The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics ed. by Andrew Linzey and Clair Linzey (review)

John Rossi

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics. Edited by Andrew Linzey and Clair Linzey. (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 598 + xxv pp. Hardback. £139.99. ISBN: 978-1-137-36670-2.)

JOHN ROSSI
Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics

The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics is a recent addition to anthologies in the field, joining *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*, and *The Routledge Handbook of Animal Ethics*. Edited by Andrew Linzey and Clair Linzey of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics, the book boasts more than 30 contributors, many of them philosophers, but also including sociologists, scientists, theologians, lawyers, psychologists, and animal advocates. The editors were intentionally multidisciplinary in their approach, noting that "there is currently no book series that is a focus for multidisciplinary research in the field," and calling attention to the need not only for philosophical inquiry into what we owe animals, but also into the "social, legal, cultural, religious and political" influences that "legitimate animal abuse" (p. viii).

The book is divided up into four sections: "The Ethics of Control," "The Ethics of Captivity," "The Ethics of Killing," and "The Ethics of Causing Suffering." Each of these sections includes an editorial introduction and multiple entries spanning diverse issues, including animal research, animal agriculture, hunting, fishing, zoos, the role of animals in religion, the role of language in structuring thought about nonhuman animals, and others. Similarly, the chapters span issues affecting many species, including farmed animals, fish, deer, elephants, whales and dolphins, rodents, companion animals (e.g., dogs and cats), and others.

While the book is billed as a "practical" handbook of animal ethics, it does wade into some conceptual territory, tackling such issues as the ethical permissibility of confining and controlling animals, the question of whether (painless) death harms nonhuman animals, and the comparative wrongness of killing humans and nonhuman animals. This said, it largely stays away from more detailed discussion of normative ethical theory and the moral standing of nonhuman animals, focusing instead on the specific ways that humans treat nonhuman animals. In focusing more on practical than theoretical ethics, the *Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics* both complements and differentiates itself from some other anthologies in the field.

The book has several strengths to recommend it, the first being the logic of its organization. The ethically problematic aspects of humans' treatment of nonhuman animals frequently map onto one or more of the categories of causing suffering, killing, and confining. The organization of chapters under these section headings helps to provide a rational structure to the text, as well as an easy way for the reader to navigate which sections they would like to tackle first (although there is some overlap between

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sections). With this, the explicit and sustained focus on the ethics of control (section 1) is a welcome and differentiating feature of the text. Much prior work in animal ethics has addressed questions of harming and killing animals, but the ethical permissibility of control per se has received comparatively lesser attention.

The multidisciplinary nature of the book is also a selling point. In any anthology on animal ethics, the reader can expect entries from academic philosophers, but the book's inclusion of empirical scientific reviews, sociological and legal analyses, and work in discourse analysis are strengths. One danger in focusing exclusively on what we ought to think and do is that it ignores the influences on how we actually think and act. Many of the book's entries address these influences and thus round out the normative analysis.

The middle two sections of the book seem most successful to this reviewer. The section on the ethics of killing contains two well-argued conceptual chapters, coupled with practical analyses of fishing, deer hunting, and religious perspectives on killing nonhuman animals. While animal research and animal agriculture are not directly addressed in this section, the conceptual arguments can be applied to the killing of nonhuman animals in these contexts. The section on the ethics of captivity is not as conceptually strong but contains excellent empirical chapters on the welfare of elephants, whales, and dolphins in captivity. Prior work in normative ethics has established how confinement can be harmful to nonhuman animals by directly causing suffering or depriving them of opportunities for satisfaction (see, e.g., DeGrazia, 2002). However, it is important to complement such theoretical frameworks with substantiation of how captivity *actually is* harmful to nonhuman animals in virtue of the interests they have and how captivity infringes upon such interests. These chapters argue that captivity is fundamentally (and not conditionally) incompatible with the welfare of elephants, whales, and dolphins.

