

Olympics is rhetoric



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> Joleanna Tran English 1020 Professor Tiffany Mitchell September 6, 2012

Olympics: Worldwide Forum Rhetoric is defined as " the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing" and " language designed to have a persuasive or impressive effect on its audience". It can also refer to describing meaning as a whole or " a vehicle for meaning whose aim is often to identify, inform, or persuade an audience. " The Summer Olympics and rhetoric do not sound like they have anything to do with each other, but in fact, the Olympics is one of the most communicated mass media events occurring to date. Without the games, many issues would have gone unnoticed, such as underprivileged Muslim athletes, unstable inter-country relationships, and even bad televising. They bring countries closer through mutual appreciation for sports and help build bridges between them but at the same time exasperate teams with pre-existing affairs. Today, the Olympic games are highly commercialized and it is hard to look past the media hype and intense product marketing, but they still act as great median for communication between viewers and athletes, alike. Rhetoric is composed of readers, writers, and texts and uses those elements to transmit meaning. The part that connects the other two is the text. The texts of the Olympics are the results of each event, the viewers' reactions, and news stories focusing on key points of the games. They are the entirety of the games, and they are also what is primarily used for persuasion and for making impressions. How one might look at each text could vary from another solely based their culture, personality, values, or even their opinion of the writer. Next, there are the readers, such as the audience and those viewing the events via television or the Internet. Also, judges are actively viewing the athletes and their performances. The readers are the ones

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taking the text and information and processing it into something they can readily understand. The games can definitely be compared to a “ language” in the sense that it is something left up to the viewers to interpret. Readers have the ability to analyze the texts in many different ways, therefore comprehension of the games is infinite. They could support one issue and berate another. If they decide to state their opinion openly, via speech or social media sites, they could be considered the writers as well. Also, when the judges criticize the athletic performances, their rulings could be considered part of the text, making them writers, too. The writers of the Olympics can be characterized by the host country’s coordination of the opening and closing ceremonies, broadcasters, viewers on social networks, and the athletes. They are whom or what the text is composed of or by. The host country makes up the setting and plans the opening and closing ceremonies, and if they were hosted in a different location, the themes and ideas would also be altered. Athletes are authors, as they create the results, and can be compared to the main characters of the text. As main characters are the primary focus in stories, prized athletes play the roles of heroes and heroines to their countries. Without them, nations would not have as much pride and satisfaction in competing in the Olympics. Viewers, although mostly classified as readers, have developed excessively due to the increase in social media. Emily Bell of The Guardian UK, wrote an article describing the troubles that surfaced during this year’s events. She said that during the 2012 Summer Olympics, web traffic statistics showed “ dizzying levels of increase”, making this year the “ first social media Olympics” (Bell). Twitter, Facebook, and texting have made it available to let everyone know what you are thinking, literally whenever. The trending Twitter hashtag “#NBCfail”

went viral when NBC decided not to show the 100 m final (Bray). Viewers in the US were livid due to international “ tweeters” posting results before they were able to view the race. Because of NBC’s lack of coverage, they retaliated by posting offensive comments towards the failing broadcast system. They voiced their opinions and became the writers of the situation by collaborating and explaining what could have been done instead. Each of the listed play a role in defining how the Olympics will turn out and make up the bulk of what will be remembered of them, though they are remembered differently in different countries. News articles printed in the Guardian, a UK based newspaper, has different biases than the New York Times. Each country shows nationalism in its own way and depicts events differently than others. Through reading some articles in the Guardian, it is easy to conclude that their thoughts on NBC’s faltering broadcast were less concerned than the New York Times. The Guardian’s account of the whole ordeal even went so far as to sound arrogant when referring to their sponsored broadcaster, BBC, vs NBC. Besides communicating faults and results, the Olympic games are a way to show patriotism and give countries the opportunity to show each other up through sporting events. The events are used to persuade viewers who the “ better” and more talented country is. It gives developing countries like Turkey and Ethiopia bragging rights and something to be proud of. Although China and the United States, having the largest economies, also have the largest selection pool of athletes. In events that China do well in, the United States is never far behind and vice versa. It is not uncommon for economic standings to be represented through the more or less able athletes, again, referable to communicating through rhetoric. The games also give us insight on other countries’, otherwise, overlooked

issues. These things are all subtly referenced to but brought to light via viewers, reporters, and writers. The games bring attention and concern to problems that would normally be ignored and forgotten. The Ancient Olympic games were hosted to honor the Gods, and therefore were a sort of religious festival. They have since developed and grown exponentially commercially due to the prospect of being able to show power through athletic events and nationalism. Thanks to mass media, nearly every nation participates now, making it the largest international sporting event in history. The Olympic games communicate togetherness by uniting countries through a mutual passion for athletics, but at the same time, exacerbate tension through competition. While the Olympic games are meant to bring the world closer, it is undeniable that prior political engagements and economic decisions can alter the games and their outcome. For example, the 1916 Summer Olympics were to have been held in Berlin, but were cancelled due to the start of World War I. The 1936 Olympics in Berlin were extremely controversial due to the fact that the location had been chosen after Hitler had declared himself Dictator (Wickford). He used the social event to advertise concepts of "Aryan racial superiority." Boycotts started in 1956 when Lichtenstein, the Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden boycotted the games protesting Soviet' invasion of Hungary. Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq also did not participate due to conflict and war between Egypt and Israel. The People's Republic of China refused to participate because Taiwan was allowed to. After that, every Summer Olympics that followed had nations that did not participate due to other political or social problems. The relationships and social standings between countries have a very large effect on each of the Olympic games. Some problems can even extend from a

specific religious group, such as in the 2012 Summer Olympics, when women were finally given permission to wear the religious head dressing, a Hijab, in competition. The agreement allowed Saudi Arabian judo competitor Wodjan Shahrkhani to wear the sport version of the Hijab (Shergold). Although she lost her first-round match, she said, " I am proud of be the first Saudi woman and I'm very grateful to the crowd that supported me, " showing pride and joy for her country. Before the acceptance of this sportswear, Muslim women had to choose between athletic fame and condemnation of them and their family by the entire country. Most Americans could not fathom not being able to show patriotism and their pride in themselves because of an article of clothing, but through this news and text, it is possible to see other perspectives. The Olympics are a way of communicating struggles that have not been widely recognized by international news. International problems are spoken through the games via rhetoric. Without the Olympics, some problems such as Muslim women's inability to play sports because of their head dressing and NBC's poor customer service deprived Americans of viewing and cheering on their teams. Controversial issues show themselves through the Olympics and the propaganda that is now consuming the games. Rhetoric is communication between a reader and a writer through forms of texts or information, and the Olympics serve as a kind of " meeting ground" for communities to identify problems and concerns may it be about the rules, unfair athletic performance, or even wars through boycotts. Works Cited Bell, Emily. " Lessons to be Learned From the First Social Media Olympics. " 5 August 2012. The Guardian. 11 Sept 2012. . Bray, Hiawatha. " Olympic-Level Social Media Growing Pains. " 31 July 2012. Boston. 11 Sept 2012. . Friedman, Marcelle. " Justice Prevails, as Saudi Woman Allowed to Wear Hijab <https://assignbuster.com/olympics-is-rhetoric/>

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