Soccer, Broadcasting, and Narrative: On Televising a Live Soccer Match

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Abstract

Soccer broadcasts have been explored in a number of interesting ways, uncovering racial difference, gendered stereotypes, domestic viewing experiences, nationalistic discourse, and national styles of production. What is lacking, however, is how the viewer comprehends space and time in the live broadcast. Such literatures neglect the hybrid nature of televised soccer as a combination of visual and verbal communication. Understanding and experiencing a televised soccer match is a formulation of visual principles and verbal understanding of temporality within the narrative of a live broadcast. These principles are materialized through the screen and develop an unconscious understanding of movement, spatiality, and temporality differing from a cinematic unconscious through the cutting and sequencing of footage and border moments—screen wipe, frames, cuts—which work in combination with commentary to establish a microgeography of the screen. Viewers of televised soccer, therefore, establish a comprehension of time and space which is distinctive and differs from reportage.

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Introduction—Live Sport, Broadcasting, and Television

The relationship between television and sport is an area of contention, particularly regarding whether it is beneficial to both parties or in favour of one side or the other (Real, 2005). Rader (1984), for example, views the relationship in a somewhat negative manner regarding television as a corrupting and exploitative influence on sport. While Barnett (1990) comprehends the association without longing for an ideal past but does share an anxious position over the impact of a satellite- and cable-focused future for televised sport. What is without doubt is the influence economically, socially, imaginatively, and even politically of televised sport. Fundamental to a great extent of the most interesting work on television and sport has been the proponent developed by Gruneau (1999, p. 114), "for a critical approach to the study of sport that combines social theory with history, interpretive cultural analysis, and political economy."

Reminiscent of the majority of entertainment media, sport on television is comprehended through the conventions of narrative drama. Sport on television is a narrative event due to the fact that matches have a beginning, middle, and an end. However, television is capable of intensifying the dramatic tension in an assortment of ways. For example, Whannel (1984, p. 102) suggests that the "insistence that television does not simply cover events, but transforms them into stories—is to raise questions about the polarity between actuality and fiction. Television sport can clearly be seen in terms of dramatic presentation and analyzed as a form of narrative construction." Added to this Kinkema and Harris (1998) draw attention to 16 pieces of research that demonstrate how narratives are intentionally engaged by the media to heighten the dramatic impact of sport. The entrenched power of narrative to exert a pull on and keep hold of interest constructs such ways of telling stories as an essential activity in all forms of human life. And televised sport merely affords this in an intensified and vibrant manner.

An example of attempting to approach televised sport and convey its lively nature is in the seminal book on televised soccer edited by Buscombe (1975) which offers a reading of the 1974 Soccer World Cup broadcasts. In a range of chapters, the style of sequences, panel presentations, and comparison of shot length are described. While the book offers a reading of televised sport that has more akin with television criticism in places providing merely the authors—of whom there are four—personal tastes, especially into the role of panels in live broadcast, and the title sequences of two competing programmes. It does provide an interesting starting point for sport and television—in one chapter a schema is provided by analysing two countries' individual styles of broadcasting sport, however, as it compares one live match from the World Cup (from German TV) and a highlights programme from league soccer (from the BBC), the analysis falls some way sort of providing legible conclusions. In contrast, the work of Hall (1973) provides a useful insight into the polysemic nature of any text and should provide an interesting starting point for any textual analysis. A polysemic text is one that is "open" to various readings or has multiple readings or meanings.

Goldlust (1987, p. 85), on the other hand, suggests that televised sport does not convey an unmediated reporting of the event. Rather, the broadcast of any sport event is "constructed of three embedded" events that occur simultaneously,

> (t)hey are (1) the game event, defined as the action on the field plus directly related activities taking place on the sidelines, (2) the stadium event, defined as the total sequence of activities occurring in the stadium, both perceived and participated in by the fans and including the game event, and (3) the medium event, defined as the total telecast of which coverage of the game is part.

The medium event integrates the game and the stadium events but assimilates these with commentary, interview, and graphics. The viewer receives not a direct image of the event but through the medium event and corresponding images and sound an attempt is made to portray a coherent analysis, evaluation, and assessment of the unfolding actions. Goldlust adds "the visual aspect of the telecast operates as a sign system for the elaboration of particular verbal codes" (p. 92).

