Health, Place, and Animals: The Co-Production of Therapeutic Geographies and Community Supported Agriculture Farms

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Summary

This thesis aims to examine the relationships between health, place, and animals, within the context of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms. The conceptual framework of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ has been used by geographers to understand the dynamic interrelations between health and place. To more critically unpack the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ and engage with their more-than-human constitutive elements, I mobilise a relational approach, informed by post-structuralist thinking, examining how ‘therapeutic spaces’ emerge relationally, co-constituted by a variety of heterogeneous agencies. Aiming to show how therapeutic affect can emerge in everyday spaces, I locate my research within CSA, an alternative system of food production. My interest in a more-than-human approach has particular relevance when considering CSAs as the place of animals in such systems is neglected within existing research.

I mobilise qualitative research, exploring why animals come to be present within these alternative food networks. Animals are implicated within CSAs for diverse reasons, with the farms acting as spaces for human-animal encounters. I discuss the generative potential of situated relationships between humans and animals in leading to the production of new bodily capacities or the closing down of existing ones, affecting how people understand and experience health. I also consider non-humans’ experiences of these relationships, exploring who ‘therapeutic spaces’ are ‘therapeutic’ for. I discuss the ways in which animals can become entangled in ‘therapeutic’ relationships based around anthropocentric and parasitic notions of health. However, equally, human-animal relationships can emerge as mutually beneficial, producing new bodily capacities for heterogeneous actants in a mutual ‘becoming therapeutic together’.

Overall, this thesis contributes new understandings to human geography, recognising animals as lively and dynamic co-constituents in the co-production of therapeutic geographies and community based food systems. Human-animal relations can define, enable, and enact what different actants may become, shaping their capacities to affect and be affected.
Declaration and Statements

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award.

Signed……………………………………. (candidate)
Date……………………………………..

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This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD.

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This thesis is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated, and the thesis has not been edited by a third party beyond what is permitted by Cardiff University’s Policy on the Use of Third Party Editors by Research Degree Students. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. The views expressed are my own.

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‘Animals are such agreeable friends – they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms.’

- Eliot (1857)

‘Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though. That’s the problem.’

- Milne (1954)

‘A small pet animal is often an excellent companion for the sick, for long chronic cases especially. A pet bird in a cage is sometimes the only pleasure of an invalid confined for years to the same room.’

- Nightingale (1860)
For John
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1. Introduction
1.1 Health, Place, and Animals

Health and place are intimately connected. Perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health are often associated with specific areas and localities. From the Ancient Greek Sanctuary of Asclepius at Epidaurus (Gesler 1993), to the ‘miracle healings’ at Lourdes (Gesler 1996), throughout the ages certain places have come to be linked and known in relation to ideas of health and wellbeing. The atmosphere of place is affected by health, and likewise, health is affected by the atmosphere of particular places (Gastaldo et al. 2004); place matters for health (Kearns and Collins 2009).

Geographers have engaged with the dynamic relationships between health and place through the conceptual framework of ‘therapeutic landscapes’, an area of research which has critically explored the interrelations between health and place in a wide variety of contexts, from beaches (Collins and Kearns 2007) to baths (Gesler 1998), hot springs (Geores 1998) to hospitals (Kearns and Barnett 1999). Often within discussions of such ‘therapeutic spaces’, there is a large focus on ‘natural’ or ‘wild’ landscapes, and how ‘nature’ can create healthful modalities (Gesler 1998; Palka 1999; Parr 2007; Lea 2008; Curtis 2010; Meijering et al. 2016).

Such a focus, however, has led to an accidental erasure of animal life within geographical discussions of health and place. Animals have instead been subsumed into broader conceptual categories such as ‘nature’ or ‘wilderness’, with the constituent parts of such ‘black boxes’ rarely being theorised separately (Wolch and Emel 1998; Latour 1999). Wolch and Emel’s (1995) call for ‘bringing the animals back in’ to geographical discourse does not appear to have permeated into health geography. Instead, established conceptualisations of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ have been constructed from an
anthropocentric perspective, completely ignoring and silencing the agency and experiences of non-humans in co-constituting therapeutic geographies.

In contrast, this thesis explores how places that can affect health are comprised of ‘rich ecologies of the human and the non-human, the social and the natural, the material and immaterial’ (Murdoch 2006, p. 127). The co-presence of animal life in ‘therapeutic’ spaces offers a critical way to explore how human-animal relations shape and reshape the dynamic relationships between health and place. Therefore, within this thesis, I address the lack of attention which has been given to animals within existing discussions surrounding health and place, and move to recognise non-humans as lively and dynamic colleagues in the making of worlds (Hinchliffe 2007). I thus bring animals into discussions of therapeutic geographies; animals as animals (Philo 1995), rather than constituent parts of broader homogeneous categories. I challenge the anthropocentrism and homogeneity of established studies of therapeutic spaces and instead explore how animals authorise, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid (etc.) (Latour 2005, p. 72) the formation of therapeutic geographies.

Embracing animals as subjects, I am also keen to consider non-humans’ experiences of these emergent spaces and relationships, and the often-troubling humanism of the way in which interspecies therapeutic practices are framed and performed, as well as questioning, with cautious optimism, whether animals may benefit in certain ways from their relations with humans within these ‘therapeutic’ spaces. Doing so offers an opportunity to more critically explore the relations at play within the emergence of healthful affects; an approach that moves towards considering ‘more-than-human therapeutic spaces’, and how care for humans and animals can be brought together.
To more critically unpack the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic spaces’ and engage with their more-than-human constitutive elements, I mobilise a relational approach, informed by post-structuralist thinking. A relational approach allows me to address some of the criticisms of earlier conceptualisations of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ (Andrews 2004), and results in a refreshing and refining of the concept. I reframe ‘therapeutic landscapes’ as ‘territories of becoming that produce new potentials’ (Thrift 2004b, p. 88). Here, I consider ‘therapeutic spaces’ as open and dynamic, constantly in the process of emergence. This produces a way of highlighting that ‘therapeutic spaces’ are not fixed for all time, but rather are fluidly emergent, taking on new shapes and identities, being made and unmade. As part of this, I am particularly drawn to Haraway’s (2008) idea of ‘becoming with’. ‘Becoming with’ creates a way of drawing attention more specifically to the role of non-human actants in co-producing ‘therapeutic spaces’, allowing an exploration of how human-animal relations can influence different actants’ capacities to affect and be affected.

I aim to demonstrate an approach which moves away from considering places as inherently therapeutic and instead describes how they emerge relationally, co-constituted by a variety of heterogeneous agencies. I do not wish to argue for any kind of fixed or universal therapeutic space, but rather explore how ongoing ‘lines of flight’ (the elusive moment when change happens) (Deleuze and Guattari 2008) continue to shape certain therapeutic possibilities.

1.2 Inspiration for the Research

Alongside these conceptual interests, this thesis is also very much shaped by my personal interests and experiences too. I originally developed an interest in alternative food networks and community forms of food production during my undergraduate degree, where my dissertation explored Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in North Wales
(Gorman 2010), and I later worked for a charity engaged in putting these themes into practice. I had always been keen to explore CSA further; one of the trends that I had noticed within the CSA movement in the UK was the growing number of CSA schemes that were beginning to incorporate livestock. I wanted to try and understand why these groups were wanting to have animals involved, and how that affected ways of doing things. This was something which did not seem to have previously risen to the fore in discussions of CSA, with livestock marginalised and forgotten about.

At the same time, I was aware of some of the claims CSA farms often made regarding producing health benefits (Stagl 2002; Cox et al. 2008; Press and Arnould 2011). This was something I wanted to explore more critically, exploring this idea of ‘health’ in more detail, and discover in what way ‘connecting with nature’ on a community supported farm could make people feel healthy, and how these claims around health were being produced. I was aware of some of the basic ideas associated with Gesler’s (1992) geographical ideas of ‘Therapeutic Landscapes’ and found the concept fascinating. As someone that spent a lot of time in and out of hospitals as a child, I really related to the idea that ‘the character of some places is affected by health and healthcare and […] health and healthcare is affected by the character of particular places’ (Gastaldo et al. 2004, p. 158). Combining this with a personal love of animals and pets, and an equally personal interest in how animals can affect people’s mental health, I noticed that animals had been understudied and erased within the therapeutic landscape and health geography literature too, and things started to fit together in a series of interesting research questions.
The final ‘piece of the puzzle’ was inspired from reading Haraway’s (2008) book, When Species Meet. In the book, Haraway talks about haemophilia¹, a condition I am personally affected by, and the creation of ‘bleeder dogs’, dogs specifically bred to provide research opportunities into bleeding disorders, helping to establish modern haemophilia management. Haraway goes on to question ‘how to involve humans with hemophilia or humans who care for people with hemophilia in the care of the dogs?’ (p. 84). This idea really gripped me, the idea of trying to bring care together, in a more mutual way, and provides the third ‘strand’ of ideas and questions which flow through this thesis.

1.3 Locating the Research

As a result of these converging inspirations, interests, and ideas, I chose to locate my research exploring the dynamics between health and place within the empirical arena of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). CSA is a system of food production and distribution aiming to involve local communities in the growing and rearing of their food. Wells and Gradwell (2001, p. 117) describe CSA as a form of ‘caring practice’, and although not specifically designated as places of healthcare, many CSA farms are often connected with producing health benefits (Cooley 1996; Stagl 2002).

Many CSA projects also attempt to create ways for their farms to provide benefits to various groups, inviting people into the farm environment and working in partnership with external organisations (Charles 2011). In such attempts to ‘involve people who could benefit therapeutically’ (Charles 2011, p. 267), many CSAs can be seen to come to function as ‘care farms’. ‘Care farming’ is a set of relationships and practices which

¹ ‘Haemophilia is a bleeding disorder, in which there is a partial or total lack of an essential blood clotting factor. It is a lifelong disorder, that results in excessive bleeding, and many times spontaneous bleeding, which, very often, is internal.’ (World Health Organisation 2014).
combines agricultural production with health, social, and educational services (Hassink et al. 2010). There is little crossover between the extensive literature on ‘therapeutic landscapes’ and the developing care farming literature, something which I move to address within this research.

My interest in more-than-human and animal geographies also has a particular relevance when considering CSAs. Despite a wide body of academic literature on CSA, there has been an extensive neglect to study how animals fit into such systems. Horticultural forms of CSA have dominated research, despite many CSA projects in the UK rearing and keeping animals alongside their vegetable cultivation. There are even CSAs that have formed solely for the purpose of farming livestock. Treating these literature gaps as an opportunity, I move to critically discuss the contested and emerging roles ascribed to non-human actants, exploring the motivations for the inclusion of animals within these community based food networks. Examining how human-animal relations co-produce these farms also then provides an opportunity to explore how ‘therapeutic spaces’ emerge, co-produced by heterogeneous actants. I am keen to explore how these relations can produce mutually transformative flourishing – ‘more-than-human therapeutic spaces’.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on my interests in health and place, animals, and CSA, a series of research questions emerged and evolved as my research practice went on. The questions addressed in this thesis are as follows:

1. What motivates Community Supported Agriculture farms to engage in livestock farming? What roles and places do animals come to occupy within this agricultural model?
The aim is to understand and contextualise the place of animals on CSA farms. I seek to explore the contested and emerging roles ascribed to non-human actants on the farms, and the motivations for the inclusion of animals within these community based food networks.

2. How can relations between humans and animals influence human experiences of health in place?

The aim is to highlight how human engagement with ‘therapeutic spaces’ can be shaped and reshaped through the influence of non-human actants. I move to contribute new understandings in considering how human-animal relations can result in a proliferation of the capacity to affect and be affected.

3. How does becoming entangled in ‘therapeutic’ relations with humans affect animals?

The aim is to move beyond notions of ‘therapeutic spaces’ that focus solely on human considerations of health. Instead, I aim to consider how animals’ experiences and needs are conceptualised and understood by humans within spaces that come to be associated with health and wellbeing. This question seeks to explore the ‘transactional dynamics’ between living things, and how heterogeneous actants can produce opportunities and constraints for one another.

1.5 Thesis Structure

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 serves to draw together a conceptual and theoretical framework for my research. Here, I locate my work within existing literatures, concepts,
and theories to develop an argument that builds towards new understandings of the
dynamic relationships between health, place, and animals.

Chapter 3 serves to contextualise the empirical settings of my research, giving background
on existing understandings of Community Supported Agriculture and care farming
practices. Here I also discuss the potential for links between CSA and health, and the lack
of attention which has been given to animals within CSAs.

Chapter 4 serves to tell the story of my research. Here I provide insight into the way that I
practiced ‘data’ collection, the methodological tools I employed, and the specific ways in
which such practices were mobilised within my research.

Chapter 5 addresses Research Question 1, placing animals within understandings of
Community Supported Agriculture. This chapter seeks to explore the diversity of animals
that are present within spaces of CSA. Here, I highlight how CSAs are regularly co-
constituted by a diverse and lively arrangement of human-animal relationships that go
beyond a positioning of ‘animal as food’. I move to explore how these relationships can
come to actively shape performances and practices of CSA.

Chapter 6 addresses Research Question 2, exploring the generative potential of situated
relationships between humans and non-humans. In doing so, I make new contributions to
health geography, discussing how relations with animals can produce new bodily
capacities or close down existing ones, leading to perceptions, reputations and
experiences of health becoming associated with place.
Chapter 7 addresses Research Question 3. Here I move to consider non-humans’ experiences of these emergent ‘therapeutic’ spaces, and the often-troubling anthropocentrism of how interspecies therapeutic practices are often performed. I highlight the often parasitic ways in which animals can become entangled in ‘therapeutic’ relationships with humans. However, here, I am also interested in the transformative potential of mutualistic relations between humans and animals. As such, I move to explore how care for humans and non-humans may be brought together to realise mutual ‘more-than-human therapeutic spaces’.

Chapter 8 draws together the themes of this thesis to show how health, place, and animals are intimately entangled. Here I summarise the original contributions this thesis has developed, and outline a future research agenda.
2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework
2.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together a conceptual and theoretical framework for my research. Here I locate my work within existing literatures surrounding health, place, and animals, in order to develop an argument that builds towards new understandings of human-animal relationships and therapeutic geographies.

I begin by tracing the emergence of health geography, an area of work which argues that place matters for health. I position my research within this body of work, before moving to discuss approaches to understanding health. I discuss opportunities to consider health as the proliferation of a capacity to affect and be affected, as new relations produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones (Buchanan 1997). Building on this, I then locate my work within the conceptual framework of ‘therapeutic landscapes’, a popular way in which geographers have explored the dynamic relationships between health and place.

However, applications of the therapeutic landscape concept have often failed to discuss the heterogeneity of elements that come together to co-produce places which affect health. To more critically unpack the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic landscapes’, I mobilise a relational approach, informed by post-structuralist thinking, to manoeuvre around some of the criticisms of the ‘therapeutic landscape’ concept. Pursuing this relational approach allows for an exploration of therapeutic spaces that are open and dynamic, constantly in the process of emergence, moving understandings beyond static, fixed, and homogeneous topographical ‘therapeutic spaces’.

Having set up an approach more capable of engaging with the role of heterogeneous actants in co-producing therapeutic geographies, I move to pick up a focus on animals.
Here, I explore how Wolch and Emel’s (1995) call for ‘bringing the animals back in’ to geography has failed to permeate into health geography. Drawing on animal geography literature, I move to begin to integrate animals into discussions of therapeutic spaces. Doing so ultimately leads me to explore animals’ contested positions within such spaces and question for whom are these landscapes therapeutic?

2.2 Health and Place

Health geography is a dynamic field of study which considers how space and place are important for health. It is an area concerned with the significance of the relations between people and the environment in defining and enacting physical and mental health (Curtis 2012). As a sub-discipline, health geography has done much to emphasise how place can produce and reproduce (unequal) experiences of health (Fleuret and Atkinson 2007).

Research in this field follows a ‘post-medical’ approach² (Kearns 1993), embracing the ‘cultural turn’ (Andrews 2002); culture affects health, and health affects culture (Gesler and Kearns 2002). Health geography moves from seeing space and place as simply backdrops or containers within which disease and treatments can occur, to instead recognising space and place as active and constitutive of health, capable of transforming and contributing to health experiences (Kearns and Joseph 1993; Duff 2011). Rather than treating place as a defined location, place in this context has mainly been conceptualised as ‘a zone of experience and meaning’, unique, specific, and constructed (Wilson 2003, p. 84).

² Though as Andrews and Evans (2008) note, the notion of a purely ‘post-medical’ approach has certain problems; it is not easy to separate or ignore medical concerns from discussions of health and place.
In this way, a more critical approach to considering the complex dimensions and dynamics between people, space, and place is created, incorporating a much wider conceptualisation of health and well-being beyond the epidemiological stance of medical geography (Cummins and Milligan 2000). Critical cultural health geography attempts to understand, represent, and articulate the ways in which ‘places hold particular significance for people, how a person’s background and experience may shape their experience of places, and how places affect their opportunities and activities’ in regard to health (Andrews 2002, p. 227). Health is experienced and constructed within place, an embodied and situated experience. It is not possible to separate the experience of health from the place in which it is experienced in (Kearns 1993; Andrews 2002); place matters for health (Kearns and Collins 2009).

Place to place variations result in different relational constitutions of what health ‘is’, the different material circumstances and cultural ascriptions bound up with socio-spatial hierarchies of difference (Dear et al. 1997; Gesler and Kearns 2002). The character of place is affected by health and healthcare, and likewise, health and healthcare are affected by the character of particular places (Gastaldo et al. 2004).

Within health geography, the ‘therapeutic landscapes’ concept has emerged as a popular and useful way to conceptualise and explore the relationships between health and place (Andrews 2004). The idea of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ exists as a ‘geographic metaphor for aiding in the understanding of how the healing process works itself out in places’ (Gesler 1992, p. 743). The phrase has been used extensively as ‘a conceptual framework to organise ideas about how people experience landscape in ways that are important to their health’ (Curtis 2012, p. 7). It is within this body of work that I locate my research, arguing that it proves a useful means to explore how animals are imbricated within the
dynamics between health and place. However, before discussing the ‘therapeutic landscapes’ concept in further detail, I first move to discuss the idea of ‘health’, explaining how I conceptualise ‘therapeutic’ affect.

2.3 Understanding 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).

Despite the therapeutic landscape concept being one which attempts to explore and explain how health and place are linked, ‘health’ is infrequently defined by those engaging with the concept. There is little questioning of what constitutes ‘the therapeutic’. Gesler’s (1993, p. 171) original conceptualisation of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ was purely focussed on spaces that provided ‘physical and mental healing’, though called for a more holistic approach to health than the purely biomedical model. However, health here remains grounded in healing, rather than healthfulness. Other deployments and engagements of the therapeutic landscapes concept simply take ‘health’ as a given, an external and universal ‘thing’ to be acquired, restored, or maintained.

Related terms, such as wellbeing, suffer equally from a fuzzy obscurity. As Andrews (2007) argues, the nature of wellbeing is rarely foregrounded in geographic writing, deployed instead as a rather vague and indirect term 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).
Here, 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. Andrews et al. (2013a, p. 101) describes how ‘therapeutic affects can be understood in relation to the encounters through which bodies acquire new capacities’. Affect is a concept becoming increasingly utilised within 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, p. 8). Duff, draws on Deleuze 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, p. 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 affective orientations, either to enhance that individual’s power of acting or to diminish it (Duff 2011, p. 153).

Health is thus processual and relational, not simply a ‘state’ of an ontologically prior body, or an outcome to be achieved (Fox 2011; Atkinson 2013). Health is not a homogeneous category (Fleuret and Atkinson 2007), it is dynamically and relationally constituted (Fox 2002). New relations produce new ‘bodily capacities’ or 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).

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3 Health geography has seen less engagement with affect. Exploring the affective relations between health and place has mainly been championed by Andrews (Andrews et al. 2013a; Andrews et al. 2014; Andrews 2015, 2016c, b, a), Conradson (Conradson 2005b, a), and Duff (Duff 2010, 2011).

4 Andrews et al. (2014) have argued that there is a large potential and opportunity for health geography to draw more heavily on Deleuze’s work in understanding the dynamics between health and place.
‘Bodily capacities’ here refer specifically to a body’s power(s) to act, and the way 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; the continuous modification and transition of a body’s competencies and potential for action (Duff 2010). Health can thus be conceptualised as the proliferation and transformation of the ‘capacity to affect and be affected’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2008; Fox 2011).

Affects are ‘becomings’ that represent a change of state of an entity and its capacities [...] when affects produce capacities of bodies to do, desire and feel, these capacities in turn produce subsequent affective flows [...] for instance, a past memory may affect which music a person chooses; in turn, the choice of an upbeat tune or song may arouse an individual to action, emotion or further memories and so on. (Fox 2013, p. 499)

There is no over-arching concept of health, just practices and flows of becoming, complex assemblages, and heterogeneous relations (Braidotti 2013):

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 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, p. 360)

Fox (2016) uses Deleuze to argue for a conceptualisation of health, 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 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 by outside forces, 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. I argue that Fox’s conceptualisations of health offer a useful approach for health geographers.

Fox (2016) goes on to suggest the idea of a ‘health assemblage’, as a way of understanding the various ways in which relations entangle to co-constitute an understanding of ‘health’. However, Fox fails to recognise the role of space and place in his conceptualisation of health assemblages. Recognising Deleuze’s emphasis of territories and milieux (Bonta and Protevi 2004), there is an opportunity to explore the material and immaterial elements of a particular environment and how they come to be ‘important vectors of affective transmission in the body’s power of acting’ (Duff 2010, p. 629). Bodies and places become fluidly entangled in a relational co-production of ‘health’. This is where the concept of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ can have value, as a way of recognising the way that space and place can be important for health opportunities; health is affected by, through, and in place (Foley 2012). ‘Therapeutic landscapes’ in this way can enact health possibilities through producing new bodily capacities, while simultaneously closing down existing ones (Buchanan 1997). This is not about exploring spaces where an individual may ‘move towards wellbeing’ (Conradson 2003, p. 511) with wellbeing existing as an achievable, final, and fixed state. Rather, health becomes a relational experience that 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 individual’s affective orientations, either to enhance that individual's power of acting or to diminish it’ (Duff 2011, p. 153). The task of health geographers then becomes exploring what a body can and cannot do within place, and how place can facilitate or constrain a body (Milligan 2015).

Rather than the ‘experience of being well’ (Kearns and Collins 2009, p. 20), I am interested in the processes and relationships involved in constant and ceaseless experiences of ‘becoming well’. Wellbeing in this way is in constant production and reproduction, a set of situated and relational affects (Atkinson 2013). As Andrews (2016c, p. 212) argues, 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’.

Duff (2010) calls for exploring the relations that bodies have in order to explore a person’s health. This thesis thus concerns itself with exploring the situated spatial relations between humans and animals in order to critically discuss how the presence and agency of animals affects the relations that bodies have. Though attempting to avoid the often overly accentuated positive approach of health geography (DeVerteuil 2015a) and recognising too the closing down of possibilities caused by human-animal relations. Indeed the medicalisation of non-human life can be a powerful territorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 2008) which diminishes the totality of relations and opportunities (Buchanan 1997; Fox 2011). I move now to discuss the development of the therapeutic landscape concept.
2.4 The Development of the Therapeutic Landscape Concept

A therapeutic landscape arises when physical and built environments, social conditions and human perceptions combine to produce an atmosphere which is conducive to healing’ (Gesler 1996, p. 96)

Since Gesler first wrote about the idea of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ in 1992, geographers have actively and critically engaged with the concept (Andrews 2004). This engagement has produced a large literature which moves to understand how perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health come to be associated with place, and the significance of specific environments, spaces, and places for aspects of health (DeVerteuil et al. 2007; Curtis 2012).

Therapeutic landscapes have been described in physiological terms, the idea that place can act to facilitate relief from physical symptoms and assist in reducing stress (Gesler 1992; Kearns and Collins 2000). Other utilisations of the term have been used to highlight how place can improve and support a person’s emotional and social wellbeing (Curtis 2010). Later uses of the concept have demonstrated how rather than explicitly providing a specifically curative factor, therapeutic landscapes are often framed as those that support a maintenance of health and wellbeing, or provide opportunities for capacity building (Van Ingen 2004; Leach et al. 2008).

Therapeutic landscapes can be both physical places, as well as non-physical. They can come to exist solely or simultaneously as metaphorical and imaginary places, invented, influenced, and ‘experienced’ through memory and active visualisation practices (Gastaldo et al. 2004; Andrews and Shaw 2012). Andrews and Kitchin (2005) even suggest that therapeutic landscapes may exist mediated in and by ‘cyberspace’. Therapeutic affect(s) can be experienced somewhere other than physical locations and outside linear time.
(Andrews 2004), having ‘emotional and life course resonances’ that extend far beyond any actual physical site specific single encounters (Foley and Kistemann 2015, p. 161). Despite this, the temporal dimension of ‘therapeutic landscape’ affects has had little attention within literature; a ‘therapeutic’ engagement with landscape can change for an individual at different points in their lives (Meijering et al. 2016).

More recently, there has been a move within literature to refer simply to ‘therapeutic spaces’, dropping the ‘landscape’ aspect of the concept. This has arisen as a means of broadening how geographers engage with ideas of health and place, recognising the more-than-terrestrial spaces which can impact on health and wellbeing (Foley and Kistemann 2015). Indeed, the wording of ‘landscape’ in the titling of the concept is perhaps something of a misnomer, often leading to an over-emphasis on the physical environment. Gesler (1992) lamented that ‘the first reaction one encounters when mentioning therapeutic landscapes is that what is meant is bucolic locales, health spas, and the like’ (p.743). Instead, the concept’s application of ‘landscape’ aimed to draw on a more cultural approach, recognising landscape as a dynamic and evolving process, moulded by the meshing and imbrication between physical, individual, and social factors (Gesler 1992). Kearns and Moon (2002, p. 611) comment on the ‘chaotic pluralism’ of using the term ‘landscape’ to discuss the links between health and place:

For some, it is analogous to literally defined localities. For others it is a metaphor for the complex layerings of history, social structure and built environment that converge in particular places. Though its differing meanings suggest a degree of pluralism which sometimes borders on the chaotic, there is also a sense in which, notwithstanding its internal inconsistency, it remains the term that most clearly embodies the tropes of place and health that were expected to be the hallmarks of a new geography of health.
Certain places may enact therapeutic possibilities only following a prolonged experience of a particular environment (Gesler 1992). Others may only emerge as therapeutic following a journey to or through (Gesler 1996; Doughty 2013), or come to exist as ‘spatially transient landscapes’ (one that has no fixed place) (Van Ingen 2004). Van Ingen (2004) incorporates this into the therapeutic landscape framework by discussing ‘place-aware’ landscapes and ‘place-bound’ landscapes. Hiking through a forest may produce a ‘place-aware’ therapeutic landscape, where therapeutic affects are not necessarily linked to the specific topographic place the activity takes place in. Comparatively, visiting Lourdes and experiencing a therapeutic benefit (Gesler 1996) is much more ‘place-bound’, topographically situated (Van Ingen 2004).

Therapeutic affect emergent from an aesthetic engagement with place is a recurrent theme within discussions of therapeutic spaces (Collins 2007; Bell et al. 2015). Palka (1999) suggests that simply deriving pleasure from a landscape can be a form of therapy. Importantly, this aesthetic value is not purely based on the visual. Milligan et al. (2004) have noted that the opportunity for a whole spectrum of sensory experiences is particularly significant in enacting a therapeutic engagement with place. Butterfield and Martin (2016) also discuss how ‘sensory richness’ affords an opportunity for the emergence of therapeutic affect. However, there has been little uptake and critical interrogation of this within existing literature, Evans (2016, p. 173) for example, argues that work within ‘the therapeutic landscape tradition has largely been visually-orientated’.

Hoyez (2007) suggests that activities can aid in shaping therapeutic geographies, particularly activities which have a pre-existing reputation for health or wellbeing. The health experience felt from undertaking the activity can come to be associated with the place in which the activity occurs. What people do is as significant as where they are for
understanding the relationships between health and place (Pitt 2014). For some, an area could ‘become therapeutic’ simply because it is conducive to physical activities and exercise (Collins and Kearns 2007). Pitt (2014) draws upon Csikszentmihalyi’s (2009) concept of ‘flow’ to explain how activities allow people to become absorbed, screening out negative perceptions. Thus, spaces with specific activities may be more likely to open up certain therapeutic possibilities. Though for some, it is the specific absence of activities that can constitute an area as ‘therapeutic’ (Conradson 2007). It is often activities which already have an explicit reputation for health or wellbeing themselves (running [Van Ingen 2004], yoga [Hoyez 2007], hiking and walking [Doughty 2013]) which have been explored in literature related to therapeutic spaces. My work here on farming offers an opportunity to examine activities which are more extraneous to health in this regard. Alongside this interest in activities, there is also a growing engagement concerning how embodied movement can produce spaces that come to be experienced as restorative (Doughty 2013).

Linked to these ideas of embodied movement, it is often specifically shared movement that comes to be experienced therapeutically (Doughty 2013). Shared movement creates a sense of sociality and opportunity for being in the world with others. Indeed, a large proportion of the literature surrounding therapeutic spaces discusses the ‘social’ relations which can lead to the formation of places that affect health (Gesler 1993; Milligan et al. 2004; Tonnellier and Curtis 2005; Curtis 2010; Foley 2014). Therapeutic spaces can be those locations which provide crucial opportunities for experiencing a sense of community and involvement in social networks and activities (Milligan et al. 2004; Milligan et al. 2015). Similarly, Brewster (2014) discusses how a sense of being known and valued can

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5 Milligan et al.’s (2015) recent explorations of ‘Men in Sheds’ provides a useful exception here, exploring how activities from previous everyday working lives can produce a place with healthful affect.
contribute to a persons’ capacity to affect and be affected. Ideas of health and sociality are intimately interweaved (Foley 2014).

Another emergent trend within therapeutic spaces literature has been attending to the emotional aspects of how perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health come to be associated with particular places (Milligan et al. 2004; Conradson 2005a; Hoyez 2007; English et al. 2008; Laws 2009; Rose E. 2012; Foley and Kistemann 2015). This work draws on a vast literature of interest in emotion within geography. Emotions can shape the experience of being-in-the-world, affecting a sense of place, and who and what we are (Davidson and Milligan 2004). Therapeutic spaces can emerge through the creation of a place for emotional expression and support (Laws 2009), or places of profound emotional affect (Foley 2011). Therapeutic spaces can also be those which facilitate an emotional connection between people, or even with other places (Gastaldo et al. 2004). Place can influence language choices, power relations, and people’s comfort with situations – in this way certain places can enact a therapeutic experience through the production of a non-technical space, avowedly differentiated from a scientific, clinical, or otherwise professional environment (Gesler and Kearns 2002; Laws 2009). There are many dimensions and relations at play within therapeutic spaces.

However, despite this wide body of literature, applications of the therapeutic landscape concept have often failed to discuss the heterogeneity of elements that come together to co-produce therapeutic geographies. ‘Therapeutic spaces’ are not self-contained human forms, a priori or ex nihilo, but rather constantly emerging hybrid spaces, ‘mixtures of machines, animals, states, organisations, ecologies, politics’ – all manner of elements (Hinchliffe 2007, p. 51). Drawing on this, I move to further discuss, and recast, the therapeutic landscapes literature, exploring how a relational geography of therapeutic
spaces can aid in understanding how groupings of diverse and heterogeneous elements can produce new bodily capacities.

2.5 Heterogeneous Spaces: A Relational Geography of Therapeutic Spaces

Within this section I develop a relational approach, informed by post-structuralist thinking, to explore the heterogeneous co-emergent makeup of spatial formations. Relationality provides a means of understanding how various entities are embedded within complex entanglements. A relational approach to understanding the dynamics between health and place is not entirely new (Conradson 2005b; Andrews et al. 2013a). However, here I am specifically interested in utilising and refining such an approach to understand how relations between heterogeneous actants can result in a proliferation of the capacity to affect and be affected.

Embracing heterogeneity requires recognising that nature and culture are not oppositional binaries, but rather blurred and contiguous (Braidotti 2013). A focus on the heterogeneous nature of how different spatial forms linked with ideas and experiences of health come to be produced, sustained, and contested (Kearns and Gesler 1998) enables the ‘therapeutic landscape’ concept to move beyond the demarcation of two distinct domains of natural and social, instead allowing engagement with the ‘complex entanglements of social practice and the fleshy materialities of the socio-spatial world’ (Murdoch 2006, p. 17). Embracing heterogeneity also involves recognising and considering the importance of imagined, affective, and experiential elements, and offers the potential to provide fresh insights into the dynamics between health and place (Andrews 2004).
Relationality takes the view that any interaction between a ‘thing’ and another ‘thing’ must be seen as a relation between ‘things’ (Murdoch 2006). Space and place are not containers for entities and processes, but rather a product of interrelations (Massey 2005; Murdoch 2006). Jones (2009, pp. 491-492) provides a useful summation of relational thinking and its applications to geography:

Relational thinking is a paradigmatic departure from the concerns of absolute and relative space, because it dissolves the boundaries between objects and space, and rejects forms of spatial totality. Space does not exist as an entity in and of itself, over and above material objects and their spatiotemporal relations and extensions. In short, objects are space, space is objects, and moreover objects can be understood only in relation to other objects – with all this being a perpetual becoming of heterogeneous networks and events that connect internal spatiotemporal relations [...] In short, the spatial project for relational thinkers is to replace topography and structure-agency dichotomies with a topological theory of space, place and politics as encountered, performed, and fluid.

It is the enactment of emergent relations which give reality form and meaning, and can thus produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones (Buchanan 1997). Therapeutic affect is a relational outcome (Conradson 2005b). Andrews et al. (2013a) argue that attention to relationality opens up new ways of understanding the diversities and intricacies of health and place, and that a relational approach is necessary for attending to more fluid conceptualisations of health (as discussed previously, page 15 onwards) (Andrews 2016c).

There exists not a singular narrative, but multiple, unfixed, and often contested meanings (Murdoch 2006); places have multiple identities (Massey 1991). Spaces and places are multiplicities, cross-cut by differing processes and practices. There are no essential qualities to any given place, all identities are instead derived from the relations established between places (Massey 2005; Murdoch 2006). As a result, no singular space emerges as therapeutic for all; what constitutes therapeutic for one human (or, as I go on to explore,
non-human) may not for another, even potentially causing harm rather than health. There are diverse ways in which different actants can encounter and experience the same landscape (Wakefield and McMullan 2005; Milligan and Bingley 2007; Williams 2007). The fact of which draws attention to the multiplicity of these spaces, and questions who has the right and power to territorialize spaces as ‘therapeutic’ (Parr 1999). Failing to recognise the multiplicity and contingency of therapeutic possibilities silences and shuts down the experiences of certain actants in oppressive and dangerous ways.

Conradson (2005b), for example, draws on the idea of the ‘relational self’ to highlight the fluidity within spaces conducive to health, noting that a ‘therapeutic landscape experience’ will be influenced by reconfigurations of the relational self as individuals move through space, becoming imbricated with different sets of relations. In this way, the ‘therapeutic’ nature of place is emergent from relational configurations co-produced by a series of heterogeneous actants, events, practices, and processes (Bear 2013), rather than inherent in any given place. Different spaces generate different temporalities, and enact and facilitate different modes of being and relating (Lien 2015). There is the potential for the formation of multiple simultaneous therapeutic geographies.

Numerous authors writing about therapeutic landscapes have discussed how certain relations can alter health experiences of place: illness or disability (Kearns and Gesler 1998; Bell 2016), age (Milligan et al. 2004; Milligan et al. 2015), nationality and cultural background (Marcus and Barnes 1999; Chang and Relf 2004), socio-economic status (Kearns and Joseph 1993), gender (MacKian 2008; Love et al. 2012; Milligan et al. 2015), and class, race, and sexuality (Van Ingen 2004). These differing relations ultimately create spaces which are therapeutic to certain individuals, but not others.
Ambiguities and idiosyncrasies exist then among the relations that can affect places becoming conducive to health. The territorialization of these places as therapeutic is neither constant nor stable. Authors have described how therapeutic territorialization is impacted by a variety of relations: social, economic and political factors (Gesler 1998), a person’s mood (Laws 2009), media attitudes (Milligan 2007), and even changing seasonally and diurnally (Collins and Kearns 2007). Furthermore, attempts to commodify therapeutic affect can deterritorialize notions of a therapeutic place (Cutchin 2007). Indeed, the reorganisation of place to accommodate access and visitation can create a fundamental shift in the nature and experience of place (Milligan et al. 2010). Discussions of therapeutic spaces must consider not only encounters within place, but also the broader web of relations within which an individual is imbricated (Conradson 2005b). Crucially, relations which can lead to therapeutic possibilities are rooted in an assemblage of all other local interactions distributed elsewhere in time and space being brought to bear on the scene through the agency of various human and non-human actants. Indeed, potentially some other actant, from some other place, and some other time is still acting on the relations taking place today through indirect connections. Encounters in, and with, forms of ‘therapeutic space’ are not isotopic, synchronic, synoptic, homogeneous, or isobaric (Latour 2005, pp. 200-201).

Considering multiplicity draws attention to another critique of much of the existing literature surrounding therapeutic landscapes, in that discussions are frequently based on arguing the case for specifically named and bounded locations as being ‘therapeutic landscapes’ (Gesler 1993, 1996, 1998; DeVerteuil and Andrews 2007; Hallman 2007; Dunkley 2009; Williams 2010; Brewster 2014; Butterfield and Martin 2016) (to name but a few). Andrews (2004, p. 308) describes such research as simply applying a ‘bumper sticker’ to phenomena. This is disappointing, given the potential identified by Wilson (2003) who
proposed that the therapeutic landscape concept allowed health geographers to ‘shed geometric and locational approaches to space and place’. Wilton and DeVerteuil (2006) suggest that this trend in literature has created a dichotomy of viewing space as either therapeutic or untherapeutic. It is a trend that has produced a pointillistic approach (Doel 1999), with health becoming overly spatialised, divided into zones of ‘healthy’ and ‘not healthy’. I suggest that rather, therapeutic spaces emerge as hybrids, with processes and experiences, as well as perceptions and understandings, of health fluidly flowing across human imposed topographical spatial divides. Within this thesis I seek to demonstrate the contingent potential of any space to ‘become therapeutic’ challenging existing ideas that there are ‘therapeutic spaces’ that are ‘out there’ externally, or that they can be created as totalised and fixed phenomena. To quote Duff (2011, p. 154):

No one place is likely to generate the same bundle of affective resources for all who experience it and yet all places generate affective encounters and so all places have the potential to augment or diminish one’s capacities.

This is pertinent, as an everyday approach\(^6\) has been frequently neglected within studies of therapeutic spaces. Discussions have instead focussed on more extraordinary places (for example, Gesler’s (1996) study of pilgrimages at Lourdes, or Williams’ (2010) study of the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré), as well as places specifically designated as spaces of health (Kearns and Barnett 1999; DeVerteuil et al. 2007; Butterfield and Martin 2016), failing to recognise that new capacities can emerge from everyday spaces (Wilson 2003).

\(^6\) What Pinder (2011, p. 223) describes as ‘the ordinary, routine and repetitive aspects of life that are pervasive and yet frequently overlooked and taken-for-granted […] through which people experience and interact with the world and with others’. 
The view which emerges from readings of the majority of therapeutic landscape literature is that the therapeutic nature of place is simply achieved and then fixed for all time, rather than an emergent and contingent quality, fluctuating and fluidly being remade. Moving from these rigid conceptualisations, I instead conceptualise ‘therapeutic spaces’ as open and dynamic, constantly in the process of emergence and forever ‘becoming’. While historically contingent, such spaces are also constantly being re-created and never achieve a permanent stabilisation, with actants dispersing and regrouping in new formations and relations. These spaces are not persistently therapeutic.

My approach here produces a way of moving beyond research that describes well-ordered, topographical therapeutic spaces, creating a way of ‘describing the world while keeping it open’ (Mol and Law 2002, p. 16). The didactic message of earlier therapeutic landscape studies has been the idea that ‘where’ people are is important in how they feel healthful (Curtis 2004). I move thinking beyond this topographic approach, which, as Andrews (2004) argues, has led to a detailed description of particularly contained places, to instead adopt a more topological approach and study the processes of spatial emergence (Murdoch 2006).

Rather than viewing therapeutic spaces and places as fixed and contained, I conceptualise these geographical phenomena as ‘territories of becoming that produce new potentials’ (Thrift 2004b, p. 88). Spaces and places are dynamic, rather than static. Potential is derived from the very openness of space, and the way in which relations intersect and combine. It is this idea of potential that proves of interest for my discussions of ‘therapeutic spaces’, the potential for anywhere to become processually and precariously relationally constituted as a ‘therapeutic space’.
There do not exist external and singular bounded ‘therapeutic spaces’ where health is here but not there, but rather, actants become embedded in a variety of (fluidly reconfigured) sets of relations of varying complexity that enact affective therapeutic possibilities in different ways. As Thrift (2004b, p. 91) argues, the world is a mutable ‘kaleidoscopic mix of space-times constantly being built up and torn down’. There is no difference between macro and micro, nor global and local; more complex sets of relations simply reach further (Murdoch 2006). Sites do not differ in size, but in linkages (Latour 2005); scale becomes the actor’s own achievement (Latour 2005). Thus ideas of the creation of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ at city and regional scales (Wakefield and McMullan 2005) become somewhat redundant.

‘Therapeutic’ space is not rendered permanent by underlying structures, but rather achieves temporary and provisional stabilisation through the relations established between entities of various kinds. Any spatial solidity is a precarious accomplishment in the face of instability, and the project of therapeutic geographers becomes accounting for the relational spaces that do emerge through interactions and interrelations, exploring how particular spatial configurations are generated (Murdoch 2006) that (re)shape actants’ capacities to affect and be affected. It is not enough to simply describe and label particular topographical sites as ‘therapeutic’ (Andrews 2004). Rather, I explore the processes, relations, and actants which come together in specific, contingent, and precarious formations in ways that can lead to an opening up and closing down of therapeutic possibilities, exploring the processes of generation rather than conceptualising some static permanent achievement. As Anderson and Harrison (2010, p. 16) argue, ‘it is not enough to simply assert that phenomena are ‘relationally constituted’ or invoke the form of the network, rather it becomes necessary to think about the specificity and performative efficacy of different relations and different relational configurations’. I am interested in the
emergent, investigating ‘what is possible’, not just how a form came to be, nor its list of properties and characteristics but how ongoing ‘lines of flight’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2008) continue to shape and potentialise (Greenhough 2011, p. 135). Rather than static links between health and place, I am interested in the ‘taking place’ of health; the detail of what is happening in the moment, immediate, and active (Andrews 2016a).

