**How have the film makers of *The Cove* and *Blackfish* used techniques to create empathy for animal rights?**

Documentaries provide factual information from language and visuals that are based on real events of a particular subject. The awareness of animal rights is increasing both locally and globally, with the exploitation and sacrifice of living beings for the pleasure of humans. Documentaries are considered a successful form of publication to promote animal rights. Focal points include the treatment and impact of humans on the animals and their quality of life, both captive and wild. Two leading documentaries in this field are; *The Cove,* directed by Louis Psihoyos and *Blackfish* directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite. *The Cove,* produced in 2009, is based in the small fishing town of Taiji, Japan, and exposes the brutal practice of the capture and slaughter of dolphins, due to human greed. In contrast, *Blackfish* is a more modern film released in 2013. Based in America, it follows the story of Tillikum, a captive Killer Whale in Sea World. The film makers of The *Cove* and *Blackfish* use a variety of techniques to create empathy for animals.

Animal rights documentaries became increasingly popular in the late 20th century and early 21st century due to unethical and conflicting behaviour being publicised globally. With the world waking up to animal rights, two documentaries for marine species, *Blackfish* and *The Cove,* led the way demonstrating the horrific events and tragedies as a result of human greed. *Blackfish* portrays the argument that Killer Whales should not be kept in captivity, causing intense physiological damage, leading to aggression. This behaviour, scarce in the wild, is more prominent in captivity. *Blackfish* looks to showcase this behaviour as unnatural and unethical. To understand this message, the information is presented from former SeaWorld trainers, Killer Whale experts and first-hand witnesses of Tillikum. This provides the audience with diverse insights of what happens behind the scenes, specifically the truth in the deaths of multiple trainers globally. In contrast, *The Cove* is narrated mainly by Ric O'Barry, the former trainer of *Flipper,* the Dolphin of the 1964 television program triggering curiosity and popularity for dolphins. He sets out to question the demand for dolphins in entertainment parks. *The Cove* differs in the intended audience, as the factual information is aimed at people socially interested in animal rights. It is also designed to educate on the hidden exercise of the capture and slaughter of dolphins for marine parks. Similar to *The Cove, Blackfish* aims to educate the audience about the livelihood of SeaWorld and the treatment of whales in captivity. It looks to lower the support to marine parks that exhibit and encourage shows that mentally harm the marine animals.

Interviews in *The Cove* and *Blackfish* demonstrate a variety of viewpoints, showcasing the fundamental causes in the mistreatment of marine species at marine parks. The documentaries each *have* specialists and previous employees in the marine and entertainment industry that have now become activists. In *The Cove,* Ric O'Barry begins by explaining his motivation to become an activist with the death of the dolphin Cathy, "She was really depressed... ! could see it. She committed suicide in my arms." O'Barry goes onto explain that dolphins and whales, unlike humans, are not automatic air breathers and make a conscious effort to breathe. He says, "She swam into my arms, looked me right in the eye, and took a breath... and didn't take another one... I knew then they were self-aware." Similarly, the message of self-awareness is shown in *Backfish.* An interview with Neuroscientist Lori Marino, explains the intelligence of Orea whales. She says, "The orca brain screams out intelligence and awareness... they have a sense of self and bonding that's more

complex than humans. Everything about them is social." The purpose of both films is to explain how the marine species have self-awareness, creating a common ground between animals and humans. This initiates subconscious thoughts within the viewer, regarding the roles between them and the suffering animals being reversed, thus creating empathy. In *The Cove,* interviews are intense and unplanned. A member of the International Whaling Commission, Hideki Moronuki, after being spontaneously shown footage of the slaughtering, said, 'When and where did you get this footage?" This technique of ambushing puts interviewees on the defensive making them seem guilty. In comparison, *Blackfish,* displays a formal approach while interviewing the former SeaWorld trainers. Cowperthwaite compares present interviews from scientists and prior workers to archival film of SeaWorld tour-guides. The information from professionals verifies the false information that SeaWorld was providing the public, especially the mental and physical wellbeing of the whales.

