

How ‘real’ are nature documentaries?

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Abstract: With the improvements made in films, as well as their editing processes, purposes and scopes, the requirement to create entertaining content often leaves the end product of documentary stories separate from the ‘real’ processes occurring in the natural world. In this dissertation, how definitions of documentaries have been examined will be explored, focusing on how the manipulation of real events can create a factual report and discussing how much ‘real’ is needed for this.

Keywords: Documentaries, Visuals, Technology, Narrative Structure

1. Introduction

Quite what count as ‘documentaries’ nowadays, given the hectic generic mutations that have occurred in the factual output on TV, have been an issue of recent dispute, raising interesting questions about programme claim, programme value as well as production practice and forms. ^[18]

John Grierson, a Scottish documentary filmmaker, was the first to coin the term ‘documentary films’ in 1926. For Grierson, “documentaries are an art of giving film sequences natural materials.”^[11] Today, the Oxford dictionary definition states that “a documentary consists of or is based on official documents, or using pictures or interviews with people involved in real events to provide a factual report on a particular subject.” ^[23] The definition of a documentary has caused debates. With improvements made in films, as well as their editing processes, purposes and scopes, the requirement to create entertaining content often leaves the end product of documentary stories separate from ‘real’ processes occurring in the natural world. In this dissertation, how definitions of documentaries have been examined will be explored, focusing on how the manipulation of real events can create a factual report and discussing how much ‘real’ is needed for this. Television documentaries are an effective way of informing an audience of worldly topics which people may not have had any insight into otherwise. Many documentaries are given negative backlash on how their content has been structured or whether it is manipulative to viewers. This can be down to ethical issues, technical choices or the ways producers and editors have formulated a narrative sequence, which defies the truthful representation of a story. The level of creative storytelling to becoming a fictional piece is to be evaluated and examined. Views on nature documentaries specifically vary from award-winning visuals uncovering new discoveries to opposing opinions on the fakery and deceiving representations of the real world.

Like never before, we have been able to capture nature, to even 1,000 meters underwater, the maximum depth that the current technologies can effectively function at. This was achieved by the crew of Blue Planet 2, a nature documentary series released in 2017, narrated by Sir David Attenborough, whose first major nature documentary series to feature in was Zoo Quest from 1954 to 1963. Attenborough has continued growing in the natural history sector, which is considered by many as a British national treasure. Through the Blue Planet 2 series, many discoveries new to science have been achieved with the aid of modern technologies. It was presented to an average of 10.3 million live viewers, attracting more viewers than Strictly Come Dancing and X Factor on the night of its first episode on the 29th October 2017 ^[14]. Due to viewers’ preferences regarding the consumption of television entertainment, it would have seemed very unlikely in 1955 (when nature documentaries on TV started with Ian McTaggart-Cowen presenting Fur and Feathers on CBC) that a documentary series would become the second most popular television genre in the United Kingdom in August 2017 ^[27].

Reasons for the outstanding popularity of documentaries today is the fact that directors have pinpointed engaging subjects and applied storytelling styles to these television moments, who have been able to theatricalise facts to captivate viewers in a way that the documentaries of the mid 1900s were not able to follow. There has been a dramatic development in technologies, allowing new ways of

seeing and granting new possibilities of discoveries to take place. Interviews have come to be more 'natural', engaging viewers to long for the exploration of the 'real' world and uncovering hidden truths. Audiences are now more willing to work out what is really going on, and documentaries are helping them to do so.

In this essay, different techniques documentary makers use will be examined from the perspective of technologies and equipment to post-production methods, as well as how audiences are targeted through narrative storytelling. These techniques will be investigated through past and present documentaries and by examining differences as well as similarities occurring with the evolvement of nature documentaries. In order to do this, the recent British nature documentary series Planet Earth 2 (2016) and Blue Planet 2 (2017)^{[4][26]}, produced by the BBC and narrated by Sir David Attenborough, will be referred to as primary case studies. References will be made to other documentaries such as The Cove (2009) directed by Louie Psihoyos, Nanook Of The North: A Story Of Life And Love In The Actual Arctic (1922) by Robert J. Flaherty and Hombre y la Tierra (1975-1980) by Félix Samuel Rodríguez de la Fuente, all of which shared a high popularity on release, with many conflicting opinions and criticism coming with their success. Since documentaries have developed away from being strictly informative, it is important to question the authenticity of animal life that documentaries present. I will investigate whether the representations of animal life have in fact become more rather than less misleading.