Though equally, as Murdoch (2006) argues, attention must be paid to spaces that do not emerge, examining the sets of relations that fail to gain coherence. The relational making of space is a contested process. The construction of one set of relations may involve the exclusion of certain entities and the forcible enrolment of others. This is not about a return to a dichotomy of therapeutic/untherapeutic space, but rather considering how relations can become imbricated in ways that prevent ‘therapeutic space’ emerging, and recognising the multiplicity of ways of being in spaces described as therapeutic. I move to explore this idea of emergence now, and consider the ways that ideas of ‘becoming’ prove useful in manoeuvring around some of the criticisms of the ‘therapeutic landscape’ concept.

2.5.1 Becoming Therapeutic Rather than Being Therapeutic

As I have explained, a relational approach, informed by post-structuralist thinking, provides a useful way to describe therapeutic spaces that are open and dynamic, and constantly ‘becoming’. Framing things as ‘becoming’ is a way of recognising fluid flows of life (Murdoch 2006). Life is not composed of pre-given forms that simply evolve to become what they are, instead life has a transformative potential. Becoming is all of the movements, connections, and pieces of the world that are patched together to form a reality (Roffe 2007). Indeed, there is no ‘world behind appearances’, things and states are purely products of becoming (Stagoll 2005). ‘Therapeutic’ territories are not fixed for all
time, instead they are always being made and unmade, coming together and coming apart. Existence in a particular configuration is something which must be continually worked at (Wise 2014). Thrift and Dewsbury (2000, p. 418) summarise becoming as such:

Becoming necessarily entails deformation, reformation, performance, and transformation, which involve gaps and gasps, stutters and cuts, misfires and stoppages, unintended outcomes, unprecedented transferences, and jagged changes. These breaks are not simply ungoverned transversal communications within and between assemblages that bring novel forces into play and so also new formations. They are also a function of the very way events occur, which is not rule governed, or where the rule does not apply.

There are multiple lines of becoming during which intersections and encounters can affect a new becoming and new ways of being, with no external end. The process of becoming is thus a transformation from one multiplicity into another. An unpredictable and ceaseless process of diversification and transformation that alters, innovates, and changes relations; a constant composition to become something else (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2007). Due (2007, p. 142) describes becoming as ‘immanence realised in practice’. The formation of therapeutic geographies is no different in this regard, always emergent, taking on new shapes and identities. Here then, rather than arguing for certain places being therapeutic, I suggest that places have the potential to become therapeutic. ‘Therapeutic spaces’ are not ontological realities, normatively identifiable as therapeutic, but rather can possibly, maybe, might, emerge in many different ways.

Importantly, becoming is not a phase between two states. Becoming is neither product, final, nor interim, instead it functions as the very dynamism of change attending towards no goal or end structure. There is no specific ‘time of change’ between one event and another, but a continual, immanent flow of changes (Stagoll 2005). Emergence does not
refer to an ‘original emergence’ or ‘historic birth’ but instead recurrent and constant production (DeLanda 2006).

Thinking through this fluidity, and how place can produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones, can be aided by the three entangled processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. Originating in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (2008), they are processes that come together simultaneously to represent the stability, order, change, and disruption at work. I argue that they prove useful for understanding the dynamic relations between health and place, and move here to introduce these processes to health geography’s theoretical ‘toolkit’ (Andrews et al. 2013b).

Territorialization is a process of creating order out of chaos. A process in which particular routines, habitual relations, and internal uniformity are established and repeated, expressing rigid structuration (Woodward 2007). Territorialization is the acquisition, definition, sharpening, and reinforcing of boundaries (Bear 2013), operating as an exclusionary and homogenising process to consolidate an identity (DeLanda 2006). In the therapeutic landscapes literature, Gesler and Kearns (2002) highlight the importance of naming places and how this can cause people to relate in a certain way with an area. Naming thus functions as a way of territorializing associations of health and place. Further, the formation of therapeutic geographies can be based on an accumulation of ideas over time (Gesler 1998), territorialized as an ‘understood truth’ in cultural memory (Gesler and Kearns 2002). Indeed, Gesler (1996) found Lourdes to be a therapeutic experience, despite his lack of faith7. Once territorialized as therapeutic, the relation of repute serves to reinforce and consolidate the relations between health and place.

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7 Though as a Westemer living in a society historically and culturally influenced by Christian traditions, Gesler still possesses the knowledge and understanding of relevant religious customs.
Stabilisation is a tenuous and precarious achievement (Allen 2011); relations are forever being partially unravelled and then rewoven, undergoing constant mutations in the process (Wiley 2003). Deterritorialization is a way of recognising this fluidity and change (Woodward 2007). Often described as a process when an event of becoming escapes or detaches from its original territory (Colebrook 2002); a coming undone of things (Parr 2005). The process of deterritorialization is best understood as a ‘movement producing change’ (Parr 2005, p. 67), changing the configuration and functioning of a territory, freeing up fixed relations, increasing heterogeneity. Deterritorialization can also be a ceasing to stand out, a ceasing to be perceived as different (Buchanan 2005). Often framed as a ‘disruptive’ process, deterritorialization is also simultaneously about the novel, and how innovatory practices and knowledges alter relations and stability (DeLanda 2006). The introduction of a contagion (or perhaps just the knowledge of such a contagion’s potential) to a care farm or other place constructed on a reputation of therapeutic animal encounter would serve to deterritorialize therapeutic relations, turning it into a place of risk and uncertainty. Alternatively, to draw on Collins and Kearns’ (2007) discussions of the ambiguity of the beach as being therapeutic, it would be possible to view the introduction of concerns surrounding photocarcinogenesis as a line of flight which deterritorializes a previously stable therapeutic reputation.

Reterritorialization is not a return to original configurations post-deterritorialization in some restorative manner, nor is it about adding and creating new territories. Instead, it is about how deterritorialized elements recombine in new and restructured relations (Patton 2005). Returning to the example of a care farm, the introduction of anti-bacterial handwash, 

Williams (2010) questions whether First Nations peoples would find a Christian pilgrimage site therapeutic without preconceptions and understanding of relevant symbolisms. Discourses, languages and meanings can impact the potential formation of therapeutic geographies.
biosecurity procedures, and health and safety protocols, could all serve to reterritorialize a place as one associated as therapeutic. A process of restructuring around the previous movement to continue to perform ideas of a therapeutic territory, though fundamentally changed. While for Collins and Kearns’ (2007) ambiguously therapeutic beach, the introduction of sunscreen, allows the relations to be recombined in a new configuration, drawing in new relations which alter the way in which ‘becoming therapeutic’ with a beach environment is practiced and performed.

Change can occur at many levels with these processes occurring synchronously to one another, reterritorializing while being deterritorialized. Though importantly, they are not causative of one another (Buchanan 2006; Parr 2006). Instead, these processes are always bound up together, occurring simultaneously (Parr 2005), though neither ordered nor reciprocal (Buchanan 2005).

Within this attention to the ways in which spaces are involved in processes of constantly becoming, Haraway’s (2008) idea of ‘becoming with’ is particularly valuable. ‘Becoming with’ describes the way in which worlds take shape through processes of being affected by others (Haraway 2008). ‘Becoming with’ offers an ontological approach that is grounded in ideas of connection, challenging beliefs that humans (and ‘human spaces’), are separate(d) (Wright 2014). For Haraway, this acknowledgement of ‘becoming with’ is a way of moving beyond human exceptionalism, recognising the co-constitution of everyday life and that becoming is always ‘becoming with’; ‘animals are everywhere full partners in worlding’ (Haraway 2008, p. 301).

Suchet-Pearson et al. (2013, p. 189) use the alternative term ‘co-becoming’, with similar ontological implications. They argue that ‘co-becoming’ provides a way of recognising
fundamental connectedness. A means of taking seriously and attending to the vibrancy, agency, and contributions of non-human beings and things, which come together in processes of constantly becoming and co-emergent relationships. They describe how:

All the things, affects, emotions, processes, relationships, all the humans and non-human beings, the smells, the waves, the light, the material and the non-material, the ephemeral, those that were and will be, the actors and actants; these are not things or objects, rather they are constantly in a process of becoming, becoming and emerging together in particular times/places and through particular entangled relationships. This notion of co-becoming challenges the static assumption of an independent, isolated existence.

The authors use this style of thinking to begin to consider the ways caring for, and being cared for by, a territory, is always a process of co-becoming. Suchet-Pearson et al’s (2013) attempts to understand ‘care’ as co-becoming/becoming with, calls attention to new questions for discussions of therapeutic geographies when considering humans as ‘part of the world, rather than distinct from it’ (Suchet-Pearson et al. 2013, p. 188).

Becoming with is about an ‘openness to transformation through contact, contagion, and encounter’ (Berrigan 2014, p. 176). Focussing on a ‘becoming with’ rather than a simple ‘becoming’, draws attention to the role of heterogeneous actants in co-producing therapeutic geographies. It calls for examining how co-presence builds attachment sites and ‘ties sticky knots to bind intra-acting critters together in the kinds of response and regard that change the subject and the object’ (Haraway 2008, p. 301). ‘Becoming with’ involves not just exploring the contingent potentiality of any space to become therapeutic, but giving a specific focus to how these spaces are co-constituted by heterogeneous actants. A process of recognising that every encounter between humans and non-humans entails a transformative potential (Lien 2015). Importantly, as Wright et al. (2015) recognise, humans play a role in the co-becomings of others too, and animals must also
be considered as co-participants of these spaces. It is the matter of animals to which I turn now, exploring how non-human life has been marginalised and erased within discussions of ‘therapeutic spaces’.

2.6 The Missing Animals of Therapeutic Landscapes

Wolch and Emel’s (1995) call for ‘bringing the animals back in’ to geographical discourse does not appear to have permeated into discussions of therapeutic spaces. To date there has been little research exploring the role of non-humans in ‘therapeutic landscapes’ literatures. Hallman (2007) discusses ‘The Zoo as Therapeutic Landscape’, yet completely fails to discuss how animals’ presence or roles influences the formation of such therapeutic geographies. Laws and Radford (1998) have previously noted that there has been a need for geographies of health to increasingly engage with ‘the other’, however this does not appear to have been taken up in respect to non-human others. To quote Conradson (2005b, p. 339), the therapeutic landscape 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’. Instead, the longstanding approach within health geography has been to put ‘people centre stage’ (Andrews 2015, p. 338), an approach which has resulted in anthropocentric therapeutic geographies.

Animals have instead been subsumed into the broader concept and ‘black-box’ of ‘nature’. Nature is a contestable, manipulable, unfixed term, animated, multiple, and differentiated

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8 My own work withstanding (Gorman 2017c).
9 Conradson (2005b, a) makes some brief references to non-humans in his own discussions here, but the human-animal relations, and how they produce therapeutic affect, remain largely unpacked. While this rare recognition of animals being imbricated within therapeutic spaces is a welcome exception to the general trend, beyond Conradson’s description that ‘contact with wildlife’ is ‘valued’, there is little here about specifically how animals influence health in place.
(Hinchliffe 2007). To simply attribute a spaces’ therapeutic associations to ‘nature’ is a case of short-circuiting discussions and interrupting the study of relations (Latour 2005). ‘Natures’ have constitutive elements, and these constitutive parts should be theorised separately (Wolch and Emel 1998).

Lea (2008, p. 95) for example discusses ‘the potential for nature to create therapeutic or healing modalities’ and ‘using imaginations of nature to work embodiment in particular ways’. The actual relations and elements referred to here are unclear. There are multiple, contested geographic imaginaries of ‘nature’. What about animals negatively constructed as pests or vermin (Ginn 2013; Moran 2015)? A reliance on homogeneous applications of ‘nature’ fails to engage with the multiplicities and contingencies at play. When discussing ‘therapeutic landscapes’ at ‘post-secondary education institutions’, Windhorst and Williams (2016, p. 235) describe how ‘nature can be brought inside’ to promote positive mental health – what constitutive elements of nature to bring though? Nature is not simply a homogeneous thing (nor indeed, a thing per se).

Milligan et al. (2004, p. 1790) describe how their participants within the ‘therapeutic landscape’ of a community garden gain a sense of ‘satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure from their engagement with nature’. However, to rely on ‘nature’ as the end-point of analysis obscures the relational constitution of the these spaces; aesthetic engagement with a slug will be different from that of a flower or a songbird. Indeed, it creates a different relational configuration, one which may lead to differently defining actants’ capacities to affect and be affected.

Similarly, there are frequent discussions and attributions of how ‘wild’ landscapes can evoke therapeutic experiences (Palka 1999; Dunkley 2009). Yet there is infrequently any
in-depth discussion within the therapeutic landscapes literature of what constitutes this ‘wild’. Things in themselves are not wild (Hinchliffe 2007). Forests are another recurrent theme within the existing therapeutic landscape literature (Bell 1999; Thurber and Malinowski 1999; Milligan and Bingley 2007; Morita et al. 2007), yet again ‘forest’ is regularly used as a homogeneous descriptor, with the diversity of heterogeneous actants which comprise such forest spaces often left under discussed or even unmentioned entirely. As Hinchliffe (2007) argues, woodlands will be practiced by and with many different species, people, habits, artefacts, in many different places.

Here then, I move to attend to Hanlon’s (2014, p. 144) calls for health geography to widen its accounts of place to consider the ‘ways in which bodies not only interact, but co-evolve with things (e.g. physical infrastructure, technologies) and other beings (i.e. not simply other people, but pets, livestock, wildlife, insects, and so on)’. Places that can affect health are comprised of ‘rich ecologies of the human and the non-human, the social and the natural, the material and immaterial’ (Murdoch 2006, p. 127). ‘Nature’ is not ‘out there’, undeveloped and untouched, but rather already mixed up in entangled and co-produced landscapes and worlds (Hinchliffe 2007). Philo and Wilbert (2000) argue that humans are always, and have always been, enmeshed in social relations with animals. They go on to state that ‘animals are undoubtedly constitutive of human societies in all sorts of ways’ (p. 2) – the same rings true for discussions of places associated with health. It seems odd to consider how forests (Thurber and Malinowski 1999), beaches (Collins and Kearns 2007), and zoos (Hallman 2007) can exist as ‘therapeutic spaces’, without reflecting on the co-presence and imbrication of creatures such as squirrels, starfish, and sea lions.

Animals can be powerful symbols of place, heritage, and ways of life (Wolch et al. 2003) – Gesler (1993, 1998) has previously commented on how the symbolic aspects of
particular places strongly influence how they can come to be construed as therapeutic. However, while attending to how animals are semiotically imbricated within the co-production of therapeutic geographies is important, this should not come in place of recognising the animal as a living embodied social actant. Animals are not just empty vessels for human meaning-making. Gesler (1993) for example, briefly associates snakes as an important part in the therapeutic geographies of the Asclepian sanctuary at Epidaurus. However, this is purely as symbols, with animals’ ability to impact the therapeutic nature of the space derived purely from their place within human mythology. Retaining agency, and the ability to affect the emergence of ‘therapeutic’ spaces, to humanity, fails to fully understand how animals are bound up and imbricated in these spaces, instead, simply presenting a two-dimensional picture of what animals are and are capable of.

While Foley’s (2011, 2012, 2015) work has engaged with the way in which water can enact certain therapeutic engagements with place, it presents the watery worlds it engages with as opaque surfaces, unmindful of the diversity of vibrant lifeforms lurking beneath (Bear and Eden 2011). Foley (2015) talks of the therapeutic benefits of being in blue places, taking swimming as an example, and the immersive therapeutic engagements people gain from such an activity. There are missed opportunities here to engage with the heterogeneity of the sea. As Lambert et al. (2006, p. 486) describe, ‘understanding the geographies of these maritime worlds also requires consideration of the relationships between different elements […] relationships with marine animals’. The sea is not an unpopulated body of water, but home to a range of non-human life, again highlighting the indeterminacy and multiplicities of therapeutic geographies. Similarly, Foley and Kistemann (2015) mention fishing as an activity which can lead to being affected by therapeutic blue-space, however drawing on Bear and Eden (2011), fishing is an activity
which is co-produced between fish and humans, requiring fish to respond in a certain manner, not a human activity conducted in isolation. Fish are actively involved in the production of ‘therapeutic blue-space’ here.

The capacity for ‘agency’ – the actions that produce the ‘social’ world – extends beyond humans to the non-human and inanimate. Any ‘thing’ that modifies a state of affairs by making a difference, producing affects, or altering the course of events is an actor, while an actor that makes no difference is not an actor at all (Latour 2005; Bennett 2010). To quote Murdoch (1997, p. 331): ‘things act in concert with humans; humans act in concert with things’. This is not to say that these things determine, cause, or impose action (Latour 2005), nor should it be an attempt at imputing conscious intention (Philo and Wilbert 2000). Rather, such an approach implies that there are many shades of causality – ‘things might authorise, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on’ (Latour 2005, p. 72). Various actants do not exercise the same kind of agency; just because some material element of the place does not ‘determine’ an action, does not mean that it does nothing. Things are vital players in the world, efficacious existents in excess of their association with human meanings and contexts (Bennett 2010).

Thus, animals too are actors10 (or, more properly, actants, to remove a level of anthropomorphism). Not simply recipients of human action, animals are capable of independent and individual action, possessing agency. Though often the options for these actants are limited, shaped by human primacy (Cudworth 2011a). Here I move to challenge the anthropocentrism which appears in earlier studies of therapeutic spaces, moving beyond the human as the sole arbiter of action. Particularly, taking Latour’s

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10 It is perhaps worth noting however that relocating agency to non-humans still allows humans to retain certain privilege in how – and to what animals – agency is selectively extended (Hinchliffe 2007).
argument and questioning how animals authorise, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid (etc.) the formation of therapeutic geographies. Drawing on Bennett’s (2010, p. 3) discussions of the agency of non-human things, the idea that ‘things do in fact affect other bodies, enhancing or weakening their power’ returns to the conceptualisation of health defined by what a body can do, its capacities and limits, discussed earlier (page 17). Animals (and other non-human things) can alter the relations that bodies have, shaping and reshaping practices and flows of becoming.

Further, human-animal relations themselves are heterogeneous, not simply an interaction between human and non-human bodies, but rather hybrid, informed and constituted by a wide variety of other bodies, objects, technologies, ideas, and social organisations (Hinchliffe 2007). Encountering a cow means encountering mud, manure, and flies, as well as a list of other, less visible associations: viruses, injections, tablets, and farming practices, etc. Thus, this is not just about relocating agency to animals, but also exploring how the agency of accompanying things becomes enrolled in a co-production of therapeutic affect. As Milligan and Wiles (2010) argue, to understand ‘care’ means not just considering a dyadic relationship between care-giver and care-recipient, but all of those involved in co-producing the relationship of care.

To address these literature gaps and concerns, I move now to build on, and further, an argument I have begun to develop elsewhere (Gorman 2017c), exploring how heterogeneous non-human elements can come together to co-produce therapeutic geographies.
2.7 Bringing the Animals Back to Therapeutic Landscapes

Non-humans are lively and dynamic colleagues in the making of worlds (Hinchliffe 2007). Despite the lack of acknowledgement of animals in studies of therapeutic spaces, there is a wide body of literature outside geographical scholarship which has catalogued the health benefits which non-humans can affect for humans. Indeed, Beck and Katcher (2003, p. 87) argue that ‘there is solid evidence that animal contact has significant health benefits and that it positively influences transient physiological states, morale, and feelings of self-worth’ (p.87).

Human-animal relations have been shown to have a range of positive influences on varying groups of humans, affecting what different actants may become. This includes reduced autistic symptoms, improved self-esteem, reduced loneliness, and increased interaction in social situations, to more physiological changes such as improved motor skills, reduced anxiety, and reduced blood pressure (Barker and Dawson 1998; Odendaal 2000; Urbanik 2012). Animals can facilitate human contact and interaction, boost self-efficacy and self-esteem, as well as acting as support mechanisms, serving as attachment figures, and offering an emotional bond (Berget and Braastad 2008). Animals can also provide a diversion and distraction from everyday stresses and pains, and caring for animals can create a purposeful routine (Beyersdorfer and Birkenhauer 1990; Barba 1995). Animals provide people with something to nurture, something spontaneous to react to, and something to interact with on an emotional level, possibly triggering memories and a sense of familiarity (McBride 1999). In this way, animals can allow for the retention of a level of connection to place, culture, and identity (Zeisel and Tyson 1999; Riley 2011). This emotional bonding with other species can help to satisfy human emotional needs and enhance emotional capacity (Kellert 1996), while for some people, simply observing animals can be therapeutic (Zeisel and Tyson 1999). Animals can also function as a
powerful semiotic force, contributing to the formation of positive health perceptions and experiences (Mallon 1994). Indeed, animals can be an important symbol of life; they can ‘counteract the atmosphere of disease and death that can so easily permeate a long term care facility’ (Gesler 2003, p. 99). Hodgson and Darling (2011, p. 189) recently coined the term ‘zooeyia’ to refer to the positive benefits to human health that emerge from interacting with animals – though their specific focussing on a more traditional definition of ‘companion animals’ (dogs, cats, etc.), somewhat limits its utility for these discussions. There exists a wide variety of species which may ‘become companion-able’. As Haraway (2008) argues, the category ‘companion species’ is less shapely and more rambunctious than ‘companion animals’ such as dogs and cats, but rather signifies those animals that come to be constitutive, knotted together in the making of moments and spaces of encounters in ongoing processes of being affected by others.

Hinchcliffe (2007, p. 25) describes how ‘plants, animals, and non-living matter may co-evolve and produce opportunities and constraints for one another through all manner of relations including co-operation, symbiosis, parasitism, co-habitation, opportunism as well as competition’. Returning to the previously outlined relational approach to health (page 17), this idea of ‘producing opportunities and constraints’ explains well how heterogeneous actants can co-produce therapeutic possibilities, enabling and enacting what different actants may become. Processes of ‘co-evolution’ point to the relational character of change (SJH 2011) and create a way to attend to Andrews’ (2016c, p. 211) call for health geographies to recognise ‘the transactional dynamics of living things’. Indeed, Bull (2016, p. 81) argues that exploring parasitism provides a useful ‘analytical tool for engaging with the politics of multispecies codependencies’, while Plumwood (2003, p. 196) suggests that relationships of mutuality allow actants to ‘take joy in the flourishing of others’. These co-evolutionary concepts have received little attention within health geography, however,
within the context of how human-animal relations can come to affect health, they offer useful analytical scope for exploring the ‘ways in which bodies not only interact, but co-evolve with things’ (Hanlon 2014, p. 144).

Importantly, relationships and encounters between people and animals are multideterminate. Not all relations with animals will be inherently positive; there is the possibility for bites, anaphylaxis, parasites, and poorly-tempered animals (Barba 1995). Phobias and negative past experiences with animals may also result in different experiences (Odendaal 2000; Milligan and Bingley 2007), differently defining different actants’ capacity to affect and be affected. This can ultimately result in the emergence of spaces which may be therapeutic to certain individuals and social groups, but not others. Indeed, there is the potential for othering those who have specific and different reactions to animals, producing tensions and politics (Smith and Davidson 2006) and closing down bodily capacities.

Returning to the idea of human-animal relations themselves being heterogeneous (page 43), Milligan and Bingley (2007) note how children can harbour fears and misconceptions about animal life, influenced by myths and fairy tales. It is not just a physical encounter which constitutes therapeutic possibilities, but rather therapeutic relations with animals are enmeshed in wider understandings, representations, and conceptualisations of animals. Animals then, as with the wider concept of therapeutic spaces (Milligan and Bingley 2007), are not guaranteed to create relations which can result in a therapeutic experience for all. Heterogeneous therapeutic spaces can instead be described as acting ‘something like viscous fluids that can reshape and regroup to adapt to different conditions’ (Hinchliffe 2007, p. 68).
Bringing (or perhaps, to continue placing stock in animal mobilities and agencies, simply acknowledging the presence of) animals into spaces considered ‘therapeutic’ can destabilise certain human spatial boundaries. The presence of animals can create tension between different geographical imaginations over what a ‘therapeutic space’ is, and who and what should be present. Animals can become ‘out of place’, transgressing taken for granted human notions of what ‘rightly’ constitutes certain places (Philo and Wilbert 2000).

To take an example from Butterfield and Martin’s (2016) study of a cancer centre as a ‘therapeutic landscape’, birds being able to be seen and heard from the centre are actants that are in the ‘right place’, allowing the centre to emerge as therapeutic for certain individuals through providing a level of sensory richness. It could be rightly questioned as to whether the same relations would emerge were it cockroaches or venomous snakes. Human-animal boundaries (imagined and materially constructed) are well enforced spatial orderings. Humans often have a strong (though multiple, fluid, and contested) sense of the ‘proper places’ which animals should occupy, both physically, and in the more abstract ‘scheme of things’. Ideas exist about which certain sorts of animals should be present and proximate, and those which should be more remote and removed (Philo and Wilbert 2000).

Exclusion has been recognised as an important factor in geographic discussions of therapeutic spaces (Kearns and Gesler 1998), and this is no different when discussing the exclusion of non-humans. The absence and barring of certain species can be framed as crucial to understandings of ‘health’ – relations can have a role to play through their nonappearance (McFarlane and Anderson 2011). Intrusion by non-humans can disrupt therapeutic processes (Dunkley 2009), and in more extreme cases of intrusion animals can be the specific cause of affecting negative health and wellbeing for humans (Jadhav and Barua 2012). In certain contexts, animals can find their relationships reconfigured from affecting a therapeutic experience to becoming infectious agents or health hazards (Law...
and Miele 2011). There are complex entanglements of human-animal relations within therapeutic geographies.

When animals are accepted or introduced into spaces associated with health, they are usually expected to conform and fit into a human understanding of ‘society’ and space. Processes are often applied to animals to render them suitable companions, ‘denaturalising’ and ‘unwilding’ them, making animals ‘less smelly and dirty’, removing any potential defiling traits to make non-humans suitable objects for affection and bonding (Griffiths et al. 2000, p. 57). Humans have expectations of what animals should be like and how they should behave (Philo 1995; Philo and Wilbert 2000). Animals are often culturally coded, regarded as ‘unhygienic’ and ‘dirty’, or ‘clean’ and ‘charismatic’, leading to default and territorialized human-animal relations (Philo and Wolch 1998).

When thinking about ‘bringing the animals back in’ (Wolch and Emel 1995) to geographic discussions of therapeutic spaces, it may seem natural to begin to think about large and encounterable charismatic species, but therapeutic geographies should pay attention to how all manner of non-humans come to affect health relations, not just those positively constructed and valued by humans (Moran 2015). Indeed, microorganisms and protozoans can certainly affect health experiences – and many of these species may already be engaged in existing relations and symbioses with more visible and apparent actants. Indeed, in a report for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention exploring places of human-animal encounters Blackmore (2009, p. 1) surmises that, ‘although human-animal contact has many benefits, many human health problems are associated with these settings including infectious diseases, exposure to rabies, and injuries. Infectious disease outbreaks reported during the previous decade have been caused by
Escherichia coli O157:H7, Salmonella species, Cryptosporidium species, Coxiella burnetii, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, ringworm, and other pathogens.

Lorimer (2016a), on the other hand, discusses ‘helminthic therapy’, and how certain parasitic worms living in the human gut can assist in the management of autoimmune conditions and might shape processes of mood and cognition. Lorimer discusses the controlled (re)introduction of parasitic worms into human bodies and casts it as a form of ‘inner rewilding’. Here the human body itself serves as a form of therapeutic ‘landscape’ for mutual flourishing. This echoes the point made earlier (page 43), that human-animal relations are informed and constituted by a wide variety of not always visible other bodies too, not just a meeting between a single human and a single animal. Indeed, drawing on Helmreich’s (2015) figure of Homo microbis, the ‘human’ body is composed of bacteria, fungi, and archaea to the point where microbial cells outnumber those purely human cells ten to one. Humans exist as ‘a superorganism, accommodating, infected, and kept alive by diverse microbes in dynamic ecologies’ (Lorimer 2016a, p. 58). Humans are, to certain extents, always ‘becoming with’ non-human others.

Care must be taken not to side-line invisible, uncomfortable, and unloved species (Ginn 2013, p. 2). Indeed, given growing interest in the salutary potentials of microbes (Lorimer 2016a), and the changing conceptions of microbial life from being positioned as perilous to instead being one of promise (Paxson and Helmreich 2014), there are important considerations for geographies of therapeutic spaces to begin to address. For example, Lorimer (2016a, b) discusses the novel use of bacterial mixtures as a means of sanitising the built environment, actively seeding sites with stable colonies of ‘good’ bacteria in practices of making live and letting die. This opens up questions of what microbiopolitical work has been done to ‘therapeutic spaces’ to territorialize them as places of health. The
‘probiotic turn’ which Lorimer hints at certainly has implications for discussing the links between health and place. I move now to make a case for attending to the individual actants imbricated and the actual relations between specific elements, moving beyond homogeneous descriptions of ‘the animal’.

2.7.1 Therapeutic Relations with Individual Animals

‘Animal’ has been used as a catch-all for everything deemed as beastly and other (Derrida and Wills 2002), but it is not a homogeneous grouping, instead comprised of diverse and specific lifeforms, responding in specific ways with a multiplicity of relations to humans, and imbricated within complex sets of relations (Whatmore and Thorne 2000). A reliance on homogeneous terms for heterogeneous things ignores the multiplicities and the contested geographic imaginaries of ‘therapeutic spaces’. To return to Butterfield and Martin’s (2016) birds in the ‘therapeutic landscape’ of a cancer centre gardens, the presence of a vulture or raven (with their cultural connotations of death) will produce a different relational configuration compared to the presence of a chirping robin. Self-sealing conceptual categories divert analytical attention away from the generative agency of actants (Lien 2015). Thus, when discussing how human-animal relations can produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones, care must be taken to attend to the individual actants imbricated and the actual relations between specific actants. Human-animal relations are multiplex and contingent, interpreted in specific ways related to culture and place; a consequence of particular relations between particular actants (Elder et al. 1998; Cudworth 2011b).

There is a strong trend within literature on therapeutic spaces of exploring how familiarity is a key relation in establishing spaces that can be conducive to health and wellbeing (Williams 2002; Rose E. 2012; Brewster 2014; Simpson 2016). Gesler (1992) suggests
that certain spaces may enact a therapeutic engagement with place following a prolonged experience of a particular environment. This familiarity and prolonged experience translates to human-animal relations too. Indeed, Hassink (2002) notes that the therapeutic benefits of animals are best expressed when participants form bonds with individual animals themselves.

Animals’ social and cultural positions are constructed and influenced by their specific and individual personalities (Robbins 1998). Certain individualised animals become associated with an elite status, in terms of both care and the interest of humans in engaging with them (Anderson 1998). Events can cause animals to ‘stand out’, individuated by their own life histories (Wilkie 2005). Rather than simply exploring human-animal relations as they are represented, I instead move to pay attention to how they unfold in practice, their generative potential, rather than just their cultural form (Lien 2015).

In the same way in which I have argued against an approach based on using the ‘therapeutic landscape’ title like an explanatory or certifiable seal of approval (Andrews 2004), neither is this is about arguing that certain species of animals are intrinsically and inherently therapeutic. As Mol (2002, p. 150) describes, ‘mutual inclusion does not imply there are no frictions left [...] coexistence side by side, mutual inclusion, inclusion in tension, interference: the relations between objects enacted are complex’. It is important to pay attention to individual and situated relations.

2.7.2 Therapeutic Relations with Agricultural Animals

As Conradson (2005b, p. 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’. Thus I now briefly turn to discussing the links between agricultural
spaces and geographic ideas of ‘therapeutic spaces’. Agricultural spaces provide huge potential for exploring human-animal relationships (Riley 2011). Here, I am interested in how these human-animal relations can result in a production of new bodily capacities or the closing down of existing ones.

There are often strong links between agrarian and therapeutic practices (Stock and Brickell 2013). Indeed, Romig and Feidler (2008) suggest that the agrarian experience is often associated with a calm life and low stress – whether producers themselves would agree is, of course, questionable. However, Romig and Feidler’s point highlights that therapeutic spaces are constituted by more than simply the physical elements of the site – they are relationally configured by and through a simultaneous collection and connection of bodies, discourses, technologies, times, spaces, and modes of operation. Ideas and preconceptions about pastoral rural idylls become bound up in the formation of therapeutic geographies.

Domestication, in certain conceptualisations, is problematic, being that it relies on a dichotomy between nature and culture, wild and domesticated. However, I follow Lien (2015) in approaching domestication as a set of relational practices which enact biosocial formations of being together. A situated, transformative, mutual, embodied, open-ended, and multiple process, rather than an ordering one based on a singular narrative. 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. Lien (2015) also
draws on Evans-Pritchard's (1964, p. 36) attention to the ways in which symbiosis and mutuality are bound up within practices of domestication:

It has been remarked that the Nuer might be called parasites of the cow, but it might be said with equal force that the cow is a parasite of the Nuer, whose lives are spent in ensuring its welfare [...] In truth the relationship is symbiotic: cattle and men sustain life by their reciprocal services to one another. In this intimate symbiotic relationship men and beasts form a single community of the closest kind.

This returns to the idea (discussed on page 45) of how heterogeneous actants can produce opportunities and constraints for one another through relations of co-operation, symbiosis, parasitism, co-habitation, opportunism, and competition (Hinchliffe 2007). The ideas of parasitism, symbiosis, and mutual reciprocity expressed here provides a useful way to frame and interrogate the diversity of relations drawn together, highlighting the way in which therapeutic geographies are co-produced.

Most studies exploring the health benefits of human-animal relations have focussed on pet animals (Berget et al. 2008). Hassink (2002) notes that agricultural animals are less likely to be used to being handled and petted than these more traditional ‘therapy animals’. Further, the high standards associated with both animal welfare and food safety may create further barriers for utilising productive domestic animals in attempting to evoke therapeutic encounters (van Elsen et al. 2006). It is also worth remembering that the actuality of animal farming is far removed from the idyll, particularly when it comes to culling, and the highly visible life practices of animals (Philo 1995; Morgan and Cole 2011). However, agricultural animals represent opportunities for incorporating additional activities into therapeutic encounters (milking, riding, etc.) compared to more traditionally used ‘therapy animals’ such as cats and dogs, creating new relational configurations and bodily capacities. The different engagements and encounters produced by ‘agricultural’ animals
highlights that the analytical focus should be on individual human-animal relations, and their specific affects and capabilities. Animals are not a homogeneous source of therapy for humans.

Sperling and Decker (2007) suggest agricultural areas are likely to be viewed as therapeutic as they actively embody the production of food necessary for health. Food provides another useful lens through which to examine the idea of ‘therapeutic spaces’, and raises certain contestations when animals are considered – simultaneously friends and sources of food (Holloway 2001). Indeed, as Haraway (2003, p. 64) writes, ‘one does not eat one’s companion animals’, creating a level of tension surrounding the idea of ‘becoming therapeutic with’ agricultural animals destined for slaughter. Drawing on this tension, I now move to begin to consider how becoming entangled in ‘therapeutic’ relations affects animals.

2.8 Towards More-Than-Human Therapeutic Spaces

The ‘animal turn’ within scholarship (Wilkie 2013) has led to a reframing of animals from marginal objects to instead an approach which recognises animals as subjects. As discussed earlier (page 42), animals are individual experiential beings, actants possessing agency, capable of participating in relationships. To quote Bekoff (2000, p. 861), ‘current interdisciplinary research provides compelling evidence that many animals experience such emotions as joy, fear, love, despair, and grief’. Recognising animals as actants then involves going beyond simply recognising presence and agency, with non-humans co-producing therapeutic geographies, but also specifically considering animals’ experiences of these spaces. Foley (2012, p. 25), in his study of holy wells, spas, and baths as therapeutic spaces shares a brief historical anecdote of a case where animals were introduced to bathhouses, not for purposes of animal-assisted therapy for humans, but
rather ‘to provide them [the animals] with physical healing and spiritual healing’. There are questions here to ask around whether what constitutes a therapeutic space for humans is also therapeutic for non-humans. Foley’s (2015, p. 25) anecdote also reveals again the intricate ways in which non-human life is entangled and imbricated within the co-production of therapeutic geographies; these spaces are not, and never have been, purely human spaces.

Drawing on animal geography literature, and wider multispecies scholarship, leads me to critically question for whom exactly are these relations and spaces therapeutic? All beings, or simply (some) humans? What do animals get out of being involved in therapeutic practices and spaces? Although importantly, similarly to how not all humans will experience space in the same way, neither will all animals.

Animals are attempting to live their own lives (Philo and Wilbert 2000). Their life-practices are potentially in conflict with human conceptions and imaginations of ‘therapeutic spaces’. Animals are emergent companion species, both complicit in, and resistant to, the various therapeutic practices and spaces in which they are enmeshed (Lien 2015). Indeed, what for humans may be a place for an interspecies therapeutic encounter could easily be perceived as a prison for non-humans (Sorenson 2008).

At first, it may seem as though the very idea of attempting to conceptualise a space as a ‘therapeutic landscape’ is a purely human process. However, animals too are actively involved in processes of place making and world building (Philo and Wilbert 2000). As Lorimer (2006, p. 503) describes:

Among animals, the complex circuitry of material surfaces, too often truncated into mere range, distance, and destination, is a product of the
same selective acts of placemaking and negotiation that we choose to recognise as landscape.

Discussions of therapeutic relationships with animals mainly focus on the human experience of the encounter (Fine 2006; VanFleet and Faa-Thompson 2014). The framing of therapeutic affect is purely in relation to human needs and desires, with the human remaining central to any kind of multispecies ethics or encounters performed (Lorimer 2016a). This can result in a somewhat ‘imperialist’ attitude, with health being positioned as ‘just another resource to be harvested’ from non-humans (Malamud 2013). Malamud (2007) also discusses how animals can be injured from participating in what was a positive relationship from a human perspective. Considering animal-assisted-therapy practices, both Mallon (1994) and Barba (1995) have recognised that there is the potential that human participants may provoke or injure animals through aggressive behaviour, and that some animals may be unable to cope with excessive noise or activity. Many authors such as Haraway (2008) and Kellert (1996) write of the positives of interspecies sociality, but are such relationships always as good for the non-humans involved? Are therapeutic human-animal relations just one more form of the commodification of animal bodies?

It is worth reiterating that it is specific and individual non-humans involved in these spaces, each with their own life histories and experiences, changing their behaviours relationally in response to previous engagements with humans (Bear and Eden 2011). I discussed earlier (page 46) how negative past experiences with animals may result in different experiences for humans, the converse is also true – animals’ past experiences of humans can impact on their experiences and relationships with humans (Lorimer and Whatmore 2009). Gullo et al. (1998), in their study of cougars, raise the question of how animals perceive their relationships with humans. Drawing on their work, I move to consider similar questions within the context of therapeutic space and relations.
Hassink (2002) warns that a focus on optimising the welfare of human participants may result in a converse reduction on animal welfare. Indeed, Mallon (1994) suggests that it is ‘mastering’ and dominating an animal which results in therapeutic affects for humans. How does this anthropocentrism impact on animals’ experiences within emergent therapeutic spaces? Scholl and Demattio (2007) discuss how animals used on care farms should be socialised and trained. Does this result in a denial of agency and the exclusion and ejection of animals who do not behave to appropriate human standards? Scholl and Demattio (2007, p. 44) later describe how the Austrian Council for Agricultural Engineering and Rural Development ‘is preparing an examination system for farm animals which lists the requirements the farm animals have to meet to be admitted to animal assisted interventions’. The idea of assessment is not unusual in animal-assisted-therapy. The charity ‘Pets as Therapy’, for example, includes a similar ‘temperament test’ for dogs, including such questions as whether a dog ‘takes titbits gently’ and ‘is happy to be groomed’ (Pets As Therapy 2016). The lack of a similar assessment for human participants suggests that these practices are being constructed and performed to evoke health experiences for a solely human audience. Animals become relegated to a state of utility, a non-mutual relationship, rather than as co-beneficiaries of any positive affects. Furthermore, there are questions to be raised regarding what happens to the animals who fail to meet such examination requirements.

Returning briefly to the concept of zooeyia (the idea of positive health benefits from animals [page 45]), zooeyia specifically focusses on ‘the human health benefits from animals […] the positive impact on human health’ (Hodgson and Darling 2011, p. 189, emphasis added). The animal experience and any potential cross-species benefit of these relationships is silenced, with non-humans being ‘jettisoned as subjects of health in their
own right, being reaffirmed as utilitarian handmaidens’ (Hanrahan 2014, p. 38). Concepts are needed for recognising multispecies spaces of health which move beyond the anthropocentric duality of animals as either risks or benefits (Hanrahan 2014). Thus, here I move to affirm animals as individual subjective actants with their own lived experiences of emergent therapeutic spaces.

‘Therapeutic’ relations between species do not have to be limited to anthropocentric and utilitarian codings. Therapeutic affect can be mutually reciprocal between human and non-human. In their discussion of care farms, Leck et al. (2014, p. 314) suggest taking an approach that considers how care is co-produced to improve the wellbeing of all concerned, human and animal. Malamud (2013) suggests decentring humans in discussions of therapy animals and instead rejecting human exceptionalism and positioning humans as ‘service animals’ too. An approach which begins to question what therapeutic qualities and affects humans can provide to other species in a more mutualistic approach to symbiotic therapeutic affect. In the same way that dogs can be used to care and comfort humans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, humans can provide care and comfort to ex-battery hens (Jones 2011); the therapeutic use of other species does not necessarily need to be anthropocentric. Indeed, Braastad (2005) suggests that through increasing farm animals’ interaction with humans by engaging them within animal-assisted-therapy practices, animal welfare has the potential to improve as animals’ fear of humans is gradually reduced through processes of socialisation. On a physiological level, Messent (1982) has noted that the lowering of blood pressure experienced during animal-assisted-therapy has the potential to be mutually beneficial, with dogs also experiencing reduced blood pressure. Malamud (2013) argues that the non-human experience of an emotional bond between human and animal should not be overlooked either. There is an opportunity to draw on what Braidotti (2013, p. 60) describes as ‘zoe-centred
egalitarianism’, and engage in more equitable framings of relationships between human and non-human, exploring communities of interdependence with multiple others (see also Gorman [2017c]).

