

The Creation and Interpretation of the Educational Television Program "The Last Wanderer"

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ABSTRACT

The Last Wanderer is a unique project focusing on the survival realities of stray animals. Through in-depth field research and authentic documentation, it reveals the hardships faced by abandoned or lost creatures in both urban and rural environments. Centered on animal rescue efforts, it weaves their aimless wandering into a path of redemption leading to shelters. The project further explores shelters as sanctuary spaces, tracing the journey from aimless roaming to sheltered refuge, while delving into the narrative threads of rescue organizations.

KEYWORDS

Wandering rescue; Life protection; Stray animals

1 Introduction

The documentary The Last Wanderers turns its lens on stray animals—a marginalized group in society—focusing on a Beijing animal rescue center. It meticulously portrays the struggles and resilience of homeless creatures in dire straits, while quietly documenting the unseen dedication and perseverance of the shelter's staff. The setting shifts between kennels and clinics, transitioning from routine care to emergency rescues. Each frame reflects the intricate emotional bonds between humans and animals. The film aims for viewers to feel the hope and dignity carried by every life, thereby sparking public concern for stray animals and propelling humanity toward a new era of harmonious coexistence with nature.

2 The Creative Form of The Last Wanderer

The Last Wanderer focuses on social phenomena often overlooked and marginalized within modern civilization. Adopting a format that blends documentary with exploration, it begins at the intersection of human and animal coexistence, directing its lens toward forgotten individuals and vulnerable groups left behind in the march of urbanization and civilization. Further explore the topic of individual dignity and the underlying lack and reconstruction of collective responsibility awareness.

2.1 Synopsis

The project was conducted at a Beijing-based nonprofit facility dedicated to rescuing stray animals, primarily through on-site filming and comprehensive documentation. The documentary aims to reveal the animals' struggle for survival within the sanctuary while showcasing volunteers' relentless rescue efforts despite scarce resources and limited public recognition. It also highlights the staff's unwavering dedication in the face of public indifference and insufficient resources. Through these vivid and moving images, coupled with a documentary structure that evokes emotional resonance, Aiming to prompt audiences to unconsciously reflect on the fundamental value of life, thereby sparking profound inner conflict and prompting a reconsideration of the symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature. This work not only aims to heighten public awareness and compassion for vulnerable lives, but also employs social documentary imagery as its medium. Exploring the implications of the concept of symbiosis in modern civilization, Investigating the ethical framework of interdependent existence, Undertake inspiring explorations in promoting social care and individual responsibility awareness, closely linking artistic works with real-world social issues. Achieving a result that integrates deeper social value with practical significance.

2.2 Planning Background

Rapid urbanization and economic growth have triggered dramatic shifts in lifestyles, yet the sharp rise in stray animals has become a pressing issue. Rough estimates suggest that tens of millions of stray cats and dogs now roam the country. Moreover, there is no clear sign of a decline. Digging deeper into the root causes reveals that this is primarily the result of

outdated traditional views on pet ownership and the frequent occurrence of abandonment. This reveals the deep-seated contradictions and conflicts between urban ecology and sociocultural dynamics in modern life. The current system for rescuing stray animals remains in its early stages of grassroots exploration, hampered by funding shortages, scarce resources, and insufficient public awareness. This has collectively become a major obstacle restricting the further expansion of relevant institutions and individuals.

Despite the tireless efforts of some organizations and volunteers, the entire system remains riddled with flaws and beset by problems. Funding crises occur repeatedly, while access to resources faces significant obstacles and restrictions. Under sustained pressure, delivering actual aid becomes exceedingly difficult—layers upon layers of barriers that outsiders can scarcely comprehend. The public's perception of this issue is rather vague or indifferent, and this prevailing attitude in turn exacerbates the complexity of the situation. Against this backdrop, a television program focusing on the issue of stray animals takes on particular importance. The camera sweeps across the real-life scenes of abandoned animals, capturing the dedication of rescuers striving to protect them and the myriad challenges they face. Employing a meticulous and realistic approach to depict every detail aims to evoke broader societal attention and emotional resonance. Through evocative visual language and a uniquely emotional narrative approach, it prompts audiences to reexamine the complex and intimate bonds of coexistence between humans and animals from the perspective of life's value.

