How Literature Can Raise Awareness Towards Animal Cruelty:
Musteri ng Up The Strength To Read the Facts
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Question: Can different types of literature be used to raise awareness towards animal cruelty? Including fiction?

Abstract:
The purpose of this research project is to educate readers to the harsh reality of animal cruelty. 10 million animals are abused to death every year in the United States, and the most common victims are dogs, cats, horses, and livestock. Aside from eating meat, one of the most popular forms of animal abuse, many people still unknowingly fund animal torture. Although unintentional, humans contribute to the mistreatment of animals when buying particular cosmetic products or clothing, when taking trips to a zoo or circus, or paying to take photos with tigers or swim with dolphins on vacation. Although funding things like this seems harmless and all in good fun, it is at the expense of Earth’s most innocent creatures. In order to create a more proactive society, we humans need to become knowledgeable of the different ways we take part in animal abuse along with ways to be proactive in the fight against it.

The best way to be an advocate for those who don’t have a voice is through the power of literature. If you don’t see or hear or read something yourself, you will never understand its true severity. Reading about this sensitive topic through first-hand accounts like “Voices for Animal Liberation” by Brittany Michelson allows readers to become more aware of what goes on in the world through the eyes of another. Even fiction stories like “The Plague Dogs” help to promote empathy and connect us with our own humanity. In a world clouded by money and greed, we need this type of eye-opening realization that comes from literature. We must do what we can to keep animals safe and cease funding industries that use animals for their own selfish needs.

Findings:

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair is a fictional piece of literature about a Lithuanian immigrant who comes to America looking to find success; the “American Dream.” However, because of immigration status, he is stuck working in a meat packing plant. In the novel he chooses to expose the horrendous conditions of what happens behind closed doors. Published in 1906, the same circumstances and accounts of abuse still hold true today. American immigrants are overrepresented and taken advantage of in the meatpacking industry and animals who await execution are still being mutilated, injected and starved.

The novel The Plague Dogs by Richard Adams tells a story about two dogs, Snitter and Rowf, who are trapped in an animal testing laboratory where they are inhumanely tested on and abused. The two dogs eventually escape from their cages and are forced to fend for themselves in a world that was more complicated than they both expected. As they try to get their big break, the government looks for them and tells the country that they are carrying the plague and are a danger. Although a fiction story, the message it sends is very real. This novel illustrates humanity’s cruel relationship to animals but proposes the possibility for a peaceful and compassionate co-existence between the two.

The book Voices for Animal Liberation by Brittany Michelson (with a foreword written by Ingrid Newkirk, the founder and president of PETA) provides readers with over 25 first hand accounts by new and highly influential voices who have been sparked by the vision of a more ethical world. This book contains true and inspiring stories that will give anyone the motivation to speak up and participate in the animal rights movement.

Michelson gives readers a chance to read facts, philosophies and stories that apply to all places around the world and will challenge your current ideologies and perceptions.

Significance:
Through literature, we understand the true severity of animal cruelty through various types of works whether that be first-hand accounts or fiction stories. Literature allows us to get a glimpse into the history of animal cruelty and shows how we have made it this far- but also motivates us to continue pushing forward for the liberation of all animals.