The stylistic features including voiceoversand foreshadowing, enhance both *The Cove* and *Blackfish,* showcasing insightful meaning and information. *The Cove* starts with a voiceover saying, "I want to tell you, we tried to do the story legally." This statement foreshadows the storyline to the audience creating suspense of the action, anticipating illegal and dangerous behaviour. The initial scene for *Blackfish* is an archival phone call to the Fire Rescue from the SeaWorld in Orlando with a rattled employee explaining, "She actually has a trainer in the water with one of our whales, the whale you're not supposed to be in the water with." Followed by another tragedy call to Orange County Sheriff's office from an employee seeking emergency response for an incident at SeaWorld saying, "A whale has eaten one of the trainers." The recorder repeated the employer’s words through disbelief and confusion, assuring the audience that whales behaving in such manner is an obscure tragedy in the wild, therefore unpredicted in captivity. However, setting the scene for *The Cove,* a voiceover by Louie Psihoyos from an overview shot explaining, ''The town of Taiji, a little town with a really big secret... if you didn't know what's going on over here you'd think that this is a town that loves dolphins and whales." Similar to *Blackfish,* the language of Louie Psihoyos and Ric O'Barry from *The Cove,* creates suspense for the audience regarding the town’s illusion. Commentary of Psihoyos' point of viewis shared when he mentions, "I thought what I am doing? I went half way across the world, end up in the car with this paranoid guy [Ric O'Barry]." Then O'Barry saying, "Somebodies behind me I don't know who that is, yep they're coming." This proves O'Barry is not paranoid, although he is threatened by the people of Taiji, creating anticipation for what is to come. Another example of the hidden enmity against O'Barry was at the highly regarded Marine Mammal conference in 2005, with Ric O'Barry being the keynote speaker. Psihoyos states, "... at the last minute the sponsor of the program pulled him from the ticket. I thought that was interesting and asked who the sponsor was and they said SeaWorld." The suspicious behaviour from SeaWorld foreshadows conspiracies by the media and companies that *The Cove later* uncovers. These examples show how the filmmakers are specific in the collaboration of the language and footage to concern the audience about animal rights.

Live and archival footage of the animals progress the scenes into becoming more realistic, showing the audience 'truth' about the unfathomable practices. Whales and dolphins travel strenuously during the day for feeding, socialising and enjoyment. The footage shown in both documentaries of species racing through the ocean inspires a heart-warming sensation for the audience with freedom of the animals. As humans we seek the freedom and release of energy, therefore the connection between the audience and the live footage deepens. In *The Cove* film techniques were used to captivate the audience showing a lady chewing in the audience at a dolphin show, with O'Barry explaining, "...They sell dolphin and whale meat right in the dolphinarium. The captivity industry keeps this slaughter going by rewarding the fishermen for their bad behavior." This creates a collective horror amongst the audience seeing the disturbing truth of eating the animals. However, the lady may not be eating dolphin, the director used film techniques to influence the thought process of the audience to believe she is. *Blackfish* shows live footage of Orcas predominantly in the closing of the film, with the interviewees, being former SeaWorld trainers, uniting and witnessing the whales in their natural habitat. The emotional encounter brings closure to the documentary with the trainers now understanding that Orcas should exclusively inhabit the ocean. Archival footage of Tilikum's capture forebodes his deprived life, with the family grieving for the loss. The heartache is shown through the footage and latches onto emotions of anguish and provokes the audience to feel the same. In *The Cove,* the director displays archival footage of the slaughtering taking place from years past. The gruesome images and video displays the blood bath of murdered whales and the struggling ones gasp their last breath. Still photography was used to convey the misconception about the Taiji community with a photograph of 'We love dolphins” graffitied in a space visible to all. The message from both films is reinforced with animations of the capture. Showing strategic routes of animal escape illustrates the intelligence of the animals and conveys similarity with humans in regards to protecting their family. Subsequently, live and archival film stimulates empathetic reactions from the audience, while viewing the disturbing conduct that follows the capture and treatment of the animals.

Cowperthwaite and Psihoyos use music to influence the audience in scenes to captivate and highlight a particular tone. Similarly, both films use the presence of silence to exaggerate the sombre tone. For example, in *The Cove,* during the killing scenes, there was no music to emphasise the horror, finishing with a lone, melancholy, Japanese flute. This seems to form sorrow within viewer and create anger towards the people of Taiji for their irresponsible and cruel actions. *Blackfish* instead uses sound effects like the whales bashing on the cages to show their depressed state of mind. The suspenseful music through the film portrays the captive whales as ‘ticking time bombs,' anything may suddenly happen, keeping the audience on edge. The ticking sound foreshadows the physiological damage the whales had to endure, however it stopped with footage of uninhibited whales and the instrumental wondrous music is amplified. Inspiring music is played in both films to bring light to the issue. In *The Cove,* "Heroes" by David Bowie plays during the final scene while dolphins swim free, encouraging the audience's participation. The sound from the species calling one another is echoed during the film, reinforcing the family connection and self-awareness. An underwater sound device captures the dolphin's distressed cries in *The Cove* during the slaughter and stops when the water turns red, symbolic of death. In contrast, sound effects in *Blackfish* focus on components to improve the credibility. For example, in an investigation scene while text comes onto the screen, a typing sound plays, giving it a 'documented' tone. These examples show how documentary film makers influence the audience's interpretation of events and look to persuade their opinion.