Recently, Whannel (2009, p. 214) has identified two aspects of the impact of television on sport "first, the impact upon the institutions, rituals, and practices of organized sport; and second, the impact upon spectators, the television audience, and social practices more generally. Clearly, television has transformed sport beyond recognition." However, in conclusion Whannel identifies televised sport in a positive light within the realm of collective experience whereby, "(i)n a future in which people compose their own viewing schedules from a large range of instantly downloadable sources, major live sport may just be the last bastion of the experience of simultaneous communal viewing" (p. 216). In this vain, the sports broadcast has developed via the technological development of the sport event by processes of visual selection, representation, and enhanced commentary (Barnett, 1990; Bruce, 2005; Gruneau, 1989; Rowe, 2004; Desmarais & Bruce, 2009; Wenner & Gantz, 1989). The relationship between sport and television broadcasts has been explored by a range of academic analysis tracing the combination back to the origins of 1940s and 1950s televised sporting encounters (Barnett, 1990; Coakley, 1999; Oriard, 2001; Rowe, 2004; Whannel, 1992; Wenner, 1989). The production methods and techniques of organisation of live broadcasts of sporting events has also been the focus of attention (Engström, Juhlin, Perry, & Broth, 2010; Silk, 2001; Silk, Slack, & Amis, 2000; Stoddart, 1994). As has the nature and impact of advertising, sport, and audience with regard to televised soccer matches (Evens & Lefeber, 2011; Sandvoss, 2003).

Wenner and Gantz (1998) have conducted the most detailed study on the audience experiences of viewing televised sports. The authors explain that motivation for watching televised sport covers a range of drives including fandom, learning, emotional release, community, and filler. Associated affective and behavioral practices include reading up and discussing the game, drinking and snacking during the game, and getting angry during the game. These behaviors are more widespread for male experiences in comparison to female experiences. Also they are more familiar with

regular fans than with nonfans. There is little difference between male and female fans if both are ardent television sports viewers or conversely if they rarely watch televised sport.

Wenner and Gantz recognize, however, that there are considerably more "sports impassioned" men and the likelihood of finding a partner who is equally as interested in televised sport may prove complicated. For example, female viewers tend to watch sports as a "last resort," while male viewers watch sports to enjoy themselves, drink, experience exhilaration, and gain knowledge about players and teams. As Wenner and Gantz (1998, p. 244) draw attention to "both reinforces aspects of the football widow and raises questions about it." Wenner and Gantz conclude that televised sport viewers do not conform to the stereotype couch potato and are in fact engaged, perceptive, and active. They do not, for example, let their emotions interfere with their everyday life at any stage of the match or before or after. Televised sport can be a problem in relationships, Wenner and Gantz conclude by stating that "the armchair quarterback and the football widow have neither been typecast accurately nor are they experiencing many sport-related marital problems" (p. 251).

Narrative and commentary in soccer broadcasts have been explored in a number of ways. The role of the live broadcast, and in particular live commentary, has been studied in regard to historical aspects (Haynes, 1998; Whannel, 1992), gendered, racial, nationalistic, and ethnic discourses (Billings, 2003; Billings, Angelini, & Eastman, 2005; Billings & Eastman, 2002; Pociello, 1999; Sabo, Jansen, Tate, Duncan, & Leggett, 1996; Watson, 2010), as well as language styles and components (Bowcher, 2003; Ferguson, 1983; Kuiper & Haggo, 1985; Wanta & Leggett, 1988). For example, Bruce (2004) has advocated that television sport commentators more so than others are inclined to utilize ethnic or racial stereotypes when illustrating performances of the athletes. And Sterkenburg, Knoppers, and de Leeuw (2012, p. 436) conclude that "Dutch soccer commentary seems a place where hegemonic, historically informed and globalized discourses about racial/ethnic groups are reconstructed, confirmed and 'naturalized'" but adding that it is "also a site where existing racial/ethnic categorizations and hierarchies are challenged." Commentary of live televised sport is therefore a contested terrain where discourses and counter discourses are created and challenged.