An important topic today is climate changes, especially among young people. "Nearly 90 percent of young people surveying worldwide think that world leaders should do "whatever it takes" to tackle climate changes" ^[29]. The awareness of climate changes has gained interest from new generations who have developed a greater interest in the understanding of the natural world. Millennials consider "climate changes as the world's most serious issue, according to the 2017 Global Shaper Survey made by the World Economic Forum on more than 31,000 millennials from 186 countries and territories." ^[9]. This statistic compliments Blue Planet 2's first episode, which captured the attention of 2.3 million viewers aged between 16 and 34. ^[18] The figures clearly show that target audiences are young adult viewers with interest in climate changes and the environment. Do nature documentaries make a conscious effort to tackle and address the urgency of climate changes? If so, how are they achieving this?

2. To Entertain or to Inform?

It is obvious that documentaries have come a long way, for example, The Lumière Brothers, French inventors of photographic equipment, created the film *Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory (La Sortie de L'Usine Lumière à Lyon)* (1895), which is studied to be the first motion picture. Compared to recent documentaries such as the Blue Planet 2 series (2017), it was "the top-rated series in 2017 and the most-watched natural history title in more than 15 years" (Pedersen and Pedersen, 2017). The differences between the past and the present show their purpose to entertain audiences. The entertainment value of Lumière Brothers relied on the fact that it was the first real motion picture ever made, making it intriguing for audiences to view something never seen before. Whereas, audience needs for Blue Planet 2 are very different from the constant exposure of motion pictures today, whose expectations for films are higher than ever and many techniques are needed today to keep a viewer engaged. The vast scale of the documentary genre has become ever-growing. There are now many sub-genres covering hundreds of different stories and topics. It is now possible for anyone with a camera in their mobile phone to create their own documentaries, which is now easier than ever before. In April 2017, documentaries were charted 1st, 7th, 12th, 16th and 23rd out of the top on-demand programmes, with the first being Planet Earth 2: Islands, enjoying an average of 524 programme streams per second. ^[27]

Question I will address is, which is the leading reason for the creation of documentaries now, is it to inform, to entertain or to do both? Whether these means of attracting audiences are favourable to the welfare of the planet?

A narrative is needed to gain higher attention from viewers on TV, who are not solely watching the programmes out of their specific interest. A technique editor's use of nature documentaries is to reconstruct film clips to form one narrative sequence, which recreates realities into a fictional sequence. This is shown in the episode of Planet Earth 2: Islands, appearing to feature just one marine iguana hatchling chased by snakes, filmed in the Galapagos Islands. This particular scene went viral and won a BAFTA award for the must-see moments in 2016, the year in which it was aired. On Vulture, an entertainment news website, Elizabeth White, the producer behind the episode, was interviewed, during which White explained the reasons why this scene was able to grip so many viewers ^[12]. The scene,

White explained, was cleverly edited, in which the editor and herself discussed narrative decisions on whether to show shots of iguana getting caught by snakes or to have its scenes of running free first. White explained that these editing decisions needed to be made for “a big emotional piece” to take place, “where people are going to feel like they’re rooting for a character.” Despite this, the BBC spokeswoman defended the scene, explaining it as “a true representation of animal behaviour”^[5] even if it was not just the very iguana shown in the scene. Nevertheless, this scene was hugely successful in entertainment value. A reason explained by White for its success was the familiarity it had with conventional film characters following the fundamentals of a storytelling pattern. White illustrated “the fact that there’s something about it, in which almost quite human makes a big difference”. The iguanas stood up on their two back legs to run, showing clear indications of human attributes, meaning that it was “massively made into an easier story”, said White. Audiences have been engaged by anthropomorphism of animals since the popularity of zoos and circus, where animals would be trained to behave with human characteristics and learn to perform for human entertainment, which made it easier for the success of documentaries by applying characters to animals and telling a story through their actions, even if this was a false representation of how animals would naturally behave.

Exploiting animals with human attributes became a technique in television shows stemmed from Disney’s creation of their early documentaries.