Applying a more-than-human approach to discussions of therapeutic geographies involves more than simply ‘letting animals back in’ (Wolch and Emel 1995). Instead, it is a project of unsettling the central role given to humans within academic discussions of ‘therapeutic spaces’ and developing a less anthropocentric one sided way of knowing and being (Buller 2013). A more-than-human approach to therapeutic spaces questions the place of animals in human lives, and the place of humans in animals’ lives (Lorimer 2010). Decentring the human opens up a valuable conceptual space for shifting the animal out of the cultural margins (Baker 1993) and allows research to attend to the more-than-human. This involves extending the notion of care to more-than-human relationships and initiating a more thorough exploration of modalities of sharing emergent therapeutic spaces with non-human others (Milligan and Wiles 2010; Doughty 2013). Within this thesis then, I move to attend to Milligan et al.’s (2007, p. 138) argument that the geography of care should extend beyond human boundedness to consider the relationship between animals, place, and care. They argue that such an approach offers a useful opportunity to link ‘ideas of wellbeing, and the potentially therapeutic relationship between places, non-human subjects and care’ (Milligan et al. 2007, p. 138).

‘Therapeutic landscapes’ are complex, multispecies spaces, containing messy and multiple entanglements of all sorts of different organisms, all with a diversity of different ways of living and being. Geographic discussions of therapeutic spaces cannot simply forget, or refuse to acknowledge the non-human actants that are present, within, and sharing these spaces. To quote Haraway (2015, p. 160), ‘with intense commitment and
collaborative work and play with other terrans, flourishing for rich multispecies assemblages that include people will be possible’. Haraway’s choice of words here highlights how interspecies relations can shape therapeutic opportunities; it is the ability to thrive and flourish that enables actants’ functionality and opportunities.

2.9 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 it possess that enact, define, and enable capacities and limits. This approach to conceptualising health offers a new way for geographers to critically engage with understanding how health comes to be dynamically and relationally constituted.

Places are not sterile and lifeless environments. Nor are they solely the reservation of human actants. Animals are full partners in worlding (Haraway 2008). The opportunities and constraints that emerge from place are (re)shaped by relations with animals. Yet, as I have discussed within this chapter, often within geographic discussions of health and place, animals are marginalised in their capacity to affect health. Lived encounters and relationships with animals are hidden away in broader conceptual categories. Drawing on more-than-human and animal geography literature, I have highlighted gaps in the existing geographic literature on the dynamics between health and place.

Thus here, 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. Therapeutic spaces thus emerge as co-produced, not static, fixed, or homogeneous spaces, but fluid, indeterminate, and multiple. Open and dynamic, constantly in the process of emergence.
An ongoing emergence co-constituted by the presence of heterogeneous actants. This relational approach, and a focus on ‘becoming’, creates new ways to critically explore ideas of therapeutic spaces, investigating the dependencies and co-existences through which spaces can be (de/re)territorialized as ‘therapeutic’.

My approach here offers new ways to think about the co-production of therapeutic spaces, and the roles of animals in affecting health opportunities in place. However, an attention to the more-than-human also involves paying attention to animals as subjects too, in order to more critically explore the relations at play within the emergence of healthful affects, and question how care for humans and animals can be brought together.

I now move to briefly contextualise the empirical settings wherein I explore how human-animal relations can come to define, enable, and enact what different actants may become regarding their capacity to affect and be affected.
3. Setting the Empirical Scene
3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces my empirical setting: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Here I provide a contextual background to CSA, including a discussion of the associated terminology, and how established literature has sought to classify and understand the system. I additionally move to examine the relationship between CSAs and health, exploring practices of ‘care farming’, and how this developing means of combining agriculture and ‘care’ has been conceptualised. Finally, this chapter highlights a tendency to side-line animals within discussions (and practices) of CSA.

3.2 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system of food production and distribution aiming to involve local communities in the growing and rearing of their food. CSA is often framed within the wider category of ‘alternative food networks’ (Schnell 2007), a broad term covering ‘emerging networks of producers, consumers, and other actors that embody alternatives to the more standardised industrial mode of food supply’ (Renting et al. 2003, p. 394).

CSA has been defined in the UK as ‘any food, fuel or fibre producing initiative where the community shares the responsibilities and rewards of production in a spirit of mutual trust and openness. Whether through ownership, investment, sharing the costs of production, or provision of labour’ (CSA Network UK 2015). CSA covers a wide range of different partnerships between consumers and producers; there are a broad array of different models of CSA and stakeholders involve themselves for a wide range of reasons. CSAs typically have goals to remake the food system into something more ‘economically and socially just, locally based, and environmentally sustainable’ (Schnell 2007, p. 551).
However, much of the academic and ‘grey’ literature on CSA is based on a North American CSA context, and there is a need to question the relevance of this for the UK CSAs which this thesis engages with. There are different geographies and networks at play (Goodman 2003). North American and European research on alternative food take slightly different thematic approaches. The former applies a more socio-political and activist context, with a heavy emphasis on consumption and justice. Contrastingly, the latter is more focussed on institutional change and engaging policymakers, taking a politico-economic approach and examining rural development (Maye et al. 2007).

CSA is a highly variable system, changing based on the needs of the community as well as the resources available. The Soil Association (2009) note that CSA is not an end product as such, but rather more a method of developing a local food system. There are a rich diversity of ways of practicing and being CSA – to quote Henderson (1998) ‘no two CSAs are alike’. Usually, consumers commit financially in advance to buy produce from a CSA farm (‘buying a share’). A ‘share’ is the CSA term for the food boxes they produce; CSA members purchase a ‘share’ of the harvest (Pilley 2001; Henderson and Van En 2007). CSA is slightly different from pure ‘subscription farming’, where the producer owes the consumer for what they have paid in advance (Tippins et al. 2002). Instead, those who join a CSA commit to share the ‘risk and reward of farming’, and will simply receive a share of whatever is produced, whether munificent or meagre (Pilley 2001; Henderson and Van En 2007). This upfront investment is used to cover the farm’s operating costs. Consumers will often have input and influence over what is grown. The farmer then supplies the members (shareholders) with boxes of produce.
CSAs can broadly be classified into two basic types: farmer-led, and consumer-led. Farmer-led CSA (or subscription CSA) is the ‘top-down’ approach to CSA, where an existing agriculturalist is the key instigator of the system and makes most of the management decisions. Members financially subscribe, but often have little other involvement. This is the most common form of CSA practiced in the USA, where almost 75% of projects are farmer-driven (Adam 2006). However, there is a grey area in differentiating these forms of CSA from simple box schemes (Adam 2006; Soil Association 2009). Consumer-led CSA (or shareholder CSA), on the other hand, is a more ‘bottom up’ approach, initiated by a community of people interested in CSA, or just ideas around local food or sustainability. This core group organise the subscriptions and work in partnership, or hire a farmer, to provide the CSA with produce. Land to grow the food is rented, purchased, or leased, and consumers tend to participate in the schemes much more closely, actively engaged and involved in the labour of food production. This consumer-driven CSA is the type most common in the UK (Adam 2006; Soil Association 2009). McFadden (2008) views CSA as existing on a continuum, with the more commercially oriented subscription farms at one pole and the more philosophically and community oriented CSAs at the other.

CSA is an evolving and changing practice, and there are a diverse range of forms of CSA, prompting problems for simple classification. Henderson (2010), for example, notes that it is subscription farming and box schemes which seem to be proving most popular in Europe rather than ‘true CSA’. Indeed, Volz et al. (2016) noted challenges in determining which initiatives within the alternative food movement to include in their recent ‘overview of community supported agriculture in Europe’, and call for more research into differentiating between CSA and related concepts.
In the UK, the Soil Association (2009) describes CSA as a ‘relatively new and evolving’ concept. The first CSA in the UK was set up in 1994, and since then, the model has mainly been driven and supported by the Soil Association through a series of feasibility studies and development projects (Volz et al. 2016). Research from 2011 found that CSA projects in England alone ‘work over 3,200 acres of land, count at least 5,000 trading members, feed at least 12,500 people, and have a combined annual turnover of over £7,000,000’ (Saltmarsh et al. 2011, p. 4). However, CSA remains less widespread in the UK than other forms of alternative food networks, with farmers markets and box schemes proving more popular and well known (Volz et al. 2016). At the time of Saltmarsh et al.’s (2011) research, the number of CSAs had been growing rapidly, with over 50 new projects having been set up in the previous three years.

Recent work by Volz et al. (2016) describes 80 CSA initiatives active in the UK. However, McFadden (2008) notes that accounting for CSA is difficult, as many farms operate ‘privately and quietly’, going unnoticed in statistics. Furthermore, the wide range of different types of CSA, and the problems of defining what is, and what is not, a CSA, as well as the quickly changing and evolutionary nature of CSA schemes make obtaining accurate information about the uptake of CSA difficult. Pilley (2001) also blames the grassroots nature of CSA initiatives for creating problems with estimating numbers, suggesting ‘it is likely that many more exist than we account for’ (Pilley 2001, p. 9). Similarly, and more recently, McEwan (2015) quotes an interview with the UK’s CSA Network (a co-operative organisation aiming to promote and grow the CSA model): ‘no one really knows how many CSA schemes currently operate because they spring up and then disappear without ever announcing themselves’.
Much of the existing literature on CSA, and alternative food networks more broadly, has examined how exclusivity and elitism is often emergent within local food projects (Sage 2003; Macias 2008; Carolan 2011). CSAs tend to primarily attract affluent, educated, white people (Hinrichs and Kremer 2002; Allen 2008; Guthman 2008); in one US based case study Oberholtzer (2004) found that 89% of CSA members had higher education qualifications as well as incomes nearly double the state average, suggesting there is an element of privilege to engaging in such alternative systems. Indeed, in Guthman’s (2008, p. 393) work on CSA and AFNs, one respondent stated that attracting low-income consumers ‘may discourage the high-end consumers that we cater to’. Additionally, the geographic imaginary often associated with CSAs and their desire for a return to an agrarian past is one that is far more easily romanticised by white groups than others (Guthman 2004) and erases some of the explicitly racist practices which have shaped the production of food systems both past and present (Guthman 2008). Kellert (1996) suggests that for some groups, ideas of being ‘close to the land’ are associated with and remembered as symbols of exploitation and exclusion. As a result, Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) note the importance of perceptions and reputations of alternative food networks like CSAs, and question how comfortable do marginalised groups feel in accessing niche food sources – CSAs are often coded as ‘white’ spaces, which people of colour must in a sense, overcome, to participate (Guthman 2008). These debates are certainly worth bearing in mind when considering human-animal relations; animals are deeply tied in to human social and power structures (Birke 2012). People’s experiences with ‘nature’ and animals can reinforce social difference and power-relations (Panelli 2010). Animals and animality have been a ‘crucial reference point’ in constructing socio-spatial difference and hierarchy, and informing class, race, and gender politics (Anderson 1995). I’ll return to discussing the relationships between CSAs and animals shortly, firstly however, I move to discuss the links these farms have with ideas of health and care.
3.3 CSA, Health, and Care

Although not specifically designated as ‘places of health’, CSA farms are often connected with the production of health benefits. Many of the farms claim to offer improved health from eating the local (and often organic) produce grown, taking part in physical activity and volunteering on the farm, or simply being outdoors with ‘nature’ (Cooley 1996; Stagl 2002). Wells and Gradwell (2001, p. 117) describe CSA as a food system characterised by partnership and respect formed around an enactment of ‘caring practices’. Indeed, many CSAs actively attempt to create ways for their farms to provide some form of ‘therapeutic’ benefit, often working in partnership with external organisations to invite people onto their farms (Charles 2011).

As Charles (2011, p. 267) describes, many CSAs actively attempt to ‘involve people who could benefit therapeutically’ in their practice. In this way, CSAs can be seen to come to function as ‘care farms’, a form of farming combining agricultural production with health, social, and educational services. Care farming is defined as ‘the use of commercial farms and agricultural landscapes as a base for promoting mental and physical health through normal farming activity’ (Hine et al. 2008a, p. 247). It involves utilising an agricultural setting to promote and maintain health, caring for different groups of people in what Hassink et al. (2010) describe as part of the wider shift from institutional to socialised and community care. A shift in focus from care in the community, to care by the community (Milligan 2003). As Milligan (2014) describes, such shifts have been seen to bring new actors into the care network. In the context of care farming, these new actants include animals.

Research on care farming rarely discusses what ‘care’ entails. Care is structured and practiced in different ways. It can generally be understood as a provision of practical or
emotional support realised through a ‘complex network of actants and actions with multidirectional flows of activity and connections’ (Milligan 2014). Care is ‘movement towards another person in a way that has the potential to facilitate or promote their wellbeing’ (Conradson 2003, p. 508); though care is not specifically person to person, but can be between humans and non-humans. To draw on Fox (2013, p. 505), care is a relation which ‘may supply its recipient with new capacities to ‘become-other’ and thereby resist the constraints of illness, disability or ageing’. Though equally, care relationships have the potential to become constraining as well as enabling (Fox and Ward 2008). ‘Caring for’ is not necessarily rewarding and comforting (Puig de la Bellacasa 2012). Importantly, drawing on Milligan’s (2014, 2015) recognition of care as multidirectional, it is a relation which does not just affect the recipient, but also transforms, enables, and constrains the care-giver too. Relations are altered and challenged by the process of caring (Milligan 2015). Similarly to the discussions of health on page 14, care is experienced in spatial ways; where care occurs plays an important role in the experience of care, but equally practices and performances of care shape the places in which care is experienced (Milligan 2005, 2014).

Care farming aims to create an atmosphere which is framed as being ‘closer to normal life’ than conventional spaces of care (Hassink et al. 2010; de Krom and Dessein 2013), with people previously pathologized and institutionalised able to live more ‘ordinary’ and empowered lives (Kraftl 2014). Elings (2012) suggests that this arises from the notion that there is less stigma attached to agricultural sites compared to traditional healthcare facilities such as institutions, care homes, or rehabilitation centres. This simultaneous ‘alternative normality’ creates modes of engaging those who may be ‘wary’ of becoming involved or enrolled within more conventional therapeutic places.
Often having a focus on the vulnerable, care farming is frequently linked to creating a fairer distribution of health and wellbeing opportunities, and enhancing people’s capabilities through education and learning (Elings and Hassink 2008). Often the care activities are parallel to the commercial agricultural activities, rather than embedded within, as fully integrating social care can be a challenge, negatively affecting agricultural efficiency and profitability (Hassink 2002). These challenges result in there being many different types of ‘care farm’ existing, regarding the extent of ‘farming’ and ‘care’ that they offer. This is often influenced by the context, ‘client’ group, and type of agricultural enterprise in question, resulting in a spectrum of care farming ranging between a focus on agricultural (and economic) production, to a focus on the pure provision of care, with most farms occupying a middle ground (Hine et al. 2008a, b).

The actual activities undertaken as part of care farming are frequently under discussed within literature with authors regularly conceptualising what occurs as ‘agricultural activity’ or ‘farm-work’¹¹ (Gorman and Cacciatore 2017). To quote Leck et al. (2014, p. 323), ‘uncertainty persists about the range of activities that care farming encompasses’. Some farms provide specific therapies and interventions (Hine et al. 2008b), aiming to provide a structured programme of farming-related activities, combined with a series of goals. This often occurs as part of a regular and structured care, rehabilitation, therapeutic, or educational programme, via day care, supported workplaces, and residential places (Elings and Hassink 2008). Other farms involved in the practice take a more passive approach, simply inviting various vulnerable groups onto the farm to make use of a space that has the potential to be therapeutic.

¹¹ Kraftl (2014, pp. 56-57) provides a useful exception to this general trend.
The uptake of these practices is difficult to confirm, again, due to the level of informality in the way many of these enterprises operate. There is no formal registration process, rather, many care farms develop a personal relationship with some form of local commissioning organisation. Haubenhofer et al. (2010) provide estimates of 1000 care farms in the Netherlands, a ‘few hundred’ in Austria, Belgium, Italy, and Norway. More recent approximations by Care Farming UK (2016) suggest around 240 care farms in the UK, with 8400 people attending these farms for some sort of support on a weekly basis.

There is little dialogue between the extensive literature on therapeutic landscapes (or the related framework of ‘landscapes of care’ [Milligan and Wiles 2010]) and the developing care farm literature\textsuperscript{12} (though academic writing on care farming is relatively sparse [Hassink et al. 2012], something which I hope to address within this thesis). There is much that geography can offer in understanding care farming. As Leck et al. (2014, p. 314) describe, it is ultimately the idea of ‘the farm’ that is ‘the foundation stone that supports a wide range of service users who are provided with opportunities to develop transferable skills in a safe, restorative, and uplifting work space’. While care farming frequently involves aspects of animal-assisted therapy, green exercise, and therapeutic horticulture, the complex interactions and relations between these, as well as the specific place based context of a ‘commercial farm and agricultural landscape’ (Hine et al. 2008a) brings additional relationships and therapeutic potentials to the fore. The view that emerges from the literature on care farming suggests that care farms are definitive consolidated things. However, drawing on the arguments within Chapter 2, I instead move to consider care farm\textit{ing}, as a set of relationships and practices emergent in agricultural spaces that can produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones.

\textsuperscript{12}Leck et al.’s (2014) study being a noticeable exception.
Despite these links with ideas and practices of health and therapy, besides Charles’ (2011) work, there has been little engagement within CSA literature with ideas of health. Similarly, while there has been interest within health geography in exploring gardening (Milligan et al. 2004; Pitt 2014; Meijering et al. 2016), this has not branched out to more farm based spaces. Thus, I offer additional original contributions in drawing these themes and literatures together, developing ways of understanding the relations between spaces of food and agriculture and health, and how CSA spaces can affect healthful relations.

In exploring CSA, I move to attend to calls raised by Andrews and Kearns (2005, p. 2711) for health geographies to ‘incorporate ordinary and over-looked locations’ and grant attention ‘to the places that are unintentionally ‘othered’ in scholarship’. Thinking about ‘unintentional othering’, I now move to discuss how literature on CSA has tended to overlook animals.

3.4 CSA and Animals

Despite the wide body of literature on CSA which has explored the system from both the perspectives of its workings (Cone and Myhre 2000; Groh and McFadden 2000; Sharp et al. 2002; Schnell 2007; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007) and the associated benefits and attractions to participation (Cooley 1996; Cooley and Lass 1998; Oberholtzer 2004; Cox et al. 2008; Bougerara et al. 2009), the place of animals in such systems is generally left neglected. Horticultural forms of CSA have dominated research despite many CSA projects farming and keeping animals simultaneously to vegetable cultivation. Indeed, there are even CSAs formed solely around livestock.

While horticulture has been at the core of the CSA model since its development, the number of CSAs keeping animals is growing as projects and consumers are embracing
the model as a means of access to a greater variety of produce. According to Volz et al. (2016), 38% of CSAs in Europe offer eggs, 29% meat, 28% honey, and 26% dairy products. Indeed, in the UK, the CSA Network reports a growth in CSA initiatives by ‘existing farmers, often meat producers, who have land available and are looking at CSA as a way to involve the community and diversify their products’ (Volz et al. 2016, p. 114).

For many farms, animals are crucial to maintaining the everyday fabric of an understanding of ‘the farm’, key co-constituents of place-making and experience-producing (Cloke and Perkins 2005). I move to develop an understanding of the place of animals within CSAs, critically discussing the contested and emerging roles ascribed to non-human actants, and exploring the motivations for the inclusion of animals within these community based food networks. The multiple models of CSA and diversity of subscribers means that the animals involved are often portrayed as having a multitude of different roles, existing as sources of food (meat), producers of food (honey, eggs, dairy, etc.), or sources of a (therapeutic) animal encounter. Animals’ positions often fluidly shift between these, or fulfil multiple roles simultaneously: friend one day, food the next.

The inattention which has been paid towards non-human actants within the CSA systems is another case where Wolch and Emel’s (1995) call for ‘bringing the animals back in’ to geographical discourse does not appear to have had much success. Most of the literature on CSA (both academic and grey), conceptualises these schemes as being purely horticultural spaces. I, however, wish to argue that CSA spaces are far from being purely based around fruit and vegetables, but are instead regularly co-constituted by a diverse and lively arrangement of human-animal relationships.

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13 As a comparison, 94% offer vegetables, 58% offer fruit, and 25% offer bread.
3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has elicited connections between the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2, and the empirical arena where I apply these concepts. Like discussions of therapeutic landscapes, there has been a lack of attention to the role and presence of animals within literature on community food networks. I move to address such knowledge gaps, and explore how and why CSA projects seek to engage with animals. I have highlighted that, through an engagement in ‘care farming’, human-animal relations on CSAs are frequently embedded within discourses of health and care, with many of the groups utilising non-human life to expand people’s functioning and opportunities. Having introduced the empirical setting wherein I situate this thesis, I now move to explain my methodological approach, and how I engaged with CSAs in my exploration of the co-production of therapeutic geographies.
4. Methodologies
4.1 Introduction

This research involved critically interrogating the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic spaces’ and engaging with their more-than-human constitutive elements. I thus adopted a variety of ethnographic methods to explore the more-than-human relationships that emerge within Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms. These methods were chosen to produce understandings of the context of animals within this niche form of alternative agriculture, as well as how human-animal relations can realise the emergence of a ‘therapeutic’ space, (re)shaping the bodily capacities of different actants. The study drew on interviews with representatives from CSAs, to explore the roles allotted to animals on farms, and interviewees’ experiences of these specific animals. I then combined these interviews with participant observation to explore the everyday lived human-animal relationships emergent within CSA.

This chapter serves to tell the story of my research; how and why it happened, and how I went about it. Here I give insight and justification into the way I practiced ‘data’ collection, the methodological tools I employed, and the specific ways in which such practices were mobilised within my research. I utilise extracts from my interview research and fieldnotes, as well as a few photographs\textsuperscript{14}, to recount the tale of my explorations, illustrating my choices, and illuminating the methodological challenges I encountered.

I also question and explore how different elements within the research process have co-constituted the worlds I have been studying. This involves unpacking the homogeneity of

\textsuperscript{14} While photographs and visual methods offer opportunities for different forms of representation within ethnographic research, particularly for animal geography research (Bear et al. 2016), due to the potential for vulnerable groups to be present within the farms, and the issues of the potential surveillant nature of photography (Prins 2010), I chose not to adopt visual methods as a major approach for exploring human-animal relations. Instead these photographs serve more as illustrative accompaniments, to give readers a sense of the places I was in, and the animals I was with.
certain social science methods. For example, I explore how the smartphone on which I took my fieldnotes came to influence the setting and sequences I was watching. Similarly, I move to pay attention to how my interviews became mediated by a variety of more-than-human relations coming together to form the ‘interview assemblage’ (Honan 2014).

I begin by discussing my interview practices, my systems of piloting and recruitment, as well as the interviews themselves, and the post-interview processes through which I transmuted discussions into ‘data’. Moving to comment on the observation stage of my fieldwork, I discuss how and why I chose a specific farm to observe, and the style and practice of ethnographic observation which I followed. I then move to consider some of the power relationships that existed during my research and my positionality as a researcher. Finally, I conclude by discussing how I undertook the analysis of the ‘data’ that I collected.

4.2 Asking About Animals

Within this section I explain the story of my interview research, discussing why I chose to conduct interviews, who I chose to speak with, and why and how I chose these groups of people, as well as how I practiced interviewing.

I conducted 55 interviews in total: 28 with representatives from CSA projects that incorporated livestock; 13 with representatives from CSA projects without animals; and 14 with representatives from external organisations that were identified as having relevant contributions to make to the research. A full schedule of interviewees can be found in Appendix B, on page 325. These interviews were audio recorded, following the participants’ consent, and later transcribed. An additional 10 projects (6 with animals, 4 without) responded to a set of written questions via email.
Interviews allow researchers to capture how participants themselves frame and understand aspects of their experiences. The interview is perhaps the most widely employed method within qualitative research, and has been employed extensively within geographical research (Longhurst 2010). Interviews are capable of generating both broad cultural consensus and personal and private understandings, attitudes, and feelings within a single conversational exchange. Rather than an interview granting a researcher access to some externalised truths to be uncovered or ‘mined’, interviews grant a researcher access to particular perspectives, and situated and contextual knowledges. Interviewing is a process of becoming involved in a co-production of knowledge with research participants (Kvale 2008; Edwards and Holland 2013).

While more-than-human research can trouble the interview as a method, Dowling et al. (2016) argue that conventional methodological approaches open generative possibilities for more-than-human scholarship. Rather than jettisoning the interview, it becomes about re-imagining interviewing, and importantly, the subsequent analysis of interview data, through a more-than-human lens. In this way, using interviews as a means of exploring the intense, affective, emotional, and embodied relationships between heterogeneous actants, and revealing the agency of more-than-human elements in the co-production of certain forms (Dowling et al. 2016). Indeed, 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 relationships which humans have with them. Indeed, everyday encounters are the most telling as they are not extraordinary events (Haraway 2008). Interviews with individuals currently embedded in long-term relationships with
specific animals can shed light on the practices and relationships at play within multispecies communities (Johnston 2008).

My first phase of data collection thus involved conducting semi-structured interviews with representatives from CSA farms across the UK. These interviews sought to discover the context of the farms, the roles ascribed to the animals, and how participants viewed their relationships and encounters with animals. I also wanted to discover to what extent the farms viewed themselves and their animals as having some form of therapeutic affect, and what, if any, links they made to health. A sample interview guide can be found in Appendix A, on page 322. As Patton (1990, p. 278) describes:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. [...] The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.

Rather than purely unstructured interviews, I opted for semi-structured interviews to generate an element of focus, allowing my interviews to focus specifically on the animal and wellbeing elements of the farming projects. While semi-structured interviews involve a pre-prepared schedule of questions, they remain characterised by their flexibility, discursiveness, and open-ended nature. This flexibility provided the opportunity for organic questioning and a conversational flow. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to pursue topics which are of interest and value to them, and discuss what they view as important, while allowing the researcher to explore emergent ideas as the conversation progresses (Arksey and Knight 1999; Bryman 2001).
As noted by Patton (1990) in the quote used earlier (page 79), interviews also allow a researcher access to issues resistant to observation. Interviews can quickly cover a wider breadth of topics than what may be possible during participant observation, discussing historical contexts, rather than just what is currently observable. Interviews have the potential to be less intrusive than in-depth ethnographical observation. As a result, this allows the recruitment of a wider number of participants who may be put off from entering into protracted research arrangements (Arksey and Knight 1999; Bryman 2001). Interviews became a way of allowing me access without needing to take up large amounts of my participants’ time. Indeed, several of the CSA projects I interviewed had specific policies not to allow researchers to visit the farm, as they could not afford the time input, as Hannah, a CSA farmer in England, describes:

_We get a lot of research enquiries so we have to be careful how much time we put into them (sorry – running a CSA initiative is an economically marginal activity, so we have to stay focussed!) [...] we are inundated with requests for visits, so nominally on our website we charge 50 bob, it’s a polite way of saying, go away! Sorry to be said!_

Given this, I move here to discuss briefly how I found my participants, and to whom I decided to speak.

4.2.1 Piloting

Before beginning my fieldwork, I obtained ethical approval from Cardiff University School of Planning and Geography’s Research Ethics Committee. My research was informed by the Economic and Social Research Council’s (2012) six key principles of ethical research. Participants gave informed consent, and I ensured they were understanding of

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15 Now the School of Geography and Planning.
the purpose of the research, their (voluntary) participation and role, and how their confidentiality would be maintained.

I initially conducted pilot interviews with three animal based CSAs\(^\text{16}\), to assess how effectively the interview would work and whether the type of information being sought would be obtained (Berg 2004). The information from this pilot work was recorded, and proved useful in developing the research further, as some of the quotes in this section highlight. I chose three CSAs with distinct practices and forms: a mixed horticulture and meat CSA in Wales; a meat and dairy CSA with no horticulture in England; and a solely horticultural CSA in England that utilised animals for labour rather than food. Piloting allowed me to ensure that my questions were relevant enough to explore the diversity of roles allotted to animals on CSA farms. These pilot interviews enabled me to identify how people responded to my questioning and take steps to adjust my schedule of questions accordingly, for example, reflecting the multiple ways in which CSAs came to involve themselves in various ‘caring practices’ (Wells and Gradwell 2001):

* Rich: I was just wondering if you could describe the therapeutic stuff you do quickly?
  * Dan: Yeah, well at the moment it’s pretty basic, we’re doing that, I don’t know if you call that therapeutic, we’re just running volunteer sessions for those groups.
  * Rich: Which groups?
  * Dan: A homeless project, a mental health group, young offenders have signed up to it, but I don’t think there’s been any young offenders in those groups so far, coz they’re a mixed group.

Interviewing Dan made me realise that many CSA groups simply saw themselves as providing volunteering opportunities, rather than explicitly ‘mobilising farming practices as a way of promoting mental and physical health’ (Hassink et al. 2010) or conceptualising

\(^{16}\) CSA schemes that I was already aware of, from previous work.
themselves as a distinctively ‘therapeutic space’. I altered my interview approach to engage more with the practices and actions taking place and learn more about the different conceptualisations of human-animal relations, rather than focussing specifically on pre-conceived notions of therapeutic practices.

Similarly, when speaking to Logan during these pilot interviews about his goats, chickens and pigs, it became apparent that issues of breed and an animal’s heritage were a large and important part of CSA groups’ engagement with animals:

*Rich: What animals do you have on the farm? Is it goats, chickens, pigs and bees?*
*Logan: Yes that’s right, half of the goats are milk animals. We’ve got a mixture of pure Saanen, and some Anglo-Nubian crosses, Anglo-Nubian is a mix of a British and Indian and African, brown and long ears, and our Saanens are a white, come from the Saanen valley in Switzerland, they’re sort of world record milk production animals, a lot of milk, but a bit thinner, less butter fat, the Nubians have more butter fat, better for cheese making.*

Based on this, I built a specific question into my interview schedule inquiring about the breeds of animals on the farms, and how these had come to be selected and chosen. These amendments proved useful, prompting interesting discussions during interviews as a result. The role of particular breeds in allowing CSAs to perform discourses of localism and tradition is something I specifically consider later on in Chapter 5 (see page 158).

4.2.2 Who to speak to?

Following the piloting process, I aimed to conduct interviews with the majority\(^\text{17}\) of animal-based CSA projects currently operating in the UK. As with many pieces of research,\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{17}\) Or indeed, potentially all. Given that CSA is a niche model of food production, and animal based projects are a minority compared to the more common horticultural projects, this looked to be achievable.
choosing who to speak to and obtaining access were initial challenges. For my research, a challenge was that a definitive list of CSA projects currently operating in the UK did not exist at that time. The Soil Association was maintaining a database of UK based CSAs, but this endeavour ceased in March 2012 (Soil Association 2014), remaining online and accessible until early 2015, before being removed completely. As I discussed in Chapter 3, ‘no-one really knows’ how many CSA schemes there are (McEwan 2015) (see page 66). Cataloguing CSAs is a difficult task due to the diversity of ways with which the term is used (see discussions on page 65). There is confusion and spill-over between similar enterprises such as ‘community farms’, ‘city farms’, ‘food co-ops’, ‘transition town projects’, ‘landsharing schemes’, and other trends within local food initiatives. Indeed, as I would find out during my interviews, for some groups CSA meant a very specific thing, as Stephen, the co-ordinator for several CSAs in England explains:

To me, a CSA is about a community supporting an existing agriculturalist, rather than getting engaged with agriculture.

For others like Albert, founder of a biodynamic CSA in England, what defined a CSA was very much in relation to what it was not, situating the groups’ practices in contestation to other forms of alternative food networks:

I would tend to call a CSA a place where people are actually having a kind of subscription for supporting the farm, and then getting their veg, you know, and they're paying a monthly standing order and that’s supporting the farm, rather than a box scheme, where people are just buying boxes like in Riverford\textsuperscript{18} or whatever.

\textsuperscript{18} Riverford is a national veg-box scheme delivering around 47,000 boxes a week to homes around the UK. It is often spoken of as a threat to CSA, or an attempt at capitalizing the CSA model at the expense of an actual connection between consumer and producer. A recent article in the New York Times by Moskin (2016) summarises similar views with similarly competing schemes in the US: ‘the presence of a middleman between the farmer and the customer is precisely what traditional C.S.A.s are designed to avoid’.
Others were less concerned with a fixed identity, and more concerned with the practices and actions taking place, such as Jon, founder of a CSA in Wales, ‘I suppose our community group, doing its own thing, looking after sheep, in some way is a form of CSA’. Indeed, for Rosa, founder of a CSA in England, the association of CSA only came much later:

> It actually started off with a conversation between me and George in the pub, ended up setting up a CSA before we even knew what a CSA was! I ended up doing a bit of research, and next time I saw him, I said ‘do you know what we're doing George, we're doing a community supported agriculture scheme’, he goes ‘bloody hell!’.

Some groups even rejected the need for a singular definition of what practicing CSA was, embracing a more situated and fluid approach to understanding CSA:

> You know actually, there probably isn't an overriding model that you can use, because the point of it is that it works in your community, and all communities are different, they have different amounts of land, different kinds of people, different support, you know, different amounts of money involved, so, you know, yeah, yeah they all will be different, and I think groups, just sort of evolve depending on what their members want really, you know and that’s sort of, well that’s the way that we’ve gone. [Ruth, founder of a CSA in England]

> I think CSA, it’s very in evolution, very in flux, you know the danger is you set up too clearly sort of defining what you’re dealing with, it’s much more fluid I think, it’s all a changing. It's ongoing, it's so ongoing in its evolution, we don’t know really where we are, we’re riding the surf as it were. [Antony, board member of the CSA Network]

There are a multiplicity of ways of practicing and becoming a CSA. CSAs are relationally co-constituted, not fixed universal forms. My sampling approach thus involved working with projects that self-defined as CSAs, respecting participants’ views and understanding of their practice, rather than trying to force an outside definition or typology on ways of doing local food. For example, one group whom I contacted initially, having found them listed on the Soil Association’s old CSA database replied to me explaining that:
We don’t actually run ourselves as a CSA, we are a basic co-op. I’m happy to help you out with more info if the group is a relevant model for your research, but as I said, we don’t run as a CSA and don’t consider ourselves one. [Melissa, chairperson of a Food Co-Op in England]

Though the group’s activities could be considered as a ‘consumer-led’ approach to practicing CSA\(^{19}\), I was keen to follow Harper (1992, p. 147), who argues for utilising participants’ own definitions and understandings of the limits of their communities and networks. I was curious to explore how groups that defined themselves as ‘doing CSA’ allotted roles to animals, and how this idea of ‘being CSA’ affected certain kinds of practices, particularly concerning ideas of ‘health’.

4.2.3 Finding Participants

I began by establishing a skeletal database of UK based farms that claimed an association as being, practicing, or utilising CSA, via a variety of sources. Though slightly dated, lists of CSAs curated by The Soil Association (Soil Association 2014), The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (Federation of City Farms and Gardens 2014), and The Community Supported Agriculture Network UK (CSA Network UK 2014), served as my starting point. I then used social media websites (Facebook and Twitter), in-depth search engine requests, and an element of ‘snowball sampling’\(^{20}\) to develop a more concise database of livestock based CSAs\(^{21}\).

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\(^{19}\) Refer to page 65 for difference between consumer-led and farmer-led styles of practicing CSA.

\(^{20}\) Using one contact to help recruit another contact, who in turn can potentially put you in touch with another contact (Valentine 1997).

\(^{21}\) This database has since been used by various organisations (The Community Supported Agriculture Network UK, Farms Not Factories) to better understand the growth of livestock based CSA projects.
My initial plan had been to only interview representatives from currently running CSA projects. However, I realised there was also value to be gained from interviewing defunct and historic animal-CSAs. Specifically, to gain insight into why the project had ceased to exist, and whether the animal element had been a significant factor for the scheme’s death. Drawing on historical sources and archival materials within geographic research is well established (Ogborn 2010). However, historical sources can take many forms, and there are opportunities for geographers to increasingly engage with, and make use of, digital archives. Emerging digital media and online worlds can ‘extend the field’, producing additional insight (Sanjek and Tratner 2015). I therefore engaged in a level of ‘digital archival work’, utilising The Internet Archive’s ‘wayback machine’22 to access archived versions of webpages where those pages had been removed from the Internet (see Figure 1).

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By engaging in this ‘digital archival work’, I established contact with four animal CSA projects which no longer ran, and gained valuable insight into the fluid nature of animal based alternative food networks. Here I saw what Cox et al. (2008) described as a ‘graduation effect’. An occurrence where CSA members come to take additional ownership of their food system and grow their own food directly. This ‘graduation’ often leads to a collapse of the original group and project if it is core and founding members that ‘graduate’ in this way, as Annmarie, founder of a now defunct meat CSA in England, explains:

*I suppose in some ways I've focussed inwards [...] because we've got chickens here and things like that, I don't feel that same need, I suppose, to connect.*
As well as historic projects, my snowballing approach meant I also interviewed representatives from recently founded and emerging CSA projects to discuss their aims and aspirations. With these new groups, I was particularly interested in what they saw as any future roles to be allotted to animals on their farms.

I conducted 27 interviews with representatives from animal based CSA projects in the UK. These CSAs ranged from more typical livestock farming CSAs, to apicultural CSAs, and game-meat CSAs, as well as CSAs keeping animals for therapeutic or labour purposes. The full diversity of human-animal relationships emergent within CSA farms is discussed within Chapter 5. Participants were very forthcoming and amenable to being interviewed. CSA, at least in more recent years, and in a UK context, has been an under-researched phenomenon. Those involved are keen to advocate the model – which obviously, requires reflection during analysis.

Research is rarely a straightforward or directly linear process however. During these interviews with representatives from animal based CSA farms, I became aware of a need to speak to those CSAs that remained purely horticultural too. I wanted to discuss their reasons for a lack of livestock, investigating what (if any) conscious decisions had been made by the community groups to refrain from engagement in animal farming. I was also interested in how CSAs without animals engaged with ideas of health, to see how important human-animal relationships are made out to be in their discourse around ‘caring practices’ (Wells and Gradwell 2001). I thus started a second phase of semi-structured

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Although the focus of my research was UK based CSA, I also interviewed one project based in Spain given that the project supplies to UK markets, and a project in the Republic of Ireland, which (at the time of writing) was the only example of an animal CSA in the Republic (at least, that I was able to find evidence of).
interviews with representatives from CSA farms that claimed not to involve animals in their CSA schemes, and practiced only fruit and vegetable growing.

I conducted 14 of these interviews, using the database of CSA farms that I had created in the earlier stages of my research. This turned out to be a useful exercise. Quite often I would spend the first half hour of an interview with a representative from a ‘horticultural’ CSA telling me that they ‘had no animals’. Only for them to later mention that they did have a couple of bee-hives, or actively engaged with wildlife, or game. This level of amnesia in relation to non-humans highlights that human attention is primarily drawn to large and familiar mammalian species, with wider populations of insect and undomesticated life that co-habit certain spaces rendered invisible (Ginn 2013). As I will go on to discuss in Chapter 5, CSA spaces are far from being solely based around fruit and vegetables, but are instead regularly co-constituted by a diverse and lively arrangement of human-animal relationships that go beyond a positioning of ‘animal as food’. There is no clear dichotomous split between animal CSAs and horticultural CSAs.

Emergent from my interviewing of representatives from CSAs, my research then snowballed into interviewing 14 external organisations. These were mainly with groups that were identified by my participants as having potentially relevant contributions to make to the research. Often these were organisations which were linked more directly to promoting and developing CSA as a model of alternative agriculture (the Soil Association, the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, etc.). I was interested as to how these organisations conceptualised the roles of animals within a CSA approach, and the links that they saw across the sector between health, place, and animals.
Others were conducted with representatives from organisations I met during my later participant observation. This included organisations (local authority schemes, a college, and a charity) involved in bringing vulnerable groups onto the CSAs to benefit from what they perceived to be a therapeutic space, for example, the groups Dan mentioned, in the quote I used earlier on page 81.

My reasons for choosing to interview people more directly associated with the farms, rather than people visiting the farms for therapeutic purposes was in order to focus on the broader picture of the human-animal relations taking place on the farm. Discussions of therapeutic spaces must consider the wider web of relations within which encounters in place occur (Conradson 2005b). Additionally, I wanted to avoid an approach which resulted in overly medicalising the people who were visiting the farms – and the farms themselves – by focussing on those who had been sent to a specific ‘therapeutic space’. Working directly with farmers offered the best route into exploring how and why the animals were utilised in certain ways, how they became involved in ‘caring practices’, and what was done to the animals, and the animals’ spaces, as a result. However, this did mean bearing in mind during the analysis that the ways in which these places (and the human-animal relations developed within) affected visitors to the farms was inevitably shaped by the interpretations of the farmer (or other CSA representative). This created another incentive for me to additionally mobilise participant observation alongside my interviews, in order to pick up the more emergent everyday experiences of visitors to the farms through informal conversations and ‘witnessing’ (Dewsbury 2003). Participant observation is something I will return to shortly (page 98 onwards), however, having discussed how I found and selected who I spoke to, I move to briefly comment on the medium by which I spoke to my participants.
4.2.4 Interview Media

I chose to use a mixture of face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, and online synchronous interviews (using Skype). 55 semi-structured interviews were conducted via these means, usually lasting for an hour at a time. Where participants could not commit, or were unwilling, for either a face-to-face, telephone, or online interview, they were instead offered a chance to respond to a set of written questions via email. Email interviews create a different style of response, as participants can respond asynchronously, in a written rather than spoken form, and spend time thinking and editing their responses. However, this fall-back position of email interviews created a mechanism for the retention of additional participants and their input into the research; thus, on top of the 55 semi-structured interviews, 10 projects replied to written questions. A full schedule of interviewees can be found in Appendix B, on page 325.