Although being four years apart in production, individually each film had a wave of action following the release, taking social media by storm. Both *The Cove* and *Blackfish* challenge the cruel practices to raise people's consciousness in supporting animal rights. *The Cove,* showing slaughtering by the Taiji fisherman, created resentment and a sombre tone. However the film also demonstrated the importance of animals being free and educating younger generations about their intelligence and role in the ecosystem. In *Blackfish,* the message is portrayed through the stories and footage of the western society taking advantage of vulnerable species for entertainment purposes. *Blackfish* is perhaps more effective as it shows the sacrifice of freedom for the self-aware mammals, all for western greed and the need to be entertained. It illustrates the secretive industry and provokes the audience into become active within animal rights. Although one uses archival and the other livefootage, they both prove to be effective.

Each documentary aims to persuade the audience to care toward animal rights, therefore being aware of their self-conscious and personal impact in supporting unethical practices. Similarly, the films use persuasive techniques to convey the consequence of captivity on the animal's wellbeing and the local and global ecosystems. The importance of each documentary and their contribution to animal rights issues is significant and will continue to grow in support, inspiring audiences to take a stand against animal cruelty.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 English

Overall: A (27/30)

Although some of the Application criteria have been assessed at the high B level (primarily those associated with sophisticated and precise language use) the coverage of KU2 and An2 is thorough and perceptive and solidly in the high A range.

|  | Knowledge and Understanding | Analysis | Application |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in a range of texts.Thorough knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use a range of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.Extensive knowledge and understanding of a wide range of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, audiences, and contexts. | Complex analysis of ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts.Perceptive analysis of language features, stylistic features, and conventions used in texts, and thoughtful evaluation of how these influence audiences.Critical analysis of similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Versatile and precise use of language and stylistic features to create a wide range of coherent texts that address the purpose, audience, and context.Fluently integrated use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.Sophisticated use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| B | Knowledge and understanding of ideas and perspectives in a range of texts.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use a range of language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.Knowledge and understanding of a range of ways in which texts are created for different purposes, contexts, and audiences. | Detailed analysis of ideas, perspectives, and/or aspects of culture represented in texts.Detailed analysis of language features, stylistic features, and conventions, and evaluation of how these influence audiences.Clear analysis of similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Accurate use of language and stylistic features to create a range of coherent texts that address the purpose, context, and audience.Appropriate use of evidence from texts to develop and support a response.Consistent use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| C | Knowledge and understanding of some ideas and perspectives in texts.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use some language features, stylistic features, and conventions to make meaning.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which everyday texts are created for different purposes, contexts, and audiences. | Analysis of some ideas and perspectives represented in texts.Description and some analysis of different language features, stylistic features, and conventions, and/or some evaluation of how these influence audiences.Analysis of some similarities and differences when comparing texts. | Generally accurate use of language and stylistic features to create texts that address the purpose, context, and audience.Selection of some evidence from texts to develop and support a response.Appropriate use of accurate, clear, and fluent expression. |
| D | Knowledge and understanding of some ideas in a narrow range texts.Some knowledge and understanding of ways in which creators of texts use language features and conventions to make meaning.Knowledge and understanding of ways in which some everyday texts are created for different purposes and audiences. | Description of some ideas in texts.Description of some language features, stylistic features, and/or conventions.Description of some similarities and differences in texts. | Use of some language and stylistic features to create a narrow range of texts.Partial use of basic evidence from texts to develop a response.Inconsistent use of expression. |
| E | Identification of an idea in a text.Identification of a limited range of ways in which creators of texts use language techniques.Recognition of one or more ways in which a familiar text is created. | Reference to an idea in a text.Recognition of language or stylistic features.Recognition of a simple connection between texts. | Restricted use of language or stylistic features to create a text.Limited use of evidence from a text in a response.Limited use of clear expression. |