The longer the public is exposed to the Disney model of ‘documentaries’, the more it is reasonable to propose. People have come to expect this kind of dramatized behavior and narrative from animal subjects.^[1]

Walt Disney Productions produced its series ‘True-Life Adventures’ (1948--1960), a series of documentary films spawned by research taken when filming fawn in the wild. This research leads to the production of the film *Bambi* (1942), an American animation about the life of a white-tailed deer. Within one True-life Adventures film *The Living Desert*, a scene between bobcat and wild pigs took place. The narrator, Winston Hibler, describes the animals with human characteristics heavily accompanied by a dramatic cartoon--like soundtrack, which is further accompanied by foley sound effects of the bobcats’ roars and wild pigs’ screeches. These sounds were most likely to be recreated in a studio or recorded in the wild previously, which are common procedures included in most nature documentaries. The narrator refers to the hero in this story as “Old Mr. Bobcat”, who is told that “there’s no time to be choosy, this is an emergency!” when running from the villains (wild pigs), described with “short tempers”. This description method allows a relationship to be formed between audiences and the animals, making viewers feel empathy for ‘Old Mr. Bobcat’. This is one of the many entertainment techniques that can be applied to nature documentaries, so as to playfully educate an audience. Does this mean that entertainment is crucial for audiences to be educated through informative TV series? “To inform, to teach and to entertain are all about the same thing. Really it is. You cannot educate without entertaining; that is the first lesson for any teacher.”^[19]

The use of entertainment techniques through narratives and sounds brings both positive and negative attributes. A wider range of audiences is reached when a conventional equilibrium narrative is applied, a narrative in which a change of balance can occur, therefore keeping an audience entertained but always ending in a new equilibrium to keep the storytelling conventions for audiences’ familiarity and comfort. This is applied to situations in the wild where the animals are shown to follow through editing cuts. Children and adults are targeted at a playful and personal level through anthropomorphism, which conveys emotions through a formed connection between the audiences and the animals. This is something not exploited on the Discovery Channel, a basic cable and satellite television channel that attained an average 5 million viewers in 2017, dropping from 10 million in 2013^[27]. The Discovery Channel tends to focus on a more informative approach to the way they document. This is because viewers have most likely tuned in because of their specific interests, whereas the viewers of Blue Planet 2 are targeted differently at broadcast on BBC One, a channel which holds many different TV genres for a wide range of viewing audiences.

A negative with prioritising entertainment for success when thinking about a narrative structure is the risk of audiences feeling manipulated by what they think they are viewing. An example of this is the Frozen Planet, a 2011 British nature documentary series, which caused controversy among media when it was discovered that the polar bear cubs were filmed in a wildlife zoo in the Netherlands, but not the Arctic. The BBC denied misleading viewers when questioned, but the narration of Sir David Attenborough indicated that this scene was filmed in the Arctic when explaining that the polar bear cubs were born “beneath the snow” when the polar bears were realistically filmed in the Dutch zoo on fake snow. The BBC backed their wording decisions by referring to the BBC’s editorial guidelines on wildlife programmes, which read that when filming could be judged as unsafe, “it can be editorially and ethically justified to use captive animals.”^[30] The choice of wording in narrations needs to be thought through considerably for documentaries to avoid deceiving their audiences, but at the same time, not to ruin their magic.

Often, documentaries are led by feeding spectacles over the truth.

Clearly, documentaries needed to make a strong claim on the real but at the same time, Grierson did not want it to be a mechanical, automatic claim arising from nothing more than the very nature of the apparatuses. He therefore defined documentaries as ‘a creative treatment of actuality’ and a problem was thereby created. ^[25]

This was apparent in the American silent documentary film, *Nanook of the North: A Story Of Life And Love In The Actual Arctic* (1922) by Robert J. Flaherty, which was highly criticised for recreating sequences, but it was argued that the reenactment of some scenes was so realistic and honest that this was a truth of some sort. The film would now be categorised as a docudrama (containing elements of both documentaries and dramas) to avoid viewers from being misled into what was real or a staged scene. Deogracias and Mateos-Perez describe that: “the film *Nanook of the North* does not show the life of an Eskimo, but reconstructs the life of an Eskimo.” ^[7] Deogracias and Mateos-Perez, authors of the article *Thinking About Television Audiences: Entertainment and Reconstruction In Nature Documentaries* (2013), do not project negative views on the film but interpret it as falsely-advertised, which should have been more open with how the film was made with an explanation on any shot that could be misread. Capturing pure truths through camera lens is one of the discussions. In some cases, a completely-honest truth simply cannot be told through a camera as everything recorded would have had some alterations of actions when positioned in front of a camera. It is hard to present a whole truth without some sort of manipulation unless the subject isn’t aware that it’s being filmed.