The Last Wanderer attempts to use the camera as a brush to depict the survival landscape and rescue journey of stray animals, thereby opening people's hearts to this long-neglected vulnerable group. It captures the delicate emotional threads between humans and animals while quietly sowing seeds of respect for life and care for the vulnerable; This work also delves into the deep-rooted societal causes of the stray animal problem and potential solutions through its visual exploration of the relationship between humans and animals. It further sparks profound reflection on the critical issue of human-nature symbiosis, injecting a driving force into fostering a more harmonious social ecosystem where humanity and nature coexist.

The total runtime of the production is set at approximately 20 minutes. With the current popularity of short videos and the evident trend toward fragmented information dissemination, overly lengthy television social education programs risk wearing down viewers' patience and diminishing their interest. Too brief, it lacks depth and struggles to hold sustained interest; a fleeting experience offers only sensory stimulation. Audiences find it difficult to engage in deep thinking or comprehend issues amid rapid visual stimuli, so the work opts for a 20-minute duration to strike a delicate balance between the emotional and the rational.

When promoting this program, first leverage mainstream social platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin to release emotionally charged and suspenseful trailers, complemented by behind-the-scenes clips. We're also launching the hashtag #TheLastWanderer, inviting key opinion leaders in the public welfare sector and animal protection organizations to interact and repost. Gradually extend the program's reach to every corner of society. Collaborate closely with animal welfare organizations to embed relevant program videos and posters on their official websites, in public service initiatives, and at offline adoption events or charity sales. Precision targeting to capture the attention of core audiences; Launching an online "Share Your Rescue Story" campaign, with selected exemplary cases integrated into a specially produced segment. Offline, we partnered with pet hospitals, pet stores, and community organizations to host a series of public welfare initiatives themed "Caring for Stray Animals." These efforts simultaneously boosted the program's brand recognition and social influence.

2.3 Market Analysis

Regardless of the type of television program, it must be produced based on China's current realities. Based on China's unique national conditions, grounded in China's social realities, in accordance with the operational principles of China's television media, and adhering to the viewing habits and practical needs of Chinese television audiences, Organize, produce, and broadcast television programs that align with China's national characteristics, style, and tastes^[1]. In recent years, animal protection and public welfare awareness have gradually gained momentum across multiple sectors, with the issue of stray animals increasingly drawing attention in public discourse. This situation provided the basis for selecting the topic of the documentary The Last Wanderers. From the outset, the project targeted urban youth aged 18 to 35 as its primary audience, while also extending its reach to the 36-to-50 age group who hold household decision-making power. A deeper analysis of audience segmentation reveals that the 18-25 age group—Gen Z, including college students and new professionals—constitutes the core demographic driving engagement around stray animal rescue topics on platforms like Bilibili and Douyin, accounting for 83% of the topic's total views. (Data source: QuestMobile 2024). This demographic is easily emotionally stirred by short video content, driving its dissemination and spread; Individuals aged 26 to 35 are generally in a period of career stability, with both their economic capacity and willingness to participate in public welfare initiatives growing in tandem. They are more inclined to choose in-depth content that sparks value

collisions or offers a sense of cultural belonging; middle-aged family audiences aged 36 to 50 shoulder the dual responsibilities of children's education and community activities. The latest data from CCTV Documentary Channel shows that this segment of viewers achieves a 39% viewership rating during prime time. Documentary-style social issues resonate with them, revealing a tendency toward responsibility-driven engagement.

2.4 Characteristics of the Work

The Last Wanderer breaks free from conventional television storytelling conventions, adopting a documentary approach to capture the harsh realities of stray animals' survival and the deeply moving moments of their rescue. The cinematography is exquisitely detailed and uniquely distinctive, while the narrative tone carries subtle emotional ripples, vividly unfolding the complex emotional bonds between humans and animals before the audience. This work breaks free from the constraints of linear storytelling, instead weaving in the mundane routines of the rescue center and the tense situations during emergency treatments at the animal clinic. There are also fragments of personal recollection brimming with warmth yet tinged with melancholy, lending the overall narrative greater depth and texture. The film focuses more on evoking a powerful emotional resonance within viewers and prompting profound social reflection, while also showcasing the myriad challenges faced in rescue operations. Through subtle details that reveal life's resilience and an unwavering hold on hope, it guides the audience's emotional journey while prompting reflection on their own social responsibilities. The work is imbued with profound humanistic concern and a keen awareness of the present reality.

