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7 **Thinking Critically about Health and Human-Animal Relations: Therapeutic Affect within**
8 **Spaces of Care Farming**
9
10 *This article draws on a more-than-representational approach to reconsider how*
11 *geographers engage with ideas of 'health'. Health can be understood as the constant*
12 *reshaping of an individual's capacity to affect and be affected, the way in which a body's*
13 *powers to act are dynamically augmented or diminished by different affective relations.*
14 *The article also addresses calls for health geography to engage with the more-than-*
15 *human. The article mobilises a qualitative study of 'care farming' within England and*
16 *Wales to highlight the generative potential of human-animal relations in (re)shaping the*
17 *diverse affective relations gathered together to produce new bodily capacities. The article*
18 *demonstrates how animal presence and agency can break down barriers, allowing people*
19 *to navigate and negotiate adverse contexts and access support in a manner and space in*
20 *which they feel comfortable. Additionally, human-animal relations are shown to produce*
21 *affective experiences that act to re-place identities, understandings, and ways of 'being-*
22 *with' the world that can enact what different actants may become. Human-animal*
23 *relations matter for health.*
24
25 Keywords: Health Geography; Human-Animal Relations; Health; Care Farming; Health and Place; UK
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27
28 **1. Introduction**

29

30 Despite health geography's interests in exploring and explaining the interrelations between
31 health and place, 'health' as a concept itself is often left undefined, un-interrogated, and
32 unpacked, frequently taken as a given, an external and universal 'thing' to be acquired,
33 restored, or maintained. Within this article I reconsider and reconceptualise how health
34 geographers approach and engage with ideas of 'health' and 'the therapeutic', focussing on
35 the generative potential of situated relations, and how ongoing lines of flight (Deleuze &
36 Guattari, 2008) continue to shape affective capacities and therapeutic possibilities. Alongside
37 these broader conceptual aims, I am also interested in how animals have been marginalised
38 within health geography (Conradson, 2005; Gorman, 2017b). Drawing these themes together

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utilising an empirical study of 'care farming' practices in England and Wales, I explore how human-animal relations can shape and reshape bodily capacities, affecting an individual's capabilities and opportunities to function and flourish. In doing so, the article attends to calls by numerous authors (Andrews et al., 2014; Hanlon, 2014; Milligan et al., 2007) to more critically explore the role of the non-human within geographic understandings of health, as well as contributing to recent efforts within health geography to develop fresh understandings of the value and analytical utility of affective accounts of health.

2. Thinking about Health

Health is a multifaceted concept. It can refer specifically to physical and bodily health and the absence of diagnosed diseases, but also captures the many different dimensions and relations that impact everyday, lived, corporeal, emotional, and social wellbeing (Curtis, 2004). However, the specific nature of health and wellbeing are rarely foregrounded in geographic writing, and are, as Andrews (2007) argues, instead frequently deployed as rather vague and indirect terms suggestive of some degree of happiness, contentment, or quality of life. Research has missed the opportunity to explore health and wellbeing at a more 'immediate' level, exploring the processes through which health and wellbeing emerge (Andrews et al., 2014).

Within this article, I draw on health, not in a biomedical or functionalist sense of a simple absence of 'ill-health', but rather in terms of the affects or relations a body possesses. In such a framing, health is processual, not simply a 'state' of an ontologically prior body, nor an outcome to be achieved, but instead dynamically and relationally constituted (Fox, 2002,

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2011). New relations produce new 'bodily capacities' and close down existing ones (Buchanan, 1997); though this is not an either-or dualism, simply the processes at play within a 'becoming healthy' (Fox, 2011). 'Bodily capacities' here refer to a body's power(s) to act, and the ways in which competencies are acquired, cultivated, maintained, and advanced through the provision of new affective sensitivities (Duff, 2010, 2011). These 'capacities' highlight the capability of bodies to enter into relations with other bodies and experience diverse affects. A continuous modification and transition of a body's competencies and potential for action (Duff, 2010) that transforms a body's potency to 'do different things' and 'perform different actions' (Emmerson, 2017, 11). Health can thus be conceptualised as the proliferation and transformation of the 'capacity to affect and be affected' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008; Fox, 2011).