“It is an idealist mystification to believe that “truths” can be captured by a camera.” ^[17]

Although, with the help of technologies, it is easier to achieve. An award-winning documentary, *The Cove* (2009), shows ways in which the surveillance technology helped the team of activists to uncover the slaughter and hunting of dolphins in Taiji, Japan. The team used cameras hidden in artificial rocks and a helicopter with a camera attached to expose the dolphins killed for meat or captured to be trained. This took place in a highly-guarded secret cove in Taiji out of sight from the public view. This was a guerilla-style use of documentation featuring scenes of disgust, which was used as an effective tool for awareness. *The Cove* “does not preclude the possibility that disgust can be a progressive political device” ^[13]. This direct human action of death and violence towards wildlife impacted a huge range of audiences, which led Japan’s dolphin hunt to decrease from 23,000 in 2009 when the film was released to less than 6,000 in 2015, said the director of *The Cove*, Louie Psihoyos ^[10]. Despite that this guerilla tactic of exploitation achieved such success in an active change, it could be problematic for BBC One to follow from being the most-watched television channel in the UK. The channel has viewers of different ages, who may feel offended if shown such graphic content, unlike *The Cove* that uses this as its advantage, making it easier for the majority of viewers already having interest upon conservation of the natural world. This raises the point that nature documentaries such as Blue Planet 2 are hiding real events because of the unpleasant truths. The reason is to maintain the security of viewer ratings with amiable content that doesn’t stray too much towards the hard-hitting actuality of the environmental crises.

3. Technology

The rapid rise of technologies allows documentaries to advance further visually than ever before. A positive evolvement of technologies grants the discovery of new wildlife and lets human eyes see the world in ways which would otherwise be impossible. In spite of these accomplishments, concern comes to the animals’ privacy and whether intruding in their lives creates a negative impact on the natural world.

The making of a documentary is one of the most challenging genres to film both physically and mentally. This was clear for the making of Blue Planet 2, during which Katie Hall, the Production Manager, expressed that the series involved “6,000 hours of underwater filming and 1,000 hours of submersible filming” ^[20]. Regardless of the availability of the latest filming equipment, a large amount of time and money were still needed. Technologies allowed them to attach suction cameras onto Orcas. This footage let viewers see something that they might never have done so in real life, also benefitting scientists to potentially help reduce many animals from extinction by knowing what areas to protect, so as to benefit their wellbeing. James Honeyborne, Executive Producer of Blue Planet 2, says that “There’s a dynamic emerging between the scientific community and ourselves”. Honeyborne also explained in an interview with the BBC ^[2] that being able to view these animals’ behaviour would help viewers to “better appreciate the wonder, magic and importance of the seas”. Televisions are a source that can provide people who are out of touch with the natural world to have more understanding of it if used in a correct way. The BBC has tried to avoid false advertisements in filming strategies by covering an insight into how the crew manages to capture particular shots in a ten-minute feature at the end of

Planet Earth 2 and Blue Planet 2. There is also more information available about the making of programmes on the BBC website. By allowing viewers to find out how the crew handles animals and the environment they are in, it provides reassurance for audiences to know that the production is ethically correct and keeps manipulation accusations down.

Other documentaries were unsuccessful in this, for example, *Hombre y la Tierra* (1974), a Spanish nature documentary translated as 'Man and the Earth' presented by a Spanish naturalist and broadcaster, Rodríguez de la Fuente. It was heavily criticised with statements regarding the unethical tactics inflicted by Fuente to make capturing wildlife through a camera easier. The 'harsh and selective' methods (such as making incisions in a rabbit's paw or sewing a pigeon's eyelids shut) employed to provide predators with easy prey, which thus achieved the most powerful images, greatly disappointed the public.^[24]

Fuente ignored the fact that this was now a false representation of how animals would be caught by predators because of the alterations made physically to the prey. These methods are now looked into thoroughly and ethical rights for animals are now stated very clearly for documentary makers to follow. Although being ethically correct, this still does not mean that documentary makers need to present a clear truth of animal life. While new technologies are making a truthful representation easier to capture, the choices on whether to keep a truthful representation are up to the editors, and their goals for what a documentary should entail are up to them.

In the episode 'Mountains' in Planet Earth 2, a raptor conservationist fitted a miniature 4k 'lipstick' camera to a young golden eagle.^[3] This scene was discussed in various news articles, claimed to be fake. The Daily Mail wrote that, "The BBC has revealed that the footage of breathtaking Planet Earth 2 appeared to show a mountainous habitat from a wild golden eagle's view, but was actually filmed using a captive bird that lived in a wildlife sanctuary in France."^[20] The programme can still represent the nature of a bird, although its actions may be different from those in the wild due to the life of captivity it is used to. Articles accuse the scene of being deceiving to its audiences.

