip of men on society has dramatically loosened” (Phoenix). Thus, the myth that males are superior to females should be exploded. 13. Critical Perspective The image makes people reflects on whether polygamy should be accepted in the United States.

It is no denying that polygamous marriage often leads to frequent arguments and conflicts between one another. Nonetheless, we shouldn't eliminate any possibility that some people really do not care about sharing with the same spouse because they really love him or her. Apart from that, the picture invokes a false gender stereotype that men are naturally philanderers, and then they desire more partners, while women are satisfied with remaining with a single partner for her whole life (Brettell & Sargent 10). In fact, some physiological constraints prevent them from marrying more than one husband.

For instance, in Islam, a woman is not allowed to have multiple husbands since she is unable to fulfill the sexual desires of her husbands meanwhile due to monthly periods and pregnancies (“ Why can't women have multiple husbands”). After all, polygamous marriage is not synonymous with having sex with multiple partners. Two advantages that I state from personal perspective should be applicable to female polygamy. Similar to male polygamy, women can definitely acquire gifts without much efforts and find

more happiness, relaxation and leisure time if they get married to multiple husbands.

Even though women probably do not find greater sexual pleasure, they will not feel monotonous because they don't need to have sex with the same husband. Overall, the image is so unidirectional that it only mirrors male polygamy. It may trigger off negative opinions from feminists because the image savors of gender inequality and women's submissiveness. To conclude, this image inculcates us with the importance of gender equality. If male polygamy was acceptable, female polygamy would also be accepted.