

Critical Notebook 5b: *Media Analysis of an Event*

For many of us, when we think of a famous event, we can have a sense that we experience an up-close, personal relationship to the event even if we were not there. Think of major sporting events like the Olympics, the World Cup, or the American World Series or Super Bowl or unfolding major world events such as the first moon landing or the fall of the Berlin Wall or the attacks of September 11, 2001. Aside from the people witnessing these moments, those who process memories of these events – which can feel quite personal and connected to the real-time, unfolding happenings – are developing all of their perspectives through the moving images that have been produced, recorded, selected, and edited by individual and multiple media sources.

With this activity, you will investigate and evaluate the effect of media as you experience an event occurring during the work in this course.

For the selected event, individual students are to watch the event through an individual media source for a particular window of time. Group members can determine particular media outlets that will be investigated for distinct blocks (for example, thirty minute or one- or two-hour segments of time).

When investigating the media events, make sure to take notes on all moving images for that period of time. This includes commercials, transitional passages, and all motion pictures that the viewer experiences.

Use the following questions to guide writing and discussion:

1. *Sources & Audiences*

- a. What are the sources of the moving images you are observing? List them.
- b. What are the reasons that these images have been created and for whom?
- c. Are there other sources of images for these events (besides the images you are presently viewing)? Do you have access to them? In what ways could you access other messages for these events?

2. *Content & Structure*

- a. How does each distinct new piece of media begin (event footage, commentary, personal interest feature, commercial, etc.)? How are transitions between media managed (direct cuts, fades, dissolves, logo intertitles, introductory graphics, etc.)?
- b. What values or perspectives are made clear through the media being shown, such as through selection of topics or points of view? What is not being shown from this event that might be important to consider?

3. *Production and Post-production*

- a. How was each type of media produced? From your learning in previous chapters, describe from evidence on the screen the methods that appear to have been used.
- b. Selecting three different examples of media viewed during your time period, describe the structure of how the message is communicated as well as the style and tone of the moviemaking.

4. *Processing the Event*

- a. How is time experienced in relation to the actual events? Are they occurring over the same “real time” or has time been altered in any way?
- b. In what ways is the content of the media as close as possible to the facts of what is occurring? What are the most significant ways in which the facts of the events are being altered?
- c. What are some of your reactions to the media that you have observed? What did you find the most interesting? The least interesting? The most biased? The least biased?
- d. Are there other sources of moving images or other media that you wish to seek out to explore this event further? How might other perspectives add to your knowledge and experience relating to this event?
- e. Using at least five terms from the **Chapter 5 Vocabulary List of *Moving Images (Personal Expression and Studio Production)***, discuss the methods of communication that you observed while experiencing the “media event” that you have studied.