The form of the broadcast is central to how it is perceived, understood, and incorporated by viewers. Desmarais and Bruce (2009, p. 353) conclude "the power of images in live sport television often makes us less conscious of the role of language in the work of enhancing and representing events that seem to primarily appeal to the visual senses." Commentary and narrative should therefore be approached not only together but for the way they are organized into visual principles by the viewers, visual principles that are retained by the viewer and incorporated in to their understanding. Relatively little attention has been paid to how narrative is comprehended not as a text to be discovered by viewers but as a combination of verbal and visual cues in a live soccer broadcast. This article will attend to this undertheorized aspect of the live broadcast by using the narrative theory of Ryan (1993) and incorporating

the visual approach of Dittmer (2010) to engage with a live broadcast in a manner that aims to draw out the complexities involved with televised soccer.

This article examines the live sport broadcast because as Whannel (2009) attests televised sport is the "last bastion of the experience of simultaneous communal viewing" and therefore engenders a method of understanding movement, corporeality, and narrating experiences, which establishes a form of unconsciousness understanding. Doel and Clarke (2002) suggest that cinema has produced a cinematic unconscious whereby experience is perceived through the apparatus of the cinema and techniques of the cinematographer. Televised sport offers a method of comprehending which is materialized through the screen, and these principles develop an unconscious understanding of movement, spatiality, and temporality differing from a cinematic unconscious through the cutting and sequencing of footage and border moments. This article therefore examines how this event is captured and made intelligible, exploring the relation between image and event, in particular, how is the temporal and spatial story of the match developed, told, and organized?

On the Match

The analysis in this article will be of a live broadcast of a professional soccer match in the English Premier League. This article is structured around a single broadcast and match—the English Premier League match between Everton and Arsenal. The Premier League is the top level of professional soccer that is played in England and the match in question was played at Goodison Park in Liverpool, home of Everton Football Club. The day is November 14, 2010, and the contest was both sides 13th of 38 leagues to be played during the 2010–2011 season. The match was broadcast live on Sky Sports 1 as part of Sky Sports Super Sunday programmes that consisted of two live matches. Sky Sports is the primary soccer broadcaster in England and is only available on subscription. In the commentary box for Sky Sports are Rob Palmer, a senior match commentator with 14 years' experience, and Alan Smith as match summarizer, a former professional player who scored the winning goal in the 1994 UEFA Cup Winners Cup Final for Arsenal. The match was won by the away side, Arsenal, by two goals to one.

On the Development of Narrative

The narrative of a soccer match is both spatial and temporal. There are on-screen narrative aids (the score tagline—an innovation established by Sky Sports in 1992), audio narrative aids (the commentary), and visual narrative aids (the camera shot) which combine to construct and report the story of the events as they occur. The unfolding narrative is, as you would expect, reliant on the sequence of the match. The sequence of the match and the broadcast is in one sense limited to the temporality of soccer. The live broadcast of the match is therefore expected to be one continuous flow. This, however, is not the case. The narrative that is constructed

in the live broadcast is simultaneous and nonretrospective, which distinguishes it from typical narrative construction that occurs in fiction and in even types of sports reporting. Following Ryan (1993) the simultaneous broadcast of events establishes a narrative that attempts to convey three elements: what is happening, how it is happening, and why it is happening. These three elements are: chronicle, mimesis, and plot.

The chronicle establishes "the what" aspect detailing the events themselves. The mimesis focuses on "the how," doing so by conferring presence and an immediate closeness and vividness. The plot organizes the narrated into a global design that makes events intelligible. The live broadcast's narrative is not merely visual nor is it merely verbal. Rather, it is a combination of both which can be seen to play out. The combination of visual and verbal helps to assemble the unfolding event. The narrative is established by the combination of the tripartite assemblage and is achieved by temporal flexibility. While initially a live broadcast may be thought of as pure chronicle—this is not the case. The coverage does not simply provide a listing of the events. Rather, the coverage dips in and out of live-as-it-happens time, providing a global design interspersed with analysis and explanations of the action. These temporal elements will be shown to be in operation during the live match commentary in the following section.