Affect is a concept increasingly utilised within geography (though less so in health geography). It is 'used to describe unformed and unstructured intensities that, although not necessarily experienced by or possessed by a subject, correspond to the passage from one bodily state to another and are therefore analysable in terms of their effects' (Anderson, 2011, 8). Duff (2010, 2011), draws on the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari to explore how affect applies to health and suggests that:

> Affects are an emergent effect of the body's manifold encounters, with each encounter transforming the nature of the body's characteristic relations and hence its manifest capacities (Duff, 2010, 626) […] Affects are a lived moment of action-potential and they convey a body's durational and dispositional orientation to the world […] every encounter subtly transforms an individual's

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> affective orientations, either to enhance that individual's power of acting or to diminish it (Duff, 2011, 153).

Fox (2002, 2011, 2016) too uses the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari to argue for a conceptualisation of health where health is defined by what a body can do, its capacities and limits, rather than what it is. Treating health in this way recognises the interconnectedness of all things and thus situates the 'health' of a body within an assemblage of shifting and fluctuating biological, psychological, cultural, economic, and abstract relations to other bodies, objects, technologies, ideas, and social organisations. In this way health becomes not simply passively inscribed and territorialized indefinitely, but something which can be resisted, subverted, and deterritorialized by other forces, dependent on affective relations (Fox, 2002). 'Health' becomes a precarious relational achievement, produced through the diverse relations, elements, and affects gathered together, shaped and potentialised by ongoing 'lines of flight' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008).

> We may understand 'health' as – at least in part – the resistance of body-self to forces of territorialization. Resistance is not only a possibility: it is the character of the body-self as it refracts the affects and relations which impinge upon it. As has been noted, these include physical and biological, psychological or emotional, social and cultural relations, and the body-self uses these strategically to define what it can 'do'. So, the 'health' of a body is the outcome of all these refracted and resisted relations, biological capabilities or cultural mind-sets, alliances with friends or health workers, struggles for control over treatment or conditions of living. Health is neither an absolute (defined by

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> whatever discipline) to be aspired towards, nor an idealized outcome of 'mind-over-matter'. It is a process of becoming by body-self, of rallying affects and relations, resisting physical or social territorialization and experimenting with what is, and what might become. (Fox, 2002, 360)

Importantly though, and to build on Fox, these relations that converge to define what a body can do are neither isotopic, synchronic, synoptic, homogeneous, nor isobaric (Latour, 2005, 200-201). Childhood encounters that result in phobias of medical staff and spaces continue to shape the opportunities which people have to build 'alliances with health workers' and the many other ways relations entangle to co-constitute an understanding of 'health', what Fox (2011, 2016) calls a 'health assemblage'.

Recognising Deleuze and Guatarri's emphasis of territories and milieus (Bonta & Protevi, 2004), there is an opportunity for health geographers to engage with this idea of 'health assemblages' and explore the material and immaterial elements of particular environments and how they come to be 'important vectors of affective transmission in the body's power of acting' (Duff, 2010, 629). Bodies and places become fluidly entangled in a relational co-production of 'health'; health is affected by, through, and in place. Though importantly, this is not about exploring spaces where an individual may 'move towards wellbeing' (Conradson, 2003, 511) with health and wellbeing existing as achievable, final, and fixed states. Instead, the focus moves towards exploring the processes and relationships involved in the production and reproduction of constant and ceaseless experiences of 'becoming healthy'. Health is continuously (re)shaped by an environment, as opposed to something that results, or is taken, from an environment (Andrews et al., 2014). Encounters in place subtly transform 'an

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individual's affective orientations, either to enhance that individual's power of acting or to diminish it' (Duff, 2011, 153).

This 'affective turn' as it might be conceptualised, allows something slightly different to be 'brought to the table' of contemporary health geography, presenting the world as a lived, immediate, continually moving performance, and exploring the variegated ways life presents, manifests, and feels in its most basic forms (Andrews, 2018). Such an approach allows for a conceptualisation of health as something 'unstable and amenable to immediate change, something both individual and collective, something both consciously and less-than-fully consciously known, thus as something both subjective and objective' (Andrews, 2016b, 212). Shifting the focus to the fundamental energies and liveliness of humans and other beings, and the ways health is co-produced and shared between bodies (Andrews, 2018).

