

### Preparation for the critical review

#### Moving beyond observation: finding your way to a viable thesis and strategy.

1. **Observation:** Here is where most of you began.
  - What are the distinctive features of the videos that you have chosen?
  - How are the two documentaries different?
  - Which of the two did you prefer?
  
2. **Analysis:** Moving beyond thoughtful observations toward an enlightening thesis.
  - How can you account for the distinctive features and differences that you observed? (lots of possibilities here)
  - What assumptions have the producers made about the audience?
    1. Do these assumptions affect the distinctive features & differences?
  - Is there an unintended cost to the transformation or filtering of scientific knowledge in this field? (You might ask similar questions about other types of knowledge presented in the film.)
  - Does one of the articles on science documentaries help you make sense of the decisions made by the directors of your documentaries?
  - Why do your specific conclusions matter? How do you move beyond two specific films toward some broader insight?
  
3. **Persuasion & enlightenment:** How do you translate your own insights into an engaging and enlightening critical review?
  - Where should you start?
    - What kinds of background information do your readers need?
      - About the general topic?
      - About the individual films?
    - Why should your readers care about the issues addressed in your critical review?
  - How should you explain the logic behind your thesis?
  - What kind of evidence do you need? How can you show—rather than tell—your readers how specific evidence from the films clarifies & supports your thesis?
    - Is there some scene or sequence of scenes in each documentary that offers a particular clear view of the way that the producers have transformed or filtered the scientific findings?
    - How might the critical article that you read help you articulate and support your thesis?
  - Where has this process taken you? What broader insight should your readers take away from this critical review?

**Reminder: You cannot assume that your readers want to read about your documentaries just because you chose this particular pair. Make sure that you have something to say to your readers.**

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