Planet Earth 2 have achieved many new accomplishments when it comes to technologies, but is such new equipment helpful for benefitting the Earth that they are filming or just the beauty that is left is captured? An article published by *The Guardian* reveals a natural history programme producer, Martin Hugh-Games' explanation on why he thinks that Planet Earth 2 is "a disaster for the world's wildlife"^[6]. Hugh-Games believes that the series is "lulling the huge audiences worldwide into a false sense of security", instead of revealing the huge impact humans are having on the environment. Hugh-Games compliments the series on its glory and spectacular imagery, and says that "We have never been so close to the actions or have the pictures looked so luxurious", but makes the point that along with these luxurious pictures is the need to address the not-so-pleasant side if we are to prevent the extinction of wildlife. The programme maker's justification to this response is that if audiences are interested in the natural world, they will, therefore, start to care more about its longevity, leading to more willingness of people to try and conserve it. This justification, unfortunately, has not succeeded in any evidence for this happening among audiences. Whereas, technical firsts are accomplished by the crew that has helped scientists to discover more about some species, one of which being the new development of low-light cameras, the first to capture glowing fungi assisted by click beetles, as shown in episode 3: 'Jungles'. It means that Planet Earth 2 has benefitted the Earth for scientists' research, but is not necessarily beneficial to an active change made by the viewers.

In many cases, sound techniques used in documentaries need the use of foley sounds to accompany on top of visuals they capture. Sometimes this is essential due to the impossibility of a microphone capturing some animals' sounds whilst still being safe, humane, or just technically-possible. This illusion has been a film secret since the beginning of the genre. In Planet Earth 2, foley sounds or pre-recorded sounds have been used throughout each episode, attempting to recreate them as realistically as possible. The use of sounds to depict animals' call or cry is made to match as accurately as possible helps viewers to understand more about the animals. However close, such sounds are still not made by animals, but is a deceiving strategy used in documentaries. Other sounds of movements such as, a lizard gliding through the air, with similar sound effects of a plane flying, have frustrated many viewers, which is prevalent on social media. Many social media users expressed that the sounds of an animal's movements in Planet Earth 2 were far too "exaggerated", causing them to actually become distracted from the information given in the programme^[26]. Foley sound artists have succeeded in many ways to help TV shows become more sensorily-stimulating, but not for becoming a more realistic representation.

4. Fantasy Worlds

Truths have to be made vivid and interesting; they have to be "dramatized" if it is to convince

audiences of the evidence, whose “confidence” in it allows truths to take shape. Documentaries are the presentation of actual facts in a way that makes them credible and telling to people at the time. ^[28]

It is important for a documentary to be interesting and entertaining for the engagement of its audiences. Documentaries such as *Blue Planet 2* and *Planet Earth 2* are certainly achieved to dramatise scenes to bind with a truth, for example, the scene of iguana vs snakes in *Planet Earth 2* is described as “the most exhilarating natural clip ever filmed” by Vulture ^[17]. Audiences are able to be taken into a world they may already know of and reveal more, like taking on an investigation into other depths of the world. But, when the focus is on creating a utopian representation, a false image of real-world happenings can begin to cause controversies. Both *Blue Planet 2* and *Planet Earth 2* have been criticised for fantasising the world, leaving ugly but important truths only to be lightly touched on. As previously mentioned, *Planet Earth 2* gained negative publicity in *The Guardian* with the article: *A Disaster For World's Wildlife Says Rival Nature Producer* ^[8]. Martin Hughes-Games, a presenter of BBC's *Springwatch*, argued that the “David Attenborough series ignores the damage humans are doing”. The series contains beautiful and scenic habitats filled with wildlife, which hides audiences from the truth that natural life is rapidly decreasing due to human actions. Hughes-Games says that:

The producers continue going to the rapidly shrinking parks and reserves to make their films--creating a beautiful, beguiling and fantasy world, a utopia where tigers still roam free and untroubled, a natural world exists as if man had never been in.

He continues to say that “fantasy should be balanced by reality” ^[15]. Issues regarding climate changes and plastic pollution were addressed in *Blue Planet 2*'s final episode, ‘Our Blue Planet’, in which many responses were created on social media, for example Twitter:

Windsor, Robin (Robinwindsor). “Watching *Blue Planet*, I am horrified at what plastics in the sea are doing to our marine life – we MUST start to do something about it!!!!” 10 December 2017, 12:27 p.m. Tweet.