3. Animals and Health Geography

The longstanding approach within health geography has been to put 'people centre stage' (Andrews, 2015, 338), an approach which has resulted in anthropocentric geographies of health (Gorman, 2017b). Laws and Radford (1998) have previously noted that there has been a need for geographies of health to engage with 'the other', however this does not appear to have been taken up in respect to non-human others. To quote Conradson (2005, 339), the health geographies literature has seen 'rather less consideration of the non-human entities (plants, animals, micro-organisms) and created objects (homes, computers, cars) which also feature significantly in contemporary place-making'. However, increasingly, non-human life is being utilised (and commodified) in attempts to produce affective healthful encounters,

1 from cat cafes (Plourde, 2014) to care farms (Gorman, 2017b), Pets-As-Therapy dogs on
2 hospital wards (Pets As Therapy, 2016) to 'puppy rooms' on university campuses (BBC, 2015);
3 animals are increasingly imbricated within the geographies of health.
4
5 Thus here, I attend to Hanlon's (2014, 144) calls for health geography to widen its accounts
6 of place to consider the 'ways in which bodies not only interact, but co-evolve with things
7 (e.g. physical infrastructure, technologies) and other beings (i.e. not simply other people, but
8 pets, livestock, wildlife, insects, and so on)'. Places that can affect health are comprised of
9 'rich ecologies of the human and the non-human, the social and the natural, the material and
10 immaterial' (Murdoch, 2006, 127). Any 'thing' that modifies a state of affairs by making a
11 difference, producing affects, or altering the course of events is an actor (Bennett, 2010;
12 Latour, 2005). This is not to say that these things determine, cause, or impose action (Latour,
13 2005). Rather, such an approach implies that there are many shades of causality – 'things
14 might authorise, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible,
15 forbid, and so on' (Latour, 2005, 72). Things are vital players in the world, efficacious existents
16 in excess of their association with human meanings and contexts (Bennett, 2010).
17
18 Drawing on Bennett's (2010, 3) discussions of the agency of non-human things, the idea that
19 'things do in fact affect other bodies, enhancing or weakening their power' returns to a
20 conceptualisation of health defined by what a body can do, its capacities and limits. Similarly,
21 Hinchliffe (2007, 25) describes how 'plants, animals, and non-living matter may co-evolve and
22 produce opportunities and constraints for one another through all manner of relations'.
23 These ideas of 'producing opportunities and constraints' and 'enhancing and weakening
24 power' provide a useful means to consider how human-animal relations can co-produce

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therapeutic possibilities, enabling and enacting what different actants may become. Animals (and other non-human things) can alter the relations that bodies have, shaping and reshaping practices and flows of becoming.

4. Exploring Health

Duff (2010) calls for exploring the relations that bodies have to explore a person's health. This article thus concerns itself with exploring the situated spatial relations between humans and animals to critically discuss how the presence and agency of animals can shape and reshape capacities to affect and be affected. Before moving to discuss this in more detail, I firstly explore the contextual and empirical settings that underpin and emplace these deliberations, as well as explaining the methodological practices which enabled and produced this study.

4.1. Contextualising Care Farming

The empirics for this article were collected during a study of Community Supported Agriculture, a system of food production and distribution aiming to involve local communities in the growing and rearing of their food. Wells and Gradwell (2001, 117) describe CSA as a form of 'caring practice', and many CSA farms are often connected with producing health benefits (Press & Arnould, 2011). Many CSAs invite groups that might 'benefit therapeutically' (Charles, 2011) onto their farms, with CSAs functioning, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, as 'care farms'. Care farming is a place-based intervention in which agricultural settings and practices are utilised to provide care for vulnerable groups (Gorman & Cacciatore, 2017), in what Hassink et al. (2010) describe as part of the wider shift from

institutional to socialised and community care. Though equally, care farming can also be considered through a lens of neoliberalization, and be seen as an effect of the state withdrawing from responsibilities of care. In Kraftl's (2014a, 62) work, he reports that farmers engaging in care farming felt under increasing pressure to take up 'the burden' of public service withdrawal. Care farming might thus be considered a shadow state activity (Wolch, 1990) that (to borrow an excellent pun from a reviewer) farms out the care of vulnerable groups to enterprises not established nor intended to do this type of work.