There is often a hesitance to move away from the ‘gold standard’ of face-to-face interviewing (McCoyd and Kerson 2006). However, numerous authors have demonstrated that telephone and online mediums of conducting semi-structured interviews still allow for the collection of rich and rigorous data (Hanna 2012; Deakin and Wakefield 2013; Janghorban et al. 2014). Indeed, Holt (2010) argues that the lack of ability to rely on visual cues forces clearer articulation and richer description.

Offering participants a choice of medium disturbs some of the usual power structures associated with interviewing, where the researcher normally takes control of the process (Holt 2010). Telephone and online interviews also allow a researcher to access a more geographically dispersed range of participants, without compromising a project’s feasibility. Technologically mediated interviews in this way can also be more convenient for participants and easier to re-arrange, reducing drop-out and withdrawal rates within
research. Using technologies such as Skype allows a researcher to benefit from aspects of both face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews, providing the capability for synchronous exchanges without fully losing visual and interpersonal cues. Technologies such as Skype can also influence power relations between researchers and participants by offering participants the right to withdraw at the click of a button. Skype also allows interviews to occur in a place which is simultaneously neutral and personal (Hanna 2012; Janghorban et al. 2014). Telephone and online interviewing also allows for research to be conducted with a level of sustainable and ecological principles in mind, avoiding excess travel (Hanna 2012). These were principles which I felt to be personally important, but were also of value to many of my participants and enabled me to develop initial rapport. When I did travel to sites in person, I utilised public transport as a way of continuing to enact these principles.

To return to the example of Hannah, mentioned earlier (page 80), despite her initial reservations about being involved with the research project, the flexibility to be involved via a medium more suited to her meant she could be involved in the interview process:

_I’d be happy to chat to you on the phone while I am harvesting if that could be of any help initially? Blue tooth wireless headphones are a marvellous thing for a farmer!_

Speaking to Hannah on her Bluetooth wireless headset meant that I could interview her while ‘doing’, allowing more of an insight into the place of the farm. I was able to listen to her move around the space of the farm, which prompted different discussions than had we been sat in a café or an office in a more traditional ‘sit-down’ interview (Carpiano 2009). My experiences with Hannah also highlights Fletcher and Platt’s (2016) point that having animals ‘present’ during the interviews can act as a catalyst for story-telling. For example,
as Hannah moves through the farm, her memories of the animals associated with place produced new stories:

*And then we've got, I'm standing facing up the field, we've got rows of fruit trees spaced like you'd normally put in an orchard, and we've actually started moving the cattle in between the rows of the fruit trees so we've got them in a long thin enclosure because we move them twice a week for more grazing, and that way we can use the cows to bolster the fruit trees.*

This created a novel and different way in which to practice ‘walking interviews’ (Jones et al. 2008; Carpiano 2009; Evans and Jones 2011), indeed, possibly with benefits in that it allows an element of ‘walking with’ without the researchers’ presence being potentially disruptive of the experience (DeLyser and Sui 2013)\(^{24}\). This level of walking-and-talking also allowed for the more-than-human elements of the farm to make themselves present in the interviews, allowing my audio recorder to pick up the salutations of cows. Similarly, the audible static of the wind as Hannah moved around the topographic site of the farm amid a gathering storm helped me to gain a sense of the fluid and transient nature of ‘the farm’:

*I am literally moving the cow fence as I speak to you, so that’s why it will get a bit windy as I head further up the field, there’s a storm coming in.*

It highlights the ‘present-ness’ of the exchanges made, such discussions were ‘one moment in an assemblage’, one set of particular entanglements (Mazzei and Jackson 2016). My interviews thus became brief ‘assemblages of enunciation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2008), co-constituted and mediated by an array of heterogeneous more-than-human elements to co-produce ‘the interview’; Hannah’s Bluetooth headset, my own

\(^{24}\) This is not to position telephone ‘go-alongs’ as superior to actual co-presence and shared mobility, I merely seek to highlight the different ways in which ‘going-along’ can be practiced and mediated.
smartphone, the gathering storm, Hannah’s cows (Buzz and Woody), all coming together to form the ‘interview assemblage’ (Honan 2014).

As Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) point out, interview research tends to concentrate on talk, forgetting to pay attention to the material context of the talk, and how this influences what is said. A focus on the verbal can erase the more-than-human elements of the interview setting. Even the mundane and trivial aspects of research can authorise, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid (etc.) (Latour 2005, p. 72) the interview assemblage. Neither the interviewer or interviewee were acting alone to constitute the conversational contexts of my interviews. Rather a number of interrelations with and among things became imbricated in orchestrating, co-constituting, and mediating the emergent complex episode of ‘the interview’ (Brinkmann and Kvale 2014).

Hanna (2012, p. 241) discusses how digitally mediated interviews allow participants to ‘remain in the comfortable location of their home while being interviewed’. However, in my experience, this was not simply about reducing the intensity of ‘surveillant gazing practices’ and enabling participants to control the privacy of the conversation (Holt 2010). Instead it was about instilling a more everyday setting for the interviews, within which participants felt able to get on with their lived practices. In certain instances, these became bound up within the interview assemblage, and helped develop insight into interviewees’ experiences of the more-than-human relationships that were emergent within CSA farms. For example, when speaking to Logan, the farmer at a meat and dairy CSA in England, his responses to my questions became bound up with his situated relationships with his CSA’s animals:
I'm now thinking about going out to feed the animals [...] so yeah, my brother's just gone away for Christmas for a few days, so I'm here, and looking after the farm till the weekend, yeah, it just makes things a little more challenging, there's that extra level of commitment needed, with veg you can go away at the weekend or Christmas, I'll be here still.

These digitally mediated discussions thus allowed my interviews to form a viewpoint on certain practices that would have been hidden during more formalised face-to-face interviews in a meeting room or café. When interviewing Frankie by telephone, as she supervised a visitor day at her CSA in England, one of the visitors injured themselves. Frankie had to spring into first-aider mode, ‘hang on, sorry, I've just got a volunteer who's injured, just gonna check she's okay’, shedding light on the instability of the farm’s territorialization as a ‘therapeutic’ space. Although I was not going-along in person (à la go-along interviews), by speaking to participants as they were actively ‘doing’, my interviews gained additional contextual insights. I was able to examine participants’ interpretations of their contexts while they were immediately experiencing those contexts to illuminate how place matters (Carpiano 2009).

4.2.5 Post-Interview

All interviews were audio recorded, following the participants’ consent to do so. Participants had been made aware that they were free at any point to ask for the recording to be stopped. The recording of my interviews was done using the default ‘voice memos’ application on my smartphone. While for telephone and skype interviews this simply meant precariously balancing the smartphone near enough to my laptop speakers to avoid static and feedback, during face-to-face interviews, the smartphone itself became more visible to my participants, and played a role in actively mediating the interviews. The role of the
visible smartphone within research is something I will explore in more detail later when I
discuss my ethnographic notetaking practices (see also Gorman [2017a])

I chose to transcribe all my interviews myself. This allowed me to become involved and
familiar with the data while producing a written representation of the exchanges which took
place during the interview process. I transcribed my interviews immediately after (or at
least, as near to as possible) discussions with my participants, so that I would be able to
recall relevant contextual detail.

At this stage, I also chose to anonymise my participants for reasons of confidentiality and
ethical research practice. I generated a list of pseudonyms by which to represent
participants within my writing, recognising that pseudonyms allow participants to have a
voice within research, rather than participant codes or numbers which can have a reductive
effect (Braun and Clarke 2013). It is generally a given that human participants receive
pseudonyms in this way. The ubiquitous and taken for granted nature of this is perhaps
problematic however, as Guenther (2009) argues, researchers rarely discuss how or why
they choose pseudonyms. The allocation of pseudonyms can be a form of cultural erasure
(O'Reilly and Kiyimba 2015) leading to misrepresentation (Lahman et al. 2015). Even less
is written about pseudonyms for animal participants/animals within research. Yet animals
are so intimately linked to people, bound up with aspects of human identity and sociality,
that they can be obvious signifiers for identification, potentially compromising anonymity:
All the dogs were known too, by name, and guide dog users were even able to recognise each other by their dogs:

Student: There’s a German shepherd over there.
David, guide dog owner: Oh, that’ll be Dougal, that means Tim’s here!

[Fieldnotes, 18 May 2016]²⁵

For ‘David’, a German Shepherd named ‘Dougal’ is a crucial part of ‘Tim’s’ identity. The presence of the dog reveals Tim to be the new person in the room, despite David being unable to physically see Tim. I thus chose to also refer to any named animals I encountered within my participant observation, or that were mentioned within my interviews, by pseudonyms too. This approach also stays true to my commitment to take animals seriously and follow a more symmetrical treatment of different species, continuing a project of removing human centricity and moving from simply framing animals as ‘bare life’, to instead have ‘qualified lives’, biographical and political (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010).

The issue of naming is an important one for qualitative research to address; it is an example of the power that resides in the researcher’s hands (Hurst 2008). To quote Hurst (2008, p. 345): ‘obviously, renaming is necessary to provide anonymity, but there are no good guidelines […] of how to go about doing the renaming’. I thus followed Hurst’s strategy in trying to come up with pseudonyms that ‘would be of similar meaning and connotation’, roughly matching original names in length and complexity. If participants had names that were representative of a certain ethnicity or culture they were renamed in an appropriate fashion. For example, my fieldwork in Wales involved encountering participants with specifically Welsh names. Similarly, I ensured that any participants who had gender-neutral names, were also given gender-neutral pseudonyms.

²⁵ Perhaps unconventionally, this fieldnote extract is from a separate research project I am pursuing; however, I have included it here as it elucidates the issue of animal names and confidentiality.
I had originally intended to give some regional context to participant’s quotes. However, as I began to utilise more descriptive and specific extracts from our conversations I realised that, given the niche context of livestock CSAs, by describing a CSA as being in ‘North East England’ it could become obvious as to which farm I was referring to. I have thus chosen to ‘geographically’ ground my quotations purely by the farms’ country (England/Wales), rather than anything more regionally specific.

The process of transcription was an interpretative, transformative, and abstractive procedure through which I transmuted my audio recordings to text. I took a fairly denaturalised approach to transcription, given my interests in the meanings and perceptions emergent and shared during the interviews (Oliver et al. 2005). However, this did mean that certain linguistic features (tone, pace, emphasis, etc.), background noises, and non-verbal and bodily cues (movement, posture, gestures, body language, etc.) were lost. Layers of meaning are stripped out and altered through the loss of context and certain qualities from the original interview dialogue (Gillham 2005; Kvale 2008). Interviewing, and the subsequent transcription, thus only give a viewpoint to certain elements (Mazzei 2013). For this reason, as I will now move to discuss, I also practiced participant observation on the farms.

4.3 Observing Human-Animal Relationships

Alongside my interviews with representatives from CSAs, I also wanted to explore the everyday lived human-animal relationships on the farms, and thus chose to conduct participant observation within a CSA too.
Participant observation is a reflexive and experiential research method in which the researcher is immersed in an environment for an extended period, making regular observations on the behaviour of members\(^{26}\) within the setting to produce understanding. Historically, ethnographic observation developed as a way to understand the views and lives of people ‘on the inside’ in the context of their everyday and lived experiences. It creates ‘a mode of being-in-the-world’ for researchers (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, p. 249) that develops descriptive ‘tales of culture’ to arrive at a theoretical understanding that is gradual, tentative, and grounded (Harper 1992, p. 141). Observing and participating through ethnographical methods allows a researcher an understanding of the situated perspectives of the participants involved in the study, throwing light on issues through detailed descriptions of everyday life. There are no formal steps to practicing ethnographic observation. Instead, praxis arises shaped and informed by the specific phenomena and settings under investigation (Laurier 2003). My observations served as a form of ‘witnessing happenings’, 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, p. 326).

4.3.1 Where to Observe?

Selecting site(s) for in-depth ethnographic research is an art unto itself (Hine 2000). Drawing on Curtis et al.’s (2000) approaches to sampling and site selection for qualitative

\(^{26}\) In this case, both humans and animals.
research in health geographies I came to base my in-depth ethnographic observation at a CSA project in Wales, which, for purposes of anonymity, I will refer to as ‘Bwncath Farm’.

The group started off with a consumer-led sheep CSA, beginning with 14 fourteen Beulah Speckled Face sheep in 2013, before introducing a batch of Shetlands the following season:

We were very interested in restoration grazing, and the roles of animals and you know sort of actually creating conservation grazing, And one of the things that one of our group looked at was using, primitive breeds for that reason, and yeah, yeah, he said well why don’t we get some Shetlands, partly because of the restoration grazing, and partly because they’re meant to be a lot hardier, we were having foot and eye problems and we thought well actually maybe if we get some Shetlands we’ll have less problems.

[Jon, founder of Bwncath]

The group were keen to breed and lamb their own sheep from the get go and had their first lambs in Spring 2014. The group also started keeping chickens. Some of the members had previously been keeping chickens personally, but had suffered complaints from neighbours, so moved to keeping chickens via the CSA:

Jon: I brought four from the farm up the road, just because, it’s a working egg farm, and I knew they were getting rid of some. Someone bought, Ryan brought his from the butcher, he just has like little chickens ready to lay. Dewi brought.
Dan: He brought some down didn’t he that he’d raised?
Jon: So a couple that Dewi had raised from chicks.
Dan: And we got some from [the local community farm]. Just all from different places.

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27 Bwncath is Welsh for ‘buzzard’, a bird of prey which I frequently spotted on the farm, both of us observing the comings and goings on the farm.

28 Refer to page 65 for difference between consumer-led and farmer-led styles of practicing CSA.
As well as the chickens and sheep, the CSA also had two hives of bees which had been captured from wild swarms, and then transferred and housed within hives on the farm itself, as shown in Figure 2:

![Bwncath CSA’s bee hives](image)

The group had also planted a 50-tree orchard of various varieties of heritage apples, pears, and plums, along with 100 fruit bushes in March 2014. Then in June 2014 they installed a polytunnel, ready for the preparation of a horticultural element to their CSA. The horticultural part of the CSA was slightly different from the livestock elements, as the
community then realised the need to hire Dan as a farmer to run it as a more producer-led CSA. When I first met with the group, in December 2014, they were busy preparing the land to be ready to produce the first vegetable shares in the Spring of 2015, as Jon’s quote below, and Figures 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate:

I suppose the stage we’re at is advertising that it’s started, and just building up interest. So just sort of building up interest and then, yeah people will start subscribing in the spring. [Jon, founder of Bwncath]

Figure 3 - The development of Bwncath CSA
Figure 4 - The development of Bwncath CSA ii

Figure 5 - The development of Bwncath CSA iii
The group had originally planned to integrate their CSA with renewable energy generation via community owned ground mounted solar panels, grazing their sheep around photovoltaics. This is a concept known as ‘agrivoltaics’, a novel approach attempting to reduce land-use competition between food production and energy production by efficiently combining the two (Dinesh and Pearce 2016). Agrivoltaics is an emerging field, though the majority of reports make specific reference to crop-growing, rather than animal farming.

Unfortunately, the group’s planning application for a solar array was rejected in April 2015. The involvement of solar panels could have created (academically interesting) tensions with the farm being a ‘therapeutic space’, with the solar panels disrupting preconceived ideas of ‘untouched’ rural idylls. Therapeutic geographies are informed and constituted by a wide variety of more-than-human actants and agencies.

As well as their local food work Bwncath had proved successful in engaging the local council and providing opportunities for vulnerable groups to visit the site for therapeutic and educational benefits, as Dan, Bwncath’s farmer, explains:

I had approached a guy on the council and then he, he gathers people from various organisations and brings them out here in a minibus, so there’ll be a group of leaders from, so there’ll be someone from the young homeless project, some of their clients, someone from the mental health with a few of their clients, and then they’ll all just come, part of the idea is that they all mix and they all work with each other and they just get out of [City] into [Countryside region], and so that’s that side of it. And then we’re going to start working with [local college] with students doing more formal training next year, like around horticulture. And with school groups, we're just starting with that one school now, and doing that pizza project. Oh, we've started, I'm working with a ‘forest school’ initiative, and then they're basically running courses to train teachers in use of the outdoors, so we're working with them.

Bwncath also framed ‘care’ in a slightly different manner to most ‘care farming’ projects, where the emphasis is on groups with learning difficulties or physical disabilities. Instead,
at Bwncath ‘care’ is more holistic and community focussed, aiming to provide opportunities for a much wider range of groups, extending from people at risk of substance abuse, people within the criminal justice system, people at risk of homelessness, and young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET). This in itself provided a useful way of exploring the idea of both ‘therapeutic spaces’ and ‘care farming’, and highlighting that such concepts are not limited strictly to purely medicinal interpretations of health and care.

With their diversity of activities and differing animals, Bwncath proved to be a useful arena within which to explore everyday lived human-animal relationships, and how these multispecies relations can produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones. On a practical point, Bwncath was also one of the most feasibly accessible CSAs from those to which I had been offered access, allowing me to make multiple visits to the site, and regularly attend their programme of activity days. They were also very keen and interested in research, which allowed me a great deal of access to participate and observe.

4.3.2 Ethnographic Style

I undertook overt ethnographic observation. Both for ethical reasons, and for the ability to take better, more accurate, notes at the time of observation, rather than having to scurry off to surreptitiously scribble notes in a bathroom (facilities which are few and far between on many community farming projects!) à la the classic ‘ethnographer's bladder’. Beside these more practical dimensions, this kind of open philosophy was fundamental to the style of research I wished to pursue, crucial in allowing me to build networks, and work together with the farms I was researching. I chose to take an active, participatory, and involved approach to develop an understanding of the situated perspectives of the participants involved at the farm, and thus regularly pitched in with various agricultural
activities. Participation can be instrumental in achieving rich, deep, and situated description; to know with others, there is a need to engage in practice with them (Pink 2009).

I attempted to position myself as a learner, and this proved a valuable and useful tool to prompt discussions about the values and cultures of the farm and explore the everyday lived relationships between humans and animals. Difference can be used analogously to similarity to develop useful points of discussion through a researcher acknowledging their own inexperience, aiding in shifting the power balance away from the researcher (Valentine 1997; Skelton 2001; Marshall and Rossman 2010). Apprenticing myself in this way also enabled me to build rapport with the visitors on the farm:

*I frequently encouraged the visitors to the farm to take the lead and show me how to do whatever task we were working on. They seemed to enjoy demonstrating their aptitude at the task, and teaching the skill to me. This wasn’t hard, as I was generally rubbish at everything, much to their amusement! [Fieldnotes, 3 March 2015]*

My research involved ‘selective intermittent ethnography’ (Jeffrey and Troman 2004), with site visits involving a progressive focussing, and being determined as and when appropriate, in a combination of short intense bursts and more sporadic visits to allow time for reflection and experimentation with theory in between. Such an ethnographic style allows the flexibility to follow compelling and developing interests and observations but also gives time for relationships to develop with participants. My observations took place between March 2015 and September 2015, visiting the farm every 1-2 weeks, a similar pattern to Dunkley’s (2009) observations of a therapeutic camping programme. This more intermittent approach allowed me to follow the agricultural cycle and be on the farm during different seasonal events, for example, the birth of lambs, which was a period of great excitement and interest to many of the young people visiting the farms. I would generally
get to the farm around 9 o’clock to help Dan set up for the day’s visiting group, who would normally arrive on the farm by 10:30. I would then spend the day taking part in whatever activities were taking place. Groups tended to stay till about 3pm, however, I stayed on the farm much longer, helping Dan finish whatever tasks still needed completing.

In practice, during my time observing at Bwncath, I attempted to follow Crang and Cook’s (2007, p. 55) guidance in ‘both trying to describe things in breadth […] and trying to focus in on what seems most important’. Given my interest in human-animal relations, my observations were most often focussed on the meetings, interactions, and encounters between species (something I discuss in further detail on page 117), however, I also endeavoured to observe what Crang and Cook (2007, p. 56) refer to as ‘mundane happenings’ in order to question ‘what is important for people living and working in a particular setting, and to note and question when, where and why everyday time–space rhythms and routines get disrupted’. As such, although the vast majority of my fieldnotes describe and represent interspecies interactions, I also moved to record particular features about the people and place of the farm. I observed how people moved around the farm, what they did, and how they did it. I observed the way in which people worked in groups, as well as how they utilised the farm space for solitude. I observed how people interacted with each other, as well as with non-humans, and the place-based features of the farm itself. Some of these observations proved useful in contextualising the wider web of relations which both led to people being involved with the farm, and also shaped their experiences whilst at the farm (Conradson 2005b):

_Over lunch, we sat in the polytunnel. The visitors seemed to enjoy writing their names and Tupac lyrics in the condensation on the polytunnel walls: “They got money for wars, but can’t feed the poor”. I wondered if that reflected the sentiment of some of the visitors from Dave’s group who were not in education, employment, or training. I also thought it was quite_
appropriate, given that they were currently helping develop a community farm scheme. [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]

Although my main participant observation took place at Bwncath, I also practiced what has been called ‘multi-sited ethnography’, a style of ethnography in which the researcher moves through a spatially dispersed field to study phenomena that cannot be accounted for by focusing on a single site (Marcus 1995; Falzon 2012). Cook et al. (2012) suggest that multi-sited ethnography evolves from the view that the partial perspective afforded by a single research site is insufficient, with multi-sited ethnography’s greatest advantage lying in the opportunity to include by design a series of points of connection and views. For me, this involved accompanying Dan, the farmer at Bwncath, on site visits to other CSAs, as well as attending events organised by external organisations where Bwncath were delivering activities, bringing elements of the farm with them. Additionally, I attended various fundraising events the group ran outside of the farm space during my fieldwork, such as Bwncath’s ‘Harvest Festival’. I also visited a CSA in England that functioned as a more explicit care farm, providing therapy, training, and work experience for people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. The time I spent there observing provided a useful way of comparing to Bwncath’s provision of care for a much wider range of groups.

It was useful to spend some time with Dan that was more free and open, than when we are working on the farm. Away from colleagues and community members, Dan told me that originally, the horticultural CSA at Bwncath had been contentious as he was taking away the best, driest, part of the field, away from the sheep club. [Fieldnotes, 19 September 2015]

To quote Fortun (2012, p. 83), ‘one pursues multi-sited ethnography because one knows, so to speak, that knowledge practices and objects are entangled, and that being differently positioned produces different perspectives’. Multi-sited ethnography allows research to observe a studied phenomenon from different angles. I found this particularly useful within my research as the animals on the farms were simultaneously ascribed a variety of roles,
meaning different things to different people on different CSA farms. To attain a rich and thick description of the role of animals on the farms, attaining these numerous and varying vantage points was crucial. There is also an argument that a multi-sited perspective is a useful tool for research into human-animal relations, drawing attention to the multiple forms of human-non-human relationships in different geocultural sites, opening up a possibility for a ‘comparison across varied eco-collaborations, in which non-humans are enlisted in contrasting roles’ (Matsutake Worlds Research Group 2012, pp. 198-199).

Senses and sensorial experiences were also something which was referenced heavily in both the interview phase of data collection, and my initial field notes:

Regular comments that we get are that people appreciate the sound of the horses working, the quietness, and yeah, having the horses around, its, you know, gives it an added dimension. [Al, a farmer at a horticultural CSA in England]

I thus drew on methodological practices associated with ‘sensory ethnography’. Sensory ethnography involves drawing on the ethnographer’s own sensorial experiences to apprehend and comprehend experiences, ways of knowing, meaning, and practices. Sensory ethnography offers a means of attending to the idiosyncratic and contextual sensory experiences of encounters with space and place. As Madden (2014, p. 282) describes:

Participant observation is a whole-of-body experience that goes beyond ethnographers observing with their eyes as they participate, but they also “observe” with all their senses. Touch, smell, taste, sound, and sight come together to form the framework for memories, jottings, and consolidated notes that form the evidentiary basis of ethnographic writing. Good ethnographers will use their whole body as an organic recording device.
A sensory approach directs attention to how the senses are implicated in an emergence of performances, practices, and interactions (Valtonen et al. 2010). This is done through the mobilisation of ‘thick sensory description’ (Taylor and Hansen 2005), a process of giving particular focus to the more-than-visual within fieldnotes, recording the richness, nature, and quality of the sound, smell, and tactile feelings of place (Roe et al. 2016). Being emplaced allows a researcher to experience the range of sensory experiences that their studied group are exposed to (Sunderland et al. 2012). Knowledge and understanding are produced via becoming similarly emplaced, experiencing co-presence and sensorily and materially occupying a similar place to those a researcher seeks to understand (Pink 2009). Attending to the senses in this way allowed to me engage with different aspects of the therapeutic geographies I was attempting to explore, and draw attention to the multiplicities and contingencies of how therapeutic affects can emerge. Focussing on the senses also created a route to move beyond ‘feelings about’ place, to instead develop understandings of ‘how places are felt and acted in the moment’ (Andrews 2011, p. 876), providing different access points and registers (Andrews 2016c). I was particularly keen to engage with sound and scent as way of recognising the multispecies nature of these spaces, and discussing the ways that animals can potentially be disruptive and intrusive of any ‘therapeutic’ territorialization of place. In this regard, I now move to discuss the role of animals in ethnographic practices.

4.3.3 Animals in Ethnography

The use of ethnographic observation follows the pattern of much existing research in the field of human-animal studies, a focus on looking at locally specific, interdependent, human-animal relations (Convery et al. 2005; Birke and Hockenhull 2012). Buller (2014), in a paper reviewing progress in methodologies within animal geographies, notes the embracing of ethnographic practices as a means of accounting for animal presence and
agency in a way which manoeuvres around the traditional barriers of anthropomorphic accounts of human-animal relations. Buller argues, ‘we may not share language with non-humans but we do share embodied life and movement and […] ways of inhabiting the world’ (Buller 2014, p. 5). The worlds which ethnographic research describe are co-constituted and co-recognised. Animals are active social agents, they engage in relationships and have the capacity for ample non-linguistic intersubjective exchanges with humans (Madden 2014). Ethnographic research has the potential for illuminating other ways of being in the world, and clarifying interspecies connectedness – the ‘social’ is not purely constituted by human actants (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). As Hamilton and Taylor (2012) describe, we can observe the diverse ways in which actants of various species become physically and actively moved by the cultures they inhabit.

To give attention to the vibrancy and diversity of actants within the spaces I was observing, and describe the human-animal relations with a level of symmetry, I drew on what Kirksey and Helmreich (2010) term as ‘multispecies ethnography’. Multispecies ethnography is a mode of research that develops a means of bringing creatures previously on the margins more vividly into the foreground, creating a more symmetrical treatment of different species within ethnographic observation and writing. Multispecies ethnography aims to provide a way of acknowledging that interactions between species are not purely mediated through a level of human involvement (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010; Smart 2014).

Multispecies ethnography is not about saying that a researcher can speak to or for non-humans, but instead tries to illuminate how non-humans experience the world around them (White 2013). It is not so much an anthropomorphic attempt to ‘look with the eyes’ of an animal, but instead, decentring the human to instead ‘look the animal in the eyes’ (Jaclin 2013, p. 261), an act that involves making the body of the researcher available for a
response from another being (Despret 2013). Health geography has had little to no engagement with multispecies ethnography as a specific style of ethnographic practice. However, multispecies ethnographies of places associated with health and care have the potential to highlight the diversity of different ways in which heterogeneous actants are important in co-producing therapeutic affects.

However, despite the phrase becoming increasingly popular within academic literature (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010; Maurstad et al. 2013; Ogden et al. 2013; Smart 2014), there are few texts which take on the task of explaining what it means to do, practice, or engage in ‘multispecies ethnography’. As Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. (2016, p. 150) note, there exists a ‘disjuncture betweenarticulating the need for research that decentres the human in theoretically coherent and compelling ways and fully realizing it in practice’.

In my own research practice, this desire to pursue a ‘multispecies’ path with my ethnographic observations meant that during my days on the farm observing, I attempted to give attention to both the human and non-human actants present; an ethnographic approach informed by a flattened ontology. My 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 mutually ‘response-able’ (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. 2016).

Obviously, this is easier said than done. Bwncath, and the other sites I observed, were frequently places of frantic activity. My choice to adopt an active, participatory, and involved approach meant that when I was at the farms, I was in a sense ‘working’ or ‘volunteering’, with specific responsibilities to do and complete. This often resulted in there being little time to spend with the non-human members of the farm, as I was instead
regularly asked to help supervise various activities, or being tasked with an axe, spade, or wheelbarrow.

*It is difficult to practice multispecies ethnography when there is so much going on at the farm.* [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]

Despite this, each day on the farm I would purposefully spend time among the animals to observe ‘the flows, practices, and dynamics of herds and individuals’ (Bear et al. 2016, p. 6) (see Figures 6 and 7). Similarly to Bear et al. (2016), I focussed on specific sites (e.g. the lambing barn, the chicken enclosure, the feeding troughs); moments (e.g. feeding, herding, and other instances of human-animal encounter); and movement (flows of animals as groups, and as individuals). This was a way of, to quote Lorimer (2010, p. 75), ‘bearing witness to life’s momentary acts and their multivariate expression’.
Figure 6 - Feeding time for the sheep
Fieldnotes about animals allows research to move beyond representations of non-humans generated in interviews, and capture ‘articulations-in-the-becoming’ (Bear et al. 2016). As Birke and Hockenhull (2015a, p. 83) suggest, by using overt observations of animals’ behaviours, we can at least partly ‘bring in the animal viewpoint’.

![Observing sheep](image)

**Figure 7 - Observing sheep**

I recorded my visual, tactile, aural, and olfactory observations of sheep, chickens, pigs, as well as buzzards, bees, and bluebottles, and all the other animals I encountered. Paying attention to the senses in this way was important in bringing a focus to those animals less visually obvious with the farm. One day while tasked with harvesting some corn flowers (to garnish a CSA veg-box), I had an encounter with a honeybee (see Figure 8). I had not noticed it at first, it was only hearing the buzzing noise as the bee floated around the
flowers that I became aware of it, then following it visually as it soared through the farm, scaring and delighting visitors in equal amount. Both a disruptive influence to the therapeutic nature of the farm for some, and a wondrous delight to others.

Other animals I specifically sought out:

 figured 8 - Encountering a honeybee

I spent some time watching the sheep, observing them. Dan had mentioned earlier that quite a few of the flock were having twins. The sheep stayed
fairly near the hay trough. Interestingly, the sheep who had lambed was further away, by herself with her lambs – whether this was simply because the hay trough was near to where we were working or because she wanted to be away from the rest of the flock. Some of the visitors to the farm joined me to watch the sheep. One of the girls mentioned that she felt sorry for the boy lambs as ‘they just get used’. She also pointed out that some of the sheep were ‘huge’ and ‘looked like they were struggling. [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]

As in the above fieldnote extract, frequently when I would make time to observe the farm animals, some of the visitors to the farm would join me. This became a useful technique in observing the entangled and asymmetrical ‘lively connections’ and collective affects taking place between species (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. 2016). To draw on Harper’s (1992, 2002) discussions of ‘photo-elicitation’ in which participants are presented with certain visual materials to evoke differing affective responses, these brief multispecies moments formed instances of ‘animal-elicitation’. Having the visitors join me in this way also highlighted an important point, that multispecies ethnography is about the co-becoming of heterogeneous actants, and the ways in which they interact with one another. A focus on multispecies ethnography is not just the simple rejection of the human in favour of the animal, but an observing and writing of entanglement and co-production. Indeed, when writing my fieldnotes, I treated each of the animals in a similar way to the humans I encountered. The dogs Bess and Salsa appear in my notes in a manner akin to the human members of the farm, not simply objects in the background, but co-constituents who co-produced the sociality of the farm. Considering this theme of writing fieldnotes, I now move to explore my note-taking practices more broadly.

4.3.4 Taking Notes

Fieldnotes exist as a form of representation, reducing the events, people, and places observed to textual accounts that can be reviewed and re-consulted. Fieldnotes are the
‘raw material’ of observation, objectifying events that are situated, ambiguous, and fleeting (Lindlof and Taylor 2010, p. 157).

As I mentioned earlier (page 105), I chose to be open about my note-taking on the farm to take more accurate notes at the time of observation. I began with a pocket-notebook in which to take my fieldnotes in. However, out of convenience I soon switched to regularly using my smartphone for the writing of short ‘scratchnotes’ (Sanjek 1990; Gorman 2017a). The ability to jot down key mnemonic phrases single-handedly was a great advantage compared with haphazardly juggling various agricultural tools while fumbling for my notebook and a pen. I found it much easier to take notes in this way, and it soon became second-nature. There is no doubt that my ‘digital nativeness’ (Prensky 2001) influenced this sense of ease, highlighting how our personal selves become bound up in our research practices. Our ethnographies are tied to what we know and how we individually make sense of everyday life (Laurier 2003).

While taking notes on my smartphone had practical benefits, the medium by which notes are taken can actively influence the content, style, and practice of contemporaneous ethnographic note-taking. My observations were undertaken in a place where a low-tech approach was valued, and there was a conscious rejection of digital technologies and the need to be ‘constantly connected’, yet I was frequently using my smartphone throughout the day. I worried that it would give the impression I was disinterested in the activities occurring (when in fact, the reason for the recurrent grasping of my smartphone was exactly the opposite). I found that when I stopped to type some short phrase into my smartphone to serve as an aide memoire, participants on the farm would assume that I had completed whatever task I had been set, or was bored.
Indeed, there are all manner of cultural, social, temporal, and place based contingent differentials that problematize the idea of the smartphone being socially acceptable, and thus, a potential note-taking medium; representations of smartphones are not universal. Neither are smartphones isolated artefacts, they are bound up with other debates and tensions, socially and politically constructed, powerfully implicated in a range of issues. Smartphones carry different connotations to paper notebooks, and can act to reinforce difference, making statements of privilege, power, and culture. The medium by which fieldnotes are taken actively impacts the field, capable of influencing relationships with participants, and altering the power dynamic of research. How notes are written is as consequential as what is written in them. This is an important issue, and one which I expand and develop in much more detail in Gorman (2017a). Considering this issue of power dynamics within research however, I now move to quickly discuss how I encountered, and subsequently navigated, challenges of representation regarding the human actants I encountered.

4.3.5 Writing Representations of People

The prevailing phrases for referring to human participants within care farming literature are ‘service user’ (Leck et al. 2014) or ‘client’ (Haubenhofer et al. 2010; Elings 2012; Hassink et al. 2012). However, as McLaughlin (2009) notes, both of these phrases are somewhat problematic. They are indicative of hierarchical power relationships, privileging and homogenising one aspect of an individual’s identity, creating binaries, and connotative of a level of passivity on the part of a ‘client’ or consumption on the part of a ‘user’. These phrases suggest a one-way relationship, whereas in a care farming context specifically, many of the individuals visiting the farms were actively involved in the upkeep and productivity of the farms. The visitors are providing care for the animals, rather than simply receiving care. As discussed earlier (page 68), care is multidirectional (Milligan 2014,
2015). Service also implies a fixed thing which a user or client is accessing, whereas the spaces and affects I wish to describe are open and emergent. I seek to highlight the contingent potential of any space to ‘become therapeutic’, rather than totalised and fixed phenomena to be ‘used’.

I was tempted to instead employ the phrase ‘volunteers’, as this was frequently how the farms themselves would frame and discuss the people who regularly visited their fields. However, when talking to Dave, an outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for NEET\(^{29}\) young people, who regularly brought a group to Bwncath, it emerged that several of his group were not exactly ‘freely offering’ to take part in the farm’s activities and the trips there, but were instead mandated to attend:

\[ \text{Basically, Eddie caused an offence, he was on tag, and as part of that, I suppose, pathway back into society, meeting certain tasks or goals as part of his tag.} \]

Thus instead, within my writing, I have chosen to use the word ‘visitors’ to cover the diversity of human participants that visit the farms to ‘benefit therapeutically’ (Charles 2011). Visitor also draws attention to the contingent and transient nature of the therapeutic affect which these places can produce. A therapeutic engagement with place is co-produced through ‘gaps and gasps, stutters and cuts, misfires and stoppages, unintended outcomes, unprecedented transferences, and jagged changes’ (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000, p. 418). Not a fixed nor permanent ‘therapeutic landscape’ to be used or consumed, but an emergence with no external end, shaped by ongoing relations that come to affect new ways of being.

\(^{29}\) Not in education, employment, or training.
By referring to the humans I observed within these spaces as visitors, I represent them as active co-constituents in these ‘therapeutic becomings’, rather than passive objects whom health is ‘done to’. Drawing on these discussions of power and research, I now move to discuss how I navigated my positionality within the field more broadly.

4.4 Positionality

Research and methodological choice privilege specific ways of knowing. Power relationships exist between a researcher and other actants. The researcher is not a disembodied presence, removed from the research process:

Questions of gender, class, race, nationality, politics, history, and experience shape our research and our interpretation of the world, however much we are supposed to deny it. The task, then, is not to do away with these things, but to know them and learn from them (Schoenberger 1992, p. 218).

Also our class experiences, our levels of education, our sexuality, our age, our ableness, whether we are a parent or not. All of these have a bearing upon who we are, how our identities are formed and how we do our research. We are not neutral, scientific observers, untouched by the emotional and political contexts of places where we do our research (Skelton 2001, p. 89).

Methodological texts (Bryman 2001) often discuss the idea of achieving a level of ‘insider’ status, however, this dualism of insider/outsider cannot accurately capture the complex and multifaceted identities and experiences which constitute researcher-participant relations. Instead, the boundaries between researchers and participants are fluid, dynamic, and open to evolution as relations change.

_I’ve been thinking a lot about my positionality recently on the farm. It is not static. I can go from being an insider to an outsider again, very quickly, simply dependant on the constitutive makeup of the group present._

[Fieldnotes, 3 September 2015]
Positionality is multiple and shifting. On days where I was at Bwncath with just Dan and the other regular visitors, I was much more accepted, regarded as responsible and capable. However, when other members of the CSA came to visit the farm, I was more ‘outsider’, an external and unknown presence, not a part of the local community, neighbourhood, and friendship group which constituted the CSA. There are many layers of sameness and difference which can be operating simultaneously (Marshall 2002; Valentine 2002).

Indeed, researcher’s bodies, clothing, practices (such as smoking or eating), and even non-visual cues and representations become intimately intertwined with ethnographic practice, and how a researcher represents themselves to participants (Parr 1998). ‘The researcher’ is heterogeneous. Parr (1998) discusses how the scent of her shampoo set her apart, for me, this came from my battered old waterproof jacket:

A few of the visitors to the farm had borrowed waterproofs from [The Council Project], as they did not have their own. Dave, the co-ordinator, joked with me about my own waterproof jacket: “look at this guy, wearing his Rab30, students have clearly got too much money” – it was a useful point about my positionality, my jacket is about 8 years old by this point, and has been re-waterproofed and repaired multiple times, yet, it is still a ‘brand’ compared to the cheap council-issued coats the visitors were having to share. [Fieldnotes, 3 March 2015]

It is thus important to recognise participants’ constructions of the researcher, utilising the gaze of others to develop a positioned and situated view of the researcher; identity shifts in relation to context (Nast 1998; Falconer Al-Hindi and Kawabata 2002).

30 ‘Rab’ is a mountaineering clothing and camping equipment manufacturer and supplier.
Another challenging aspect of my positionality was my willingness to eat meat. In multiple interviews, participants initially skirted around questions to do with slaughter and butchery, often prefacing their answers by asking if I was a vegetarian:

_Hannah: Are you vegetarian yourself?
_Rich: No.
_Hannah: I must say that makes it easier to talk about_

By confirming that I accepted the hegemonic view on animal consumption, I could encourage interviewees to discuss in more detail the processes through which the animals became food, and the complicated relations emergent between death and healthful affect. I strongly believe that I would have encountered more resistance and been unable to attain such a rich data set had I actively identified as a vegetarian during this piece of research.

Recognising that positionality is not static, I experienced certain changes during my research. One came about because of a presentation I gave at the CSA Network UK’s Annual General Meeting in July 2015, after which I was nominated and voted onto the board of directors for the CSA Network (a role I continue to hold presently). While becoming a director granted me access to additional documents and networks, I had to manage my position and make clear that I kept my ‘research self’ and activities wholly separate from my ‘director self’ and activities.

Importantly, ‘social science methodologies not only describe the worlds they observe, but (at least in part) are involved in the invention or creation of the world’ (Coleman and Ringrose 2013, p. 1). Indeed, my presence as a researcher studying ‘therapeutic landscapes’ had the potential to ‘territorialize’ an area, adding a level of definition and sharpening, consolidating the farms’ reputations as places of health. This territorialization had the potential to produce a level of ‘participant bias’, where participants attempt to
interpret research’s purpose and change their behaviour to fit, playing the part they believe the researcher is seeking. Alternatively, my research may (have) initiate(d) (re/de) territorializing processes, ‘a movement producing change’ (Parr 2005, p. 67), and introduce(d) new knowledges and innovation; not all the farms I was engaging with where explicitly emphasising health benefits. Having explained my research to Dan, he became more curious about the idea of using the farm environment as a potential ‘therapeutic space’:

*I hadn’t really thought of it from that perspective, but it would be really good to look at how it can benefit what we’re up to, and particularly like the therapeutic side of it.*

The researcher thus becomes co-constitutive of the studied phenomena. In this way, my own body, views, language, and experiences became new relations, impacting on the potential of the farms to become processually and precariously relationally constituted as a ‘therapeutic space’.

Being a researcher with haemophilia\(^{31}\) created certain practical, ethical, and reflexive challenges during fieldwork, and was something I came to reflect on:

*Another aspect of my positionality is my Haemophilia. No-one at the farm knows. They probably should for health and safety reasons, but at the same time, I imagine that I might be restricted to certain tasks then, disallowed to participate fully. Being a researcher with Haemophilia is challenging, I have to hide certain realities about my identity and bodily realities while researching\(^{32}\). Luckily, the time when I did bleed extensively, I was able to mask it, laugh it off. However, I was also embarrassed; blood is a very visceral thing, and it was a very public show of my body ‘othering’ me. The question of to tell or not to tell is constantly in my mind. There is also an issue of whether it is too late, would they feel betrayed? Embarrassed that they’ve been letting me do dangerous/physical tasks for months? [Fieldnotes, 3 September 2015]*

\(^{31}\) See page 5 for more information on haemophilia.