On the Role of Commentary

Commentary of a soccer match that is broadcast live on television is a complicated process. Not only do the commentators report on the unfolding actions on the pitch, they also link the match with wider events and situate them within the relating context. The commentary that is performed by television commentators differs from radio commentary and newspaper reporting due to the visual availability of images and the fixed length of the match. The match speed cannot be adjusted in a live broadcast as the match is unfolding in front of the viewer. The dialogue of the commentators is incorporated in framing and establishing the live event. The commentary of live televised sport draws attention to the temporalities that are bound up within narrative. The commentators have to talk through the action live-as-it-happens and make sense of these actions. In this sense, the commentary of a live broadcast is understood as particular practical actions, intimately bound up with the likes of embodied gesture and woven into the ongoing (procedural) conduct of practical life (Laurier & Philo, 2005).

The commentary, more than being merely descriptive (as will be evidenced below), is a performative act (Thrift, 2008), performativity in the sense that the commentary is actively participating in the creation of a specific soccer "medium event" (Goldlust, 1987) that is developed by specific practices and techniques. The procedures of commentary are wrapped up in the praxis of live broadcast and "doing" soccer. As talk, and narrative, in the scenario of the live broadcast is doing more than merely describing something, this gives rise to a number of connected questions

such as how is a narrative established and developed within a live broadcast, what is it that the commentary of a live broadcast is doing if it is not merely describing the match, and what is the interplay between the visual and verbal?

> **Rob Palmer ([RP]** *Match Commentator*): It is not an injury that has seen Jack Wilshire go off, reportedly tactical on Arsene Wenger's part which is to bring on Denilson which is a bit of a surprise (45:01 [match time]).

> —***CUT (change of camera shot)***—

> **Alan Smith ([AS]** *Summarizer*): Yeah, perhaps he got a bit of a shunting at times here Jack Wilshire. The Heitigna one, you can see what David Moyes is thinking and with Jack Rodwell in the middle of the park they have another player capable of picking out a pass. They did let themselves down in keeping possessions at times in the first half Everton (45:16)

> —***CUT***—

> **RP**: Rodwell's first Premier League appearance since August, since when he has had an ankle injury. So it's good for Everton to have him back and available to be playing again now (45:23)
> **RP**: Here's Bacry Sagna the surprise goal scorer. Now one ahead of his fellow full back Goal—***CUT***—Clichy who's been playing longer for Arsenal but still has only one goal to his credit (45:32)
> **RP**: Here's Denilson who scored in the six— ***CUT***—one win here last year— ***CUT*** — (45:48)
> **RP**: Denilson ... there was a foul by— ***CUT*** —Phil Neville, the referee played the advantage (45:55)
> **AS**: —***CUT***—Just quick feet there from the Brazilian did for Phil Neville (45:59)
> **RP**: Here's Denilson—***CUT***—again ... now Song (46:06)
> **RP**: This is Samir Nasri (46:12)
> **RP**: Arshavin ... and—***CUT***—it's come back off Pinear and Distin had to deal with that because Alex Song was lurking (46:15)
> **RP**: Arsenal are unbeaten in their last six against Everton including their last three visits here (46:30)
> **RP**: Here's Cesc Fabregas(▲) ... it's a nice—***CUT***—height for Tim Howard (46:38)
> **RP**: Arsenal have—***CUT***—gained more Premier League points, wins and goals in this fixture than any other. Seem to favour playing—***CUT***—Everton (46:47)
> **RP**: Everton's patience paid off in the week with their late fight back to earn a point against Bolton (47:00)
> **AS**: They have got options on the bench there's no—***CUT***—doubt about that. Beckford will be raring to get on after that first goal (47:05)
> **RP**: Clearance by Squillaci and er I think Saha—***CUT***—may have unintentionally stood on his hand then—***CUT***—(47:17)
> **RP**: Won by Denilson. Three up—***CUT***—head of him here (47:26)
> **RP**: Fabregas into the path of Chamakh (47:33)
> **RP**: Fabregas(▲)! Two nil Arsenal what a start to the second half for the visitors (47:35)

—*Screen Wipe*—

[▲ = sharp increase in pitch/volume of voice]

On Temporality and the Live Broadcast

To return to the match commentary that featured in the previous section, the temporalities of narrative can be seen to be in constant struggle from reporting the match events, explaining incidents, linking present events to past events to making future projections about possible outcomes. The intriguing makeup of live commentary means that these formulations can appear in isolation or in unison. For example:

> Here's Bacry Sagna

This is what is expected from a live commentary. The main match commentator is identifying the player who is in possession of the ball. This is pure chronicle. Once you add more of the utterance, however, the picture of how this fits in with the match takes place. Not only is this the player who scored but that fact was unexpected.