In the UK, care farming involves providing care, rehabilitation, therapeutic, and educational programmes for people with learning difficulties, disaffected youth, and people experiencing ill-mental health (Hine et al., 2008). Some farms provide specific therapies and interventions, whilst others take a more passive approach whereby they actively invite groups to make use of the farm environment for volunteering, contact with 'nature', and other outdoor social activities. The wide variety of 'client groups' that attend care farms can often make it difficult to disentangle the types of benefits that visitors receive, for some the therapeutic benefits of care farms may be about education and the enhancement of their employability and skills (see Kraftl (2014b)), whilst for others (particularly those with more severe disabilities) attending a care farm is much more about the respite opportunities that the farm can offer. Here I position care farming as a set of relationships and practices emergent in agricultural spaces that can produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones.

As Conradson (2005, 346) argues, 'in order to understand a particular therapeutic landscape experience, it is useful to give attention to the broader relational configurations within which it occurs', and this applies equally to therapeutic encounters with animals. Given the

agricultural context, the vast majority of animals encounterable within spaces of care farming are domesticated species. Domestication has resulted in certain sets of relations across species that enable and enact particular biosocial formations and relational practices, through which humans and non-humans mutually inhabit each other's worlds. These sets of relations are informed by long histories of entangled becoming with other species. Lien (2015) describes agricultural sites as fragile spaces of beings and things that, while they precariously hold together, define and enact what humans and non-humans alike may become, processes of becoming which I move to showcase shortly.

4.2. Methodologies

During 2015, 55 semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from Community Supported Agriculture projects across England and Wales, as well as with representatives from groups who visited these farms for therapeutic purposes. Alongside these interviews, ethnographic observation was mobilised to explore peoples' everyday lived experiences, relationships, and encounters on the farms.

While more-than-human and affective research can both trouble the interview as a method, Dowling et al. (2016) argue that conventional methodological approaches open generative possibilities. Rather than jettisoning the interview, it becomes about re-imagining interviewing, in ways that allow for 'reflections on processes of becoming affected' (Dowling et al., 2016, 4) and creating space for people to tell stories about affective connections and events (Goffey & Pettinger, 2014). In this way, using interviews to explore the intense, affective, emotional, and embodied relationships between heterogeneous actants, and

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revealing the agency of more-than-human elements in the co-production of certain forms and affective states (Dowling et al., 2016).

The interviews sought to discover how interviewees viewed their relationships and encounters with animals, and to what extent the farms viewed themselves and their animals as having some form of therapeutic affect. Tsing (2010) argues that multispecies studies require mobilising the talents and knowledge of those close to, and passionate about, animals. Making use of the dwelt and situated knowledge of the people who live with, work with, and encounter animals on a day-to-day basis can provide useful knowledge about animals themselves and the affective relationships which humans have with them. Interviews with individuals currently embedded in long-term relationships with specific animals can shed light on affective practices and relationships at play within multispecies communities (Johnston, 2008).

However, interviewing only gives a viewpoint to certain elements, affects, and representations (Mazzei, 2013). For this reason, a farm was chosen (drawing on the case selection criteria developed by Curtis et al. (2000) for qualitative research in health geographies) for regular participant observation between March and September 2015. The chosen farm aimed to provide opportunities for a wide range of organisations within the local area, and had developed personal relationships with several local agencies looking for therapeutic and educational volunteering opportunities for their 'client' groups (see also, Gorman (2017a). The groups that came to the farm tended to be fairly heterogeneous, as Dave, an outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for young people not in education, employment, or training explains: 'w*e work with people at risk of substance abuse,*

criminal justice system, homelessness, and a range of different partners'. Groups would visit the farm once a week, and get involved with a range of agricultural tasks that contributed to the upkeep of the farm.

