

The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics

Edited by A Linzey and C Linzey (2018). Published by Palgrave Macmillan, The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW, UK. 598 pages Hardback (ISBN: 978-1-137-36670-2). Price £129.99

The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics is approximately 600 pages of papers covering a wide range of topics, edited by the Director and Deputy Director of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. Many of the contributions coming from Fellows of that organisation. It is divided into four main sections: ‘The ethics of control’; ‘The ethics of captivity’; ‘The ethics of killing’; and ‘The ethics of causing suffering’. Each section starts with an introductory chapter which describes the papers which follow and how they relate to each other. The first section of the book is the most abstract, with chapters including ‘Chain of fools: The language of power’ and ‘Speciesism and the ideology of domination in the Italian philosophical tradition’. In the second section, after a chapter entitled ‘Incarceration, liberty and dignity’, the subject matter becomes more applied, with particularly interesting, evidence-based chapters on ethical issues surrounding keeping elephants and marine animals in captivity. The third section incorporates religious and philosophical considerations including a chapter on religious slaughter (which provides a useful summary of international legal perspectives on frameworks for religious slaughter), another on Christian ethics and protection of animal lives, and a philosophical discussion of the wrongness of killing humans and of killing animals. The final section combines broad considerations of why animal suffering matters and what animal rights and human duties mean in a legal context, with more specific chapters on, for example, production animals, conservation, and bullfighting.

Taken as a whole, the book covers a wide range of specific subject matter, combined with more abstract discussion of the philosophical and ethical issues which the specific topics throw up. Many of the chapters provide useful summaries or reflections upon the existing literature on the topic.

I found *The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics* difficult both to read and review. Not because it is not well written and edited — it undeniably is — but because, as the editors make clear at the outset, most of the contributing authors approach their subject matter from an animal rights perspective. Whilst that approach is of course valid and defensible, it is not (for reasons which I have explained elsewhere [Campbell 2019]) one which I espouse. I take a utilitarian view of animal ethics, and the majority of authors in this book — to quote Priscilla Cohn’s introduction to Chapter 20 — find that utilitarian theories are “plagued with venerable problems”. That being so, I found that I simply didn’t agree with the starting point of many of the arguments being advanced. The persuasive power of some of the arguments was also weakened by reliance upon examples which even those utilitarians who support a

particular use of an animal would find unacceptable. Examples of poor practice are used as the basis for arguing against the practice at all. Thus, the introductory chapter on ‘The ethics of control’ describes a “person captur(ing) (a) dog and sell(ing) him for use in research facilities”. Whilst it is sadly possible that this does occur in some parts of the world, no reputable scientific laboratory would source its animals in this way. One can certainly condemn such practices — or the example given by Jodey Castricano in Chapter 8 of monkeys being bred in Indonesia or The Philippines, exported to Britain for use in scientific research and dying *en route* in cages which were too small and inadequately ventilated — but still support the use of animals in science in general. Similarly, cattle prods and hot branding are used as examples of “the ways in which non-human bodies (are) appropriated (as) property” (Chapter 5), yet there are many who worry about and disagree with the use of both of these methods when more humane alternatives are available without necessarily subscribing to the view that non-human animal farming should be banned.

The language throughout the book (as one gathers from the section and chapter titles) is emotive; the editors and authors obviously feel justifiably so. It is certainly thought-provoking but I am not sure that sentences such as “systemic practice of violence in which social animals are enslaved and biologically manipulated, resulting in their objectification, subordination and oppression” will engage all of the potential readership of this book. Another example is the description of chimpanzees being used in biomedical research to support the argument that “animals suffer both physical and psychological harms in captivity” (Chapter 10): “Chimpanzees...were regularly shot with tranquillizer darts from close range and then fell from their perches onto the hard floor”. Whilst I find it undeniable that animals do indeed often suffer both physical and psychological harms in captivity, the argument is not strengthened by using an example of obviously poor practice to support it.

Furthermore, in relation to animal welfare, some startling statements are made. Lori Gruen begins the chapter on ‘Incarceration, liberty and dignity’, for example, by writing “Though there has been increased attention to the violations that accompany human bondage and confinement, the same level of attention has not been directed at the harms of captivity for non-human animals”. That statement is to deny the considerable body of work which has been undertaken in recent years looking, for example, at the Five Freedoms, the Five Welfare Domains, and methods of reducing, replacing, and refining animal use in science, or even increasing awareness amongst the animal-owning public of animals’ welfare needs.