> Here's Bacry Sagna the surprise goal scorer

The commentator continues to locate the unexpected aspect of the goal scorer by explaining his position on the pitch—a full back (defender)—as well as further adding to how rare players from this position score by linking this to the goal scoring record of his teammate. The introduction of his teammates' name also occurs as the ball is passed along the defensive line of Arsenal and is now located with the full back on the opposite side.

> Here's Bacry Sagna the surprise goal scorer. Now one ahead of his fellow full back Geal Clichy

The commentator then needs to return to chronicling the action. The ball has travelled the width of the pitch without mentioning the players the ball has been in contact with. To make the commentary not only informative but also entertaining, the commentator identifies that another player has possession of the ball by locating that player's history in relation to the team and his teammate.

> Here's Bacry Sagna the surprise goal scorer. Now one ahead of his fellow full back Geal Clichy who's been playing longer for Arsenal but still has only one goal to his credit

The temporality of the live commentary is not constantly in such flux. The chronicle of the match is still a central reason behind the commentary and why

people are tuning in. This can be seen to be working in a series of utterances that form the excerpt above. Here the commentator is describing what is happening on the screens. Picking out the players by name and letting the viewers know who is in possession of the ball, what changes to the match have taken place, and events that the viewer may have missed. These are performed in the style of reporting the action. These descriptions of the action also offer pointers for the viewers—suggesting where fellow teammates or the opposition are and whether a particular movement was easy to accomplish or more difficult. The commentator is also extending the visual pictures but guiding the viewer's eyes to particular actions or events.

> It is not an injury that has seen Jack Wilshire go off, reportedly tactical on Arsene Wenger's part which is to bring on Denilson which is a bit of a surprise
> Denilson . . . there was a foul by Phil Neville, the referee played the advantage
> Arshavin . . . and it's come back off Pinear and Distin had to deal with that because Alex Song was lurking
> Here's Cesc Fabregas(▲) . . . it's a nice height for Tim Howard
> Clearance by Squillaci and er I think Saha may have unintentionally stood on his hand then
> Won by Denilson. Three up head of him here
> Fabregas into the path of Chamakh
> Fabregas(▲)! Two nil Arsenal what a start to the second half for the visitors

The chronicle forms only part of the live commentary. If the match commentator and summarizer were merely going to repeat the action from the pitch, then the broadcast would not be informative, entertaining, or engaging. There is an expectation to the live broadcast. A certain way that the coverage happens that makes live broadcast construction of narrative very interesting. Not only does the commentator describe parts of the action, there is also the wider stories and personal narratives that the actions are placed within and around. Take for example the Everton substitute. A young player who has been injured for a couple of months and has not played is introduced with the commentator, alluding to his unfortunate absence from the team. The match summarizer then also locates the player's abilities within a future projection of what his skills may do for his team.

> Rodwell's first Premier League appearance since August, since when he has had an ankle injury
>
> The Heitigna one, you can see what David Moyes is thinking and with Jack Rodwell in the middle of the park they have another player capable of picking out a pass

As well as involving other "characters" such as the team manager and departing player what this does is introduce a player who will—because his plays in midfield—feature quite prominently in the second half of the match. This player has not touched the ball as yet so this part of the chronicle has added nuance to the unfolding

and upcoming events. The commentary also involves a mixture of temporalities when the ball is with a certain player. In such a scenario, the temporal flow of the match can be disrupted by linking the current match with one that has occurred in the past between the teams involved. This is a common feature of sports coverage, connecting this season with last and present with past and, indeed, present with past and future. In this instance, Arsenal won this corresponding fixture in the previous season by six goals to one. Now into the second half the commentator takes the opportunity to link these two temporal moments with each other via the chronicle of the action and the player involved.

