

Human Rights and Animal Rights: A Synergistic Approach

In recent years animal protection lawyers have embarked on a number of novel legal advocacy and litigation strategies that have sought to challenge the second-class status of nonhuman animals in the law by extending fundamental legal rights to them that have hitherto been regarded as the sole preserve of human beings. Such campaigns have prompted a ‘human rights backlash’ amongst certain legal commentators who argue that extending fundamental rights to nonhuman animals risks undermining extant human rights protection. In this paper I will outline the nature of some of these ‘antagonistic’ arguments and suggest some reasons to doubt them. I will then provide a sketch of a three-tiered ‘synergistic approach’ to human and animal rights, highlighting the ways in which the animal rights and human rights projects are complementary in terms of their theoretical, psychological and practical dimensions.



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