Nonetheless, the book gave me frequent pause for thought — sometimes to pause, reflect and disagree, and sometimes because it added new considerations to topics which I had thought about previously. I particularly enjoyed Catherine Doyle’s chapter on elephants in captivity. This offers a very thoughtful, evidence-based analysis of current understanding of elephants’ experiences of their lives, and

what that implies about keeping them in captivity. Lori Marino's chapter on captive marine mammals is equally persuasive, using a very thorough, accessible review of current scientific understanding of cetaceans to build an argument that it is impossible for cetaceans to flourish in captivity and that they should not, therefore, be kept in that way. Although not necessarily agreeing with large parts of it, I also very much enjoyed Carlos Naconecy's chapter entitled: 'What is morally wrong with killing animals (if this does not involve suffering)', which was very clearly laid out and argued.

The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics does not really seem to me to be what it proclaims itself to be. It is heralded as a "new book for a new field of enquiry: Animal Ethics". Yet animal ethics has been a gradually growing field of interest for at least the last decade (indeed, the First International Conference on Veterinary and Animal Ethics was held back in 2013), and there are many previous publications in the area by a wide range of authors. Some claims are made which are hard to substantiate. Kay Peggs writes in Chapter 23, for example: "It is unusual to think about companion animals as suffering non-human animals" yet surely that is exactly what is going on in the course of common discussions about canine separation anxiety; cats being kept indoors and brachycephalic breeds? The book doesn't really give the reader access to all of 'animal ethics', but rather to one particular way of approaching ethical questions relating to animals ("...the academic exploration of the moral status of the non-human...which helps us to understand the influences...that legitimate animal abuse", as the editors tell us in the introduction). The editors attempt to persuade us that this approach is animal ethics, in its entirety. I disagree. The focus of the book is philosophical, sociological, and legal, with minimal contribution from animal welfarists or veterinarians. Thomas White, the author of the introductory chapter on 'The ethics of captivity' states that "Senior scientists...lack the requisite technical skills necessary to handle the intangible character of normative, philosophical thinking". One might rejoin, in an equally sweeping way, that senior philosophers lack the requisite training to interpret scientific data or animal behavioural and physiological parameters. There are many people from many disciplines who share a common interest in improving the lives of animals, albeit an interest expressed in different ways, and based on differing principles. It is a shame that what presents itself as a handbook didn't incorporate more diverse approaches. Nonetheless, there is a lot of interest within its considerable volume, and if a rights-based way of 'doing' animal ethics appeals to you there is no doubt that this book is well-written, scholarly and covers a wide range of topics.

Reference

Campbell MLH 2019 *Animal, Ethics and Us*. 5M Publishing: Sheffield, UK

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Field and Laboratory Methods in Animal Cognition: A Comparative Guide

Edited by N Bueno-Guerra and F Amici (2018). Published by Cambridge University Press, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8BS, UK. 456 pages Paperback (ISBN: 9781108413947). Price £39.99.

I was excited to receive a copy of *Field and Laboratory Methods in Animal Cognition: A Comparative Guide* as it promised to fill a gap in the literature that is currently wide open; that of bringing together a cross-section of researchers, all of whom have designed cognitive tests for their study species by considering the particular perceptual and motor abilities that make up each species' *Umwelt*. The book is an edited volume covering a broad range of taxa in alphabetical order — starting with ants and ending with tortoises, with elephants, chickens, bats and sharks (to name but a few) in between. Each chapter covers the same set of topics, focusing on a different species of animal, providing an overview of what each species can perceive (its *Merkwelt*) and what it can do (its *Wirkwelt*) before covering the body of cognitive research on that species, with a heavy emphasis on methodology. The formulaic nature of each chapter's format makes it a book well suited for dipping into, rather than reading from cover-to-cover.

The theme of the book is to focus on each species in its own right rather than considering its abilities in relation to a human baseline or, indeed, that of any other species, and to provide a practical guide specific to the study of each animal in turn. Authors are experts in the field and provide inside advice and tips for new researchers embarking on the study of animal cognition, with a particular emphasis on fieldwork. The chapters provide some key points for cognition research in general, as well as tailored, species-specific sticking points.

This engaging book highlights the very different ways in which the world can be perceived, and the unique characteristics these differences allow each species in question. The deliberate move away from an anthropocentric view of animal cognition is laudable in a world where researchers are increasingly encouraged to value research in terms of the impact it can offer, very often by considering how it relates to humans. This book offers a timely call back to what is often called 'blue skies science', though that term belittles the importance of understanding the myriad of ways that the world can be perceived and acted upon, as well as the crucial point that humans are not the pinnacle species to which all others should be compared, but simply one member of the web of life on Earth. This book's USP is really based on its use of the researchers' own voices, which provides an intimate window into their own particular body of research. The book is full of generous advice about potential pitfalls and things to look out for that are particular to a study species, giving each chapter life and a depth that would be lost in a more general text.