These observations on the farm provided a way of 'bearing witness to life's momentary acts and their multivariate expression' (Lorimer, 2010, 75) and exploring the everyday lived human-animal relationships emergent within the places, practices, and performances of CSA and care farming. This involved paying attention to the inchoate and processual life of the places I was emplaced within (Dewsbury, 2003). This 'witnessing' allowed me to 'get embroiled in the site and allow [myself] to be infected by the effort, investment, and craze of the particular practice of experience being investigated' (Dewsbury, 2010, 326).

The aim was to trace how the lives of the humans, and the lives of the other animals within the 'common worlds' of the farm were 'entangled, interconnected, mutually dependent, and therefore mutually 'response-able'' (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2016, 151). A process of cultivating a sensitivity towards the other, that is, to quote Haraway (2008, 71), 'a relationship crafted in intra-action through which entities, subjects and objects, come into being'.

Following the conclusion of interviewing and participant observation, all transcripts and fieldnotes were imported into NVivo for coding and analysis. The analysis took a 'messy' approach, acknowledging that data does not fit into neat categories, and embracing rather than sacrificing the complexity and open-endedness of phenomena (Law, 2007). The process was not an attempt to uncover some hidden truth within the data, but rather an attempt to

identify recurrent themes and patterns of relations, exploring some of the stories of interconnection between humans, animals, and healthful experiences.

5. Health and Human-Animal Relations

Exploring care farming provides an opportunity to critically consider how different human, animal, and material assemblages are brought together to enact affective therapeutic possibilities in different ways. Building on Gorman (2017b), and in a commitment to focus on the 'taking place' of health (Andrews, 2016a), I am interested in the generative potential of situated human-animal relations in (re)shaping the diverse affective relations gathered together to produce new bodily capacities.

In the spirit of this special issue on the 'lessons for critical human geography from people's diverse struggles to find health and wellbeing in adverse contexts' there are two particular themes which emerge as especially relevant. Firstly, I explore how animal presence and agency can lead to a breaking down of barriers, and an increased desire to participate and engage in certain therapeutic processes and places that then leads to an opening up of bodily capacities. Understanding how non-human life can be (and is being) utilised as a strategy to procure and produce interest and attendance in health and care interventions offers an important consideration for recognising the differing routes through which people come to experience health and wellbeing. Drawing on these discussions, I examine how animal encounters are utilised in the building of a sense of belonging within spaces of care farming, investigating how human-animal relations can affect what a body can become. The encounters and relationships between humans and animals within the farms can come to

produce affective experiences that act to re-place identities, understandings, and ways of 'being-with' the world.

5.1. Breaking Barriers

Animals can provide an attraction and incentive for visitors, a reason to show up and get involved, encouraging and sustaining retention rates. For many of the visitors to the farms I worked with, it was the specific possibility of seeing animals that led them to participate and attend various group activities:

> *Dan explained that more lambs would be born soon, over the next few weeks, this seemed to be a real positive for the group, with many of the visitors saying how they would definitely be coming back for more of the sessions on the farm so that they could see more of the lambs.* [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]

The opportunity to encounter animals was used to invoke interest amongst visitors, breaking down barriers to participation. As Dave, an outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for young people not in education, employment, or training, puts it: *'if they don't like something, it's usually two fingers up and they won't come back, but they obviously enjoy the experience […] if people feel happy, they'll come back'*. Animals can act as a solution to disengagement. The attraction and novelty of encountering and interacting with something 'cute', like the lambs in the above example, or alternatively, 'macho', thinking about the larger dairy animals and tropes of 'cowboys', serves as a remedy to disinterested bravado. In this way, animals can create a space of engagement, transforming spaces and practices associated

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with health and wellbeing from rigid and uninspiring into something more fascinating and attractive, achieving buy-in and attendance.

Discourses around care farming practices often draw on the idea that agricultural activities are more 'normal' (de Krom & Dessein, 2013), producing a context that is 'closer to normal life than conventional care services' (Hassink et al., 2010, 427). While it is certainly fair to say that the presence of animals disrupts conventional and clinical norms when it comes to healthcare practices, the idea that these spaces are 'normal' is far from true. For many visitors, like Dave's young people, it is the extraordinary nature and difference of being able to interact and encounter animals which leads to their desire to participate in the programme.

