

declare the law. But what would happen to judges, understood as the more or less sincere incarnations of a collective hypocrisy, if it became widely accepted that, far from obeying transcendent, universal verities and values, they are thoroughly subject, like all other social actors, to constraints such as those placed on them, irrespective of judicial procedures and hierarchies, by the pressures of economic necessity or the seduction of media success?

APPENDIX

*The Olympics—An Agenda for Analysis*¹

What exactly do we mean when we talk about the Olympics? The apparent referent is what “really” happens. That is to say, the gigantic spectacle of sport in which athletes from all over the world compete under the sign of universalistic ideals; as well as the markedly national, even patriotic ritual of the parades by various national teams, and the award ceremonies replete with flying flags and blaring anthems. But the hidden referent is the television show, the ensemble of representations of the first spectacle, as it is filmed and broadcast by television in selections which, since the competition is international, appear unmarked by national bias. The Olympics, then, are doubly hidden: no one sees all of it, and no one sees that they don’t see it. Every television viewer can have the illusion of seeing *the* (real) Olympics.

It may seem simply to record events as they take place, but in fact, given that each national television network gives more airplay to athletes or events that satisfy national pride, television transforms a sports competition between athletes from all over into a confrontation between champions, that is, officially selected competitors from different countries.

To understand this process of symbolic transformation, we would first have to analyze the social construction of the entire Olympic spectacle. We’d have to look at the individual events and at everything that takes place around them, such as the opening and closing parades. Then we’d have to look at the production of the televised image of this spectacle. Inasmuch as it is a prop for advertising, the televised event is a commercial, marketable product that must be designed to reach the largest audience and hold on to it the longest. Aside from the

fact that these events must be timed to be shown on prime time in economically dominant countries, these programs must be tailored to meet audience demand. The expectations of different national publics and their preferences for one or another sport have to be taken into account. The sports given prominence and the individual games or meets shown must be carefully selected to showcase the national teams most likely to win events and thereby gratify national pride. It follows that the relative importance of the different sports within the international sports organizations increasingly depends on their television popularity and the correlated financial return they promise. More and more, as well, the constraints of television broadcasting influence the choice of sports included in Olympic competition, the site and time slot awarded to each sport, and even the ways in which matches and ceremonies take place. This is why (after negotiations structured by tremendous financial considerations), the key final events at the Seoul Olympics were scheduled to coincide with prime time in the United States.

All of which means that to understand the games, we would have to look at the whole field of production of the Olympics as a *televised show* or, in marketing terms, as a "means of communication." That is to say, we would have to assess all the objective relations between the agents and institutions competing to produce and sell the images of, and commentary about, the Olympics. These would include first the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which has gradually become a vast commercial enterprise with an annual budget of \$20 million, dominated by a small, closed group of sports executives and representatives from major companies (Adidas, Coca-Cola, and so on). The IOC controls transmission rights (which were estimated, for Barcelona, at \$633 billion), sponsorship rights, and the Olympic city selection. Second, we would need to turn our attention to the big (especially American) television networks competing for transmission rights (divided up by country or by language). Third would be the large

multinational corporations (Coca-Cola, Kodak, Ricoh, Philips, and so on) competing for exclusive world rights to promote their products in connection with the Games (as "official sponsors").² Finally, we cannot forget the producers of images and commentary for television, radio, and newspapers (some ten thousand at Barcelona), since it is their competition that conditions the construction of the representation of the Olympics by influencing how these images are selected, framed, and edited, and how the commentary is elaborated. Another important consideration is the intensified competition between countries that is produced by the globalization of the Olympic spectacle. The effects of this competition can be seen in official *sports policies* to promote international sports success, maximizing the symbolic and financial rewards of victory and resulting in the *industrialization of the production of sports* that implies the use of drugs and authoritarian forms of training.³

A parallel can be seen in artistic production. The individual artist's directly visible actions obscure the activity of the other actors—critics, gallery owners, museum curators, and so on—who, in and through their competition, collaborate to produce the meaning and the value of both the artwork and the artist. Even more important, they produce the very belief in the value of art and the artist that is the basis of the whole art game.⁴ Likewise, in sports, the champion runner or javelin thrower is only the obvious subject of a spectacle that in some sense is produced twice.⁵ The first production is the actual event in the stadium, which is put together by a whole array of actors, including athletes, trainers, doctors, organizers, judges, goalkeepers, and masters of the ceremonies. The second show reproduces the first in images and commentary. Usually laboring under enormous pressure, those who produce on the second show are caught up in a whole network of objective relationships that weighs heavily on each of them.