\(^{32}\) It is worth noting that this wasn’t something I specifically chose to hide from participants – there are plenty of my colleagues and friends who are not aware of my haemophilia.
Fieldwork is a fluid process, and there exists the potential for the emergence of ethical dilemmas during research – I aimed to be reflexive and maintain an attitude framed by the principles of care, respect, and professionalism (Punch 1994; de Laine 2000). Looking back, perhaps I should have been more open about my haemophilia; it could have offered opportunities to take a more auto-ethnographical approach and write ‘from the site of the body’ (Payne 1996, p. 50), representing more embodied experiences, emotions, and senses of affect. Indeed, given that auto-ethnography is also a response intending to navigate criticisms of ethnographies which portray the researcher as invisible and removed (Scott-Hoy 2002), it provides a potentially useful research method when pursuing more post-structurally informed research. Auto-ethnography creates a means of further representing how the researcher becomes co-constitutive of the studied phenomena (Sparkes 2002).

Thinking of this bodily co-constitution of the ‘therapeutic’ nature of place, one day at the farm while helping build a windbreak for the bee hives, I injured myself:

In a show of utmost professionalism, I managed to cut myself. With a bow saw, I went and plastered my hand up, however, I’d given myself quite the cut and it quickly bled through. I added a second plaster on top, to try and disguise the bleeding. However, every time I gripped something, I set it off bleeding again, gushing out from underneath the plasters and microporous tape. To the point where there was a LOT of blood. [Fieldnotes, 2 April 2015]

This fractured any therapeutic territorialization of the farm space, as I rummaged around in the farm’s recently purchased first aid kit for a plaster. My blatant injury drew an awareness to the potential hazards of the tasks myself and the visitors were engaging in. The group leaders sought to reterritorialize the space as potentially therapeutic by insisting that the other farm visitors wear protective gardening gloves as they continued their
farmwork, while simultaneously making light of the situation, brushing it off as nothing to be worried about. While this episode does not relate specifically to my emplacement as a ‘researcher’, it was constituted by my specific bodily responses, experiences, and functioning.

It was my body’s genetic inability to produce Factor VIII, an essential blood-clotting protein, that caused me to haemorrhage to such an extent from what was a minor cut. However, recognising Latour’s contestation that interactions are neither isotopic, synchronic, synoptic, homogeneous, or isobaric (Latour 2005, pp. 200-201), it was not simply a two-way encounter between my haemophilic self and a bow saw that destabilised any conceptualisation of the farm as a ‘therapeutic’ space. Relations that territorialize and deterritorialize spaces as ‘therapeutic’ are framed by other agencies distributed elsewhere in time and space being brought to bear silently on the scene to co-constitute a certain set of circumstances. On this particularly morning, I had forgotten to prophylactically inject myself with my antihaemophilic medication. This would subsequently in the day influence the aforedescribed destabilisation of the farm as a ‘therapeutic space’. This sequence of events serves as a useful reminders of the vibrancy of ‘things’ (Bennett 2010) in authorising, allowing, affording, encouraging, permitting, suggesting, influencing, blocking, forbidding, and rendering possible interactions (Latour 2005, p. 72), with topographically distant actants, and non-appearing actants (McFarlane and Anderson 2011) contingently coming together to enact health possibilities through producing new bodily capacities or close down existing ones.

Furthering the idea of the researcher actively co-constituting the spaces they are exploring, a more ‘research’ based change to the farm can be seen when I observed and assisted Dan in making a biodynamic preparation to spread on the crops:
Dan started by explaining that we were to apply a biodynamic compost preparation, ‘preparation 500’ – Dan had brought it from a French producer who he had met and been inspired by. Apparently, the mixture is made of various composted materials, then stored in a cow’s horn and buried underground for a year. Dan was clearly very passionate about biodynamics, and believed in the potential impacts, however he was also very guarded, not wanting to go into detail in his explanations. Dan was quite aware of my presence as a researcher, and admitted that it did sound a bit crazy, but he was keen to say that there was scientific research about the benefits of it. [Fieldnotes, 22 May 2015]

Dan’s keenness to justify himself and his practices, and his reservations about speaking openly about a topic he was clearly very knowledgeable and passionate about, were actively influenced by my marked presence within the farm as a ‘researcher’. The hesitancy Dan demonstrated highlights what Michael (2004) discusses about the role of various more-than-human elements, including broader bodies such as the university sector or academia, in constituting how fieldwork actually plays out. The introduction of myself, as a researcher, and as a person with specific bodily reactions, exposed the farm to new lines of flight and mutations, which perhaps, to some extent, serves to highlight the emergence, multiplicity, and indeterminacy that I seek to show are at play within the formation of therapeutic geographies.

4.5 After Fieldwork: Analysing Data

Once I had concluded my interviewing and participant observation, I moved to a stage of reflecting and familiarising myself with the content I had gathered. Having transcribed my interviews myself, I already felt a level of involvement with the data and had begun to note the emergence of certain features. However, with such an abundance of data, there was a need for a more ordered approach to be able to informally piece things together, figure things out, and gain focus and direction in a way that balanced creativity and structure (Crang and Cook 2007). I chose to use NVivo, a piece of computer-assisted qualitative
data analysis software used frequently within qualitative scholarship, as my tool of choice for storing, indexing, sorting, and coding my data. I imported all of my interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and relevant emails from participants to reconfigure my data, de- and recontextualising different parts to look at it much more carefully and critically (Crang and Cook 2007).

A code is a short phrase that attempts to capture the essence of a portion of qualitative data, creating categories, and condensing data into more manageable units of analysis. For me, the process was not an attempt to uncover some hidden truth within the data, but rather an attempt to identify any recurrent themes or patterns of relations. Coding served to make sense of the data, a means to understand connections and relationships not immediately apparent and begin to ask new questions (Cope 2010). My analysis was driven by the conceptual and theoretical framework established in Chapter 2, an approach which saw me focus in on how perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health emerged from the human-animal relations on the farms. Here, I was particularly concentrating on how these relations unfolded in practice, their generative potential to enact health possibilities through producing new bodily capacities.

My codes were tentative and temporary; to quote Cope (2010, p. 445), coding is a ‘frankly, messy’ process. My coding practices involved reading and re-reading, thinking and re-thinking, in processes of becoming intimate with data (Cope 2010). I began by marking important sections and phrases of my transcripts and fieldnotes with relevant codes. Concentrating on what was going on in the text line by line, and thinking about what was being said, the meaning and intent of different statements, while keeping notes and memos along the way. At first, each line seemed to produce its own theme, however, as I progressed through the texts, similar sentiments were able to be given similar labels
(Crang and Cook 2007). These codes were subject to change, being renamed, merged with other codes, even eliminated, in continual goings back and forth (Crang and Cook 2007; Cope 2010).

I relied on a mix of emic and etic codes in a form of ‘open coding’. This enabled me to attempt to allow a level of ‘in viva’ participant meanings to emerge, while also recognising Crang and Cook’s (2007, p. 139) argument that it is ‘virtually impossible for the researcher to banish all of her/his prior thoughts from the analysis, since her/his research will have been based around a theory-driven selection of participants, and because even noticing an ‘emic’ code will have required interpretation’. Regarding the grammar of coding, I adopted a ‘simultaneous coding’ method, a type of coding where two or more different codes can be applied to a single qualitative datum. This simultaneous (or overlap) coding is a useful approach in investigating and highlighting interrelationships and constituting elements, as well as multiple meanings (Saldana 2012).

With such an abundance of data, and a wide range of people interviewed, encountered, and observed, there was often contrary evidence. As well as a simultaneous approach, I drew on elements of ‘versus coding’ to manage these conflicts and competing goals that emerged from different participants (Saldana 2012). Rather than discarding these contrary points, I draw on them in the forthcoming chapters to highlight the multiplicity at play within these ‘territories of becoming that produce new potentials’ (Thrift 2004b, p. 88). Indeed, Dowling et al. (2016) argue that ‘de-centring the human means purposively celebrating rather than being troubled by data that do not fit expected categories’. By exploring the interrelations between different codes, recognising how they overlapped and connected, I began to tease out emergent themes, trends, and issues, in a process of ‘code mapping’ which then served as the main topics for the proceeding chapters.
Coding is viewed as problematic by some engaging in more post-structurally informed research (MacLure 2013). However, I follow MacLure (2013) in arguing that it should not be entirely abandoned as an analytic practice, and coding should not be treated as creating static representation or translation, but rather an open-ended and ongoing practice of making sense. In my coding, I was not interested in the establishment of hierarchical relationships. Instead it was an open-ended experimentation with, and receptivity to, bodies of knowledge, that demanded an immersion in, and entanglement with, ‘the data’ (MacLure 2013). To borrow MacLure’s (2013) phrasing, my NVivo workspace became more of a ‘cabinet of curiosities’ full of ‘unholy mixtures’, rather than a place of ordered and arborescent typological categorisation. A more post-structuralist approach to coding then involves:

An experiment with order and disorder in which provisional and partial taxonomies are formed, but always subject to change and metamorphosis as new connections spark amongst words, bodies, objects, and ideas […] During the process of coding some things gradually grow, or glow, into greater significance than others and become the preoccupations around which thought and writing cluster (MacLure 2013, pp. 175-181).

My analysis thus took a ‘messy’ approach (Law 2007), acknowledging that data does not fit into neat categories, and embracing rather than sacrificing the complexity and open-endedness of phenomena (Rautio 2013). Rather than segmented categories with the human subject as central (Malone 2016). I viewed my codes as ‘tangents and rhizomes’ of ever proliferating and mutating connections (Rautio 2013). The animals in my analysis are not merely objects within stories, but animals which shape the human experience as the human also shapes the animal experience (Malone 2016).
Following Milligan (2001, p. 109), ‘the process of analysis has not been viewed as developing a definitive account, rather it has been viewed as one means of trying to understand the inter-relations of multiple version of reality, and in doing so, it serves to stress the interconnectivities between actants’. My codes were neither carved from stone, nor set in stone, but my own inventions, being utilised as ‘tools to think with’ (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, p. 32), a means rather than an end to analysis (Crang and Cook 2007). They served as a way of creating a relationship between my research questions, my conceptual and theoretical frameworks, and my empirical data. In this way, revealing some of the multiple versions of more-than-human relationships that emerge within CSA farms. Relationships that can define, enable, and enact what different actants may become regarding their capacity to affect and be affected.

4.6 Conclusion

Kvale (2008, pp. 19-20) describes research as a journey, a process by which a researcher ‘wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people he or she encounters’, importantly for Kvale, this is a process of ‘wandering together with’. I began a ‘journey’ thinking about health and place, and how human-animal relations can come to produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones. I have wandered the ‘therapeutic landscapes’ of CSA farms, not simply alone, but together with a host of heterogeneous actants. From Salsa and Bess, the farm dogs who frequently shared my sandwiches, Dan the farmer at Bwncath CSA, whose boundless enthusiasm for ‘creating a place where people, animals and plants can co-exist nourishing themselves and their surroundings’ continues to inspire me, Jammy the playful (but naughty) sheep who I eventually ended up sampling and consuming at a fundraising event run by Bwncath, and even my own gut bacteria (Helmreich 2015) and fat cells (Bennett 2010). These have all
played a role in authorising, allowing, affording, encouraging, permitting, suggesting, influencing, blocking, rendering possible, forbidding (Latour 2005) my research journey.

This chapter has explained the story behind my research, examining and justifying my methodological choices, and how I practiced ‘data’ collection. Here, I have also questioned and explored how different elements within the research process co-constituted the worlds I studied, critically unpacking the homogeneity of social science methods. I move now to begin to explain where this ‘research journey’ has led me.
5. Placing Animals in Community Supported Agriculture
5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses Research Question 1: What motivates Community Supported Agriculture farms to engage in livestock farming? What roles and places do animals come to occupy within this agricultural model? Drawing on animal geography literature, I am keen to ‘look at animals’ (Berger 2009) and explore and understand how their roles and spaces are designated and classified within CSAs. This chapter thus explores the diversity of animals that are present within spaces of CSA, and the roles ascribed to them (and how animals performed and disrupted these assigned roles), taking seriously and attending to the vibrancy, agency, and contributions of non-human beings in co-producing spaces of CSA.

I move to argue and demonstrate that CSA spaces are far from being solely based around fruit and vegetables, but are instead regularly co-constituted by a diverse and lively arrangement of human-animal relationships that go beyond a positioning of ‘animal as food’. I use this research as an opportunity to bring animals back in to geographic discussions of community based food networks. I discuss how animals co-produce spaces of CSA, crucial actants that act to both stabilise and destabilise performances and practices of community supported agriculture.

I begin by contextualising the place of animals on CSA farms, exploring which animals come to be present, and how and why they become imbricated within CSAs. I then move to critically discuss the contested and emerging roles ascribed to non-human actants on the farms, exploring the motivations for the inclusion of animals within these food networks. These discussions provide a means of beginning to explore how human-animal relations can come to provide a link between health and place within CSA farms.
5.2 More-Than-Horticulture: The Animal Presence within CSA Spaces

In Chapter 3, I discussed the neglect of animals’ place in CSA systems (see page 72). Academic discourse on CSA mainly discusses these spaces of alternative food as being constituted around human relationships with fruit and vegetables (Cooley and Lass 1998; Cone and Myhre 2000; Sharp et al. 2002; Oberholtzer 2004; Schnell 2007; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007; Cox et al. 2008; Bougherara et al. 2009), even failing to comment on the messy and contested relationships between horticulturalists and wildlife. Here, I engage with geographies of local and alternative food networks to direct attention to the more-than-human elements of food systems, and begin to develop an understanding of the roles and places that animals come to occupy within CSA. To build my argument that CSA spaces are ‘more-than-horticultural’, and to attend to the heterogeneity of these spaces, I introduce the diversity of more-than-human relationships that exist at CSA sites in the UK. Such a move allows me to ‘bring the animals back’ (Wolch and Emel 1995) to discussions of CSA, and in later chapters, ‘therapeutic landscapes’.

In this section, I explore the variety of ways in which animals become present on CSA farms, ranging from strategic decisions by CSA farmers, through to accidental and unexpected appearances of new animals. Alongside this, I also examine the fluid and transitory nature of animals’ presence within CSAs, ranging from the passing imbrication of visitors’ pets, to the mobilities of individual bees. These themes allow me to not only highlight that there are different animals present for different reasons, but also to start to

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33 Wells and Gradwell (2001) provide a slight exception here, although their brief discussions of growers’ relationships with insects and other ‘pest’ species is a little rose-tinted, and fails to capture the tensions and conflicts between humans and animals in spaces of food production.
explore the ways in which CSAs are co-produced, shaped by both human and non-human agency.

5.2.1 Intended Presence

Despite what current literature may suggest, CSAs are rarely devoid of animal life. Animals are important actants that co-produce these food networks, and actively influence how people experience and engage with their food and the farms themselves. Each CSA is unique in its approach to animals, there is no singular model, nor specific list of species, breeds, and individuals that come to be included in CSAs. As Ruth, founder of a CSA with sheep, pigs, chickens, bees, and horticultural activities in England, comments, ‘the point of it is that it works in your community, and all communities are different, they have different amounts of land, different kinds of people, different support, you know, different amounts of money involved, so, you know, yeah, yeah they all will be different’. However, most commonly, and unsurprisingly, given CSA being a form of alternative food space, it was an assortment of livestock species that came to be present and invited in to the spaces of the farms through decisions by farmers and community members:

*It was about the time when, I mean, I have to hand it to, Jamie Oliver was doing that stuff around Jamie's Fowl Dinners or something like that, and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall was doing stuff around you know the inequities of the meat industry, and chickens in particular, and you know I got talking to Sally, the farmer, at the farmer’s market one day and said, ‘well how about a chicken CSA’, and she said ‘oh what do you mean, like a meat CSA?’ I said, ‘yeah, absolutely’. So we really took it from there! [Jenny, chairperson of a CSA in England]*

*The first animals that were involved were, this is quite a story, there was a group of people in the local transition group who wanted to keep pigs, they were really struggling to find somewhere to keep pigs, so I said, you are welcome to keep pigs at the CSA under these conditions, listed a load of conditions, and that worked fairly well for a while, until it didn't work, and it blew up in a very very bad way to the extent of people storming off in pubs, but it was very very bad, they stopped giving them water and things like that, it was just not good enough, so we absorbed it, so we discretely*
merged the pigs into the CSA! [Hannah, founder and farmer of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England]

I think our first season of sheep was 2012, yeah, so I think we've had 3 years of a lamb-share […] this hobby farmer was a member of [the CSA], and he would come down and help us with fencing or dig the soil or that sort of thing and in just chatting about what he was doing, the idea sort of emerged, so we put it to the members, and they were all quite supportive, I think in the first year there were only 3 lambs raised! [Rhoda, founder of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in Wales]

A wide variety of encounters, knowledges, and conversations influence and shape how community groups come to engage in livestock farming, at a variety of scales, from fractious happenings in a pub as Hannah discusses, or informed through ‘mass-market intimacy with food celebrities’ (Johnston and Goodman 2015, p. 205) as Jenny mentions. Here though, when CSA representatives talk of their engagements and motivations for having animals, it is always grounded in human desires and agencies, something which I will move to contrast and trouble later.

For Lisa, an agriculturalist setting up a farmer-led CSA in England, initially the livestock intended to be part of the CSA were those already present on the family farm. However, this later began to change:

We’ve got really what we’ve kind of inherited a bit from Jamie’s dad who’s a farmer […] we’re just starting out, so Jamie and I farm, just generally, normal farming, we’ve got cattle and sheep, and sometimes we keep pigs […] People wanted some black sheep and some prettier sheep, so we brought in a Jacob ram, so we have got a few black sheep now.

The community involvement at Lisa’s CSA then began to actively influence the specific animals that were implicated in the farming system, certain qualities and types of sheep becoming valued above others – an approach to valuing animals based on unusual or

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34 Refer to page 65 for difference between consumer-led and farmer-led styles of practicing CSA.
interesting aesthetic qualities. There are different ways of valuing animals, and tensions can come to exist between those who value the aesthetic exterior of animal bodies and those who value their interior ‘meaty’ qualities (Holloway 2005). For example, in the above quote, despite Lisa rearing her sheep for meat, she has had to change her farming practices to produce additional qualities beyond the purely food-products of the animal to be able to continue to receive the support of the local community, and their engagement in her CSA scheme.

The influence of the community on stocking preferences was a common theme. Beth, for example, the manager of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England, explained how they too had been influenced by the community element of their project as to the species of livestock they chose to include, ‘animals traditionally found on a farm i.e. cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, but because we are a community farm as well we have included donkeys and goats as well for interest’. This is similar to Serpell’s (2005, p. 178) idea of ‘anthropomorphic selection’, ‘selection in favour of physical or behavioural traits that facilitate the attribution of human mental states to animals’. While Serpell’s original use of the phrase was to discuss selection from an evolutionary and breeding perspective, it certainly applies to how CSAs chose to stock their farms. However, human choice only goes so far to explain the animals which come to be present within CSAs, as I now move to explore.

5.2.2 Transient Presence

As well as those animals who were more permanently co-habitting the space of the farm, more transient non-humans were also present, simply passing through the space, briefly entangling with the farm: ‘squirrels running through the trees are a common sight at the farm, people will often break off mid-conversation to watch them.’ [Fieldnotes, 22 May
Even CSAs that identify as solely horticultural enterprises will contain animal presence; these are highly heterogeneous spaces. Pet animals and companion animals where often passingly present too, such as Salsa, a friendly Labrador with whom I regularly shared my sandwiches during my ethnographic fieldwork:

_Dewi quite often comes to help with the groups here, and Megan, and they'll often bring their dog, and it's actually, the guy, the main group we have, is a council run group, he brings this big old brown Labrador and it's like the dogs, particularly his Labrador thinking about it, is a real like focus of like conversation, if when we have a teabreak, the dog will lie in the middle of everyone and everyone will like pet it, he's kind of like, he kind of really holds things together._ [Dan, farmer at Bwncath, discussing the role of dogs on the sociality of the CSA space]

The dogs’ occasional presence highlights the fluidity of the multispecies constitution and makeup of the farms. They are not static spaces, but circumstantial arrangements constantly becoming, evolving, and restabilising with the introduction of new actants. The experiences and relations on one day can be completely different from another. The impermanence of certain actants reinforces the arguments outlined in Chapter 2 (specifically, see page 30), that spaces (whether therapeutic, CSA, or otherwise) are not fixed for all time, instead always being made and unmade; these spaces are not homogeneous wholes, but an interconnected series of parts, always being reworked (Bennett 2010). The constitution of CSA spaces is in constant flux.

When discussing what animals are present at CSAs, it is also worth recognising the arguments of Holloway (2001) and Wilkie (2005), that what one person may class as livestock can be a pet to another. There are large and blurred overlaps between the human constructed categories animals are placed into. Non-humans can transition between, or often exist simultaneously as more than one. There exists a wide variety of species which
may ‘become companion-able’ within CSA spaces, as animals and humans come to be knotted together in ongoing processes of being affected by others (Haraway 2008).

The animals that come to be briefly knotted together in the making of CSA spaces goes far beyond what may be expected in more ‘conventional’ spaces of farm-based food production and readings of established CSA literature. Three groups I interviewed had applied the CSA model to apiculture. These engagements with bees again highlights the ephemerality of animal presence within CSAs, for although the beehives were housed with the confines of ‘the farm’, the bees themselves were uninterested in such human defined boundaries:

*It’s not organic honey coz they obviously fly beyond the realms of the farm, and they eat loads of rape, on non-organic farms* [Joni, beekeeper and founder of an apicultural CSA in England]

The transient nature of the bees in this particular example produced certain problems for the CSA, as organic guidelines for honey production state that apiaries must be sited in such a way that nectar and pollen sources consist of primarily organic crops or uncultivated areas within a four mile radius of the hives (Soil Association 2015). Fleeting and topographically distant interactions between bees and flowers then become drawn into co-producing the situated CSA and the groups’ access to certain discourses and food products. These community supported apiary projects also again highlight the problematic nature of conceptualising CSA as being a purely horticultural movement; there are a diversity of different ways in which community scale food networks are engaging with non-human actants. Indeed, these engagements are not always intended, as I now move to explore.
5.2.3 Unintended Presence

CSAs aren’t necessarily solely in the hands of humans; animals regularly transgress human notions of boundaries and place (Philo and Wilbert 2000). While certain animals come to be present on the farm based on the needs, desires, and values of the local community involved in the project, other animals just happen to be present through their own agency and mobility. For example, Joyce, director of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England told me how they had come by some of their piglets somewhat inadvertently: ‘well we had a bit of an accident where, she got pregnant by her brother, so we had to keep her *laughs* and then we thought, well actually it’s not so bad having a sow producing litters, maybe we should carry on with it, that’s what we did’. Joyce’s story exposes not just how non-human agency shapes experiences and practices of CSA, but the second half of her anecdote also reveals the hybridity of decision making that then emerges. I talked earlier about how Lisa’s strategic decisions for her CSAs’ stocking became shaped by the influence of the community (see page 137), however here, Joyce’s groups’ future stocking decisions have been actively shaped by the transgressions and agency of their pigs.

It highlights that despite the often unintended nature of certain animals’ presence within CSAs, these unintended animals still come to be regularly ascribed specific roles within the CSA by humans. For example, Jo, the director of a CSA in England, explained how an unintended influx of rabbits into their horticultural activities became ‘captured’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2008) by the CSA, with the rabbits become reterritorialized into ‘wild game’, and a source of animal protein to include in their food boxes: ‘we’re basically warren-ing rabbits and we shoot them and eat them […] for me that felt like a full cycle, they eat our veg and we eat them’.
Indeed, for many CSAs, their entanglements with unintended animals becomes something to be celebrated, and a crucial part of their identity, as Keith, a member of a horticultural CSA in England explained:

_We've had tawny owls last year, little owls this year, breed, and two years running we've had mandarin ducks in one of the owl boxes [...] with the wildlife its good, we get grass snakes, rabbits are not welcome, we've had a lot of trouble with rabbits, of course they cause damage, but they've got the fencing done with all of that, we still get, there's a big shoot over the other side, we get the pheasants coming in, one particular cock bird all through the winter was coming up to me and followed me, eating out of my hand, feeding, making people laugh and all that [...] Deer, we've had problems with deer, they've got the fencing up, I've got a wildlife area outside the walls, and yeah, with the metal sheet, I get water shrews, bank voles, toads, grass snakes, and the pond, well that's doing fantastic this year now [...] we actually pulled out around 50 little newts [...] we get a lot of red kites coming over now, they fly very low over the garden, we get a lot of raptors, red kites, buzzards, sparrowhawks, kestrels, and then as I say, the owls, we get little owls, barn owls, and tawny owls, so that sides pretty good, and then where I put the metal sheeting, we get a lot of bank voles breeding [...] It's surprising what sort of stuff you get around here._

Here, ideas of post-productivist agriculture (Ilbery and Bowler 1998) emerge, as the farms become re-framed into a broader rendering as sites of ‘wildlife production’ (Suzuki 2007), as Keith and his colleagues have modified the spatial environment of their CSA to encourage and facilitate these kinds of human-animal relations.

Animals are often physically present within the topographic space of the CSAs, even if not specifically part of a group’s structures and holdings. Indeed, even CSAs that focussed explicitly on producing fruit and vegetable crops often found themselves unintentionally entangled with animals, particularly as many rented land from a larger farming enterprise, as William, a founding member of a horticultural CSA in Wales, explained:

_We do have animals on the farm there, but they're not a real central part of the CSA, the CSA is for the veg, and the members can buy meat from the pigs that Duncan [the farmer who owns the land] keeps on the farm, if they_
I want to [...] I mean our farm, with Duncan already doing the pork, he's already doing it, he's already a farmer [...] it does mean that the animals are around, in the field, you know, they're normally turning over a patch of land ready for the vegetables, so people see the pigs as very much part of the life of the farm and people get a lot, little kids love seeing the baby piglets when they come round, so there's a lot of value to it, but it's not built into the official structures of the CSA.

There is an animality to these spaces, even when animals are not specifically mobilised or recognised as being part of the group’s direct agricultural engagements and practices. The human-animal relations on offer at a CSA are not just the farms’ explicit stock, but all manner of liminal actants.

However, there is also tension surrounding these more unintended animals. Returning to Keith’s engagement with unintended animals at his CSA in England, he went on to tell me that his practice of encouraging animal life within the growing area came to a head during a failed sweetcorn harvest: ‘the head gardener said they managed to collect about 30 sweetcorn, and they reckon the rats had about 900!’. Keith’s practice of feeding birds was blamed for the rampaging rats and a moratorium placed on bird-feeding between the end of May and the beginning of October. Keith’s story highlights an important difference in the distinctive ways in which members of the CSA engage with, and value animals; CSAs are not homogeneous entities in their treatment and relationships with non-humans. Even for Keith, ‘wildlife’ is not a homogeneous category, in his earlier quote (page 142), he discusses having problems with deer and rabbits. Different species are valued differently, based on how they transgress human imposed boundaries and order, and ultimately, how they are seen to add or detract value to the CSA project.

Gardens have proved an interesting place to explore the dynamics between health and place (Milligan et al. 2004; Pitt 2014; Meijering et al. 2016), however, it is strange that gardeners’ embattled dialogues and conflicts with pest species has not come to the fore.
previously. Milligan et al. (2004) discuss their participants’ sense of pride in witnessing the successful results of growing allotment crops. This ‘successful’ growing involves a careful mediation and management of non-human life; it is doubtful whether the same therapeutic affect would emerge if the growing project was devoured by a plague of rats. As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, the emergence of therapeutic affect is often carefully constructed around an anthropocentric management of non-human others (see page 238 onwards).

Ultimately, the animals present on CSAs are highly dependent on the communities involved; as Henderson (1998) recognised with CSAs more broadly, ‘no two CSAs are alike’. However, recognising a more-than-human approach, the communities I refer to here are not simply human communities. Instead, communities in a wider, more ecological sense, with community referring to an assemblage of interacting populations occupying a given area (Whittaker 1975). Animals actively co-produce spaces of CSA. I have argued and demonstrated in this section that CSA spaces are far from being solely based around fruit and vegetables, instead being frequently based on and ordered around dynamic and transient arrangements of human-animal relationships, both intended and unintended. I now move to more critically explore how these human-animal relationships play out.

5.3 The Multiplicity of Roles for Animals within CSA

In this section, I discuss the contested and emerging roles ascribed to non-human actants on CSA farms, and how these roles come to take place. I build on the previous section and continue to highlight the heterogeneity of these space, and the ways in which animals can act to both stabilise and destabilise performances and practices of community supported agriculture.
Although, as I will later argue (in Chapter 6), animals are hugely important in how people can come to experience the farms as a ‘therapeutic’ space, such a therapeutic provocation is rarely the sole intended reason for having livestock, nor the role in which all relations are rooted. In the following discussions I highlight that animals can come be imbricated within these spaces for a multiplicity of roles, not just therapeutic reasons. Indeed, often the emergence of therapeutic affect from encounters with the animals is an unintended consequence, with its own benefits and burdens. It is thus important to understand the roles animals are assigned to begin with, as this leads to a pre-coding of human-animal relations, impacting how (therapeutic) human-animal relations on the farms are enacted and play out (Conradson 2005b). Indeed, many CSAs experienced the animals’ role changing, as Jon, founder of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in Wales explains:

*I think we got them initially because we all eat meat, but now, I think, if you asked us why do we have the animals, I think it’s a totally different set of reasons, like they’re really, really good fun, they’re brilliant to have, it’s just, everyone loves looking after them.*

The relationships between CSAs and their animals are neither simple nor static (Convery et al. 2008). Returning to Haraway’s (2008) idea of becoming companion species (see page 45), Jon’s group have become ‘knotted together’ through their ongoing attunement to their sheep; a process of becoming affected with their sheep which has led to a change in their relationship(s) with the individual animals. This transformation moved the sheep beyond being conceptualised purely as food, and resulted in a conversion in the praxis of Jon’s group’s ways of being a CSA. Establishing animals’ ethical positions becomes contested because of the diversity of economic, cultural, and social positions they occupy (Robbins 1998). I now move to explore the initial motivations that Jon refers to for their engagement with livestock farming – animals as food.
5.3.1 CSA Animals as Food

CSA literature regularly homogenises food, often because of the (as I have demonstrated earlier in this chapter) incorrect assumption that CSAs are spaces of horticulture. There is an extensive body of literature exploring consumers’ motivations for participating in CSAs (Cooley 1996; Cooley and Lass 1998; Oberholtzer 2004; Cox et al. 2008; Bougerara et al. 2009). However, it is questionable whether these motivations translate to forms of CSA involving livestock. Furthermore, understanding which crops CSAs choose to grow (Cooley and Lass 1998) tells us little about the considerations CSA groups made when selecting species, breeds, and individual animals.

To begin with then, I explore the importance of, and the different ways in which animals become constituted as, animals-as-food in CSAs. Here I am interested in the food related motivations that can lead to certain animals being present within the farms. I draw on literature from scholarship on CSAs and alternative food networks, as well as animal geography, to produce a more ‘lively’ (Haraway 2008) understanding of CSA. Particularly here, I draw on trends within wider discussions and conceptualisations of CSA and alternative food networks to explore how the moral geographies of CSA groups influences their engagements with animals, before moving to examine how having animal food products involved shapes issues of access to food and debates around ‘good’ food.

5.3.1.1 Moral Food Communities

Given that CSAs are spaces of food production by their definition, a desire for animal food products plays a large role for many projects as to their engagements with animals on the farm. However, it was rarely a desire for a generic foodstuff, driven purely by calorific or nutritional needs that led the CSAs to establish themselves or introduce livestock. Rather,
these interests in animals emerged from a desire for specific qualities of food and practices of agriculture; participants, such as Esther, Michelle, and Neil (see below), spoke about qualities such as ‘organic’, ‘local’, ‘biodynamic’, ‘high-welfare’, ‘high quality’, ‘sustainable’, ‘traditional’, ‘natural’, or ‘ethically produced’, with the values held important to the community group then becoming embedded and embodied within both the living animal and the final food product itself. The animals’ presence, and agency (and management/suppression/encouragement thereof) become crucial in co-constituting these moral food communities.

*Well, the attraction for people, why would you pay more and put so much effort in to your meat? The people who want that humane, local meat!*  
[Esther, co-ordinator of a pig CSA in England]

*There were some families, who really wanted to be able to give their families good quality meat […] people who are passionate about local food, about ethically produced food.*  
[Michelle, coordinator of a livestock CSA in England]

*The ideologies are, the values are very clear, it’s all about, it’s all in the objectives really, it’s to get local sustainable food which is affordable and people know where it comes from is all, mainly, pretty well organically grown, it’s healthy, and so on, and affordable and all that sort of thing, very very simple values, and it’s part of, you know, trying to restore more local, the local economy. It’s all to do with sustainability really.*  
[Neil, founder of a lamb CSA in England]
The values that Esther, Michelle, and Neil talk about above in regard to their group’s desires for specific qualities of animal produce emerge from a combination of shared morals surrounding ideas of how animals should be treated and farmed, as well as a yearning for a level of involvement and participation within the food production system, and a rejection and opposition to the mainstream methods of animal farming. These practices and desires can be understood as an expression of food sovereignty: the right of communities to define their own food and agricultural systems (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010). The livestock involved become intimately associated with a morality of human behaviour and lifestyle (Holloway 2003). Sovereignty of animal production and the ability to take an active role in the rearing of livestock was highly valued across many CSAs. As Holloway et al. (2007) note, creating an identity that a product is specifically ‘yours’ carries additional significance. For some groups, such as Esther’s pig CSA in England, it was the only way to produce food in a way that matched their values:

*I mean as soon as you get a lot of people or somebody else in charge or a farmer or someone else deciding on the welfare of the animal, then you’ve lost control which defeats the whole object to me personally and I think the people in my group, defeats the object of doing it, you might be back to, you might as well buy from the farm shop.*

However, it is also worth recognising that these particular value-laden foods also serve to construct an identity for CSA members as connoisseurs of quality and ethical consumers (Holloway et al. 2007). Rather than just a desire to purchase an organic, locally produced, leg of lamb, per se, it is equally a desire to access and perform the identity of someone who buys organic and local produce; purchasing status.

Many CSAs coalesce around the lack of availability of food produced to the groups’ desired standards, as Logan, farmer at a meat and dairy CSA in England, explains: ‘*when we did this local food survey there was a desire for organic goats’ milk, raw goats milk […] organic*
chicken was really desired as well and then as you probably know, you can't, it's just easy
to, it disappears like hotcakes’. Here, the community element of the project becomes more
about a community of interest, rather than a purely geographic community. However, it is
also a slightly different community of interest in comparison to the regular understanding
that CSAs are formed by large amounts of vegetarian consumers (Lang 2010). For
example, in Lang’s (2010) work with one farm in America, he found that 31.4% of the CSA
members were vegetarians, compared to a national average of 3.2% of the population.
Having livestock involved redefines who comes to be involved in these groups and the
collective makeup of what a CSA is, challenging previous norms about what these spaces
are. Indeed, for several consumers, introducing livestock to a CSA served as a catalyst
which deterritorialized notions of vegetarianism:

He was vegetarian for 25 years, until he joined the farm, and he's not
anymore, he eats meat, because he can see the sense of it, he can see
where it fits in to the scheme of things, and there's another lady, she's
started eating meat after being vegetarian, because again she can see it,
she knows the animals are being looked after [...] I mean some people talk
about how they stop eating meat for animal welfare issues, about the
conditions in factory farms and pigs and things like that. I think it does affect
how people see it. [Hannah, founder and farmer of a mixed
horticulture/livestock CSA in England, discussing how membership of the
CSA has re-aligned certain consumers’ values]

For some, embracing the visceral and sanguine nature of livestock rearing was a
motivation itself. The hemic encounter can become a crucial part of the experience
consumers are buying into when they subscribe to and join a CSA, as Lisa, farmer at a
livestock CSA in England, explains:

Everybody is invited to come along to the abattoir, I have approached the
abattoir to see if we can have a group go in [...] the last time we went there,
there were a few guys who had looked after the pig and we waited for some
blood.
Ron, the animal co-ordinator of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England, told me that his group were pleased to be able to offer unusual animal products such as blood (for black-puddings) and heads (for brawns and other speciality cuts and dishes) to their members as part of their CSA box. Ron cited the access to these less common animal products as being a key motivation for having livestock in their CSA system. Generally, food products tend to be anonymised post-production, leading to a culture of denial around where animal products come from, what Morgan and Cole (2011) call a ‘selective visibility of life’; a process which divorces the act of eating meat from the act of killing (Kellert 1996). Yet for many CSA consumers like Ron, being able to engage with cruor and crania was one of the motivations for having animals, a way of acknowledging, connecting, and living the true realities of a food system which relies on death.

For others, however, this was framed in a sense of efficiency. Eating the whole animal became framed as a way of doing justice to animals that become food, in a way that conventional supermarket purchasing would not allow them to do, as Jon, founder of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in Wales describes:

*One of the things we said from the outset was that we wanted to use all the animal, so, you know, when we take it to the butcher we even get the testicles back from the young rams, so yeah, it was never our intention to just discard any of it, we wanted to use as much as possible.*

Thus, for many CSAs, their choice to involve animals arises as a mechanism that allows consumers to practice and perform meat consumption in a way that aligns with their wider environmental values and preferences. However, related to this, animals’ presence is mobilised on the farms not purely to provide value-embedded food, but also to allow the practice of certain agrarian values and food based philosophies (Holloway 2003). The animals on the farms do not exist solely as isolated units of stock, but instead exist on the
farms as ‘a bundle of social relations’ (Watts 1999). Animals allow groups to draw on and enact certain food cultures and discourses, particularly around alterity, heritage, or environmentalism, concerning the food they produce and practices they mobilise (Holloway 2001, 2003). Rhoda, for example, founder of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in Wales, discusses how local food traditions and cultures caused them to engage in sheep farming alongside their existing horticultural CSA: ‘we’re also aware that around us we’re surrounded by sheep, so it’s foolish to just cut yourself off from that, I mean that’s part of our heritage and our food culture if you like around here’. Similarly, Albert, founder of a mixed horticulture/livestock and biodynamic CSA, explains how animals’ involvement was necessary to performing the identity and practices of being biodynamic, crucial to maintaining the everyday fabric of a biodynamic farm:

*I mean, it was going to be a biodynamic farm as well, and of course, one of the key things there is to try and develop a closed system, within the farm you know, that you’re reliant on your own fertility.*

Biodynamic agriculture and CSA have been intimately linked over the years. In the USA, the majority of early CSAs utilised biodynamic methods, or had connections to a Waldorf school (schools where the curriculum is based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, the ‘father’ of biodynamic agriculture) (Moore 1997). In the UK, much is the same, with many CSAs reporting sharing close links with Steiner schools or Camphill communities35. Despite geography’s extensive engagement with alternative food networks, little has been written on biodynamic forms of food production. Biodynamic agriculture is intimately linked with animality, encompassing agricultural practices stressing the use of animal manure, high animal welfare, and the place of the animal within the farm organism. It is a form of agriculture which focusses intensely on soil health, and

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35 Residential communities for people with developmental disabilities based on Steiner’s anthroposophical principles (Sempik 2008).
the way in which farming is co-produced by microorganisms within soil (Turinek et al. 2009).

Dan was keen to stress how important it is to care for the soil and develop good soil fertility, and build up the microorganisms within the soil. [Fieldnotes, 22 May 2015]

CSAs’ engagement with microorganisms in this way links to the suggestion of Paxson and Helmreich (2014) that in recent years, conceptions of microbial life has moved from being positioned as peril to promise. Non-human life is fluid and ontologically unstable, capable of being cast into multiple framings. Many CSAs rejected the idea of routine use of antibiotics on their animals and fungicides on their crops, in a downgrading of the threat associated with microbial life, and the opening up of multispecies ways of flourishing and sharing space.

Animals are central to creating the ethical identity of the CSA, allowing the mobilisation of certain knowledge practices which allow the groups to position themselves against conventional food production systems (Holloway 2002). The specific mobilisation of microbes through biodynamic practices (Turinek et al. 2009) is similar to Paxson’s (2013) discussions of artisanal cheese, and how microbes can be specifically mobilised to contribute to a distinctive ‘goodness’ of foods. Soil microbes and specific knowledge practices mobilised to govern non-human actants become entangled in the co-production of the CSA as a means of accessing discourses around ‘good’ food, something I move to explore in more detail now.
5.3.1.2 Accessing ‘Good’ Food

As mentioned earlier (page 67), there is a large literature which has examined how exclusivity and elitism is often emergent within local food projects through the mobilisation of discourses of ‘good’ food (Sage 2003; Macias 2008; Carolan 2011). Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007) argue that the price consumers pay for CSA produce will likely be higher than if purchasing from a conventional grocery store – suggesting that CSAs are a privileged experience. Similarly, Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) note that the upfront costs involved in traditional CSA subscriptions can create financial barriers. Other authors (Cooley and Lass 1998; Hendrickson and Ostrom 2001) argue that CSA can be cheaper, creating better access to quality, fresh, ‘non-junk’ food, though even these views emerge produced through elitist discourses. Indeed, literature on CSA suggests that many will often include such a diversity of vegetables in their food boxes that members do not have the food capabilities or knowledge to utilise them (Hinrichs and Kremer 2002; Oberholtzer 2004; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007).

