

# SeaWorld's Sneaky Stunts

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## ~ Abstract ~

*Blackfish* discovers the problems within the sea-park industry and exposes the treatment of Orca's in captivity. A narrative analysis is used to examine how the popular opinion of SeaWorld shifted from adoring to highly criticized basically overnight. This analysis fills gaps on how powerful and devastating the popular opinion can be on high-ranking organizations.

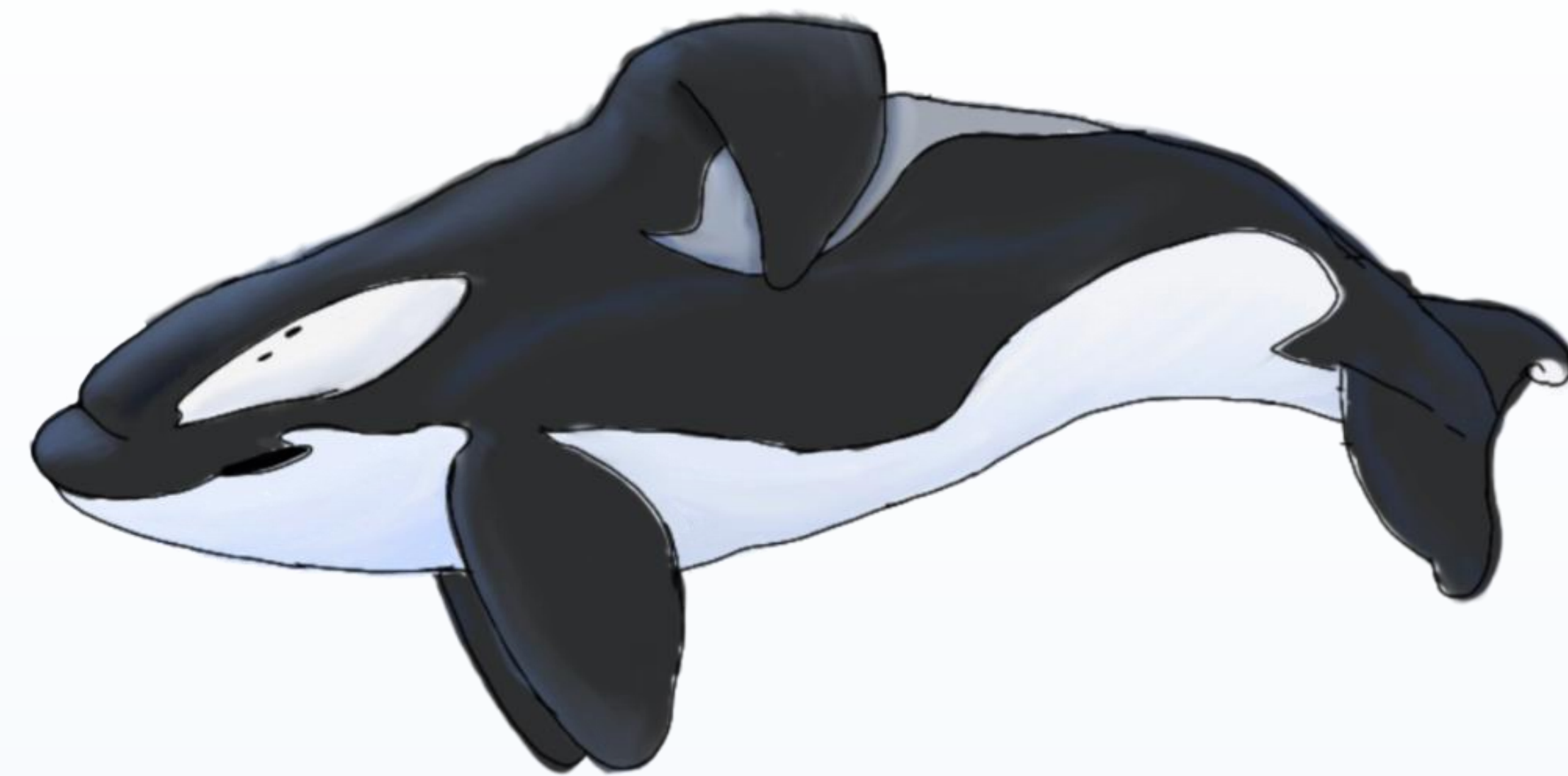
## ~ Introduction ~

- Blackfish* is a documentary that follows Tilikum, one of the most famous Orcas to have been housed at SeaWorld in Orlando, FL.
- Tilikum has received a lot of attention from the press over the years, as he is known to be responsible for the death of three people.
- The documentary addresses many of the false claims made by SeaWorld and provides insight as to why Tilikum might have acted the way he did.



## ~ Significance ~

- Blackfish* was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Documentary (BAFTA, 2014)
- SeaWorld refused to contribute to the documentary
- Attendance at SeaWorld has declined since the release of *Blackfish* (Rhodan, 2015)



## ~ Methods ~

The narrative paradigm is the rhetorical method that is utilized for this research. The narrative paradigm focuses on the narration and storytelling of the media messages that people view (Fisher, 1984; Sellnow, 2014).  
**An illustration is listed below.**



## ~ Implications ~

- Is SeaWorld as helpful as it claims?
- Wildlife should stay wildlife
- Captivation might do more bad than good
- Other ways to learn about wildlife



## ~ References ~

- BAFTA. (2014). *2014 Film Documentary*. Retrieved February 26, 2018, from <http://awards.bafta.org/award/2014/film/documentary>
- Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communications Monographs*, 51(1), 1-22.
- Rhodan, M. (2015, August 6). *SeaWorld's profits drop 84% after Blackfish documentary*. Retrieved February 26, 2018, from <http://time.com/3987998/seaworlds-profits-drop-84-after-blackfish-documentary/>
- Sellnow, D. D. (2014). *The rhetorical power of popular culture: considering mediated texts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.



### Setting

Coast of Iceland  
Sealand of the Pacific  
SeaWorld



### Characters

Tilikum the Orca  
SeaWorld  
Keltie Byrne  
Dawn Brancheau



### Narrator

Various former  
SeaWorld employees  
and witnesses



### Intended Audience

Teens, young adults,  
adults, and those in the  
marine biology field



### Events

Tilikum kills Keltie Byrne  
Tilikum kills Dawn Brancheau



### Causal relations

Capturing Tilikum and being  
raised in captivity caused him  
to act the way he did



### Temporal relations

Syntagmatic - order of  
events lead naturally to  
one another



### Moral Conveyed

Captivity is not  
necessary to learn  
more about a species

“For man cannot give wild animals freedom,  
they can only take it away.”

- Jacques-Yves Cousteau