

Anne Barnhill, Tyler Doggett, and Mark Budolfson, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*. Oxford University Press 2018. 816 pp. \$150.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780199372263).

This substantial collection is a welcome addition to the burgeoning and vast field of food ethics, a field that brings interdisciplinary work in animal ethics, environmental ethics, biology, ecology, gender studies, and other fields to bear on questions regarding food production, consumption, and culture. The *Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics* has 35 chapters, including the introduction, and covers a broad array of topics, ranging from the ethics of genetically modified food and the ethics of eating meat, to obesity and food etiquette. The collection provides valuable insight into the current state of food ethics and will be of interest to philosophers and scholars for years to come. Given the extensive and diverse array of topics covered in the book, this review cannot do justice to all of its strengths. A few comments must suffice.

The *Handbook* is divided into eight parts, with Part I focusing on current agricultural practices. The first chapter of Part I, Clark Wolf's 'Sustainable Agriculture,' offers a glimpse of the value of philosophical reflection on food concepts. He offers a philosophical anthropology of the notion of 'sustainability,' showing that, in its broadest sense, a farming practice 'is sustainable just in case it is ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable,' or non-depletory of resources (40-41). The challenge, of course, is assessing which farm practices are sustainable. Mark Budolfson argues in his chapter, 'Food, The Environment, and Global Justice,' that proponents of eating organic and/or vegan are wrong to claim that their diet is better, all things considered, for the environment. 'Reflection on the relevant empirical facts,' he writes, 'calls into question the assumption that there is a single food system that minimizes harms along each and every dimension that matters' (93). Rachel Ankeny and Heather Bray evaluate arguments against genetically-modified foods based on environmental and economic sustainability, and highlight how 'unclear' it is whether these arguments are compelling (104-106). Readers are introduced in these early chapters to the nuanced, interdisciplinary nature of food ethics—arguments against industrial agrarian farming or genetically modified food often rely on empirical premises, premises that are not assessable by armchair reflection.

There are three chapters in Part II, focusing on various aspects of the current industrial model of animal farming and animal science. Gary Comstock reviews the scientific literature on cattle cognition, arguing that 'cattle experience pain and desire but not self-consciousness' (140). Eliot Michaelson and Andrew Reisner adduce evidence for thinking that 'many species of fish are both conscious and capable of feeling pain ... [and this is a] relevant, potentially morally significant capacity' (195). The conclusion of both chapters, drawn from the extant scientific literature on animal pain and consciousness, strengthens vegetarian arguments that appeal to the wrongness of animal suffering in factory farming; specifically, these chapters highlight how implausible it is, in light of what we know about cattle and fish, to deny that such animals experience pain.

The five chapters of Part IV concern the consumption of animals. There are two broad issues that thread through the chapters of this section: whether it is moral to eat animals raised in factory farms, and the inefficacy of individual food choices to influence the factory farming industry. Tristram McPherson's chapter on ethical veganism and Bob Fischer's chapter on arguments for consuming animal products offer readers a variety of arguments for and against eating animals. Both authors are keen to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the various arguments, and readers would benefit from keeping Comstock's chapter on animal sentience in mind. If one takes the eating of animals to be immoral, then one should refrain from eating animals; however, one person refraining from meat-eating is not going to have an impact on the treatment of farm animals, and so, there

is no clear reason any one person should refrain from eating meat. This is what Julia Nefsky calls ‘the problem of collective impact’ (168). Readers are presented with a variety of responses to the problem of collective impact. Andrew Chignell argues that moral vegetarians and vegans—religious or not—hope that their individual food choices will have an impact (308); Nefsky, by contrast, focuses on instrumental progress of food choices: in order to bring about change, individual people have to bring about change (285).

The four chapters in Part IV and the five chapters in Part V deal with food politics and social justice. The food justice movement is, as the editors explain, ‘a social justice movement that aims to transform the food system by addressing a range of problems,’ including poor working conditions for agricultural workers, environmental impact of farming practices, loss of indigenous food practices, food deserts in urban, low-income neighborhoods, and so on (12). Chapters address racial imperialism and the ownership of cultural goods, including food products and practices (chapter 15); the value of indigenous food systems and injustice (chapter 16); and the global food market and inequality (chapter 17). Readers interested in practical guidance in food activism will benefit from Jeff Sebo’s chapter, ‘Multi-Issue Food Activism,’ in which he argues that advocates of food justice should campaign on multiple issues across multiple movements in a unified front (402-404). The issue of activism leads to the question, what are activists advocating for? What policy or business changes do they want? Chapters in Part V address food policy and politics. Sarah Conly argues in favor of government regulations on food production (450-453); Seana Shiffrin argues that food advertisers have a duty to ensure that consumers understand what they are purchasing and eating (491); Sabine Tsuruda argues against temporary farmworker programs (547-549).

Chapters in Parts VI and VII focus on personal and public discourse about dieting, obesity, and other cultural food practices. Tracy Isaacs, in her chapter, ‘Food Insecurity: Dieting as Ideology, as Oppression, and as Privilege,’ argues that dieting reflects an oppressive ideology, but also reflects a privileged opportunity for many relative to the large number of food insecure. Beth Dixon’s chapter, ‘Obesity and Responsibility,’ argues that, given certain environmental and social factors, some obese persons are not morally responsible for being obese. Kate Nolfi’s chapter, ‘Food Choices and Moral Character,’ examines the moral significance of unreflective eating practices, and argues that our food choices ‘help to determine whether we are morally praiseworthy or criticizable agents’ (697). Karren Stohr argues in her chapter, ‘The Etiquette of Eating’ that dinner parties offer moral occasions—they make possible moral goods that are unattainable by individuals (720).

The three chapters in the final part, Part VIII, examine food ethics in ancient, medieval, and early modern periods. Katja Maria Vogt examines ancient accounts of the motivational force of hunger, the relevance of disagreements over food practices, and the question of why ancients thought we should train our food-related attitudes. Henrik Lagerlund, noting the large absence of work on medieval food ethics, notes the distinctive Christian focus for medieval philosophers: the spiritual importance of fasting, the danger of gluttony, and the created superiority of humans over animals. John Grey and Aaron Garrett, in the final chapter, highlight differences (e.g., the importance of eating well and society) and similarities between early modern and present-day discussions of food.

It is evident that the editors succeed in introducing and adding to the vast philosophical field described as ‘food ethics’ (2). As should be clear by now, *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics* does a fine job presenting a broadly representative spectrum of the questions and answers present in food ethics. This is a must read for anyone interested in food ethics. However, the book presents a challenge to readers that stems from the field’s broad basis—it is difficult to bring chapters and sections of the book into discussion with one another. It is not merely that Paul Thompson’s discussion of agrarian virtues in Part I has little bearing on Karen Stohr’s discussion of eating etiquette in Part VII;

it is often challenging to see how chapters within the same part relate. For instance, despite the number of arguments, Tritram McPherson's chapter on ethical veganism has no clear argument in common with Bob Fischer's chapter on eating meat. Similarly, Charles List's chapter on the moral permissibility of hunting has little in common with Gary Comstock's and Eliot Michaelson and Andrew Reisner's chapters on cattle and fish sentience. To help readers navigate the topics and chapters more fully, I recommend *Food, Ethics, and Society: An Introductory Text with Readings* (Oxford University Press, 2016) as a companion text, which is edited by the same editors as the *Handbook*.

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