However, as with all CSA research, these studies focus on CSA as being exclusively horticultural. Meat and animal products have the capacity to be much more elite and expensive products than vegetables, and thus livestock CSAs could have a role to play in either widening or closing any food justice divides. Like the aforementioned studies, the representatives from CSAs whom I spoke to for this research were conflicted:

*It’s not cheap, it’s not cheap food, so you know people on a tight budget, probably not going to be able to afford it.* [Joyce, a director at a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England]

*A jar of honey is 2 pounds if you’re a member, which is half the price it would cost in the supermarket.* [Joni, beekeeper and founder of an apicultural CSA in England]
Aside from direct issues of cost and affordability, several of the farms I spoke to suggested that through offering animal products they could begin to challenge the exclusivity and elitism often associated with CSA. In this way, meat allowed them to go beyond the more ‘usual suspects’ membership constitution of alternative food networks, becoming more inclusive, as Stephen suggests about several of the CSA projects he co-ordinates in England:

*It was noticeable actually when we started the pig group, and it was the same with the chickens for meat, not necessarily with the eggs, I think the eggs are slightly different, that the range, the demographic is far more inclusive and far more representative of the wider community, than the narrower band that you tend to get around CSAs and box schemes.*

Importantly, this is not to say that meat CSA projects are inherently more inclusive than their solely horticultural counterparts. Dietary habits associated with meat proclaim class and gender distinctions (Adams 2007). The requirement to store, freeze, and later defrost large quantities of meat involves a level of access to domestic infrastructure and technology, as well as the time capabilities to plan meals in advance (Hinrichs and Kremer 2002). Thinking about this through a ‘health assemblage’ lens proves useful; the accessibility of a CSA is based on all the relations that bodies have (Fox 2002). These relations enable the utilisation and accessibility of food systems, as well as how the distribution of a CSAs ‘products’ affects functionality and opportunities, and the ability for individuals to be what they choose and flourish.

However, for some, the CSA model became very much a driver for overcoming food-based challenges, and increasing their food opportunities, as Annmarie, founder of a meat CSA in England, explains:
Living in the town centre of [Town], you know, we couldn't buy a whole carcass of shearling\textsuperscript{36}, we had nowhere to put it, you had to have chest freezers, but you live in town, so I got talking to Aileen who’s the farmer, was the farmer running the co-operative of farmers, trying to see if there was a way we could get hold of this meat, and worked out that really if we could get together a group of people who would buy a carcass each month, then it was set, for the farmer it worked out because they would be selling whole sheep, so if we split it up between us, then we'd only get a portion of a sheep, each month, so we did it over 8 months, and got her to work out how to butcher it, so it would break up into 8 different sections, so there was a rota, so after the full 8 months you would receive all the different parts of the animal, but it wouldn’t be the same animal. So that was the way we worked it really. We could get smaller portions of meat, but the farmer could sell whole carcasses, and I think we got 16 people, so we did 2 carcasses a month, and of course we committed for 8 months, so that meant that they knew that it was worthwhile, producing those shearling.

For Annmarie, the CSA model became a means for her community to access a unique food product in a style that was still convenient and fitting with individuals’ food capabilities, while supporting existing agriculturalists in a reciprocal relationship; ultimately, allowing the consumers involved to express a level of food sovereignty.

For the CSAs I was exploring, animals were an important way for consumers to define their own food and agricultural systems, broadening the ability for consumers to make claims to specific identities and position themselves as concerned about particular issues in ways that vegetables alone could not, such as advocates of animal welfare or connoisseurs of heritage breeds. CSA, as a model of farming and food production/procurement, is not limited to only fruit and vegetables, but is being applied to a wide range of human-food relationships and practices in the UK. Animals were crucial for many of the CSAs to be able to practice their own specific ways of ‘doing food’, and engage in values important to their groups. Animals were strongly linked to the identities of what the project symbolised, allowing access to specific discourses and moral claims. Food is a clear motivator for the emergence of animal based CSAs, as Neil, founder of a

\textsuperscript{36} A shearling is a wether (a castrated male) sheep, between 17 and 22 months of age, which is neither lamb nor mutton.
lamb CSA in England, summarises: ‘we’re not a movement, we’re just doing something simple, with food’. While many groups shared Neil’s sentiments, for other CSAs, animals come to play many additional roles, which I move to explore now.

5.3.2 CSA Animals as More-Than-Food

In this section I examine how human-animal relationships on CSAs go beyond positioning animals-as-food. Here I discuss the different forms of human-animal relationships that emerge, showcasing the multiplicity of CSA spaces. Particularly, I explore how CSA groups often come to engage in livestock farming as a means of performing certain imaginations of place. I also examine how engagements with animals come to be based around a desire for encounters and relationships with animals. These encounters can have a direct impact upon means by which the model of CSA is practiced, and the way in which farmers engage in relationships with consumers. These human-animal relationships also provide a useful link for beginning to conceptualise how the animals at these farms can influence understandings of health and place, a theme I develop in further detail in Chapter 6.

5.3.2.1 Performing Imaginations of Place

Animals’ roles in alternative food networks are not simply as embodied food products or commodity producers. Instead, animals are important actants within community food networks that actively influence and represent how people experience and engage with place. For example, Aisling, founder of an apicultural CSA in the Republic of Ireland, discusses how the presence of bees changes what CSA members expect her performances and practices of agriculture to be: ‘I feel now, when people come, they’ll expect, if there’s loads of bees around, they’re going to expect it to be not conventional’.
The expectation that Aisling discusses has particular relevance for considering therapeutic affect at the farms, the expectations that people have for their experiences and encounters within place are important in how places can ultimately become constituted as therapeutic in varying ways (Watson et al. 2007). Relations that can enact a therapeutic engagement with place are rarely neutral or spatially and temporally contained, but rather coloured and coded by other relations and agencies distributed elsewhere in time and space.

As with Aisling’s bees, animals were often positioned as being crucial to maintaining the everyday understanding of ‘the farm’. Animals come to be positioned as key co-constituents of place-making and experience-producing (Cloke and Perkins 2005), as the quotes below demonstrate:

*It does somehow, it changes the whole atmosphere of a place, you know you go somewhere and it’s just polytunnels and veg, and then you go along somewhere that’s got livestock, even if it’s just hens, it changes the whole atmosphere of a place.* [Louise, board member of the CSA Network UK]

*It just makes the land a really different place [...] they’re really intriguing, animals, aren’t they, and they just, they improve the whole quality of the environment I think.* [Dan, farmer at Bwncath]

Here, animals are utilised to enact the principles of specific modes of alternative agriculture and specific place themes, to create a particularly coded sense of place. Rather than simply existing as embodied food, domestic animals are powerful symbols of both place and a way of life (Wolch et al. 2003). Animals’ capacities and potentials are cast as central to the working of the situated and emplaced CSA, and the creation of place identity and local culture (Yarwood and Evans 2000; Holloway 2002, 2003). Animals’ roles were commonly about creating the type of place that people expect when they imagine ‘the farm’. Animals became a way of signifying a level of authority of a group in their performance of agriculture, allowing them to draw on certain discourses of heritage and
tradition through the transformation of animals into embodied objects of power-knowledge (Holloway 2001). In this way, animals heighten CSA groups’ claims to specific values, and can come to serve as a form of marketing the farm, attracting new members, as well as in certain cases, visiting groups seeking to use the farm for therapeutic purposes. However, equally, animals’ agency can challenge a groups’ ability to make claims to being agriculturalists, as some of Dan and Dewi’s bees demonstrate:

*Unfortunately, the farm had lost one of their bee hives, they had swarmed off. There was a sense of disappointment and feeling of failure about this from Dan and Dewi. [Fieldnotes, 7 March 2015]*

Similar to Callon’s (1984) scallops, the enrolment of non-humans as ways ofsignifying successful and authoritative performance of agriculture, alternative food, and rurality, requires these designated roles to be accepted and performed by all of the actants involved, not simply just humans. Similarly to the issue of organic honey discussed earlier (page 140), the bees’ refusal to stay within the bounded space of the CSA farm disturbed the ability for the group to make certain claims, shattering the imaginations of place that they had in mind for the farm.

Linked to performing these imaginations of place, and common across many CSAs, was an element of prestige from having a ‘rare’ breed of animal. Often this was again about invoking a sense of alternativeness to mainstream agricultural practices; animals’ genetic heritage mobilised to produce discourses of localism and tradition. These rare breeds were also used to generate additional consumer interest in the project by presenting an animal that was both aesthetically different and endowed with cultural meanings. Again, this highlights the ways that animals are mobilised for more-than-food reasons on CSAs, and the desire to produce certain qualities over quantities (Yarwood and Evans 2000):
The pigs are a Berkshire breed basically, and show pigs they are, you know, a rare breed. [Nick, chairperson of a CSA in England rearing sheep, cattle, pigs, chickens, along with horticulture and fruit, talking about the speciality of the project’s livestock] 

So, we wanted to have a rare breed for the pigs, we wanted you know, we asked around sort of a bit, we ended up with Saddlebacks, and they were born locally and obviously, we wanted to use, wanted to keep things as local as possible. [Ruth, founder of a CSA with sheep, pigs, chickens, bees, and horticultural activities in England, talking about their specific desire for a ‘rare’ breed of pig, but having to settle for what was locally available]

As Selfa and Qazi (2005) have demonstrated, alternative food networks are pre-shaped by their regional history, geography, and environmental contexts. This is no different in the context of a CSA projects’ engagement with animals; the breeds and types of animals which come to be imbricated within CSA are often inherently place-bound. Place-bound in terms of stocking due to discourses of localism being reinforced and exploited to create a sense of loyalty to particular livestock (Yarwood and Evans 2000), or even place-bound in the sense of simply stocking what is locally available, as Ruth mentions above.

Animals were regularly seen as integral to the idea of an agricultural and rural landscape by many of the CSAs I interviewed, part of their geographical imagination of the countryside (Cloke 2006). Animals’ presence was valued, and in itself, a ‘product’ of the CSA, achieved by (supporting) farming in a certain way that contributed to certain landscape distinctiveness. Annmarie describes this in relation to her group’s reasons for establishing a sheep CSA in England:

I suppose also supporting, at that time it was felt that the sheep, you know, the Swaledales and things were a bit more under threat, so it was a way of maintaining that lifestyle […] Yeah, and loving the landscape there, and of course if the sheep weren’t there, then the landscape wouldn’t be there.

Ostrom (2007) has discussed CSA being used as a strategy to preserve and protect farmland, with CSA positioned as a form of land stewardship. However, Ostrom’s
discussions and examples are framed as keeping land in horticultural production, away from rival land uses (or even away from specific styles of horticulture – corporate monocultures). With animals involved, the types of landscapes with which CSAs are engaging potentially becomes much more diverse. Annmarie’s comments on the CSAs’ animals creating a mechanism for the retention of local landscapes and lifestyles is similar to Holloway et al.’s (2007) discussions of an ‘adopt a sheep’ scheme in Italy, started to preserve traditional ways of life and rural landscapes.

For both the scheme Holloway et al. (2007) discuss, and Annmarie, animals are mobilised to produce a sense of close connection with place. There is a large trend within discussions of therapeutic spaces of considering a ‘sense of place’ in relation to health (Gesler 1993; Williams 1998; Wilson 2003); such a sense of place can be produced and evoked by human-animal relations. Animals can provide a connection to place in ways that are meaningful to health. Palka’s (1999) suggestion that the simple derivation of pleasure from a landscape can be a form of therapeutic affect produced by engagement with place is particularly relevant here. Annmarie’s description of ‘loving the landscape’ is a large part of her engagement with the CSA. Her love of landscape and subsequent connection and sense of place is co-produced by the presence of sheep. Similarly, drawing on Power and Smyth’s (2016) considerations of how wellbeing can be derived from community-based heritage conservation practices, it is possible to consider how the preservation of specific landscapes and places in such a way can produce affective experiences of pride and accomplishment. As such, animals’ place-making credentials enable CSA to produce an element of ‘community benefit’ on a much wider scale than the community of interest that constitutes the group, with the animals on the CSA becoming intertwined with wider ideas of environmental sustainability and biodiversity. Rather than
just food, they are mobilised as symbolic capital, with the ‘product’ that the livestock yield being a means to both practice and perform ideas of environmentalism and conservation.

However, there is a danger that CSA becomes a route to allow people to discharge their environmental conscience because they have the wealth to invest in a CSA scheme. CSA can become transformed into an agri-tourism experience to be brought into by affluent middle classes (Guthman 2008), seeking to demonstrate and present their capacity to be concerned (Holloway et al. 2006). Focussing on the preservation of specific landscapes and places also reifies ideas about the ‘special’ value of rural and traditional lifestyles, communities, economies, and environments (Holloway et al. 2007). Indeed, animals are commonly mobilised as a means of the group involved in the CSA expressing power. One community initiated a sheep CSA to restore a local meadow to productive use, thus preventing a housing development. Here, the animals become mobilised as political agents, rather than purely as producers of food.

The examples in this section utilise animals to encourage a specific moral understanding of what an area ‘should’ be. They perform ideas of ‘appropriate’ use, reinforcing certain political and cultural systems and further vindicating a sense of ‘goodness’ related to the practice of alternative food. Given that the members of the CSAs in these examples were primarily urban residents, there is a danger that local culture and place identity become fetishized, and alternative food networks become bound up as a way of enforcing an exogenous (and potentially exclusionary) idyll, imagined by a specific group, rather than an expression of local sovereignty. I mentioned earlier in this chapter (page 153) that much existing literature on CSA has examined how exclusivity and elitism is often emergent within local food projects (Sage 2003; Macias 2008; Carolan 2011); animals are bound up in co-producing such politics.
It is also worth noting that the imaginations of place associated with animals were dependent on the situated perspective of a specific audience. For example, the National Trust, which provides land to several livestock CSA projects in the UK, talked about how having community livestock projects on their properties had the potential to ‘bring a place to life’, and add to the spirit of place: ‘you know overall it ticks so many boxes; it's absolutely in line with what we're doing’ [Jackie, representative from the National Trust]. For the CSA groups themselves, the livestock’s roles were about food, however, for the Trust, hosting the CSA groups and their animals allowed them to draw on ideas of community, localness, and sustainability, creating and facilitating certain geographic imaginaries of heritage and countryside idylls.

Away from these more immaterial ways in which CSAs use animals to create a sense of place, animals were also used to modify the very materiality of place. For Hannah, founder and farmer of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England, her motivations for including animals in her CSA were that ‘we just needed to restore the soil, that’s why we got chickens and geese’. Again, the motivations for the inclusion of animals had little to do with the animals' edibility. Livestock modify both the physical and cultural landscapes (Anderson 2006). Indeed, in many interviews with CSA farmers, animals were frequently discussed as being present for the ‘ecosystem services’ they provided, or ‘tools’ for land management. Again, highlighting that animals are introduced to CSAs for more-than-food reasons. Indeed, animals’ roles often became about modifying the physical environment of the CSA, with animals acting as ‘living mowers and ploughs’ and becoming replacements for certain technologies. Though again, this is as much about the facilitation of specific agricultural values. Animals roles in this way become multifaceted and fluid,
positioned and viewed differently by different groups, simultaneously sausages and strimmers:

*In a way we can see them more as a tool for the trees with a nice benefit that we get some eggs and some meat, and that we can sell some of that, rather than that being a primary focus of earning money, it's about reducing other costs basically by not having to import lots of manure and stuff like that coz we can use them, use the chickens to fertilise the trees and not having to run the, the strimmer all the time, or to mow the grass, all that kind of stuff, so that kind of land management is what they're about really.*

[Jay, founder of a mixed olive/livestock CSA (located in Spain, but with a British community supporting), discussing animals’ role in creating and maintaining a specific physicality of place on the farm]

Human-animal relations at CSAs are complex, locally specific, interdependent, fluid, and shifting (Convery et al. 2008). For many CSAs, having animals within their holdings is not just about being able to produce and consume value-embedded ‘good’ foods. Instead, the animals are part of being able to perform a specific geographical imagination of ‘a farm’, of local culture, and of successful alterity. Animals’ involvement in CSA is as much about producing an ‘alternative place’ as it is about producing ‘alternative food’. However, beyond co-producing these values, politics, and imaginations of place, many CSAs also came to value animals through the opportunity for encounters, as I move to explore.

5.3.2.2 Spaces of Encounter

Much of the literature on CSA discusses how the model enables consumers to feel a sense of connection with the land (Adam 2006; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007). ‘The land’ in this sense is fairly homogeneous, and lacking a discussion of what elements it is that consumers are seeking to engage with. Similarly, there is frequent talk of how CSA creates the opportunity for consumers to develop closer relationships with food-growers (Cooley and Lass 1998; Cox et al. 2008). However, it is not simply just agriculturalists that consumers are entering relationships with; animal CSAs allow the development of closer
relationships between humans and animals. CSAs become reterritorialized as enterprises producing not just food, but also sources of animal encounters. Indeed, Lisa, a farmer at a CSA in England, found that members were joining the CSA for the encounter value of non-human life, rather than joining the CSA in a quest for alternative foods: ‘we’ve got like [...] people who just go and check the sheep but don’t want to eat them’. Human-animal relationships on CSA go beyond a singular positioning of ‘animals as food’.

For many of the CSAs, animals were valued for their ability to attract consumers to the CSA. Not just because of their roles as sources of specific value-embodied food products, but also for their value as an attraction in their own right, providing a marketing benefit and capitalising the potential for animal encounters. As Stephanie, a board member of a horticultural CSA in England enviously describes, ‘I do think animals help, I think they help bring people to the site, they’re an attraction, not everybody wants to come and admire your vegetables’. Adding livestock to the community farming projects allows CSAs to profit from consumers’ interest in, and desire for contact with animals – the nostalgia for a ‘lost nature’ and ‘disappeared animals’ (Anderson 1998; Berger 2009). Indeed, in the age of a very visual based social media, animals’ agency, aesthetics, and charisma come to be key resources which CSA farms can capitalise on to capture interest, support, and create a sense of connection between the farm and consumers. Jon and Annmarie describe this below:

You post something meaningful on Facebook and everyone ignores, you post ‘what should we call our ram’ and you at least get around a hundred different ‘likes’. It’s an important tool to communicate values. [Jon, founder of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in Wales, describing the virtual engagement that having animals brings]

It made, I think, them feel that little bit more connected with what they were eating, and I remember when they, when the snows were really bad, they, that we got sent some fantastic pictures of the sheep in the snow and them bringing them down to shelter and things and we did an email around with those and things, so there is just that sense of being a bit more, I don’t know
Annmarie describing how members of her CSA had ‘virtual animal encounters’

A level of a ‘hyperreality’ (Baudrillard 1994) to animal relationships then begins to emerge. Relationships unmediated by an actual physical encounter, but rather constituted by knowledge. A co-mingling of the physical with the virtual that allows consumers to feel a connection to non-humans, devoid of a tangible embodied encounter. Holloway et al. (2007, p. 88) describe this as ‘closeness at a distance’, manifested through internet technologies that virtually establish sensual connections and vicarious experiences between viewers and a representation of place. These virtual relations have the potential to form ‘therapeutic cyberspaces’ (Andrews and Kitchin 2005) which can produce new capacities to affect and be affected through establishing virtual and hyperreal relations between human and ‘animal’. As Annmarie describes, these virtual engagements were a large part of the positive sense of place she developed, discussed earlier on page 160.

However, this lack of corporeal connection preserves a Romantic view of livestock farming. A focus in hi-resolution detail on moments of idyllic pleasantry while the visceral nature of the processes involved in the transformation of the living animal to food is kept hidden. This preserves the status quo of an invisible transmutation and a ‘selective visibility of life’ (Morgan and Cole 2011), relieving consumers from confronting the actual subjugation of animals (Davies 2000). There are certain elements of livestock farming that are less appetising for community involvement compared with a more straightforward horticultural growing scheme.

Animal presence becomes positioned as a useful way for CSAs to garner support, both politically and financially. Animals’ presence within the farm creates a means of
engagement and charisma, and an important symbolic resource: ‘we would not get the
public visiting or the schools and would not attract funding or donations without the
animals’ [Beth, farm manager of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England]. Animals
have significant cultural value, people like to see them, and to know that they are present.
Again, this idea of presence highlights the lack of need for a physical encounter. Animals
become important agents in representing ideas of novel and virtuous practices worth
supporting. The animals’ value as food here is positioned as a bonus, rather than their
core role; their presence becomes their purpose:

A lot of them [members], they don’t have a big expectation, they’re like this
is nice, we want plenty of bees in the world and somebody’s managing them
and they’re happy to support that. [Joni, beekeeper and founder of an
apicultural CSA in England]

The animal presence allowed the CSA to perform in a completely different way to the usual
model. It is unlikely that an individual would subscribe to a horticultural CSA without
vegetable based recompense simply because they wanted to support the idea of someone
growing vegetables. ‘Sharing the reward’ of the CSA then becomes about much wider
ideas of environmental sustainability and biodiversity. The product that the CSA yields
is then more about the opportunity for a flourishing of human-animal relations, and the
potential for animal encounters.

For some farms, this move to position animals as spectacle produced a change in the type
of animals welcomed into the farm space. Beth, the farm manager of a mixed
horticulture/livestock CSA in England described how her farm changed their stocking to
embrace this aspect of the farm as a place of encounters: ‘the sheep are to produce lambs
for the visiting public and visiting Primary Schools to see and also for meat. The goats and
donkeys are just for viewing’. For Beth’s CSA, individual species were assigned individual
roles within the farm’s enterprise, with these roles changing throughout the animal’s lifespan. Certain breeds were favoured over others for their smaller statures or more sociable natures – characteristics which make them more intimately encounterable and companionable.

This has implications in changing the CSA and the farmer’s role, in that rather than focussing solely on animal management and food production, they must also focus on fulfilling people’s expectations and preconceptions of animals (Cloke and Perkins 2005) to ensure that a ‘successful’ encounter is created. This change exists as a source of tension for some producers. Returning to Beth, although they have species on the farm deliberately to create encounters, she later laments that, ‘we want the farm to be a working farm, not a petting farm’. Animals can quickly become a detractor from creating a ‘real’ farming experience when the animals become deterritorialized into spectacle, rather than food.

While animals can often be sources of tension and conflict (Anderson 2006), I spoke to one project where the presence of a flock of sheep had instead encouraged a level of co-operation and resilience among competing groups. An allotment group initially saw a more recently founded CSA orchard as a threat, a rival for both members and space. The orchard later introduced several sheep to their scheme to manage grazing between the orchard trees. The allotment members could see the sheep through the fence, lively and vibrant matter, and became interested in what the orchardists were doing. The allotment members began to get to know the members of the CSA orchard, bonding, co-operating, and working together on projects at a larger scale. This collaboration was all initially inspired by the introduction of the animals, who facilitated inter-human contact and resulted in this increased community cohesion, an important affect in contributing to a
positive sense of health and wellbeing (Wakefield and McMullan 2005). Gesler (1996) was keen to explicate the role of ‘communitas’ as being a key relation in affecting how people developed a therapeutic relationship with place. To build on Gesler’s argument, this is not a solely human relation; animals too can play a role in creating and developing such a sense of community.

Animals can thus become agents of community building, forming a way for bonding between disparate members of the community. Indeed, for several of the farms, animals acted to hold the space together, the very reason for people to be there. Having livestock involved can redefine the social makeup of what a CSA is. For other groups, the presence of animals becomes a means of communicating values, and thus attracting like-minded people to the group, creating a space of shared ideals and philosophies; a safe space to practice certain ways of being, a relation which for some territorialized the farm as providing therapeutic opportunities, producing new bodily capacities:

*And it has, it has really created like a whole little social scene around it, it's really nice, people do get together a lot and you know there's just a real sort of social group that sort of, around what's going on with the sheep, it's great.* [Dan, farmer at Bwncath]

In this regard, it is also worth recognising that the attractions offered by animals, and their ability to draw additional people into the farm space (both CSA members, and groups seeking to utilise the space of the farm to benefit therapeutically), helps to reduce and prevent farmer isolation. Animals can turn a farm into a more sociable space for those more permanently engaged with the site, as Logan, farmer at a meat and dairy CSA in England, describes below:

*I think farming can be quite lonely, especially livestock farming where nowadays with tractors and things you don't need so many people to do the work [...] we don't want to be sort of farming on our own, you know, a*
smaller team, we've got a much bigger team, 55 members or so, people who come out and get involved and help us out when we need it.

In existing literature, the benefits for farmers of inviting external groups onto the farm are framed as mainly being economic (Hine et al. 2008a; Scholl et al. 2008), yet, as Logan discusses above, it is important to consider that any potential ‘therapeutic’ affect produced by having people visit the farm can flow both ways. For some livestock CSAs, the opportunity for animal encounter was specifically embedded within discourses of health and care. Many groups actively attempted to utilise their farms, and particularly, their animals, to provide benefits to various groups, inviting people into the farm environment. As Beth explains again: ‘we have organised visits from care homes and often many of the residents once worked on farms and love to see the animals’. I develop this theme in Chapter 6, where I move to explore how human-animal relations can actively influence the production of new bodily capacities and the closing down of others.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has further developed academic understandings of spaces of community supported agriculture. I have argued and demonstrated that CSA projects in the UK are not simply spaces of horticulture, bereft of animal life, but are regularly co-constituted by a range of species, and vibrant human-animal relations and practices. These human-animal relations emerge shaped by both humans and non-humans, resulting in a range of intentional and unintentional presences and relationships that exist at a variety of temporal scales. Animals play an important role in how CSAs come to define and practice their own food and agricultural systems, with animals strongly linked to the food based values and identities of what each individual community group conceptualised as important.
This chapter has also challenged the assumption that people involve themselves in alternative food networks for purely food based reasons (Stagl 2002; Brehm and Eisenhauer 2008; Cox et al. 2008). To re-use a quote I discussed earlier: ‘we've got like [...] people who just go and check the sheep but don’t want to eat them’ [Lisa, farmer at a livestock CSA in England]. For the producers and consumers involved in CSAs, these animals serve purposes that go beyond simply being producers of food. Animals come to be implicated within the projects for diverse reasons, with animals’ ontological positions and status moving fluidly, simultaneously constructed as friend and food.

Animals influence the identity of both the people and places of CSA. Their presence allows the mobilisation of different knowledge practices, performances, and imaginations of agriculture and agricultural space. Animals’ involvement in CSA thus comes to be as much about producing an ‘alternative place’ as it is about producing ‘alternative food’. Indeed, the animal presence causes a big change in what the CSAs produce, reterritorializing them as spaces of encounter – leading to further tensions for rearing and slaughtering livestock. This pluriactivity and post-productivist approach to CSA then troubles assumptions of understanding them purely as spaces of alternative food.

Having examined the variety of human-animal relationships that exist within CSA farms, within the next chapter, I explore how these relations can come to shape and reshape perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health.
6. Human-Animal Relations and Health
6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses Research Question 2: how can relations between humans and animals influence human experiences of health in place? To discuss this, I highlight the generative potential of human-animal relations in leading to perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health coming to be associated with place.

My discussions within this chapter are themed around existing work within the geographies of therapeutic spaces. I use these themes to build on existing understandings of the dynamic relationships between health and place and consider how different relations between humans and animals can shape and reshape therapeutic geographies. My work exploring these themes also involves pulling them apart somewhat, further decentring the human in geographical discussions of health and place. These themes are not the specific realms of human actants and their experiences, but rather multidirectional relations distributed among heterogeneous actants.

To begin with, I demonstrate how the sociality of the farms, and the therapeutic affects emergent from this sociality, are co-produced and practiced with more-than-human actants. This allows me to extend health geography’s understanding of how social relations can affect health to encompass the more-than-human. Drawing on these discussions, I then move to more explicitly focus on how animal encounters can affect the relations between health and place. Particularly here I engage with work on the aesthetic dimensions of ‘therapeutic spaces’ to explore how animal presence can (re)shape the relations at play. However, I am also interested in going beyond a simple co-presence, to explore how human-animal relations play out in practice in ways that influence bodily capacities. I thus move to explore the embodied relationships and engagements between humans and animals, drawing on work within health geography that has examined
activities, movement, and sensory experiences. Recognising that human-animal relations are shaped by both in-the-moment encounters as well as informed by ongoing relationships, I move to consider how the health affects emergent from human-animal relationships can shift over time, drawing on work within the therapeutic landscapes literature which has considered relationships of familiarity. The close relationships which can develop between humans and animals here leads me to explore the emotional aspects of how human-animal relations can (re)shape health in place, building on a growing body of work within health geography. My engagement with these themes allows me to bring animals back into geographic understandings of health and place, and produce an understanding of how human-animal relations can influence bodily capacities.

6.2 More-Than-Human Social Relations

A large proportion of the literature surrounding therapeutic spaces discusses the ‘social’ relations which can lead to the formation of places that affect health (Gesler 1993; Milligan et al. 2004; Tonnellier and Curtis 2005; Curtis 2010; Foley 2014). However, relying on ‘social’ as an explanation and descriptor tends to limit applications of what is social to the purely human, failing to recognise that a vast array of more-than-human elements act as relations in co-producing therapeutic geographies. Sociality is by no means a purely human notion (Latour 2005). ‘Social’ elements of the relationships between health and place have only been explored as human based experiences of social, with no recognition of the role animals play in both creating and experiencing ‘the social realm’. Here, I build on the literature surrounding the sociality of therapeutic spaces, but introduce a more-than-human approach that recognises a ‘social’ which is not purely constituted by human actants.
Animals’ bodies and presence can become key relations in creating and facilitating a level of contact among humans. The agency of animals results in something to engage with and respond to for the visitors to the farms, often prompting inter-human relationships that the visitors may not have experienced in a different context devoid of non-human life. Georgina, the animal coordinator of a care farming programme based on a CSA in England, describes this:

*That’s where the animals come into it as well, that brings in their social thing […] just those tiny little conversations that actually people wouldn’t normally have, it’s quite good.*

Importantly however, this increased sociality was not simply among others also visiting the farms specifically for therapeutic purposes, but instead a way to increase visitors’ capabilities and wider intercommunication, as Louise and Georgina point out:

*They were finding that clients that come for the care farming were really coming out of themselves because you know, they’re chatting to members of the public about what they’re doing and the animals. [Louise, board member of the UK CSA Network]*

*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, and becoming familiar with them (a point I will discuss in more detail later, page 219), then 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 and creating new ways of interacting with others. Instead of figures in the background, they become gatekeepers in allowing others
access and encounters with animal life, a level of value is created from their companionship and attunement to the farm animals. As Georgina demonstrates above, for many of the visitors to the farm, this becomes a hugely transformative experience. Relationships with animals can have life course resonances that extend far beyond physical and contemporaneous site-specific relations (Andrews 2004; Foley and Kistemann 2015).

There are also links to the idea of emplacement here. Andrews et al. (2006, p. 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 the ‘vital materialism’ (Bennett 2010) of non-human 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 in the world. In a context of 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 allow a ‘movement producing change’ (Parr 2005, p. 67), that can position a person as “someone” in a given place’ (Gastaldo et al. 2004, p. 172) deterritorializing preconceived notions of ability.

Animals act to expedite new forms of contact between humans, providing opportunities for social reciprocity, and the gaining of social capital, and help to develop a sense of place and belonging. In this way, there is often a high level of engagement in anthropomorphism towards the animals on the farms. Serpell (2003, p. 91) claims that anthropomorphism is ‘what ultimately enables people to benefit socially, emotionally and physically from their
relationships with companion animals’. Serpell argues that the attribution of human emotions, characteristics, and behaviours to non-humans (fictitious or not) is crucial in creating meaning and value in human-animal encounters. The ability to relate to animals as humanised hybrids (Serpell 2005) becomes an important way in how people come to experience space as therapeutic, the animals becoming mobilised as allegories of positive aspects of human health and wellbeing (Tonnellier and Curtis 2005). 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.

Related to this, in Brewster’s (2014) work on ‘the library as therapeutic landscape’ her participants spoke of the value of feeling that library staff knew them, which Brewster associates with an association of a place of wellbeing. It is a similar relationship which is taking place on the CSAs, only the version of sociality taking place here is a more-than-human one. A multidirectional and interspecies approach to ‘knowing’, as Emma, opportunities coordinator for a homelessness project in Wales (Emma’s group, like Dave’s, visited a local CSA every fortnight for ‘therapeutic’ purposes), describes:

*It’s like a sense of belonging […] they’ve got to know Salsa and the names of these dogs, and they’re like ‘oh Salsa’, and they like to feel as if they belong.*
Drawing on Emma’s comments about Salsa, certain animals on the farms (often those that were most individuated) also serve to create shared relations and a commonality of knowledges and experiences between people, regardless of their background and abilities. Animals can act as both a ‘glue and a lubricant’ (Anderson and Jack 2002); a way of creating cohesion among different groups, breaking down barriers and drawing people together around a shared desire for animal encounters, as Dan demonstrates:

So, there’ll be someone from the young homeless project, some of their clients, someone from the mental health with a few of their clients, and then they’ll all just come, part of the idea is that they all mix and they all work with each other […] The main volunteer group we have, he brings this big old brown Labrador, and the dogs, particularly his Labrador thinking about it, is a real focus of conversation, when we have a tea-break, the dog will lie in the middle of everyone and everyone will pet it, he kind of really holds things together. [Dan, farmer at Bwncath]

Topographically distant animal actants too come to be mobilised in this way because of these initial animal encounters: ‘when we’re handling rabbits or grooming rabbits or something ‘oh yeah, my rabbit does this’ and you know, that sparks off a bit of conversation’[Georgina, animal coordinator at a care farming programme based at a CSA in England]. Memories and emotions associated with other animals can be stirred by contact with another member of the species. This mobilises a person’s pre-existing knowledge and affinities with an individual or species to play a role in (re)shaping the relations available within a farm visitor’s actual topographic location. It highlights Andrew’s (2004) point that a purely physical co-presence is not always required in constituting a ‘therapeutic’ space. Rather, to draw on Latour (2005, pp. 200-201), these relations are isotopic (in that ‘what is acting at the same moment in any place is coming from many other places, many distant materials, and many faraway actors’) and synoptic (‘very few of the participants in a given course of action are simultaneously visible at any given point’). Gastaldo et al. (2004, pp. 159-160) note that ‘as human beings, we imagine and
remember special events, people and places, often for our own relief and happiness’. Animals equally fit into this line of argument, with memories and imaginations of animals becoming involved in a co-production of a space conducive to a level of flourishing. This occurs both on the farm, as Georgina describes, to produce new social relations, as well as later, as participants reflect upon their fond memories of their relationships and encounters with the farm animals.

For many of the young people that visited a farm with Dave, Emma, or Siôn’s groups, the farm animals also served to constitute a more equitable space. The heterogeneous sociality of the farms meant that 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. Here, more hierarchical structures and spatial features are left 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, and, like, 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 NEET³⁷ young people, Wales]

To draw on Laws (2009), who discusses how ‘therapeutic spaces’ can emerge through the creation of a non-technical environment, animals’ ‘out of place-ness’ in these

³⁷ Not in education, employment, or training.
interactions acts as a counter, subverting hierarchical relationships to instead allow a more equal politics of relatedness. Dave went on to describe how people ‘open up when they are enjoying something’, while Emma, opportunities coordinator for a homelessness project in Wales, explains, ‘with some of my kids, they’ve started talking about their former lives and or the issues that they’ve had, and problems they’ve overcome, and you know, some of the tragedy really – they’ve brought up’. This opportunity to talk more freely and openly with confidence allows a level of release from visitors, emerging in part from what Walsh (2009, p. 468) calls ‘the nonjudgmental acceptance of animal companions’.

Importantly, in this idea of more-than-human social relationships, developing a relationship with individual animals on the farms provides opportunities for a level of sociality that is not only confined to the human sphere. Rather than just facilitating contact among different humans, animals provide ‘social’ contact themselves, cited by many of the farmers and facilitators as being a particularly important part of the farm experience for visitors with developmental or communicative issues. Rather than reifying ‘threatening structures’ and ‘institutional settings’ (Andrews and Andrews 2003, p. 542) from which several of the visitors (in Dave’s group) had been excluded or alienated from, animals instead provided a new modality of social contact. This becomes particularly important for the way in which many visitors navigate these spaces and come to find them to be therapeutic, as the quotes from Alys and Siôn demonstrate:

*This one particular student, you know, doesn’t look staff in the eye, but was very much engaged with the dog, was very much calling the dog behind us, checking he was there, you know, we would move location, he’d check with the dog ‘come on Rex, come this way’. So, some students were engaging through the animals more than the people […] students just enjoy that interaction with another being. [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]*
These more-than-human social relationships were most commonly played out with the charismatic mammals on the farms, and those animals more regularly thought of as traditional ‘companion animals’, though some of the visitors would happily talk to chickens and passing bees. The opportunity for companionability and relationships with non-humans provides additional ways in which visitors can come to experience certain spaces as producing therapeutic affect.

For the visitors to the farms I was exploring, these more-than-human social relations produced a proliferation of a capacity to affect and be affected; the animals not just facilitating contact between humans, but existing as actants with which visitors also had social relations with. These relationships between human and animal highlight the way in which human experiences and understandings of health and place are co-produced by more-than-human actants, and how heterogeneous relations produce new bodily capacities and close down existing ones. Recognising the way in which animals are imbricated within these spaces, I now move to explore animals’ very presence in more detail, examining how encounters with animals can come to transform individuals’ capacities to affect and be affected, and thus (re)shape how place can facilitate or constrain a body.

6.3 Encountering Animals

Within this section, I explore how lived and situated encounters between humans and animals affect human experiences of health in place. While the previous section has
mainly focussed on how human-animal relations affected health through influencing how humans engaged and interacted with other humans, here I particularly focus on the ‘being with’ of human-animal relations. As part of this, I draw on the idea of aesthetic value and beauty, which has been a recurrent theme within discussions of therapeutic spaces (Collins 2007; Bell et al. 2015), to show how an aesthetic appreciation of animals can influence certain affective places. This also allows me to further interrogate the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic spaces’ – an aesthetic appreciation of a farm will be influenced by many individual elements. However, human-animal relations are not just about a coexistent presence, but take place through embodied practices, activities, and movements. I thus also move to consider how these aspects of human-animal relations unfold in place and can come to enact, define, and enable bodily capacities and limits. This allows me to further examine how therapeutic affect emerges as co-produced, influenced by the agencies of human and non-human alike. Recognising this embodiment, I also move to explore how therapeutic affect can emerge through sensuous engagements with animals, and how these can come to (re)shape health relations and capabilities. This attention to the more-than-visual aspects of therapeutic geographies produces a further means of critically attending to the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic spaces’ and creates new ways of considering how both place and animals can affect health.

6.3.1 Aesthetic Engagements

Therapeutic affect emergent from an aesthetic appreciation of place is commonly discussed with literature surround health and place (Collins 2007; Bell et al. 2015). Palka (1999) for example, discusses gaining pleasure from aesthetically pleasing landscapes serving as a form of ‘therapy’. Being affected by landscape in this way derives a sense of health. Milligan et al. (2004, p. 1785) build on this to suggest that certain places provide an opportunity for therapeutic affect emerging through ‘the pleasure taken from the
aesthetic beauty of the natural environment’. They argue that aesthetically pleasing places provide ‘a setting in which it is possible to think through immediate and unresolved problems’. As I have previously argued, a reliance on homogeneous terms proves problematic in critically unpacking the relations which result in places affecting health. There are a diversity of actants and elements which comprise the spaces being discussed; what exactly is it that people are enjoying observing? Part of this is about attending to the more-than-human nature of therapeutic geographies, and recognising the co-production of the way in which these ‘territories of becoming’ produce new potentials (Thrift 2004b). I thus build on this work here by discussing how the presence and appreciation of animals can be vital in a place becoming associated with therapeutic possibilities.

For the visitors on the farms I was exploring, it was often the specific presence of animals that served as a focus of interest and aesthetic appreciation, as William, a founding member of a CSA in Wales, describes: ‘when people come down to the farm and they see the pigs just running around they add a real life to the place, animals, so yeah I think absolutely there’s a benefit there’. Animals can influence how relations with(in) place can unfold simply by being around; relations do not have to be rooted in physical contact or in specifically therapeutically coded activities. Indeed, there is often a trend within literature that considers animal-assisted-therapy of discussing how ‘therapy animals’ are ‘created’ (Zamir 2006, p. 181). Rather, I argue that relations with animals can simply emerge as therapeutic in a certain way. The presence of animals alters how people navigate the farm spaces, visually, physically, and emotionally; lingering to enjoy interactions with animals, taking (and making) time to stay and relax. It is the very presence of animals that encourages and engages people into taking a moment out of busy lives to be mindful:
People kind of enjoy that duty [feeding the animals], just to go for 20 minutes, half an hour, and stand and watch pigs. [Esther, co-ordinator of a pig CSA in England]

Generally, I find it a really nice part of my day to go spend maybe, whatever, 10-15 minutes with them [animals]. [Jay, founder of a mixed olive/livestock CSA]

In some ways, this is similar to Milligan et al.’s (2004) discussions of how places relationally constituted as aesthetically beautiful can impact on people’s 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. This is similar to Pitt’s (2014) discussions of how place-bound activities allow people to become absorbed and screen out negative perceptions, leading to certain places being considered as therapeutic. However, rather than activities, it is again specifically the presence and agency of non-human life that absorbs and distracts visitors, leading to an experience of a specific place as therapeutic. While certainly there are many vistas that would engage people in the way that Esther and Jay talk about above, the agency of animals can create an important sense of life and vibrancy, spontaneity and novelty, as Logan, farmer at a meat and dairy CSA in England, describes:

You don’t quite know what an animal’s going to do either. So yeah, they say like working with animals and that, is unpredictable, and there’s something fun about that. I had this chicken yesterday that was trying to eat my trousers, just kept jumping up on my leg and trying to peck my trousers, made me laugh!
Milligan et al. (2004, p. 1790) describe the ‘achievement, satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure’ that people can gain from their engagement with ‘nature’. However, such a reading of nature-cultural encounters within spaces of health and wellbeing privileges only one version of the relationships, co-existences, and dependencies that can lead to a place affecting bodily capacities. For example, the opportunity of seeing animal life adds to the fascination factor of the farms for many people, creating further engagement and new ways for people to benefit from being present within the landscape. However, for others, the presence and sight of animals can lead to uncertainties and concerns, mobilising fears and negative preconceptions (a theme I will return to on page 216):

\[\text{Later in the day, just before we were leaving, Rosy noticed something moving around at the bottom of the field – Dave has a fear of rats, so the group are always trying to wind him up by saying they’ve spotted a rat! Dave told me how at a previous visit, they’d been moving hay stacks, and a rat had appeared, he’d apparently shot across the field. As always, they were keen to report their observations to Dan. There was indeed something moving around! After a while of observing, Dan identified it as a female pheasant! There was a mixture of shock and curiosity – as well as some confusion – “Is that a chicken?”.[Fieldnotes, 7 May 2015]}\]

These spaces are multiplicities, constantly becoming and rearranging, evolving and restabilising with the introduction of new actants. There is no singular reading of therapeutic spaces, nor of animal encounters, but rather multiple versions of how new bodily capacities are produced (or existing ones closed down) through processes of being affected by others (Haraway 2008); a relational process of ‘becoming therapeutic with’.