Indeed, for many of the young people that visited the farm, animals also served to constitute a more equitable space. The social workers and probation officers (who would often accompany the group on visits to farms) had a chance to talk to and work with their relevant 'clients' in a very different kind of environment than in an office from behind a desk, leaving more hierarchical structures and spatial features behind in favour of instead working together collecting eggs or herding sheep. Animals in this way provide a space where people feel at ease in their discussions (Milligan et al., 2015) opening up new forms of being-with others.

> *The idea of going out on activity with young people gives them [social workers] an opportunity to get to know them and mentor them in a different kind of way […] but with being outside, it almost breaks down number of barriers, that they feel as though they can express themselves a lot more, and I know, that speaking to the clients, you develop a bit more of a conversation than say*

around the table, in classroom environment, people open up and they're a lot more willing to talk about different things. [Dave, an outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for young people not in education, employment, or training, Wales]

Coming to the farm and encountering animals acts to re-engage the visitors, and expand the opportunities they have. The added interest and pride created from relationships with animals inspires an additional level of engagement from visitors and uptake in skill accruement and development processes – an affective encounter with the farm animals that resulted in an augmenting of an individual's capacities. For example, Diana explained to me that at the end of a day's activities at the care farming programme she managed at a CSA in England, the visitors would sit down and write a diary entry about the various tasks they had completed on the farm working with the animals that day:

If you just saw how some people's handwriting and their confidence in writing has increased, we've got one lad, and his mum says, he's learnt more reading and writing here in the last 6 months than he did in 6 years at school, coz he was so proud of what he's done, he wants to write down, that he did this, and he did that, and he did that, he wants to write it down, while at school he couldn't be bothered.

Providing 'care' can in itself produce significant benefits and new bodily capacities and relations (Milligan & Wiles, 2010); the care practices and experiences within the farm are multidirectional. The opportunity to care for something can make visitors to the farms feel

good about themselves, creating a medium for the expression of altruism. As Milligan (2006, 326) describes, a carer's 'own sense of health and wellbeing is intimately bound up with the health and wellbeing of the care-recipient'. Milligan's argument equally applies to human-animal relations. Caring for the farm's livestock and contributing to the animals' health and wellbeing offers visitors a purpose, and allows them to position themselves as moral agents, capable of having an impact, as Alys explains:

> *Taking responsibility for animals was a big thing, for a lot of our students, you know, they're not even taking care of themselves in lots of circumstances, so for them to have the responsibility of changing the water and getting the hay or putting the beds out or whatever, for them, that I think, has an effect on their wellbeing, because, you know, you're giving them a level of responsibility which they've never had.* [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]

These relationships between humans and animals highlight the way in which human experiences and understandings of health and place are co-produced by more-than-human actants (Gorman, 2017b). However, animals are not simply used just to attract visitors to the spaces of the care farms, as this section has begun to highlight they are also important actants that enable the farms to influence the many different relations which are drawn together to define what a body can do. I explore this in more detail now, discussing how human-animal relations can produce a sense of belonging and other new affective capacities.

5.2. Building Belonging

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Encounters with the animals on the farm often served to expedite new forms of contact between humans, providing opportunities for social reciprocity, the gaining of social capital, and the development of a sense of place and belonging.

> *That gets the communication going, with the animals there, you've got a fun connection with the person, a member of the public, so that's, again, and the communication skills, for some of the people, they wouldn't even talk to someone when they started, and now, they're like, 'oh yeah look at my rabbit, would you like to have a stroke', talking about it.* [Georgina, animal coordinator of a care farm, based on a CSA in England]

Contact with the farm animals becomes a way of reframing visitors to the farms, expanding their self-confidence and self-image. Rather than 'care-recipients', the visitors come to be cast as experts and practitioners, their close knowledge of the non-humans co-habiting the space elevating their status, creating new ways of interacting with others, and developing a further sense of belonging within both the community of the farm, as well as society at large. As Georgina demonstrates above, for many of the visitors to the farm, this becomes a hugely transformative experience. There are links to the idea of emplacement here. Andrews et al. (2006, 154) describe how places can serve as 'crucial material and symbolic sources for biographical development and, as such, make an essential contribution to the construction of personal identity'. Here it is vitality of animal life that allows for a (re)construction of personal identities for many of the visitors. Animals serve as an 'experiential anchor' (Andrews et al., 2006), that produce new flows of becoming and ways of being-with the world. In a context of