If I have one criticism of the book, it is that it could be stronger on certain conceptual issues. Acknowledging its practical and not theoretical focus, it is nonetheless true that if controlling, confining, killing, and causing suffering to nonhuman animals is wrong, then it is important to say something about why it is wrong—even if that explanation amounts to a short synopsis of more theoretical work done elsewhere. While the question of killing is addressed well, the section on the ethics of causing suffering does not address directly why (or under what conditions) causing suffering is wrong. The chapters in this section are worthwhile reading and review practices causing animal suffering in a variety of contexts. Nonetheless, some additional conceptual front matter would have strengthened the section overall.

From a conceptual standpoint, the sections on the ethics of control and captivity seem to hang together. Confinement is a form of control and might be argued against on the grounds that it deprives nonhuman animals of opportunities for satisfaction, directly causes physical injury, or causes psychological distress, anxiety, or boredom. These kinds of arguments fit into interest-based accounts of animal welfare, which in turn can be subsumed under a principle of nonmaleficence: We should not cause harm to animals under some specified set of conditions; confinement harms animals in ways x, y, or z; therefore, we should not confine animals in this way.

While such interest-based arguments do make an appearance in the text, several of the book's authors also elaborate an autonomy-based argument against control and confinement: Nonhuman animals have their own kind of autonomy, and just as in-

fringing upon the autonomy of paradigmatic persons is wrong, infringing upon nonhuman animals' autonomy is also wrong. The problem with this argument is that different kinds of autonomy are likely to be at stake. The wrongness of infringing upon paradigmatic persons' autonomy is often explained by the facts that we are self-conscious, capable of abstract thought (including language use), and capable of intentionally choosing the kind of life that we want to live (e.g., relating to long-term projects or schemes of personal ethics). It could be argued that because nonhuman animals are not capable of exercising this kind of autonomy, they therefore cannot be harmed by its infringement.

Some of the book's authors chip away at this presumption, noting (inter alia) that nonhuman animals have desires to move around and do things that are thwarted by confinement or control, that these desires constitute a form of agency, and that (following previous scholarship) nonhuman animals possess some forms of self-awareness. Specifically, the chapters from Valéry Giroux and Carl Saucier-Bouffard, Lori Gruen, and Carlos Naconecy consider such arguments. Naconecy draws upon David DeGrazia's (2009) analysis of animal self-awareness in making his argument. Though the issue deserves more treatment than I can give it here, it seems that nonhuman animals' autonomy and self-awareness, even if granted, are of a different sort than that possessed by paradigmatic persons. Specifically, (most) nonhuman animals cannot feel *wronged* by having their preferences overridden because they are not the kinds of beings who are capable of abstractly considering themselves as autonomous and worthy of self-direction. They may desire things, and thwarting these desires might sometimes harm them, but that is a different kind of argument.

Infringing upon nonhuman animals' (more limited kind of) autonomy might nonetheless be wrong, but if different sorts of autonomy are at stake, then moral arguments relating to paradigmatic persons cannot be directly transposed to nonhuman animals. Some additional argument(s) must be supplied, but (on my reading) the book's contributors stop short of this. Nonetheless, as stated above, the ethics of control and questions of nonhuman animals' autonomy are not as well trod as other issues in animal ethics. Despite my taking issue with some of the details, the discussions contained in the book's first two sections are worthy reading and help to advance the field.

Overall, the book's chapters are well written and cogently argued, and given its breadth, different readers will find different things to value in it. *The Palgrave Handbook of Practical Animal Ethics* is a welcome addition to the literature.

References

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Animals and Animality in Primo Levi's Work. By Damiano Benvegnù. (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018. The Palgrave Macmillan Animal Ethics Series. 298 + xx pp. Hardback. $139.99. ISBN: 978-3-319-71257-4.)

ELENA PAST
Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

There could hardly be a more relevant moment to read Damiano Benvegnù's powerful book, *Animals and Animality in Primo Levi's Work*. COVID-19 taught the wider world about zoonosis and the complex processes via which the virus was "liberated" from its evolutionary niche: Launched across the bor-