> Here's Denilson who scored in the six one win here last year

The linking of temporal moment in the past is also used to speculate about the forthcoming second half. The away side Arsenal has been successful whilst playing at Everton over the past few seasons. In speculating about what may happen in the remainder of the match, the commentator explains that not only have Arsenal tended to do well at this particular ground but, also significantly, in doing so they have scored a lot of goals. This sort of in-game hype is also part of the engaging and entertaining aspect of the commentary, keeping the viewer informed as to what is happening and speculating that the match will remain or intensify in excitement and action.

> Arsenal are unbeaten in their last six against Everton including their last three visits here

> Arsenal have gained more Premier League points, wins and goals in this fixture than any other. Seem to favour playing Everton

A further dimension to live commentary that we can see in this excerpt is the expression of a narrative theme. In the case of this match, there is evidence in the utterance above which is the expected victory. A narrative theme is also developed for the home side. Trailing at the interval to a (supposedly) superior team Everton are being portrayed in the narrative as the underdogs come from behind victory. Once again linked to a different temporal moment this one not so far in the past rather, a match that occurred only a few days before where they came back from a goal down to gain a draw with a last-minute equalizer. In expanding on such a point the match summarizer also paints a further projected narrative that is the match saving substitute. The player mentioned is the same player who did such a thing in the previous match in the week, and this is linked to an unprojected future narrative by locating the player alongside the rest of the players on the substitute bench of possibilities.

> Everton's patience paid off in the week with their late fight back to earn a point against Bolton

> They have got options on the bench there's no doubt about that. Beckford will be raring to get on after that first goal

On the Live Broadcast and a Microgeography of the Screen

Televised sport establishes a fluid sense of temporality. This sense of time is combined with a set of visual conventions, which is generative of the hybrid nature of televised soccer. The development of the match narrative occurs through the footage and the border moments that accompany the commentary. As shown, commentary has a fluid temporal makeup that allows for future projection, historical recapture, and concurrent reporting. The viewer, however, interprets this temporality alongside the visuality of the match. This would be quite disconcerting for a viewer if it was not for the way a set of interpretative skills are developed. Early formulations of live soccer coverage used limited numbers of cameras from fixed positions with few cuts that built up a picture of the match in two forms, either an analytic coverage or a star-centred coverage (Goldlust, 1987). The coverage on Sky Sports is an analytical-based approach with multiple mobile cameras (up to 30 per match).

Understanding and experiencing a televised soccer match is a formulation of visual principles that are materialized through the screen, these principles develop an unconscious understanding of movement, spatiality, and temporality differing from a cinematic unconscious (Doel & Clarke, 2002) through the cutting and sequencing of footage and border moments—screen wipe, frames, cuts—which work in combination with commentary to establish a microgeography of the screen (Dittmer, 2010). Viewers, therefore, establish a comprehension of time and space, which is unique and differs from reportage, documentary, and cinema. Border moments are central to the heterogeneous possibilities of time and space that viewers of soccer develop. Not only do they comprehend what is happening in shot, they have to formulate this with the possible happenings that are occurring out of shot. Visual narrative, like the verbal narrative of the commentary is also told out of order, not only is the action on the pitch filmed directly but it is interspersed with replay and other images that the viewer organizes. The visual principles and comprehension of time space is materialized through the way the match is televised and the border moments that comprise the coverage.

There are three instances of border moments in televised soccer: Frame, Screen Wipe, Cut. The first example of the border moment is of the frame. This is the frame of the television, which provides a frame that encapsulates not the whole scene of the match but a selected fragment. As Deleuze (1986) highlights the construction of the frame establishes a powerful connection between the in frame and the out of frame—a connection between the infield and out of field. This connection works in twofold. First, in the way a framed set is generative of and demarcates its own out-of-field sets and creates connections with them—this works by framing that leaves actions partly out of the frame and implying their persistence. Second, the frame's out of field is reference to a whole, which is not merely an accumulation of all the sets of actions. The whole is something that is transient into each of the sets, each of the frames. In this understanding of the frame, it is not a distinction between concrete

and imaginary space. Rather, the distinction of the framed elements from the out of field is akin to Deleuze's distinction between actual and virtual where one is perpetually becoming the other, and thus Deleuze emphasizes the potential of the frame, the out of frame, and the image.