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migration, Gastaldo et al. (2004) discuss how displacement creates an opportunity for therapeutic affect and a reconstruction of one's subjectivity. This displacement does not have to be a physical movement, but a displacement in how one is categorised and understood by others, ones' placement in social hierarchy. Relations with animals can position a person as ''someone' in a given place' (Gastaldo et al., 2004, 172) deterritorializing preconceived notions of ability and alienation, as Siôn describes:

> *There's a lot of achievement as well, you get that actual initial, just do the job, but there's always something, you can always see the positive from it, there's always something that's been established or something that's been done, the success is massive, it gives them a massive boost to confidence, that bit of self-esteem to show that they can do things.* [Siôn, a physical activity leader on a local council scheme for young people not in education, employment, or training, Wales]

In this way, human-animal encounters on the farm produced certain emotional states and shaped how people experienced place in ways meaningful to their health. The emotive dimensions of human-animal relations can come to enhance visitors' capacities to affect and be affected, to thrive and flourish, enabling functionality and opportunities (Duff, 2010).

However, rather than just facilitating contact among different humans, animals also provide 'social' contact themselves. This was cited by many of the farmers and facilitators as being a particularly important part of the farm experience for visitors, as rather than reifying 'threatening structures' and 'institutional settings' (Andrews & Andrews, 2003, 542) from

1 which several of the visitors (in Dave's group) had been excluded or alienated from, animals
2 instead provided a new, and importantly, different, modality of social contact and sense of
3 belonging. The opportunities for companionability and relationships with animals came to
4 produce new affective capacities for many of the visitors, as Alys demonstrates:
5
6 > *This one particular student, you know, doesn't look staff in the eye, but was*
7 > *very much engaged with the dog, was very much calling the dog behind us,*
8 > *checking he was there, you know, we would move location, he'd check with the*
9 > *dog 'come on Rex, come this way'. So, some students were engaging through*
10 > *the animals more than the people […] students just enjoy that interaction with*
11 > *another being.* [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to
12 > animal projects, Wales]
13
14 Individual animal preferences become important as a way of accessing an ethos of
15 engagement that attunes individuals to a possibility of human-animal relations producing
16 some form of therapeutic affect. For example, for several visitors, like Alys' student, their
17 personal love of dogs was clearly important in how they came to experience the farm space
18 in ways conducive to their health assemblage.
19
20 There was often a high level of anthropomorphism towards the animals on the farms. Serpell
21 (2003, 91) claims that anthropomorphism is 'what ultimately enables people to benefit
22 socially, emotionally and physically from their relationships with companion animals'. Serpell
23 argues that the attribution of human emotions, characteristics, and behaviours to non-
24 humans (fictitious or not) is crucial in creating meaning and value in human-animal

encounters. The ability to relate to animals becomes an important way in how people come to experience new affective capacities as a result of their encounters. Indeed, a frequent claim from visitors was that the sheep and lambs were excited to see them. The animals would certainly gallop over to the fence when humans approached, however, taking a more pragmatic view, this was more likely to be due to the conditioning of feeding activities taking place at the fence, rather than an innate desire for human contact on the part of the sheep. However, for the visitors, the sheep valued them, and that was what mattered, and became a crucial reason the visitors experienced the place of the farm as somewhere that produced new bodily capacities; how they interpreted their relationships with animals made them feel valued.

The presence of animals altered how people navigated the farm spaces, visually, physically, and emotionally; lingering to enjoy interactions with animals, taking (and making) time to stay and relax. This is similar to Milligan et al.'s (2004) discussions of how places relationally constituted as aesthetically beautiful can impact on peoples' health assemblages through providing an opportunity and space for thinking through unresolved problems. However, here it is specifically the presence of animals that co-produces this relationship. As Lorimer (2007) describes, animals have an 'aesthetic charisma' – appearances and behaviours that trigger instantaneous affections and emotions. Animals serve as a form of escapism for many of the visitors, a trigger which attunes them to their topographic location, and can lead people to put aside external and extraneous worries, through having something specific to interact with and to focus on. Though importantly, relations do not have to be rooted in physical contact or in specifically therapeutically coded activities, animals can help to constitute a sense of belonging in a myriad of different ways. Relationships with animals can be resonant and

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sonorous, rather than just physically mediated. Animal sounds can (re)shape experiences of place, triggering memories and a sense of familiarity, whilst equally the smell of animals can facilitate an emotionally evocative engagement with place (Gorman, 2017a).