3 Statement of Creative Work

Pre-production preparations profoundly shape the artistic direction of a program. To align content with its intended objectives, the team must first define the theme, establish a framework, and identify the target audience. Subsequently, the core issues of stray animal survival and rescue are woven into the script, with narrative logic progressively refined as each plot detail is meticulously crafted. Reconsider arranging the venue at locations such as rescue centers, clinics, or public welfare organizations. Simultaneously, proper allocation of scene distribution and personnel scheduling is essential—any missing link could easily throw the entire process into disarray. From initial conceptualization to resource coordination, each task must continuously adapt to changes while maintaining precision, as any oversight could lead to operational deviations or even the risk of loss of control.

A situation refers to the overall circumstances and environmental conditions manifested within a given spatiotemporal domain, encompassing all objects or information that can influence or determine an individual's emotions, moods, cognition, and judgment^[2]. The task of gathering initial planning materials proved particularly crucial. Amidst mountains of literature and reports, the team not only glimpsed the true realities of stray animals' lives but also uncovered the intricacies of rescue efforts and the shifting social sentiments they evoked. White papers, research findings, and even news reports released by government agencies and public welfare organizations must be thoroughly collected. Furthermore, in-depth exchanges with shelter managers, relevant industry professionals, and volunteers are essential to sift through their oral accounts and daily experiences, extracting solid background materials and nuanced emotional insights. This laid a solid foundation for the entire program's expression. During the initial planning phase, the planning team and director collaborated closely to ensure the content flowed logically and was rich in emotion. This encompasses the construction of the program framework, broken down into specific scene designs and overall pacing control, and also involves selecting the filming approach for each segment. Just like using immersive long takes reminiscent of documentary filmmaking to showcase the actual living conditions of stray animals, then combining them with interviews to capture interviewees' more genuine emotional expressions—these elements all require continuous, meticulous refinement throughout the creative process.

3.1 New Approaches to Artistic Creation

Program filming undoubtedly became a crucial component of the creative process. The team had to follow the filming plan and script arrangements, using documentary techniques to conduct in-depth visits to animal rescue centers. The focus was on their daily operations, the living conditions of the animals, the contributions made by staff and volunteers, and the charitable activities themselves. Program filming undoubtedly became a crucial component of the creative process. The team had to follow the filming plan and script arrangements, using documentary techniques to conduct in-depth visits to animal rescue centers. The focus was on their daily operations, the living conditions of the animals, the contributions made by staff and volunteers, and the charitable activities themselves. The desire to capture the most authentic and emotionally resonant moments through the lens imbues this presentation with a unique expressive power. The role of the program host is undeniably crucial. During actual filming, they must accurately gauge the program's

pace and audience expectations, using emotional expressions and verbal delivery before the camera to engage viewers and draw them into the program's narrative. At the same time, it is essential to collaborate closely with on-site staff, striking a balance between emotional intensity and rational control in the delivery. When addressing emotional content and the seriousness of public welfare topics, it is crucial to maintain a delicate sense of proportion.

During post-production, the importance of voice-over work is evident. When seasoned voice actors undertake narration or commentary roles, they must immerse themselves in the emotional layers of the program's content. Capture the rhythmic essence, uncover the latent connections between frames, and convey precise visual interpretations alongside contextual analysis to the audience—thus sound seamlessly weaves into the fabric of the imagery. To evoke a deeper resonance, editors must reshape the raw footage and construct a cohesive narrative framework. Select shots based on emotional and narrative threads, using masterful techniques to heighten visual impact and provide a more fluid means of conveying the theme. Background music and sound effects play a crucial role in creating an immersive experience. When subtitles and visual elements are meticulously integrated, they provide a direct path to the program's core essence. These elements blend seamlessly together, with no sense of artificiality whatsoever.

3.2 Statement on the Significance of the Work's Creation

The ritualistic view of communication holds that communication is a process of creating, modifying, and transforming a shared culture, with its core being the sacred rites that gather people together as a community^[3]. Choosing stray animals as a research subject is not merely about bringing them into the public spotlight or raising awareness, but rather focuses on authentic documentation and in-depth exploration. In *The Last Stray*, through intuitive and emotionally resonant visual presentation and narrative techniques, This project highlights the myriad challenges faced by stray animals in their daily survival, along with the complex, intertwined circumstances and practical contradictions encountered during rescue efforts. It aims to raise awareness across society about these lives that persistently linger on the margins of our cities, inspiring more people to actively engage in improving their living conditions and restoring their inherent dignity through concrete action.