The second example of a border moment is the screen wipe, which is a tool used to separate different temporal elements of the match, for example, changing from live coverage to replay and vice versa. The screen wipe consists of a graphic—a motif or a symbol from the match—that literally wipes across the screen, generating a blank moment. The separation of time and space and the intermixing of different images form the match—different angles, speeds—means that time unravels as the forward progression of the image pauses and the viewer generates the narrative flow of the match. The third example of a border moment is the cut between shots of the live televised match. The match director cuts between the cameras that are covering a match—in the Everton versus Arsenal match there are 17 cameras. Each cut offers a change in spatial perspective of the match. The cuts need not be separated by a graphic or a screen wipe frames can directly adjoin one another either way the cuts are generative of a topological connection. This connection is the site of the development of the match by the viewer who has to sort the image and its relation to the rest of the images that have been in the match so far, how this relates to the match, and how this relates to the in frame and out of frame of the pitch, players, and the match as a whole.

In introducing the notion of the "antioptical gutter" in comics, Dittmer (2010, p. 230) shows that these empty spaces are a "site of narrative development that must take place in order for the two juxtaposed panels to make sense." Border moments in live televised soccer operate in a similar, not identical, fashion. The border of the frame, cuts, and screen wipes aids in the development of narrative and "should be thought of as an anti-optical void – there is no story to reconstitute in that space, no missing images, only a relationship to be formed in the reader's mind" (p. 231). These border moments of the live broadcast establish on the one hand an appreciation of space as heterogeneous where the out-of-frame space is not deadened and considered empty. Rather, it is comprehended as lively, action packed, brimming with possibilities, and on the other hand, these border moments are a site of affectual intensity for the viewer, where the match is understood and experienced through visual principles that are materialized through the screen (Thrift, 2008). And it is these principles that are central to, and develop, an unconscious understanding of movement, spatiality, and temporality differing from a cinematic unconscious or understandings derived from reportage, documentary, comics, and cinema.

Conclusion

This article has explored the live broadcast of a soccer match to draw attention to the hybrid nature of televised soccer as a combination of visual and verbal communication. Understanding and experiencing a televised soccer match is a formulation of visual principles that are materialized through the screen, these principles develop

an unconscious understanding of movement, spatiality, and temporality differing from a cinematic unconscious (Doel & Clarke, 2002) through the cutting and sequencing of footage and border moments—screen wipe, frames, cuts—which work in combination with commentary to establish a microgeography of the screen (Deleuze, 1986; Dittmer, 2010). Viewers of televised soccer, therefore, establish a comprehension of time and space which is unique and is different from other forms of media such as reportage, documentary, or cinema.

This article has emphasized the notion of border moments that comprise the coverage along with the narrative temporality of the commentary (Ryan, 1993; Watson, 2010). Goldlust (1987) suggests that televised sport does not convey an unmediated reporting of the event, and the commentary of the match provides one example of the "medium event." The medium event is defined as the total telecast of which coverage of the game is part, integrating the game and the stadium events but assimilates these with commentary, interview, and graphics (Goldlust, 1987). This article's focus provides an additive to studies that have looked at textual readings of sports broadcasts especially in the form semiotic readings of commentary, narrative, or image (e.g., Bowcher, 2003; Bruce, 2004; Kuiper & Haggo, 1985; Sterkenburg, Knoppers, & de Leeuw, 2012; Wanta & Leggett, 1988; Watson, 2010). This additive opens up possibilities from which to explore the multiple spatialities and temporalities that are at play within a live broadcast and how these inform viewer's perceptions of time, space, and movement.

What this analysis does is expose a previously undertheorized aspect of studies on televised sport. The match does not stop resonating with the end of the game, it is not a text that can be put and forgotten. Rather, televised sport establishes an understanding of time and space which is distinctive and is different from other forms of media. It comprises a fluid sense of temporality, appreciation of space as heterogeneous, and border moments often seen as empty images of space as sites of narrative development. The understanding of time and space in such a way influences how viewers approach time and space away from the live broadcast, for example, how they film, develop, and narrate their own life stories often via digital media devices. Studies of communication and sport therefore offer an intriguing opportunity to investigate not only how events are filmed, broadcast, and experienced but also how they shape mediated events away from the site of sport.

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