An aesthetic (dis)appreciation of place is one way in which place can come to affect health. Here I have shown how such affective aesthetic engagements with place come to be influenced by human-animal relations, producing certain emotional states and shaping how people experience place in ways meaningful to their health. To further explore how bodily capacities are (re)shaped through human-animal relations, I move now to focus on
the ‘taking place’ of human-animal encounters, examining how therapeutic affect can emerge through practice with non-human others.

6.3.2 Active Encounters

While the previous section may have focussed more on how ‘being with’ animals can enact, define, and enable different bodily capacities and limits, here I explore how ‘doing with’ animals can also influence the relations a body has. Here, I draw upon the large body of work which has explored therapeutic spaces in relation to the activities they can facilitate (see page 22). Specifically, I draw on Pitt’s (2014, p. 89) argument, that what people do is as significant as where they are for understanding how certain places can affect the many different relations which influence health assemblages. Activities frequently bring humans into contact with animals, in practices of activity and movement that are co-produced (Bear and Eden 2011). I mentioned in Chapter 2 (see page 23) a desire to move away from a trend in literature of exploring activities already associated with health benefits, and instead attend to examining how more mundane and everyday tasks may assist in a space becoming associated with therapeutic possibilities. Visitors to the farms can become involved in a range of tasks that bring them into direct material, bodily, and sensorial encounters with the range of non-human life on the farms; feeding the animals, cleaning them out, moving the animals from field to field. These activities with the animals become a catalyst for producing new ways of being in the world, producing new socialities, emotions, and other relations (Milligan et al. 2015).

For visitors to the farms, animals became a reason for people to be outdoors, and a means of encouraging physical activity, without it being framed explicitly as exercise – whether walking a dog, or trekking across a field with a wheelbarrow full of sheep-feed. This was important for several of the CSAs with a specific ‘health’ focus, as it was felt that ‘exercise’
created negative connotations of being overweight or unfit. These kinds of undertones were seen as a detractor when many of the projects were trying to encourage opportunities for the development of self-esteem:

One of the group leaders told me that in the past she has brought her dog with her to work, as one of the boys who visits the farm is overweight and they are trying to get him to exercise. By tasking him with taking the dog for a walk, it gets him physically active, without it being framed as exercise. [Fieldnotes, 9 April 2015]

They certainly actually enjoy going down to the field, even you know in a week where it’s quite awkward to go, with work or family, people kind of enjoy that, just to go for 20 minutes, half an hour, and stand and watch pigs, people are a bit odd, but it’s kind of equivalent to that, having a dog as an, not an excuse, an incentive to go for walks isn’t it, be outside. [Esther, coordinator of a pig CSA in England]

Doughty (2013) argues that shared movement can produce supportive spaces that come to be experienced as restorative, here however, it is particularly the sharing of movement with non-human others that comes to influence the production of new bodily capacities. As Buller (2014) describes, we share both embodied life and movement with animals. Here, interactions with dogs and pigs come to mediate a physical and embodied relationship with place that produces new ways of being in the world. However, these relations are not taking place in isolation, and walking with animals also affects and forms other relationships, such as new emotional geographies and sensorial experiences which I go on to discuss later. Animals influence the many different relations which are drawn together to define what a body can do (Fox 2002).

Indeed, Esther’s point about the pigs giving people a reason to be active is similar to arguments made earlier (page 183) about how animals can facilitate a healthful relationship in place by means of providing a space for thinking (Milligan et al. 2004). However, here this relationship is more complex than a simple aesthetic appreciation of
the pigs that creates serendipitous healthful flows of becoming. Instead, it involves a purposeful becoming affected by others (Haraway 2008), a relationship with the pigs that is developed over time, through processes of attachment and attunement. Various qualities are drawn into these relationships. Nick, chairperson of a CSA in England, for example, talked about how people seeing the sheep as ‘their flock’ created a level of personal involvement with the lives of the sheep that shaped the health benefits emergent from people’s time at a farm with the animals. In Chapter 5, I discussed how the creation of a food product with personal attachments results in additional significance (Holloway et al. 2007) (see page 148). A similar relationship is equally at play here, only with living animal subjects.

In this way, the animal related activities on the farms came to produce therapeutic affect as they were meaningful. Not physical activity simply for the sake of physical activity, but purposeful tasks, with a value and an end-result attached to them. Indeed, as Georgina, animal coordinator at a care farming programme based at a CSA in England, explains:

*We’re not just a day centre that people come to, so the parents and the carers can get some time off, while we sit there and we do a little bit of painting or something like that, you know. We’re actually doing a job!*

*The group leaders ask questions throughout the day while we are doing various activities, getting the visitors to think about different aspects of the farm. They suggest that it helps the visitors to engage in the farming process, and understand what they are doing – helping to take care for the animals rather than simply engaging them in tasks which are meaningless to them.* [Fieldnotes, 9 April 2015]

This purposefulness, and a related understanding of it (mentioned in the fieldnote above), becomes crucial in navigating the avoidance of the exploitative conditions and framings of the ‘asylum farms’ of the past (Parr 2007). The way in which place influences health
assemblages can be actively shaped by the power relations between and among groups (Wilton and DeVerteuil 2006).

On some of the farms, it was also the informality of the way in which these activities were framed that enabled visitors to develop relationships conducive to their wellbeing. At the sites I observed, tasks were generally explained and listed at the start of the day. The farm visitors were then free to choose what they wanted to do. It allowed them to follow their interests, and work with their preferred animals, as Dave, an outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for NEET young people, alludes to:

 Yeah working in small groups , it’s not being on a rota basis or a timetable down there, they have a little task for them to do every 40 minutes, and then the chance to rotate your role, whether its fencing, whether its weeding, whether it’s doing something with the chickens, the animals, moving straw, planting, sowing, it’s the opportunity to do different tasks within the day, not just set to one task […] it’s not a case and we go there and feel under pressure, like you've gotta work for 4 or 5 hours, people work at their own pace, and I think for a lot of the guys, clients that we work with, have got low self-esteem, low confidence, if they were put in a situation where it was like ‘get your heads down, we're not having a break for 2 hours’, it would be a negative experience, and it would be 2 fingers up and they wouldn’t come back.

Further to this informality, there is also the range of activities which can be incorporated into interactions with livestock. Berget et al. (2008) note that in contrast to typical animal-assisted-therapy (usually practiced with ‘pet’ animals), farm animals offer opportunities for incorporating additional activities into therapy such as milking, saddling, and riding. While, in isolation, these activities may not be associated with health, as they become enrolled as part of a farms ‘caring practices’, they become intimately linked with how a ‘therapeutic space’ is performed and imagined. Livestock provide a diverse range of activities for visitors, which both prevents boredom and monotony, as well as producing other benefits,
as Georgina, animal coordinator at a care farming programme based at a CSA in England, describes:

*It might get a bit too routine for the guys as well, if every day when they come all they do is muck out, that would be a bit monotonous really [...] because there is so much to do on the farm, you know, you could just probably make up a project anywhere on the farm which is the great thing about it, and yet keep so many people apart, you know you wouldn’t get on top of each other working.*

Although as I discussed earlier (page 174), for many visitors to the farms animals can help to create a space of sociality and sharing, Georgina’s comment above about being able to keep people apart is also noteworthy. The extent of the farms can create spaces for solitude and individuality to be practiced and expressed, resisting the production of ‘sites of enforced engagement’ (Milligan 2009). While not solely attributable to animals, this is certainly aided by the mobilities of the farm animals, their routes and movements around fields and paddocks allowing work and encounters to be conducted in smaller groups. Indeed, the nature of the activities which take place on the farms isn’t solely in human hands, and is dependent on interactions with animals. At times, animals’ mobilities become specifically entangled in the relational co-production of ‘health’, particularly when thinking through some of the discussions earlier around how an aesthetic appreciation of animals can co-constitute an emergence of a space of therapeutic affect. For example, I mentioned on page 184 that the opportunity of seeing animal life adds to the fascination factor of the farms. While some of the animals may live permanently within the space of the CSA, others are perhaps simply passing through the space, such as Keith’s engagements with deer and rats discussed on page 142, the squirrels mentioned on page 138, or the horses mentioned below:

*The day started by Fred giving a detailed health and safety talk. Fred also mentioned that as we were in the countryside, there were livestock present,*
explaining there were a lot of common grazing areas around. He explained what to do if approached by a cow or a horse. One of the group laughed worriedly, and said that he was afraid of horses, and if one approached him, he'd be ‘legging it’. [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]

Though similarly, discussing animals’ mobilities forces a consideration of the fluid and porous nature of spaces described as therapeutic, and that often, humans have little choice about the individual animals and species which they become relationally entangled with. As Philo and Wilbert (2000, p. 22) describe, ‘most animals will wander in and out of the relevant human spatial orderings without necessarily knowing’ – such as the horses in the extract above. Again, this can lead to uncertainties and concerns, highlighting the co-existences and dependencies at play in the relations that (re)shape human understandings and experiences of health and place.

Here I have demonstrated how therapeutic affect can emerge from embodied practices, activities, and movements with animals. My argument here has shown that the relationships between health, place, and animals is not just influenced by animals’ presence, but comes to be shaped by how humans engage with them, with bodily capacities becoming affected by the ‘taking place’ of human-animal relations. Building on this, in the next section I further my explorations of the embodied aspects of how human-animal relations affect health by introducing a sensory approach to discussions of ‘therapeutic spaces’.

6.3.3 Sensorial Engagements with Animals

A ‘therapeutic landscape experience’ (Conradson 2005b), and the proliferation of new bodily capacities, is not just produced from visual cues, but is also informed by other sensuous engagements: taste, touch, sound, and smell (Holloway and Hubbard 2001); places are always embodied (Thrift 2008). Milligan et al. (2004) have noted that the
opportunity for sensory experiences is particularly significant in enacting an affective therapeutic engagement with place. Butterfield and Martin (2016) also talk about ‘sensory richness’ affording an opportunity for the emergence of therapeutic affects. However, there has been little engagement with non-visual senses within therapeutic geographies. As Evans (2016, p. 173) notes, work within ‘the therapeutic landscape tradition has largely been visually-orientated’. I begin to address this here, discussing the dynamics between the sounds, smells, and tastes of animals, and how these (re)shape health relations and capabilities.

Attending to the senses also creates a way to engage more critically with the heterogeneity and more-than-human co-constitution of therapeutic geographies. I discussed in Chapter 4 (see page 115) how my paying attention to the senses brought a focus to the animals less visually obvious with the farms. This was a recurrent theme, for both myself, and visitors to the farms, an important part of how people engaged with animals, health, and place:

*Animals were certainly audibly present, if not visually, as we walked around the farm site. Crickets and birds provided a constant hum over the leek field.*

[Fieldnotes, 11 July 2015]

My intent here however, is not to instrumentalise the senses, dividing various sounds, smells, and tastes up into pleasing or displeasing, therapeutic or untherapeutic, within a given landscape. Instead, I draw on Prior’s (2017) arguments surrounding sonic environmental aesthetics. Prior argues that focussing on pleasure and displeasure ‘provides a limited point of entry through which to consider the full scope of human and non-human sounds in landscapes, and also the variegated ways in which we aesthetically experience and respond to these sounds’ (p. 14). Prior’s argument on sound can equally
be extrapolated to smells and tastes. Thus, rather than arguing that certain sounds, smells, and tastes are intrinsically or inherently therapeutic, what I instead demonstrate here is the generative potential of situated and embodied relationships with animals in affecting bodily capacities.

6.3.3.1 Sonic Interactions

Sound is an important part of the ordering of everyday life. Tuning in to the sonic landscape can produce sophisticated understandings of place, engendering feelings of connection with surroundings, providing different forms of engaging with space (Butler 2007). While geographers have historically been rather silent on the matter of sound, recent years have seen rather more noise being made about the aural realm. Moves have been made to attend the role of sound in producing and mediating certain environments (Bull 2015) as well as the emotional and affective significance of sonic landscapes (Doughty et al. 2016). However, within geographical discussions of health and wellbeing, sound is often ‘tuned out’. A notable exception to this is a recent edited collection by Andrews et al. (2016) on ‘soundscapes of wellbeing in popular music’. However here, I am interested in the non-musical. Andrews et al. (2014, p. 215) describe the difference as being that ‘non-musical noise is a mixture of frequencies with no mathematical relationships between them (often unpleasant to the ear), music is a mixture of frequencies with a mathematical relationship between them (which is pleasant to the ear)’. However, an approach based on dichotomising music/sound and pleasant/unpleasant limits discussions of soundscapes (Prior 2017). Here I move beyond how music is ‘embedded within complex discourses of wellbeing’ (Andrews et al. 2016, p. 1) to consider more embodied experiences of listening (Gallagher et al. 2016). Not so much music as a ‘therapeutic tool’ (Andrews et al. 2016, p. 38).

Gallagher and Prior (2014) provide a useful review of the progress in sonic geographies.
6) in specific music therapy practices (Bartel and Clements-Cortés 2016), but how the presence of everyday sounds in place can produce healthful affects. Rather than a performance of place in song (Cowell 2016), I explore how sonic relations unfold in emplaced practice, their generative potential.

The sounds present on the farms were a crucial part of how people experienced health in place, as Dan, the farmer at Bwncath, describes: ‘there’s something really satisfying that makes me feel really well hearing the cock crowing down there and knowing there’s a bunch of chickens in the orchard’. As Simpson (2016, p. 166), drawing on Deleuze’s discussions of ‘the refrain’, argues, the repetition of ‘rhythm and melody’ acts to articulate and give organisation to a territory, an experience, Simpson (2016, p. 166) argues, which can produce a familiarising and reassuring affect, ‘helping us make ourselves at home in the world’.

Non-human sounds are thus an important part of a rooted sense of place (Whale and Ginn 2017). Lorimer (2007, 2008) has drawn attention to how aural characteristics are an important part in establishing non-human charisma, and can play a part in being affected by other species. Whale and Ginn (2017) also highlight that the sounds of non-humans come to be specific means of remembering. Animal sounds can (re)shape the emotional geographies of place, triggering memories and a sense of familiarity, allowing people to retain connections to culture, identity, and past experiences. The sounds of non-human life were frequently cited as a crucial factor in how people came to be affected by being with(in) the farms:

*It’s such a sound as well, that whole just sort of vibration of thousands of bees you know, produce, does open your mind up to other things, other than that your immediate perspective […] I found it absolutely a brilliant way to reconnect with stuff and have a bit of time out and let the mind calm […]*
just going out in summer and lying next, down to the lavender or whatever it is, even under the sycamore when that’s in, the buzz is just fabulous, it’s really nice. [Gloria, founder of an apicultural CSA in England]

It’s a joy every morning when you go down they all rush to greet you with a dawn chorus from the ducks. [Tommy, member of a CSA in England]

Listening to the sounds of the farm became very much part of how people experienced place as therapeutic. As Gallagher et al. (2016) point out, sound is a vital attribute of landscape and landscape experience. Relationships with animals can be resonant and sonorous, rather than just physically mediated. Emotions affect the way we hear and react to place (Milligan 2005), but also, what we hear can affect our emotions, as Tommy describes above.

The sounds that were valued were often those that were novel, and it is perhaps the absence of familiar sound that made the place so appealing and enjoyable for visitors. Similar to Wilton et al.’s (2014) contention that ‘therapeutic spaces’ often emerge through the suspension of existing routines, relationships, and responsibilities, people’s experience of the farm as healthful arises from the very fact that the farms are far from what visitors might experience on an everyday basis (a theme I explore in more detail on page 209):

**Sound was mentioned often as being important:**

“I love that noise”

“The bird song?”

“Yes, the sound of the country. It’s so peaceful. There’s just something.”

[Fieldnotes, 2 April 2015]

*I mean, regular comments that we get are that people appreciate the sound of the horses working, the quietness, and yeah, having the horses around, its, you know, gives it an added dimension. [Al, a farmer at a horticultural CSA in England]*
Drawing on Simpson (2016, p. 163), the animal sounds produce relations of ‘mutual self-understanding and convivial sociability’ that leads to people coming together. As Simpson goes on to describe, even if this is ‘only on the level of a shared look or in seeing other smiling faces […] this can foster a different sense of these spaces through the production of different moods and atmospheres’. The bird song and the quiet plodding of plough-horses, described above, demonstrate these affective atmospheres well. Though, similarly to animal encounters and spatial preferences in general, there are differing preferences for different soundscapes. Some visitors enjoyed the quiet and tranquillity, while others wanted to hear the countryside come alive with the sound of animal life:

*The silence was valued by most of the visitors to the farm, with a lot of them commenting how nice it was. However, several of them said that they missed the baaing and hollering of the sheep. [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]*

Sonic relations, though key to co-producing certain places, are rarely at the fore, and often only brought into view (or perhaps, hearing) through a sonorous lack; the presence of sound is mostly noticed when not there (Simpson 2016). This lack is equally capable of producing new affective atmospheres. Simpson (2016) describes the missing aural presence of a tin whistle player causing him to feel concern and worry, leading to conversations and attempts to locate an assurance of the busker’s wellbeing. Here too, the baaing of sheep, a previously little mentioned dimension, became a mote of sadness for some of the visitors, a relation that produced an awareness of the sheep’s absence. Sonic relations with animals often served to create tensions and disrupt relationships and therapeutic territorializations:

*The cockerel’s crowing is quite regularly referenced as ‘annoying’ by many of the visitors, who often shout back and tell the cockerel to shut up! [Fieldnotes, 6 August 2015]*
In the same way in which music and lyrics can evoke a shared culture and place (Andrews 2016b), so can the sounds of non-humans, such as the crowing of a cockerel. The sonic emittances of non-humans often prompted shouting from the human visitors, a line of flight that deterritorialized the silent tranquillity of the farm into a raucous and disruptive multispecies drama. This disrupts coexistent relationships, such as the discussions earlier around ‘spaces for thinking’ (see page 183) (Milligan et al. 2004). The health affects emergent within place are dynamically and relationally constituted.

However, the freedom and opportunity to loudly vociferate previously contained compulsivities, desires, and behaviours allows a level of catharsis from visitors. This is, again, engendered in part by the carefree and non-judgemental presence and companionship of animals (Walsh 2009), with animals providing a refuge from social norms and judgement (Andrews and Shaw 2010). Indeed, for many visitors, it is animals’ refusals to conform to norms and standards, that results in an emergent therapeutic space. Animals’ aberrance to human axioms, such as crowing in tranquil places, can produce a sense of acceptance, emergent from animals’ transgressions. I now move to continue these discussions of how an embodied and sensuous engagement with place and animals can affect bodily capacities by turning my attention to smell.

6.3.3.2 Olfactorial Interactions

An embodied engagement through the nostrils can be an important relationship in influencing how place can come to affect health and wellbeing (Gorman 2017b). Largey and Watson (1972) discuss how humans are prone to identify certain places with both real and alleged odours, altering the way in which people engage and navigate space, generating specific reputations and stereotypes of place. Thrift (2003, p. 9) even argues that ‘aromas can create an ambience of wellbeing’. However, there has been little interest
in the olfactory composition of therapeutic spaces, despite researchers often reporting the
presence of scented materialities (such as incense) in the places they explore (Williams
2010; Bignante 2015). Indeed, authors often quote respondents talking about smells, but
tend to gloss over what their participants are saying about the aromatic qualities of place
(Baer and Gesler 2004; English et al. 2008), and how fragrant elements can come together
to form therapeutic geographies. Largey and Watson (1972) argue that smell is often a
crucial component in the definition of, and orientation to, a particular environment. Drawing
on this, I argue that smell is often a crucial component in the way in which ‘therapeutic
landscapes’ can emerge and affect health.

Similar to the animal sounds discussed previously, the smell of animals can facilitate an
emotionally evocative engagement with place (Hoover 2009). Smell can serve as a
powerful aide memoire, triggering memories, nostalgia, and a sense of familiarity, but it
can also be more materially and physically provocative, Hoover (2009) for example, notes
how smelling vomit can often induce the act itself. Aromas, smells, scents, all set off bodily
reactions, serving as connections and codes, and producing new means of engaging with
space (Thrift 2003). Smell can alter the way in which people move around and through
space (Hoover 2009), which was certainly true for how people navigated the spatiality of
the CSA farms I was exploring. Visitors would often prefer to work on tasks and socialise
in areas away from the odoriferous chicken enclosure. Thus, smell produced certain
microgeographies within the farm, influencing activities and the level of engagement which
visitors had with certain individuals and species on the farms.

For some visitors, the smellscape of the farms came to constitute a space with which they
were unwilling to occupy, disrupting the possibility of the farms having any potential to
become therapeutic:
OCD students in particular, they hated it! And I think it was just, for, the mud and the dirt, the smell. [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]

Alys worked at a special education college in Wales, and like Dave and Emma, took a group to Bwncath farm on a semi-regular basis. Here, she notes that those of her students diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive-disorder were more likely to be put off by the cornucopia of smells at the farms. Valerie, care farming project co-ordinator at a CSA in England, also noted that for some of the visiting groups she worked with, there were ‘some people that find that whole sensory thing is too much […] they can’t cope with the smell, they find the dirt disgusting’. Bell (2016) has highlighted that health experiences emergent from sonic relations are not homogeneous, and that an engagement (and the capacity to engage) with soundscapes is influenced by a person’s existing health assemblage. Smellscapes too are equally multiple and idiosyncratic. Animals, and the sensorial affects that they produce, can disrupt relationships which constitute the emergence of healthful affects:

When we first walked into the farm, I noticed a dead sheep at the gate. Chatting to Dan later, he explained that the deadstock man was meant to come and collect the carcass this morning to dispose of it. Dan was quite concerned; he didn’t want a dead sheep hanging around with the visitors coming. He’d been and covered it up with a sheet, but it was quite a hot day, and the carcass was creating a bit of a smell. [Fieldnotes, 6 August 2015]

While DeVerteuil and Andrews (2007) have highlighted the emotional labour that goes in to producing ‘therapeutic landscapes’, Dan’s concerns regarding the pungent nature of the dead sheep, and his attempts to eliminate and mask certain odours, also highlights that a level of olfactory work is often done to ‘therapeutic spaces’ to territorialize a capacity to produce therapeutic affect. Dan’s decaying ovine is a useful reminder that smellscapes
are not fixed, but rather fluidly and contingently constituted by a range of processes and actants. There is not a set nor permanent ‘smell’ of a CSA farm, nor a singular or universally replicable ‘CSA farm’ smellscape. Rather each farm’s smellscape emerges as a unique assemblage of aromas, smells, and scents, continuously being (re)constituted by a variety of bodies, objects, technologies, ideas, and social organisations. In such a manner, homogeneous descriptions of smellscapes, and the idea that certain places have ‘a’ defined smell become counterproductive; treating the spatiality of smell as uniform fails to fully attend to the intricacies of place.

Given the potential for olfactorial based segregation and othering (Classen 1992), it is worth recognising how close proximity and intimate relationships between the visitors and the farm animals can alter bodily constitution; smell marks otherness (Hoover 2009). The individualised and personal reactions (both somatic and visceral) to encounters with non-humans can create tensions and politics. There is the potential for othering those who have specific and different reactions to animals (Smith and Davidson 2006). Yet, for some farm visitors, being able to end the day coated with the redolent smells of animal contact and the exertions of accomplishment mediates an embodied engagement with a farm as a place with therapeutic potential:

*I think that’s what we tap into, just being able to get our hands dirty and coming away a bit hot and sweaty and stinking.* [Dave, an outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for NEET young people, Wales]

While Foley and Kistemann (2015, p. 161) discuss the ‘emotional and life course resonances’ of an engagement with therapeutic spaces, there is perhaps something to be said for a ‘smellscape resonance’, an odorous and aromatic embodied reminder of certain

39 Though equally, there do exist moves to perform globalised ideas of certain smellscapes (Thrift 2003).
experiences and places. Dave’s mention of being ‘sweaty’ is a thought-provoking way to think about therapeutic geographies. Waitt (2014, p. 666-667) notes that it is rare to find discussion on bodily fluids within academic writing, and argues for more attention to be paid to the ‘experiences of sweaty bodies’ noting that such experiences ‘offer possibilities to highlight the negotiations, tensions, unities and contradictions’ at play. Indeed, Waitt’s (p. 667) descriptions of how sweat and sweatiness can trigger ‘moments of pleasure that facilitate intimate relations and a sense of togetherness’ describes Dave’s experiences on the farm well. Waitt goes on to discuss how certain spaces are created where the body feels at home, where individuals instead ‘revel’ in bodily odours, and cultural conventions are cast off. Waitt attributes this mainly to domestic settings, but it is certainly characteristic in the emergence of therapeutic affect at the farms too. The mutual bodily aromas of the farm visitors contributes to a sense of togetherness; people are key components of smellscapes (Porteous 1985).

Indeed, smell in this way came to constitute a level of identity for many of the visitors to the farms, particularly regarding a willingness to embrace certain farmyard odours, and have such smells inscribed upon their bodies and clothes:

There was a second group of young people visiting the farm today. One of the new group flat out refused to get involved. He complained to the leaders that he wasn’t prepared to get dirty and smelly – when members of the regular group encouraged him to get involved, he said he’d rather be bored than go home smelling. This willingness to embrace the dirt and smells on the farm highlighted a big difference between the two groups. [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]

A concern with becoming odorous can lead to a barrier to an engagement with place. It highlights how the expectations that people have for their subjective experiences and encounters within place are important in affecting how places can become constituted as therapeutic (Watson et al. 2007). Alternatively, the main group’s engagement in the
sudorific farmyard activities gave them a level of ownership to the environment, allowing them to access a sense of belonging on the farm. A sense of identity is created through the relationship between the place of the farm and the visitors’ musty bodies.

The odours resonating from such sweaty bodies highlight an opportunity for geographies of therapeutic spaces to attend to what Waitt describes as a ‘visceral geography of sweat’, with sweat and bodily odours as active constituents of therapeutic tensions and possibilities. Indeed, sweat-lodges (Wilson 2003; DeVerteuil and Wilson 2010; Wendt and Gone 2012) and sweat-houses (Foley 2012, 2014), have been a fairly popular arena for exploring the dynamics between health and place, yet the viscerality of sweat has seldom been directly considered as part of the embodied encounter with these places. Sweat is multiple, with unstable and diverse meanings, framed as capable of both improving yet polluting bodies. The odour and material traces of sweat can evoke visceral disgust, making others feel uncomfortable (Waitt 2014). Indeed, recognising Williams’ (2002) argument that therapeutic spaces are often gendered spaces, Classen et al (2002, p. 164) contend that ‘while men are allowed to smell sweaty and unpleasant without losing any of their masculine identity, women who don’t smell sweet are traitors to the ideal of femininity and objects of disgust’, echoing Longhurst’s (2001) point that discourses around bodily fluids are widely employed in the maintenance of gender boundaries and binaries. Dave’s group were mainly young males, and his point around the groups’ enjoyment of leaving the farm ‘sweaty and stinking’ after their work with the livestock is perhaps grounded in these specific gender performances and identities. Place affects health by defining what a body can do, however, the relations a body has are crucial in informing such new bodily capacities (Fox 2002).
Indeed, at times, the farms emerged as highly ‘masculinised’ spaces where gendered difference was actively produced by the place and practices of the farms:

An interesting gendered difference was the lack of toilet facilities. It was quite easy for guys to nip to the back of the field – which with the numerous tea and coffee breaks, was quite frequent! However, for the girls, the process was for one of the coordinators to drive them 2 miles to the nearby community centre. [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]

Throughout my time observing Bwncath, and the regular group visits made by coordinators like Dave, Siôn, Alys, and Emma, groups tended to be primarily male, and the retention of female visitors seemed to be a particular problem. Work by Wydler and Gairing (2010) in a European context suggests that care farming practices are often highly bound up with rural and agricultural gender stereotypes and a traditional distribution of gender roles (though this is a fairly under-discussed area within the literature which requires more exploration). Equally however, the farms provided places to resist and subvert gendered territorializations and stereotypes (Fox 2002):

There was no gendering in how the tasks were issued out, everyone was allowed a go at everything. One of the girls told me that they’d been cycling in the past as a group, and the boys had laughed at her, as she deftly pulled out a nail from a fence post with a single swipe of the hammer, she reflected that they weren’t laughing now. [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]

The opportunities to engage in work and tasks more traditionally coded as ‘masculine’ on the farm, whether building fences or engaging in livestock work, came to produce affective experiences that acted to re-place identities, understandings, and ways of ‘being-with’ the world (Ash and Simpson 2016) that superseded pre-defined gender norms and instead produced a place for individuals to flourish on their own terms.
Returning to smell, and thinking about the more-than-human co-constitution of the farms, and the role of non-human presence in co-producing therapeutic affect in place, the odorous bodies of the farms were not just human bodies. A concentration of the sweet smell of flowers will bring more bees to the area, while the presence of deadstock and the scent of decay will draw in necrophagous species such as blowflies and bluebottles. The smellscape actively influences the constitution of the local animal population (Hoover 2009). Dan’s decomposing deadstock, mentioned earlier (page 198), became increasingly surrounded by flies as the hot day drew on, creating an unpleasant atmosphere on the farm. Smellscapes are intimately and multidirectionally entwined and entangled with the co-presence of non-human life within space, and thus how perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health come to be associated with certain places.40

Particularly important, given the agricultural context of the farms, were the smells of food, from the humid scent of tomatoes on the vine in the polytunnel, to the earthy smell of onions drying in the sun, to a concoction of aromas of roasted vegetables. Fahlander (2010) notes how the smell of cooking can bestow smellscapes with connotations of ‘hominess’. Indeed, smell, food, and taste are all intimately linked (Low 2005), and drawing on this link, I move now from smellscapes to tastescapes.

6.3.3.3 Tasteful Interactions

I mentioned in Chapter 2 that food provides a useful lens through which to examine the idea of ‘therapeutic spaces’ (see page 54). Taste strays away from relationships between humans and living animals themselves to the materialities of animals’ (as) food products.

40 The issue of smell and therapeutic spaces is one I consider in greater detail in Gorman (2017b), where I explore a much wider range of aromas, smells, and scents, and how these contribute to an embodied experience of place as therapeutic.
However, these relationships are still framed specifically by the presence of animals given the agricultural context of the farms. Here then I introduce a focus on the role played by taste in the therapeutic geographies of CSAs.

Established research utilising the ‘therapeutic landscapes’ framework has mainly conceptualised food as a resource, something which creates a therapeutic engagement with place through its associations of a level of security (Sperling and Decker 2007), a mobilisation of culture, tradition, and spirituality (Wilson 2003; Williams 2010; Friesen et al. 2016), or even as a means of taking control (English et al. 2008). However, such treatment of food fails to engage with the more visceral and affective dimensions of consumption (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2008), the tastes and textures of food which produce a sensuous experience. Williams (2010, p. 1637) discusses how visitors to the Christian pilgrimage site of St. Anne de Beaupre ‘drink the spring water as it is recognized as having miraculous powers capable of healing’, while Martin et al. (2005, p. 1898) discuss how the ability for care home residents to make a cup of tea freely and independently was key in avoiding a feeling of institutionalisation. However, these engagements with food are framed as aiding a place’s potential to become therapeutic based on more symbolic or performative means, rather than the embodied and sensuous palatability or aromatic qualities of food or drink. Engagements with taste can produce new experiences, expanding an individual’s capacity to affect and be affected:

_We said well look guys the bees might be around today, a couple of students agitated with that, ooh is that a bee, but you know […] they’d never tasted honey before, so we went to Bwncath and Dewi was there, and they said, ‘Well what’s that’, and I said ‘Honey’, ‘What’s honey? How’s it made’, ‘Do you want to try it?’; ‘Ooh no I don’t want to try it’, and then one did, and then a second, third, fourth, fifth, ‘Ooh, I’ve never tasted honey before‘, by the end of it they were all taking part! [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]_
It is also worth noting, that in the case of tasting the honey in the example above, it was the presence of the bees flying around where the visitors were working that prompted the discussions around honey in the first place. This opportunity, facilitated by the presence of bees, for a new experience leads to a level of confidence being created, and the acquisition of new knowledges and understandings; new relations produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones.

Dan was very proud and excited to bring out a jar of honey produced by his bees, letting everyone smell it, offering to people to try a bit. Some of the visitors were wary of the smell and didn’t take him up on the offer. [Fieldnotes, 7 May 2015]

Though additionally here, fears and preconceptions with certain foods and tastes can come to differently define an actants’ capacity to affect and be affected. Importantly, these responses, as well as bodily reactions of disgust and abjection, to certain foods and tastes (as well as animal encounters more generally) are not necessarily voluntary responses, but rather at times, unconscious sensibilities (Longhurst et al. 2008).

As well as the visceral smell and taste of the honey, there is also perhaps something to be said for the way in which the visitors that did indulge in the honey tasting were ‘sensing together’. Doughty (2013) has previously discussed how shared movement can produce supportive spaces that come to be experienced as restorative. Many of the farms actively engaged in this tasting together in situ, often serving the farms fare for lunch, ‘eating the field, in the field’. Eating on the farm also helps to normalise the potentially unfamiliar place and context of a working agricultural space. Longhurst et al. (2009) argue that ‘food can evoke a familiar sense of taste, texture and smell as well as create a new sense of taste, texture and smell helping people to create new visceral associations’ (p. 342). These new visceral associations, produced through an embodied sensorial engagement with the food
of the farm, again produce new bodily capacities, creating places with health and wellbeing resonances that extend beyond specific single encounters (Foley and Kistemann 2015).

*Lunch is an important part of the day on the farm, everyone stops and eats together.* [Fieldnotes, 13 August 2015]

Eating together was important in constituting a space of intersociality and signifying a morning’s work well done. It directly affected how visitors to the farms socialised, sharing food and benefitting from the emotional and social-bonding benefits that commensality can provide (Fischler 2011). Importantly, this eating together was not a solely human practice, I mentioned previously that when there was a tea-break on the farm, animals were commonly present (see page 139). Commonly during my ethnographic observation at Bwncath, when we would stop for lunch the farm dogs would be present with us:

*The visitors clearly loved having Salsa around, and were often patting him, showing affection, or trying to catch his eye and offer him food.* [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]

Many of the visitors (myself included) enjoyed sharing their sandwiches and crisps with the dogs. Their presence and involvement added different dimensions to the practice of commensality. Sharing food and eating with the dogs again highlights the interspecies connectedness at the farms, and the way in which animals co-produced the sociality of the farm; active social agents engaged in relationships. To quote Haraway (2008, p. 301), ‘human and non-human animals are companion species, messmates at table, eating together’. Animals are full partners in the worlding of therapeutic spaces (Haraway 2008).

These discussions of people’s sensorial engagements with animals, whether heard, smelt, or tasted, highlight the dynamism and change at play within emergent ‘therapeutic spaces’ and, building on the previous section, the multiple ways in which ‘health’ takes place
(Andrews 2016a). In the next section, I instead move to examine the more temporal relationships at play, to further explore how therapeutic affect can emerge from human-animal relations.

### 6.4 Temporality and Human-Animal Relationships

In this section, I discuss how ongoing relationships with animals can (re)shape how people come to experience place in relation to their health assemblage. Human-animal relations continuously (re)define, (re)enable, and (re)enact actants’ capacities to affect and be affected. These discussions provide a way of attending to Meijering et al.’s (2016) calls for more attention to be paid to the temporal dimensions of people’s therapeutic engagements with place, examining how human-animal animal relations produce different bodily capacities and constraints as people move through life.

To begin with, I explore how the initial novelty of animal contact can come to be important in shaping people’s engagement and experiences of and with health and place, before moving to consider how a growing familiarity with non-humans (individuals, breeds, and species) can come to result in relations affective of health assemblages. These discussions allow me to demonstrate the fluidity and change at play within ‘therapeutic spaces’. Therapeutic affect emerges from situated and unique engagements, shaped by a variety of brief and novel encounters, as well as ongoing relationships and attunements. ‘Therapeutic spaces’ in this way are constantly being made and remade.
6.4.1 Novel Encounters

Lea (2008) discusses how being in a ‘new environmental setting’ can make an affective difference to an individual’s health assemblage. Unpacking this more critically though, there are many different relations that can lead people to come to be present in a place with (different) therapeutic potential. Animals can provide this attraction and incentive for visitors, a reason to show up and get involved, encouraging and sustaining retention rates (Beck et al. 1986). Elings and Hassink (2008) for example, discuss how attendance at a care farm helped to overcome issues of substance abuse; the farm provided their respondents with a purpose and place they engaged with, and in turn decreased the potential of boredom alleviating substance use.

Indeed, 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 frequently used as a means of engaging visitors, encouraging them to participate in the activities taking place on several of the farms, or even simply to stick around and be present. As Dave, an outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for NEET young people, 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 associated with health and well-being from rigid and uninspiring into something more fascinating and attractive, achieving buy-in and attendance. As Dave goes on to describe, animals can function as a ‘therapeutic stepping stone’:

There is always an opportunity during the day to stop for tea and sit down, but the guys quite often go over and see the sheep, and we’ll walk down to see the chickens, it’s of interest, it’s different, it’s stuff they won’t see every day in their back gardens in town […] I think with a lot of clients that we work with, that they are, that low level of self-esteem and confidence, a massive, venturing and out of step for them, is leaving their front door, and it is a process, it is like a hand holding exercise […] I mean for some people like that guy, I know for a fact he probably didn’t wanna get out the van that morning, but the fact that they’re out the van, walked up the field. It’s a stepping stone for some people, but if he didn’t get out the van, refused to be there, he’d have a breach for that, which goes against his court order then […] That first barrier is just getting out, choosing again. Literally sometimes just getting through that door.

The novelty of animal presence was often particularly emphasised, as in the quote above by Dave. I mentioned in Chapter 3 (see page 69) that discourses around care farming practices often draw on the idea that agricultural activities are more ‘normal’ than more clinical practices and spaces of care (de Krom and Dessein 2013), producing a context that is ‘closer to normal life than conventional care services’ (Hassink et al. 2010, p. 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 the farm environment which leads to the formation of relations which come to influence and affect what a body can do. The very fact that the presence of the animals on the farm results in a space that is far from what they might experience on an everyday basis;
‘therapeutic’ spaces can emerge through the interruption of normal routines, relationships, and responsibilities (Wilton et al. 2014). However, equally, as people become more regular visitors to a farm, this ‘extraordinariness’ becomes blurred, as people become more and more embedded. As a result, the place, and the animals within, ultimately become more ‘everyday’, as demonstrated by the birdsong on Bwncath farm:

There is a constant backdrop of birdsong – though people don’t notice it after becoming regulars at the farm. I remember on my previous visits, people used to remark on the birdsong, yet now, it has simply become a place-based feature, which people expect and understand as just a part of what the farm is. [Fieldnotes, 6 August 2015]

A ‘therapeutic landscape experience’ (Conradson 2005b) thus emerges shaped by both brief and novel encounters, as well as more ongoing relationships and attunements that develop over time as people become more embedded and familiar with place, as I move to explore in more detail.

6.4.2 Becoming Familiar with Animals

Brewster (2014) has argued that a sense of familiarity is a key relation in establishing spaces that can be conducive to health and wellbeing. Familiarity can transform a place into somewhere safe, non-challenging, and comfortable, creating a level of competence in an environment (Williams 2002). Human-animal relations are rooted in an assemblage of other relations, distributed elsewhere in time and space, being brought to bear on the scene (Latour 2005). Encounters, meetings, and observations of animals are framed by previous iterations, knowledges, and a level of familiarity of such experiences, animals, and of the place itself. Becoming familiar with the animal presence at the farms – as with the birds discussed in the close of the last section – is very much important in the way in which visitors feel comfortable with place, and begin to develop a level of ownership of the environment too.
Being able to ascribe stories, names, and narratives to non-humans allows the development of a further sense ownership to the farms, and thus the creation of confidence. As an outsider coming in to observe, the visitors to the farms were keen to share their individualised memories and knowledges of the specific animals on the farm, wanting to demonstrate their abilities to get the farm dogs to perform their full repertoire of tricks. Others were quick to tell individualised stories about certain animals, such as ‘Jammy the sheep’:

*Jack was keen to talk to me about how he used to enjoy playing with Jammy, Jack said he didn’t mind Jammy butting him and thought it was quite funny. He mentioned that last time, Jammy had butted a girl though and ‘nearly knocked her out’. Jammy was a constant character referenced by the visitors throughout the day. [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]*

‘Knowing’ animals in this way can allow visitors to feel that they ‘fit’ and ‘belong’. Animals can provide a sense of stability and permanence in people’s lives (Cudworth 2011b). Indeed, animals can come to be positioned as ‘friends’:

*Dan had invited me along to an event that the council were running to celebrate their outdoor youth programs. He’d been asked to attend to thank the CSA for their involvement in community outreach. Some of the young people that I’d worked with previously on that farm gave short presentations explaining what they got out of being on the farm. Jack was one of them:

Jack: I really enjoy volunteering with [Dave’s project] as we go to new places, we go on walks, we go to the farm, I made a new friend, Jammy the lamb!
[Fieldnotes, 16 April 2015]*

Andrews et al. (2003) have previously discussed the significance of friendship for wellbeing. Friendship can produce a sense of belonging, social integration, and resilience, increasing the relations that a body has, and its ability to resist territorialization. Animals can provide this opportunity for friendship (Charles and Davies 2011). Unlike carers whose
specific provision of a service can distract from friendship building processes (Andrews et al. 2003), animals provide a different modality of friendship. This opportunity for a different means of practicing ‘friendship’ was particularly important for many of the young people who struggled with human to human social interaction.

The idea of familiarity reiterates Hassink’s (2002) point that the therapeutic benefits of animals are best expressed when people form bonds with animals. There are also links here to Gesler’s (1992) emphasis on the therapeutic potential of prolonged experience of particular spaces, as well as the dwelt knowledge of place, suggesting themes of place attachment (Low and Altman 1992). However, here, it is particularly the prolonged experience and dwelt knowledge of the non-human lives sharing and co-habitating the space that is instrumental in assisting the acquisition of new capacities. As Emma, opportunities coordinator for a homelessness project in Wales, describes: ‘it’s down to a sense of belonging and identity’. This increased level of familiarity with specific animals helps to reinforce confidence and actively influences how people come to understand and experience health in place.