The Last Wanderer vividly portrays the arduous and busy work of animal rescuers, while incorporating in-depth interviews with shelter staff and volunteers. It seeks to lay bare the weighty issue of animal welfare before the audience, quietly fostering public awareness of animal rights ethics and sparking broader, deeper societal discussions on the matter. The significance of this work extends far beyond mere concern for stray animals. It stems from humanity's collective moral responsibility, subtly yet urgently reminding the public—especially individuals—to proactively shoulder greater responsibility for these voiceless creatures and extend sufficient care.

Enhancing social responsibility and empathy is both complex and abstract. Stray animals—a vulnerable group often overlooked or even rejected by society—offer a unique entry point and space for reflection on this challenge. Rather than focusing solely on rescue operations or heartwarming moments, *The Last Stray* employs shifting perspectives and interwoven narratives to subtly reconstruct the intricate bond between humans and animals through personal experiences. This approach guides viewers to delve deeper into the significance of moral responsibility, social inclusivity, and the cultivation of charitable spirit. This approach subtly fosters collective emotional resonance and profound reflection among the public.

4 The Manifestation of Professional Competence in Creative Work

Systematic considerations for a host's delivery style can be categorized into two distinct settings: indoor studio and outdoor field interviews. In the studio, the emphasis is on crisp yet warm expression, where approachability permeates like a touch of warmth. Through steady, gentle guidance in just a few minutes on camera, the host swiftly immerses the audience in the topic's atmosphere. This approach lends greater emotional resonance to subjects like conveying the plight of stray animals. Outdoor settings present complex and dynamic environments, demanding a more spontaneous delivery style. Language can be more casual and varied, aligning closely with interviewees and surroundings to break potential awkwardness. Responding to unexpected situations requires adaptability, with speech pace and tone adjusted on the fly to match emotions, preventing the interview from falling into rigid patterns.

4.1 Hosting Style

The essence of hosting lies in the convergence of sincerity and emotion. Without natural, fluid, and approachable delivery, it becomes difficult to forge an emotional bond between the audience and the host. When addressing the plight of stray animals, I avoid rigid rational frameworks, instead delving into the depths of empathy to uncover the individual experiences and urgent needs of these creatures. This approach aims to stir the audience's innate compassion and sense

of social responsibility. Following this approach, only when viewers effortlessly resonate with the program's emotional tone while absorbing information—and unconsciously develop a desire to act and reflect after the broadcast—can the true plight of stray animals be authentically conveyed. This prompts the public to broaden their focus toward broader societal issues, collectively contributing to building a warmer and more harmonious future. Viewers should not merely gain awareness of stray animals' plight; they must also grasp the preciousness and unique charm of life through the program's nuanced moments, gripping narratives, and detailed data. Only then can a solid foundation be laid for subsequent active participation.

4.2 Host and manage the proceedings

If the host fails to strike the right balance in audience interaction, even the most ingeniously designed segments can easily go awry during execution. I'm particularly attuned to shifts in the emotional atmosphere, especially when tackling sensitive topics like stray animals. In such cases, I guide the conversation with sincerity and care, ensuring it remains timely and engaging. This approach prevents the mood from becoming overly somber and dragging down the program's pace, achieving a harmonious blend of entertainment value and depth. During interviews, I meticulously prepare questions to prompt guests or experts to share stories, details, and perspectives that align with the theme, ensuring information is efficiently conveyed to the audience. When encountering complex or emotionally charged topics, I adjust the narrative pace and focus, incorporating content that balances rationality and warmth. This approach fosters deeper reflection while ensuring the program flows smoothly.

5 Conclusions

The collaborative experience gained across roles during long-term training proved invaluable. It was this journey that inadvertently fostered increasingly seamless synergy between the photographer and me—we developed a highly attuned partnership in harmonizing visual expression with verbal narration.

When analyzing the cultural dissemination model of *The Reader*, the host highlighted the "Adopter Letter Reading" segment within the interactive segment, skillfully introducing the original creative concept. Here, sound and emotion converge, guiding the audience to contemplate the issue of stray animals in silence and quietly awakening their sense of social responsibility. It must be understood that the problem of stray animals has long transcended a mere survival crisis; it has become a mirror reflecting the ethical awakening and level of civilizational development in modern society. Through continuous deepening and expansion of foundational research, the community operation model conveyed by the "New Media Hosting and Practice" course gradually evolved into a relay campaign centered on "giving a voice to stray animals," rapidly gathering enthusiastic participation from over 2,000 individuals. This fully demonstrates that artistic development in the field of radio hosting indeed possesses profound significance, exhibits distinct practice-oriented characteristics, and holds undeniable potential.

References

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