As a collectivity, the participants in the event we call "the Olympics" might conceivably come to control the mechanisms that affect them all. But they would be able to do so only by

undertaking a serious investigation to bring to light the mechanisms behind this *two-step social construction*, first of the sports event, then of the media event. Only with the conscious control of these mechanisms that can be gained from such a process of research and reflection would this collectivity be able to maximize the potential for universalism—today in danger of extinction—that is contained within the Olympic Games.⁶

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

As Pierre Bourdieu explains, this work aims at an audience beyond the usual public for his scholarly works. To make connections to the French situation, for the most part all Anglo-American readers need do is follow Bourdieu's reasoning, supplying their own equivalents from Britain or the U.S. or, indeed, elsewhere. However, an important element that needs to be mentioned because it is absent from American or British journalism is the extent to which the government intervenes in the operations of all media.¹ A ministry of communication (grouped for some administrations with the ministry of culture) oversees the direct or indirect financial support accorded the print press, radio, and television, regulates their competition, and determines as well the nature and kind of official information made available. (The Service juridique et technique de l'information, which reports directly to the prime minister, is charged with coordinating communications policy and subventions.) Forms of support range from direct subsidies, tax reductions, and postal benefits to promotional campaigns for one or another official policy which are paid for by the government. It is not unheard of for total governmental support to reach 20 percent of income for a newspaper or journal. The goal of this financial intervention is to guarantee economic viability of "serious" opinion journals and reviews by removing them from the hold of the market. Similarly, the governmental supports the production of French television programs by limiting the proportion of foreign (read, American) programs that may be broadcast. (A few years ago, this protectionism brought France into direct conflict with the U.S. during the negotiations of GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade].)

Television in particular is subject to governmental controls. The first three television networks, established in 1949 (TF1),

1964 (Antenne 2), and 1973 (FR3, a regional network), were until recently almost entirely government subsidized and run. Originally absent altogether, advertising was introduced with two minutes per day in 1970, which had become twenty minutes a decade later, and increasingly prominent since. Liberalization of radio and television received its big push in the Events of 1968, when the ORTF (Office de la Radio et Télévision Françaises) went on strike. By the 1980s, begun by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing but primarily under the Socialist François Mitterrand, the government monopoly on programming was eliminated, a cable station was added (Canal Plus), TF1 and La Cinq were privatized, M6 and 7 were created; Channel 7 eventually turned into Arte, which, as its name suggests, is devoted to more or less high-cultural fare, not unlike but of a higher level than public broadcasting stations in the United States.

A further distinction, notably from the American press, is the strongly defined political orientations claimed and proclaimed by the print media in France. The principal national dailies referred to in *On Television* are *Libération* (center-left), *Le Monde* (center-liberal), *Le Figaro* (right-conservative), *L'Humanité* (the paper of the French Communist Party), and tabloids like *France-Soir*. The prominent weekly news magazines on the order of *Time* or *Newsweek* are *L'Express* (center) and *Le Nouvel Observateur* (center-left). *Le Monde diplomatique*, a monthly journal devoted to foreign affairs, represents liberal (in the Anglo-American sense) currents of reflection. The National Front, the radical right party led by Jean-Marie LePen (whom Bourdieu targets in Part Two of *On Television*), has no comparable news outlet.

As far as official institutions goes, it is not irrelevant that Pierre Bourdieu himself speaks from and with the authority of a peculiarly French institution, the Collège de France, founded in 1543 to counter the conservatism of the Sorbonne. The Collège grants no degrees and gives the professors (who are elected by the other members) exceptional freedom to pursue

their research and an especially public venue to present that research. (All lectures are free and open to the public). Prominent scholars at the Collège have included Louis Pasteur, Henri Bergson, and Marcel Mauss, and closer to the present, Raymond Aron, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Bourdieu was elected to a chair in sociology in 1980.