Animals are an important part of an engagement with health and place, specific actants which individuals enter relationships with. These relationships and encounters can break down barriers, allowing people to navigate and negotiate adverse contexts and access support in a manner and space in which they feel comfortable. Equally, animals' very presence and agency can become crucial in building a sense of belonging and creating new lines of flight. Relationships with animals can serve as a catalyst that produces new ways of being-with the world.

6. Conclusion

Health and place are deeply intertwined. Situated and embodied encounters and experiences in place can affect what a body can do; the relations and affects that shape and reshape bodily capacities and limits. Such an approach to conceptualising health offers a new way for geographers to critically engage with the dynamic interrelations between health and place. Importantly though, as I have shown, the opportunities and constraints that emerge from place are (re)shaped by relations with animals. Human-animal relations and encounters produce new ways of being in place. New emotions emerge from human-animal relations, along with new knowledges, experiences, socialities, and ways of thinking about and understanding oneself and one's place in and with the world. These relations can produce new bodily capacities, affecting an individual's capabilities and opportunities to function and

flourish. Human-animal relations act to (re)define, (re)enact, and (re)enable what a body can become.

Although the focus here has been on the healthful benefits of human-animal relations, it's important to recognise that these human-animal relations are not taking place in isolation. They are shaped by long histories of entangled becoming with other species (Lien, 2015), facilitated through the actions and knowledges of farmers like Dan, influenced by existing bodily capacities, and all of the other elements drawn together to produce the therapeutic assemblage (Gorman, 2017b).

This article has demonstrated how situated relationships with animals have a generative potential for shaping what a body can do. Whilst my focus here has been on the emergence of health within the context of CSA farms, as mentioned earlier, there are an increasing range of settings where non-human life is imbricated in the opening up of therapeutic possibilities; from the hospitals and care homes visited by 'Pets-as-Therapy' dogs (Pets As Therapy, 2016), to the 'puppy rooms' increasingly appearing on university campuses to help students cope with exams (BBC, 2015). Besides these more formal healthcare settings, there are also opportunities for future research to explore health in the context of people's everyday lived relationships with animals, whether brief affective encounters with rats (Clayton, 2016) or on-going relationships with pets (Fletcher & Platt, 2016), and how these relations play out in enacting, defining, and enabling what bodies can do, regarding people's (and animals') health.

Additionally, Del Casino (2016) has recently called for interrogating the role of robots in the production of 'caring spaces'. There are large parallels and the potential for vast crossover

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here, given the often hybrid nature of such robotic care-technologies which draw on the animality and charisma (Lorimer, 2007) of animal species. For example, 'Paro', the robotic baby harp seal, intended to act as a companion and prevent isolation, is built to mimic aspects of animal-assisted-therapy (Mort et al., 2013).

'Robotic pets' in this way are often designed with older people in mind (Mort et al., 2013), and geography's growing interest in the gerontological (Andrews et al., 2009) provides an interesting setting to consider human-animal relations and issues of health and wellbeing. There are questions to be asked of how human-animal bonds influence and disrupt a transition to formal care (on the part of both human, and animal). Though equally, there are opportunities to explore the role of animals in developing a sense of place and belonging for children in care, an issue which Holland (2009) calls for greater attention to. The attachment and bonds which looked-after-children form with foster families and other care-givers are not just with humans.

One of the founding messages during the emergence of the 'new geography of health' was that health is experienced within place (Kearns, 1993). Building on this, I want to close by arguing that health is experienced and co-produced together with more-than-human others. Place is affected by health, and health is affected by place (Gastaldo et al., 2004); both are affected by human-animal relations.

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