Responses such as this one containing a sense of urgency that actively want to change how we are treating the planet show the importance of this episode to educating audiences on this issue. In Attenborough's closing speech, he explains that “Never before have we had such an awareness of what we are doing to the planet, and never before have we had the power to do something about that” (Attenborough, 2017). Attenborough speaks directly to the camera as if you were sitting one to one with him, who targets the audiences powerfully with an imperative language. Leaving this powerful message to the last episode ties together the strategy of showing the planet beautifully, ending with an overall message that this planet will not be beautiful for long. But is the need to present a dream like view on the oceans beneficial to engaging the viewers? Does confronting the disheartening truths make the overall impact? Or does neither make an active impact at all?

“Hungerford and Volk (1990) demonstrate that knowledge does not lead to behavioral changes in the environmental dimension.” ^[16] Janpol & Diltz go on to express that some research findings imply that publicized environmental issues are active, informing people of what leads individuals to be less bothered about the issues. In some circumstances, people become more inactive to a problem if it has repeated exposures. This could be referred to as a “sick baby” appeal, which is a marketing tool expressing an issue and its need for help. For example, in *Blue Planet 2*, the particular sick baby appeal would be the issue of global warming and pollution. A theory proposed by Ellen et al. (1991) and Fine (1990) was that ‘when the concern is already high, a sick baby appeal may reduce perceived consumer effectiveness’ ^[22], based on which the following question is raised that if *Blue Planet 2* were to focus more directly on environmental issues in each episode, the chances of viewers to actively make changes to support the environment may actually decrease. So documentaries might be made as less ‘real’ as possible for that reason.

A study was undertaken by Nolan (2010) on viewers who had watched *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) ^[21], a documentary film involving former presidential candidate Al Gore, speaking publicly about the global warming crisis. It was found in the study that viewers attained stronger knowledge on global warming, which led them to feel more concerned about the environment and express interest in actively reducing greenhouse gases. Yet, it was found that such increased interest after watching *An Inconvenient Truth* would not be translated into actions in the future. Although, social psychologist Shalom H. Schwartz found in his theory of moral norm activation (1968) that “being aware of negative consequences to valued persons or objects increases the willingness to take actions to protect the valued objects”, ^[21] concluding that nature documentaries such as *Blue Planet 2* and *Planet Earth 2* may benefit the Earth's wellbeing more by revealing the reality of the truths, rather than the premise of the series as a product of high-selling-quality entertainment.

5. Conclusion

Despite the success of the outstanding visuals of nature documentaries that captivate wide audiences and achieve new scientific discoveries, they can be perceived as a medium to mould a truth into a product designed to entertain more than to inform. This has led the plausibility of nature documentaries to be questioned in terms of the processes they intend to demonstrate. The reality that mainstream nature documentaries are now produced primarily to provide entertaining TV and film series means that techniques such as post-production cuts and sound enhancement are employed with the purpose of improving viewers' experience. Due to this, manipulation the authenticity of the final documentaries can be perceived as misleading. The reordering of events creates a restructured narrative giving an impression that a real event takes place. Narration from broadcasters' supplement and help to make the false timeline more captivating with the use of storytelling intends to provoke emotions and entertain.

This creates a problem because some mainstream documentaries such as *Blue Planet 2* and *Planet Earth 2* fail to address the issue of climate changes in a manner which matches its urgency. Without the reality that the problems of climate changes are brought to the attention of the mainstream public, we will proceed to continue not actively participating in individually-tackled climate changes. The emission of the issue creates a fictional utopia for viewers, which is therefore inherently deceiving. Documentaries have the power to present both the beauty of our world and the way we can change our lifestyles to better protect the Earth we share with all beings. One way this could be done is to employ techniques achieved by smaller independent productions such as *The Cove* through bluntly addressing an issue while still providing highly-entertaining and visually-impressive content as *Blue Planet 2* and *Planet Earth 2* accomplish, thus both achieving entertainment value and portraying the urgency of environmental issues as well. Nature documentaries should be able to entertain and combine a realistic insight into our ever-changing world regardless of whether the real facts are pleasant or not. If we do not manage to portray this, there may not be a chance to capture the varieties of beauty of the natural world in the future that we enjoy viewing today.

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