Animal contact allows people to retain connections to their culture, identity, and past experiences (Riley 2011), as Jane, the farm manager of a CSA in England, explains: ‘we have organised visits from care homes and often many of the residents once worked on farms and love to see the animals’. Rather than the novelty of animal contact discussed earlier (page 209), it is instead a level of (past) familiarity with certain species that can result in the proliferation of the capacity to affect and be affected. This links to Rose E.’s (2012) suggestion that individuals can come to encounter certain spaces in a therapeutic manner as an ‘empathic mirror of feeling states and affects’ (p.1385) to realise therapeutic affect. Animals can act as this mirror, serving as attachment figures and representation
models, providing a secure base, and offering the opportunity for emotional bonds (Berget and Braastad 2008).

The animals that the visitors encountered within the farms are specific and individual, each with their own life histories and familiarities (Bear and Eden 2011). This changes both how humans engage and respond to the animals, as well as how the animals engage and respond to human contact themselves:

*Dewi had brought his dog Bess today, an energetic border collie, the visitors were excited to see her; the visitors enjoyed throwing sticks for Bess, as Salsa, the usual dog on the farm, an older, and fatter Labrador, normally ignored this. At times when the group were sat down, Salsa would go to visitors and curl up on their laps, getting cuddled, one of the visitors had been having difficulties at home and seemed down in the dumps, cuddling Salsa seemed to cheer her up. [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]*

Animals, species, breeds, and/or individuals cannot be considered as *de facto* routes to a proliferation of the capacity to affect and be affected. In the above example, the two dogs create different affective encounters. While Bess engages the farm visitors in excitement and physical activity, Salsa is mobilised as a means of creating a comforting familiarity. ‘Animal’ is not a homogeneous grouping, instead comprised of diverse and specific species, responding (and being responded to) in specific ways with a multiplicity of relations to humans (Bear 2011). How animals can affect health assemblages is highly relational, contingent, and manifold.

Bess and Salsa also serve as a useful way of thinking through Van Ingen’s (2004) conceptualisation of ‘place-aware therapeutic landscapes’ and topographically situated ‘place-bound therapeutic landscapes’. Most of the animals on the farms serve as ‘place-bound’, in that they are a specific feature of the farm that people interact with, whereas Bess and Salsa are more transient agents of therapeutic place-making. Indeed, as he
explains below, Dave often takes Salsa along on other activities the group does, where his group’s pre-existing relationship with Salsa, developed on the farm, then creates further flows of becoming:

A couple of the guys on the Wednesday afternoon cycling said, 'are you bringing the dog' and I said 'I don't think so coz I’m not driving into work that morning', and they were going on about, and I thought, Christ sake like, it's only a bloody dog, and then I re-arranged my transport, and drove into work on Thursday so I could bring the dog, I suppose there's a bit of companionship, they enjoy it.

Individual preference thus becomes important as a way of accessing an ethos of engagement that attunes individuals to a possibility of human-animal relations producing some form of therapeutic affect. For example, for several visitors, their personal love of dogs was clearly important in how they came to experience the farm space in ways conducive to their health assemblage.

For Watson et al. (2007, p. 871), familiar things are specifically 'objects that symbolically represent a particular sense of place [...] familiarity is equated with therapeutic effect'. Relationships of familiarity that produce therapeutic affect are not limited to purely objects though, and Watson et al.’s argument can equally apply to the rich ecologies of both the human and the non-human matter deeply intertwined and imbricated within the farms; the ‘vital materials’ (Bennett 2010) which co-produce the farms.

These ideas of relationships of familiarity link to Gesler’s (1996) suggestion that once a place becomes territorialized as having a reputation for health experiences, this relation of repute and expectation in itself becomes key in the emergence of therapeutic possibilities. The naming of certain places can cause people to relate to them in a certain way, a way of territorializing therapeutic associations (Gesler and Kearns 2002). Similar processes
happen with animals too, as they become coded as ‘therapeutic’: ‘assistance animals’ that are part of a ‘care farm’, or alternatively derided as fearful and classed as ‘creepy crawlies’ (Milligan and Bingley 2007). Though, similarly to how Williams (2010) questions the cultural specificity of certain spaces becoming territorialized as ‘therapeutic’, there are questions regarding the cultural specificity of certain species being territorialized as ‘therapeutic’. Indeed, animals are active agents in producing cultural difference which itself can cause conflict (Elder et al. 1998). As with Guthman’s (2004, 2008) work on CSA, the farms that I encountered during this research were predominantly ‘white’ spaces (see page 67), as Hannah, a CSA farmer in England, notes:

*One thing I have noticed, is it’s not particularly, it is a bit white, something that I feel quite uncomfortable about, but it’s absolutely in no way, I hope, anything deliberate that we do.*

The cultural specificity of which species become territorialized as ‘therapeutic’, and how this can alternatively create conflict, tension, and othering, rather than therapeutic affect is clearly an area which requires further research. Every et al. (2015) have started to open up questions around ‘culturally appropriate animal therapy’, noting that ‘people from Islamic countries would not normally have dogs in their homes, and may find dogs (and possibly cats) an unwelcome presence in a therapeutic setting’ (p. 7). Factors of class, race, and sexuality all play a part in (re)shaping how place can produce new bodily capacities or close down others (Buchanan 1997; Van Ingen 2004). However, as Wilson (2003, p. 84) (and others) have noted, often ‘health geographers fail to acknowledge the ethnic and racialized underpinnings of the relationship between health and place’, and there are opportunities for further research surrounding both ‘therapeutic’ encounters with animals, and experiences of ‘healthy places’ at large.
Familiarity, therefore, is not always a straightforward route to therapeutic affect, there are certain dependencies and tensions at play. Relationships of familiarity are dynamic and constituted over time, and a growing familiarity with individual animals can also diminish the totality of relations and opportunities, as Lisa, farmer at a CSA in England, demonstrates:

*I think it’s definitely a relationship with the animals, people like going up there and they were talking to me about individual animals, and individual animals got their names and people wouldn’t do that if they didn’t enjoy interacting with them, until they get too big and they got too muddy and they didn’t like interacting with them.*

Andrews et al. (2005) argue that prolonged contact has consequences for the nature of ‘therapeutic’ relationships which develop between nurses and clients; it is an argument equally applicable to human-animal relationships at the farms. Familiarity affects interspecies as well as interpersonal relations. Animal encounters, and developing a level of familiarity with the multispecies composition of certain places can disrupt a therapeutic engagement with place and close down bodily capacities. Phobias and negative past experiences with animals can result in different experiences (Odendaal 2000; Smith and Davidson 2006; Milligan and Bingley 2007), differently defining different actants’ capacities to affect and be affected. One of Alys’ students refused to take part in the groups future activity days having discovered the presence of a dog on the farm:

*One student in particular didn’t want the dog, didn’t want the mud, and then we did this big evaluation at the end of the day and, [they] just said ‘I hated it, I would never go again.’*

To draw on Andrews (2011, p. 882), although at the core of the issue is a fear of animals, being emplaced results in a simultaneous discomfort and fear of the farm too; a coming
together of ‘phobic’ minds, ‘vulnerable’ bodies, and ‘harmful’ animals. These emotions highlight tensions and point to the disruptive potential of certain animals.

This section has demonstrated how becoming familiar with certain animals can (re)shape how therapeutic affect emerges in place. Here, I have highlighted the way in which ongoing relationships with animals can come to influence an individual’s capacity to affect and be affected. Particularly, I have troubled the idea that a sense of familiarity is intrinsically positive and conducive to ‘health’. To consider this in more detail, and drawing on the discussions of fear that this section has started to engage with, I move to explore in more detail some of the emotive relations between humans and animals in these spaces, and how these can affect human understandings and experiences of health and place.

6.5 Emotive Relations

Building on the focus of attending to the emotional aspects of therapeutic spaces (Milligan et al. 2004; Conradson 2005a; English et al. 2008; Foley and Kistemann 2015), here I consider the emotive dimensions of human-animal relations, and how these can shape and reshape the relationship between health and place.

Engaging with the livestock on the farms gives the visitors something to nurture, something spontaneous to react to and interact with. For some people even triggering memories and a sense of familiarity. The opportunity to care for something can make visitors to the farms feel good about themselves, creating a medium for the expression of altruism, often cited as important in leading to wellbeing, happiness, and health (Post 2005). As Milligan (2006, p. 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’
wellbeing offers visitors a purpose, and allows them to position themselves as moral agents, capable of having an impact, as Frankie, Julia, and Lisa explain:

*I think, the therapeutic benefit of being around animals is huge as well, and I think having to nurture and care for other creatures is really key.* [Frankie, farmer at a CSA in England]

*And the satisfaction of you're looking after some bees, coz there’s all the talk about that they're dying out and the problems.* [Julia, founder of a CSA in England]

*People have expressed that they like the regular need of animals, the commitment […] most people like the dependence, whatever the weather they had to go out and look after these animals’ coz they need them.* [Lisa, farmer at a CSA in England]

Being needed, as Lisa explains above, can create emotional attachments, which can (similarly to the discussions on page 208) serve as a reinforcement for people to return regularly to the space. Animals can create a purposeful routine (Beyersdorfer and Birkenhauer 1990). Milligan et al. (2004) discuss their participants’ sense of pride in witnessing the successful results of growing allotment crops. However, this idea of having impact and witnessing the progression of a project is not purely limited to horticultural arenas; relationships with animals can equally trigger such affects and emotions, as Nick and Siôn explain:

*We want people to more and more to have a bit of a project on the farm, so that they see things move […] with the pigs they feed them and then they see them producing piglets and you know we move them and you know, so, so there’s a sort of progression of them understanding, having involvement throughout the life cycle of crops and animals.* [Nick, chairperson of a CSA in England]

*There's a lot of achievement as well, coz there’s a lot, 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 NEET young people, Wales]
Animals have the potential to initiate a change from ‘care-recipient’ to ‘care-giver’, enhancing visitors’ self-confidence and self-image, reframing them as capable. The non-human presence can actively create and facilitate a level of therapeutic engagement with place, influencing not only how people experience health and care on the farms, but also how they visualise themselves. Here, human-animal relationships result in a reconfiguring of the relational self, caused by the visitors becoming imbricated with non-human actants (Gastaldo et al. 2004; Conradson 2005b), as Diana and Alys explain:

*I think the animals add a touch of magic really, one of the big things here is for all these guys, they are cared for, and actually, when they come here, they get to care for something. It completely changes it, and gives them a sense of confidence and wellbeing, and sort of self-worth, that they kind of get a role change.* [Diana, manager at a care farming project based at a CSA in England]

*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]

The emotive aspects of human-animal encounters within the space of the farms can serve to enhance visitors’ capacity to affect and be affected, to thrive and flourish, enabling functionality and opportunities (Duff 2010). Thus, similarly to Foley and Kistemann’s (2015, p. 161) discussions of therapeutic blue spaces, the farms have ‘emotional and life course resonances’ that extend far beyond specific single encounters. An affective journey through and with a place that enables the potential for a long-lasting therapeutic relation even once the physical site of any ‘therapeutic landscape’ is left. As Andrews (2004) argues, therapeutic affect can be experienced outside of linear time and physical space.
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. 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.

Thus, as discussed on page 68, providing ‘care’ can in itself produce significant benefits and new bodily capacities and relations (Milligan and Wiles 2010); the care practices and experiences within the farm are multidirectional. However, there are certain dependencies and tensions at play within this relational change from ‘care-recipient’ to ‘care-giver’. Not everyone has the same capacities and abilities to ‘give care’, and a failure in the performance of ‘giving care’ may instead result in other emotional states being reterritorialized. Further, it is not simply enough to introduce humans and animals together; the animals must acquiesce (a theme I explore in more detail in Chapter 7), as Snowflake demonstrates:

Snowflake the cockerel was being ‘aggressive’ – but this was the norm for him. He has a reputation for chasing people and trying to peck them. [Fieldnotes, 2 April 2015]

Snowflake highlights the contingency of the processes of becoming therapeutically involved in relationships with animals, and the extent to which animals are implicated in
co-producing a ‘therapeutic space’. The life-practices of non-human actants are potentially in conflict with human conceptions of what a ‘therapeutic space’ should be. Animals are attempting to live their own lives; their desires and intentions do not necessarily coincide with human wills or ideas of ‘therapeutic’ spaces. Animals are neither actively attempting to create nor disrupt human ‘therapeutic spaces’. Rather, it is simply their presence, and expressions of agency, which leads to specific ways in which certain humans may begin to perceive an area as (un)therapeutic. The indeterminacy and contingency of ‘therapeutic’ contact with animals in these spaces highlights the challenge of describing them as fixed ‘therapeutic landscapes’. Instead, these spaces are involved in processes of ‘becoming therapeutic with’ non-humans, a contingent and precarious co-constitution.

Further, the close relationships that visitors develop with the farm animals can cause emotional tensions as people begin to form bonds with the animals: ‘one of the group ran up to Dan concerned that a sheep had been coughing, wanting Dan to check that it was okay’ [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]. This closeness between human and animal can result in every little irregularity in an animals’ behaviour and bodily functioning becoming over analysed and transformed into an emotionally driven crisis of care. Rather than a pleasant space of being in the world with others, the farms can become constituted as spaces of anxiety, particularly aided through the ‘stewardship’ role which the visitors take on in their ‘care giving’ relations to the farm animals.

However, it is not necessarily the presence of these animals alone that promotes such tensions, but the specific coming together of multiple and heterogeneous actants. Peer pressure can force people into engaging with animals when they would prefer not to, reifying stresses rather than providing a potentially therapeutic space. Conflict and tension can emerge between different groups specifically because of animal presence, and who,
and how, different groups interact with animals. With animals existing as a somewhat finite resource within CSA spaces (i.e. the desire not to stress the animals by subjecting them to a constant stream of humans), animal encounters can produce jealousy; people want an equal encounter and experience to their peers. The denial of such opportunities has the potential to fracture any potential therapeutic affect emergent from place as feelings of resentment and missed opportunity colour how people perceive and experience the farms. Animals are not guaranteed to form healthful relational modalities, as Alys also describes:

One girl warned me before we went out, 'are there any birds there?', 'no I said, there's no birds', thinking that there's no birds. When we arrived, they had chickens, there were chickens running around, and I saw, just an absolute phobia, she said, 'I can't go anywhere near, I can't do it, I've got to get back on the bus'.

Indeed, navigating animals' very presence often requires the mobilisation of a certain level of social and emotional labour from co-ordinators, highlighting the labour that goes in to co-producing therapeutic possibilities (DeVerteuil and Andrews 2007). As Alys explains:

In terms of the following, going there the following week, 'oh listen, don't worry about it now, you know, you know that they're not gonna harm you, you know that they're okay, well alright, you know', so, yeah, you're allaying anxieties, you're discussing them and relieving them of those anxieties. [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]

Alys' point about 'going there the following week' highlights an argument from the previous section (page 216), that a growing familiarity with animals is not intrinsically conducive to health. However, the fears associated with encountering certain animals can be captured, becoming instrumental in how human-animal relations can come to produce therapeutic affect. Getting visitors to encounter an animal that they are afraid of is often actively pursued. Encouraging visitors to confront and engage with their animal fears can create a model which can then be used to discuss other challenges and barriers within visitors'
lives, harnessing the apprehension that people have with certain species. Georgina describes this:

_We’re aware of anybody that’s scared of sheep, pigs, any particular animal that they’re afraid of, then we actually make them their goals [...] and that gives them something to work on and achieve [...] so we identify that they might be nervous about something and we try and just do small steps to take care of it, or it might be, you’re scared of sheep, well let’s work on, you feed the sheep independently over the fence, and then go in there, and drain the water, you know, we build it up slowly and work with how they work, so actually in 6 months’ time, they’re not afraid of the sheep._

[Georgina, animal coordinator at a care farming programme based at a CSA in England]

Here, visitors gain further confidence, having the previous experience of being afraid of an animal, but then acquiring the knowledge and experience of overcoming that fear. This change from fear to confidence highlights the relational and dynamic nature of the relationships of familiarity discussed previously (page 216). Processes of ‘becoming therapeutic’ involve ‘deformation, reformation, performation, and transformation [...] gaps and gasps, stutters and cuts, misfires and stoppages, unintended outcomes, unprecedented transferences, and jagged changes’ (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000, p. 418). The animals, and visitors’ associated fear of them, become implicated in a reframing of the self (Conradson 2005b), an encounter which creates an affective feeling of becoming powerful and capable, emergent through a level of attunement and becoming companionable with non-human actants (Haraway 2008).

_With another student of mine, there was a phobia of the dog that was gonna be on site: ’can’t go, don’t like dogs’. By the end of the couple of weeks there, he was petting the dog, and you know he really overcame his fear._

[Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]

For some visitors, it was not specifically the animals themselves which engendered these feelings of fear, but rather their associated bodily practices and sensorial affects. Fears of
zoonosis constantly shadowed animal encounters too, as relationships with microbial actants coexisted alongside relationships with the more visible animals on the farms. There is a hybridity to ‘therapeutic’ animals; embracing the ‘cow as therapist’ (Mallon 1994) means also embracing the entanglement of other elements, and their sensorial affects, as Alys further explains:

*You’ve got all the dirt aspect and we’ve got a number of students who are OCD so the fact that they’re covered in dirt or covered in mud and smell a bit, again, three walls in succession there.*

Animals do not present themselves to fit the clean idyllic imaginary and expectations of human groups (Philo 1995), and this leads to further (de/re)territorialising of certain emotive and affective states, as Alys describes above. As a result, many of the farms came to engage in practices to make their animals more suitable and available for what they envisaged as positive encounters, often interrupting animals’ usual functioning, and forcing them to act differently. This creates certain questions about how being part of these ‘therapeutic spaces’ impacts the individual animals themselves, and is the issue I move to consider in the next chapter.

### 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has made efforts to bring animals in to understandings of therapeutic spaces, highlighting the generative potential of situated relationships between heterogeneous actants. I have demonstrated how relations between humans and animals can lead to a production of new bodily capacities and/or simultaneously, close down existing ones, (re)shaping the diverse relations and flows of becoming gathered together precariously in health assemblages.
My approach here has served to critically unpack the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic spaces’ and engage with their more-than-human constitutive elements. Exploring the co-existences and dependencies of these heterogeneous relations also acts to highlight the fluidity, multiplicity, contingency, and indeterminacy of therapeutic spaces, moving understandings forward from earlier more rigid and static conceptualisations. Furthermore, using animals as a starting point, this chapter has introduced a more sensorial approach to geographic understandings of therapeutic spaces, discussing the way in which the soundscapes, smellscapes, and tastescapes of place can contribute to how perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health come to be influenced.

The discussions within this chapter provide an understanding of how relations between humans and animals influence human understandings and experiences of health and place. However, recognising the multispecies nature of ‘therapeutic spaces’ also leads to thinking about animals’ contested positions within these spaces, and questioning how being part of these ‘therapeutic spaces’ impacts the individual animals themselves. There is a danger of elevating the human experience, relegating non-humans to a state of utility. It is to these issues that I now turn, as I move to consider how becoming entangled in the relations discussed in this chapter affects animals.
7. Towards Mutual More-Than-Human Therapeutic Spaces
7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses Research Question 3: How does becoming entangled in ‘therapeutic’ relations with humans affect animals? Here I move to consider non-humans’ experiences of emergent ‘therapeutic’ spaces and relationships, and the often-troubling anthropocentrism of the way in which interspecies therapeutic practices are framed and performed, as well as questioning, with cautious optimism, whether animals may benefit in certain ways from their relations with humans within these ‘therapeutic’ spaces.

Building on the approach developed in Chapter 6, I frame these explorations through a discussion of the emergent relations between humans and animals on the farms I explored. Here, I am particularly drawn to Hinchliffe’s (2007) considerations of the way in which heterogeneous actants co-produce ‘opportunities and constraints for one another through all manner of relations including co-operation, symbiosis, parasitism, co-habitation, opportunism as well as competition’. These processes of ‘co-evolution’ have been used within geography as a means of avoiding reductionism and determinism, and instead point to the relational character of change (SJH 2011). Considering these intertwined interspecies relationships provides a useful way to frame and interrogate the diversity of relations drawn together, and focus on the way in which therapeutic geographies are co-produced. Indeed, exploring co-evolutionary processes creates a way to attend to Andrews’ (2016c, p. 211) call for health geographies to recognise ‘the transactional dynamics of living things’. Here I consider the parasitic, commensal, and mutualistic aspects of the relations which can enable and enact what different actants may become.

I highlight how animals can become entangled in ‘therapeutic’ relationships with humans that are centred around concerns for ‘health’ that are not only anthropocentric but, as I go
on to argue, might be conceptualised as ‘parasitic’; sets of relations which emerge to produce new bodily capacities for humans through processes and practices which subvert and refract the relations available to non-humans. However, I argue that the therapeutic use of other species does not have to be anthropocentric or utilitarian. I demonstrate how alternatively, some human-animal relations may be conceptualised as ‘commensal’; relations where therapeutic affect can emerge for humans in ways that does little to obtrude on the animals involved. Finally, I move to explore whether these spaces can be ‘mutually therapeutic’, places where both humans and animals can come to benefit from a level of flourishing emergent from the relationships between species.

7.2 Parasitic Relations

There is a danger of elevating the human experience above that of the animals that co-constitute the formation of places conducive to health and wellbeing. This anthropocentric attitude can often result in exploitative relationships between humans and animals; the formation of ‘parasitic’ therapeutic geographies.

Parasitism describes a relationship in which one actant benefits and the other is harmed. It provides a valuable analytical lens through which to explore how human-animal relations co-produce therapeutic geographies. Indeed, Bull (2014) argues that a focus on parasitism reemphasises the politics of multispecies worlds, and that exploring parasitic relations provides a useful ‘analytical tool for engaging with the politics of multispecies codependencies’ (Bull 2016, p. 81).

41 It is also worth recognising that as Iannuzzi and Rowan (1991) describe, there are certain political stances towards animal rights that view any use of animals to aid in human wellbeing as an(other) form of exploitation, regardless of the framing.
Here I draw on Serres' (2007) figure of the parasite. Serres (2007) describes three coinciding ways in which relations can become parasitic. Firstly, parasitism can involve ‘analysing’; intercepting relations and taking from another actant. Secondly, parasitism can involve ‘paralysing’; interrupting another actant’s usual functioning. Thirdly, parasitism can involve ‘catalysing’; forcing other actants to act differently, in a way that they would not ordinarily (Brown 2002; Serres 2007; Puleo 2013). These sub-types of parasitic relations are not distinctive categories, but rather overlapping and entangled relationships, co-existent and dependent. I use these themes to pull apart the parasitic dimensions of the human-animal relations that contribute to the emergence of spaces conducive to human health and wellbeing. I demonstrate how humans can come to parasitically flourish; a series of relations that produces new bodily capacities for humans while subverting and refracting the relations available to non-humans (Fox 2002). I also examine how these relations can be parasitic through interrupting animals’ usual activity and making them act in ways that they would not ordinarily (Puleo 2013), exploring how environments are modified, and non-human agency suppressed, to perform certain imaginations of how ‘therapeutic’ affect can emerge in place.

7.2.1 Health Through Harming

Malamud (2013) argues that when discussing ‘therapy animals’, health can be seen as just another resource to be harvested from non-humans. In a parasitic means, humans come to depend upon animal bodies to produce ‘vital flows’ (Bull 2014) of healthful relations. Indeed, given that the places I have been exploring are based within the sphere of agriculture, many of the animals are simply there until they are ready to go to slaughter, like Snowflake:
A discussion was started based on the farmer’s lunch: Snowflake the cockerel. Snowflake had got the chop the day previously – literally! Dan had taken the bird’s head off with an axe on a chopping block. [Fieldnotes, 22 May 2015]

It seems jarring to describe these farms as being ‘therapeutic spaces’ when, for the non-humans involved, they are often spaces of death. It is perhaps one of the clearest examples of the way these parasitic relations can come to ‘analyse’ therapeutic affect, taking (indeed, taking life, the ultimate form of a parasitic ‘taking from’), but not giving. While Snowflake was slaughtered as part of the farm’s normal cycle of activity, it does raise the question of what happens to non-humans if (or, when) they cannot or do not perform any specific ‘therapeutic’ duties assigned to them42.

In the agricultural context of CSAs, the places that humans visited for the potential of a therapeutic encounter with other species may not just be ‘prisons’, to draw on Sorenson (2008), but death rows. A focus on expanding human capacities can result in a converse reduction to the relations which animals’ bodies have. In the quest to realise an environment that has therapeutic potential for human visitors to the farm, animals often lose out, as relations become ‘tangentially redirected’ (Puleo 2013) by parasitic practices. While humans may enjoy their encounters and relationships with non-humans, animals can become stressed or panicked from human-animal interaction. Certain species require, if not specific technique, then at least a level of confidence, during physical and hands-on encounters:

*The visitors were tasked with setting up a new hutch for the rabbits. When it came time to move the rabbits (Mike, Blossom and Cocoa) to their new enclosure though, the rabbits themselves were carried by staff, rather than the visiting young people (despite them wanting to). It is interesting that*

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42 Matamonasa-Bennett (2015) attempted to explore this in her work, but found the interview question created discomfort and tension, and few of her participants gave anything beyond vague comments.
there are some tasks that the leaders don’t have the confidence in the visitors for, or are just too risky. [Fieldnotes, 9 April 2015]

Many of the visitors to the farms were neither necessarily skilled nor knowledgeable about animals, leading to further potential for parasitic exchanges within their relationships with the farm animals. It is easy for humans to misread animals, mistaking emotions such as agitation and stress for fun and enjoyment (Sorenson 2008). This was particularly apparent from visitors’ attempts and efforts to engage and interact with animals:

At times, some of the visitors can be overkeen; at one point Jack had filled up a wheelbarrow and was on his way to feed all the sheep. Dan quickly stopped him, explaining that all the animals have a strict feeding regime. I can see that Dan needs to be very attentive of what’s going on when the visitors are around. It’s great to see the visitors taking the initiative and wanting to be involved, but there’s obviously a level a lack of knowledge on their part, but an unwillingness to admit this and ask. [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]

Such encounters with animals may produce positive affective intensities for humans, but can be less conducive to animal flourishing and functioning. Farmers become implicated in the duty of fulfilling anticipations, imaginations, and expectations (Cloke and Perkins 2005). They must balance care for animals with human curiosity (Gruffudd 2000), while creating and fulfilling the animal encounters for which people came to the space for and aid in giving the space its therapeutic reputation. There is clearly the potential for conflict between harmonising both, and farmers, such as Joni, Dan, and Diana struggle to manage these often conflicting practices:

The big focus has been like allowing people to learn about bees, to the detriment of you know, possibly to the detriment of their welfare, and also to the detriment of honey production, because the more you open up the hive, and you know being handled, you’re handling them slowly so that people can learn and you’re doing things that actually if I were just doing it myself I would probably be quite quick but I want to show people. [Joni, beekeeper and founder of an apiculture CSA in England]
As soon as we got to the farm, Dan was keen to show the visitors the new-born lambs, though he was also cautious, as when the lambs are little, he doesn’t want to bother them. It was interesting seeing his clear desire to show off the lambs and indulge the visitors, with his obvious concern about the sheep’s welfare. [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]

Okay I think, maybe in the eight years we've been going, at one point maybe one person stood on a chick and trampled it, and I’m very sorry about that chicken. [Diana, manager of a care farming programme based at a CSA in England]

In Diana’s story, the relation becomes not so much one of parasitism, but, given the potential for emotional distress arising from harming an animal (Arluke 2006), has the potential to become one of synnecrosis (Bull 2014), a process in which both actants are harmed through the symbiotic relationship. The chick’s death here highlights what Van Dooren (2014) describes as a ‘regime of violent care’; that intimate care for some bodies and species sits alongside the domination, coercion, and abandonment of others.

Farms are working environments, everyday agricultural landscapes that have the potential to become processually and precariously relationally constituted as a ‘therapeutic space’, rather than ontological realities normatively identifiable as therapeutic. The farms are not passive spaces, but require a level of work and labour to maintain their status, both as a farm, and as a place with a reputation for therapeutic experiences. There are tasks that must be completed to maintain the farm enterprise and uphold a level of care for the animals which are part of that enterprise. Focussing on assuring human wellbeing diverts time and labour from animal care:

It is a fine balance between making sure that the visitors are getting our utmost care and they always are a priority, but you also have priority of welfare of animals as well […] Yeah so there’ll always be negative sides, and I think also, it’s, it is, some days it is a real battle to get everything done, and we think actually, I wish I could have cleaned those chickens out better, or, I wish I could have given them a bit more food that day, but it’s, we
always do the best we can and like I said, the key thing is always to reach the visitors. [Valerie, care farming project co-ordinator at a CSA in England]

As Valerie describes, with often a finite amount of time to dedicate to this upkeep, the relations between humans and animals become framed and focussed around a parasitically unequal exchange. The anthropocentric focus here produces a parasitizing siphoning which diminishes the totality of relations and opportunities for the non-human actants to instead profit a proliferation of capabilities and capacities for humans. Human needs and desires become dominant over animals:

The chickens are very muddy again already. This is recognised as being an issue, but moving them takes a lot of time, and isn’t a priority with everything else there is to do on the farm. However, there is a desire and a recognition that they need to look more presentable when groups are visiting. The farm want to ensure that when people do come and visit, they have a positive experience, there is an element of managing the environment to try and create that positive experience, or at least, ensure it by removing certain variables. [Fieldnotes, 24 September 2015]

Here, the motivation for moving the chicken paddock becomes much more about the human experience of the farm (on a sensorial level, and a moral level). Attempts are made to manage the relations and affects available in an ambition to allow for the place of the farm to act as a vector in affecting the body’s power of acting (Duff 2010).

There are also biosecurity issues to consider because of increased human-animal contact as Diana outlines below:

We dip our feet all the time now, but our chickens were ill a lot more, coz obviously you’ve got more people going in there all the time. [Diana, manager of a care farming programme based at a CSA in England]

It is not just the direct relation of the ‘human as disease reservoir’ that must be considered, but also, as Diana’s quote indicates, the hybridity of visitors to the farms acting as vectors
and pathways. To quote Bigmore (2011, p. 27), ‘Salmonella, coccidial oocysts and most
of the major diseases can use the humble wellington boot as a form of transport’. The
increased human presence within the farms due to visiting groups seeking some form of
therapeutic experience, can change the microbial constitution of the space, and lead to ill-
health for the livestock that are being sought out for their therapeutic place-making
associations. There is often trepidation in animal-therapy and care farming literature
around the potential for the animal encounters to transfer zoonotic diseases to the humans
involved (Guay 2001). However, it is rare to find any discussion of anthroponosis in relation
to animal based therapies, which, in itself, highlights the anthropocentric way in which
these practices are most often framed.

I discussed in Chapter 6 (see page 217 onwards) how emotional relations between
heterogeneous actants can produce new bodily capacities, drawing on ideas of animals
as attachment figures that can offer an important opportunity for emotional bonds (Berget
and Braastad 2008). I built on Rose E. (2012) to discuss how individuals can encounter
animals as an ‘empathic mirror of feeling states and affects’ (p.1385) to realise a
therapeutic benefit. Matamonasa-Bennett (2015, p. 30) notes that such a focus on animals
as ‘mirrors’ reduces animals to a state of ‘mirroring the clients as if they are a blank slate’
rather than being attributed as ‘sentient, intelligent, emotional beings’. Human-animal
relations are parasitized to produce an asymmetrical and unidirectional relationship, not
reciprocal, but ab-usive. Following Puleo’s (2013) reading of Serres, the word ‘abuse’ in
the context of parasitic relationships indicates less a mistreatment, and more a tangential
redirection. As Puleo (2013, p. 338) describes, ‘Serres parses the word as ‘ab-use,’ with
the prefix ‘ab-’ signifying ‘away’ to render a meaning of an unreciprocated taking’. Therapeutic affect is thus emergent from a human parasitizing of emotional relations,
Further, thinking of ‘attachment figures’, Thompson and Smith (2014) question applying ideas of attachment concerning animals' bond to humans. They suggest that animals could come to suffer from forms of separation anxiety at the perceived and/or temporary loss of their own ‘attachment figures’. Thompson and Smith raise further questions around the consideration of the impact of animal attachment to humans on inter-animal relations. They argue that individual human-animal relations can disrupt forms of interspecies sociality. DeMello (2012, p. 209) argues that animals involved in practices, relationships, and spaces that aim to offer therapeutic potential will likely have ‘more social interaction than those who live in isolation’. This is a fairly anthropocentric view that privileges human conceptualisations of ‘social’, prioritising humans as the providers of ‘socialness’ and disregarding animals’ own species specific social context. It also assumes that social relations with humans are always positive. Van Dooren (2014, pp. 95-103) provides a useful commentary on animal attachment and imprinting onto humans, and the problematic connections that can form as a result. His discussions of Whooping Cranes and how their cross-species imprinting on humans has undermined their capacity to form social and reproductive relationships with other members of their species highlights the dangers of species specific social disconnection in favour of a human dominated sociality. Attachment to humans can isolate an animal from its own species and social sphere, producing a relationship with humans at the expense of a whole set of other ways of being.

_Bess is very attached to Dewi and doesn’t like it when he has to go and do activities with visitors that she can’t join in on, like feeding the chickens. She was trying to climb over the fence (luckily the electric hadn’t been switched on) to get to Dewi._ [Fieldnotes, 7 May 2015]
While in the example above, Bess’s attachment to Dewi is based on their existing owner-companion animal relationship, her distress at his departing highlights that the emotional relations at play affect animals too. Dewi taking a group to see the chickens may produce positive emotions and affective intensities for the human visitors, while simultaneously leading to the production of negative emotional states for Bess. Thus, while an emotive attachment to an animal may serve to produce new bodily capacities for a human, for the animal involved, this relationship may be a source of anxiety. Birke and Hockenhull (2015b), for example, discuss how a person that a horse sees every day can become a source of comfort and security for the horse. However, when led by a more unfamiliar handler the horse can become anxious, looking to their owners for reassurance. Many of the animals on the farms I studied had pre-existing relationships and bonds with owners, farmers, and handlers. As Birke and Hockenhull go on to note, being made to move away from their humans to interact with more unfamiliar visitors can exist as a source of stress and worry for animals. Animals’ emotional and affective states can become neglected in the pursuit of fulfilling positive and healthful relations for the human visitors. Parasitism produces new bodily capacities by seizing and steering the relations available (Puleo 2013).

Thinking about how humans come to alter the emotional states of animals through quests for human health, ‘emotional contagion’ becomes worth considering. Described as ‘a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behaviour of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioural attitudes’ (Schoenewolf 1990, p. 50), it highlights the affective dynamics and contingencies of the emotive relations that can produce therapeutic spatial forms. Although emotional contagion has been discussed as affecting non-humans (De Waal 2009; Palagi et al. 2015), this is commonly through the lens of intraspecific relations, rather
than considering the potential for negatively influencing non-human affective states through interspecies relations.

Thus, when thinking about how emotional labour comes to be invested in producing ‘therapeutic spaces’ (DeVerteuil and Andrews 2007), this is not a purely human labour. Animals are similarly implicated in a level of emotional labour too within the emergence of new bodily capacities. Evans and Gray (2011) argue that long-term exposure to stress can have a detrimental effect on an animal in much the same way as it can on human healthcare professionals. They suggest a framing of animals as ‘co-workers’ to capture both a recognition of how animals co-produce opportunities and healthful relations, and the capacity of animals to be negatively affected because of these relationships. Animals as co-workers however, still reifies animals to a lesser position, actants provoking a therapeutic encounter for humans. Workers, not co-participants or co-beneficiaries; providers of care rather than recipients. Indeed, as Matamonasa-Bennett (2015, p. 37) argues ‘just like all people do not want to be therapists, not all horses will want to engage with humans in a therapeutic context’. While humans who have trained and work as therapists have made the conscious decision to embark on such a career path, in what way have any animals engaged in therapeutic contexts made that same decision or expressed such a desire? Co-workers is also somewhat reductive, framing therapeutic affect from relations with ‘therapy animals’ as a given. Rather, any therapeutic affect emergent from human-animal relations is contingent and contextually emergent.

Similarly, VanFleet and Faa-Thompson (2014, p. 203) describe how ‘therapists who continue to work with tired, anxious, or bored animal partners are providing a very poor model of humane treatment and empathy for their clients’. Again, notions of benefit for the

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43 Thinking about animals as ‘workers’ raises its own set of ethical implications. See Porcher and Schmitt (2012), Stuart et al. (2013), and Barua (2016).
animals involved in ‘therapeutic’ relationships become ultimately grounded and captured by parasitism. Their wellbeing is important only in that it itself is enrolled in facilitating human wellbeing. I move from these unequal and abusive relations now to consider how the sites of the farms are modified to foster human flourishing, at the expense of restricting the capacities of non-humans.

7.2.2 Interrupting Behaviour and Creating Difference

Many of the farms I explored attempted to territorialize the therapeutic relations emergent from human-animal relationships through paralysing and catalysing parasitism; interrupting animals’ usual functioning and behaviour, and forcing them to act differently (Brown 2002). This is realised particularly through processes and practices aiming to make animals available for encounters, designing the farm spaces accordingly to open up opportunities for interspecies relationships. Though equally, drawing on Andrews et al. (2003) who argue that the voluntary nature of befriending is important (the notion that an individual has chosen to engage, rather than a forced task) this has to be managed carefully. As such, it is not just about making the animals constantly available, but also encouraging them to perform in a way that aligned with visitors’ imaginations of animals and ‘animal places’ (Gruffudd 2000). The human-animal relations that emerged on the farms thus often resulted from spaces that were set up to encourage physical and tactile contact, limiting animals’ mobilities and agency.

I think it’s about managing the behaviour, yeah you could have 7 children running around trying to chase chickens, but you just make sure that that doesn’t happen, and I’m not saying that that never happens, I’ve had the odd, with my kids chasing chickens and I just sometimes think, well you know, it gives them a bit of the run around, the chickens as well as the children, it’s probably not going to be that damaging, they might not lay an egg tomorrow, but you know. [Diana, manager of a care farming programme based at a CSA in England]
What for humans may be a place of therapeutic encounter with other species could instead be contested and perceived as a prison by non-humans (Sorenson 2008). This is reminiscent of Gruffudd’s (2000, p. 226) discussions of Lubetkin’s designs of London Zoo, in that while many of the affective relations between human and animal are framed within a ‘real fondness for animals’, they are also embedded within a ‘clearly expressed hierarchy where humans [are] the rational superior’. Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) discuss the idea of being ‘in control’ of place being a factor in producing therapeutic benefit, while Mallon (1994) suggests that it is ‘mastering’ and dominating an animal which aids in therapeutic benefits emerging. The ability to paralyse and catalyse non-human relations would appear at times to be key in directly affecting how spaces become processually and precariously relationally constituted as a ‘therapeutic space’.

Related to this interruption of animals’ usual activity, Mills (2010) questions animals’ right to privacy. Developing relations with animals results in having to overcome particular animals’ desires not to be seen (similarly to the problematic spectatorship of zoos [Malamud 2007]), deliberately making the animals more available and encounterable when otherwise they may seek isolation; again, forms of paralysing and catalysing parasitism. Mills (2010) highlights how for animals, acts that are ‘rendered demonstrably private in the human realm’ (p.199) – mating, giving birth, and dying – become contrarily entangled in the idea of successful and fulfilling (therapeutic) animal encounters:

*We’ve had one ewe giving birth in full view of, it’s the one in the field here, Hayley, probably with sort of 15 people watching her, so you could say that probably that would impact on the animals* [Diana, manager of a care farming programme based at a CSA in England]

For Mills (2010), this simultaneous affordance of a right of privacy for humans, while disavowing animals a similar right, results in a level of speciesism, a form of exploitation
which reifies human dominance. Framing animals as always available further reifies a parasitic attitude towards animals’ positions in these spaces, with humans centred as recipients of therapeutic affect, and animals marginalised into objects. The spaces of the farms were frequently designed to encourage relations that produced ‘animal-ness’ (Gruffudd 2000), though specific human imaginations of animal-ness. This was not for purely selfless reasons, but because the animals themselves become implicated in creating the aesthetically pleasing ‘therapeutic spaces’ (Palka 1999), and other relations discussed in Chapter 6. As Gruffudd (2000) argues, a naturalistic enclosure may allow ‘shy’ animals to hide, but also fails to provide the more ‘extroverted’ animals a stage on which to perform. Agricultural management and knowledge practices are thus regularly changed in attempts to allow the relations discussed in Chapter 6 to flourish. Julia, founder of a CSA in England, explains how her CSA group altered their keeping of chickens to open up opportunities for animal encounters: ‘what we’ve been doing is letting the mums go broody and then hatching the chicks so that the children can come and see the little chicks’. Here, a level of (parasitic) work has been done to attempt to realise a proliferation of healthful relations. Thus, while therapeutic spaces are emergent from relational configurations (rather than ontological realities normatively identifiable as therapeutic), the relations that can enact these healthful modalities are rarely neutral or spatially and temporally contained, but rather coloured and coded by other relations and agencies distributed elsewhere in time and space (Latour 2005).

The relations on the farms are also additionally paralysed and catalysed through an influx of additional human bodies into the environment, bringing new sounds, smells, and stresses, changing how animals function and act within the farms:

*Bess knows the space of the farm, as soon as Dewi and her came back from doing their fencing work into the main field, she left him and ran*
The increased human presence can change how animals respond and their usual functioning. A previously sedate animal, happy and comfortable with being stroked and engaged in human-animal interactions on a one-on-one scale, may become agitated by the presence of a larger group and react accordingly. Being engaged in human-animal relations ultimately changes how animals interact. I discussed previously (see page 210) the role of familiarity in affecting the proliferation of healthful relations, and how humans’ past experiences with certain species can change how people interact and engage with animals. The same is equally true for how animals interrelate with humans (Lorimer and Whatmore 2009). As Jon and Dan explain, hand-rearing a lamb had changed how the ram interacted with humans:

Jon: Yeah I got head-butted by a sheep the other day, and I thought, only by the little ram, and I actually thought, that's a bit of a concern if you had someone old up here, head-butted in the side of the knee or a small kid, and that's quite, apparently very common, when you have, because the ram that butted me, is a hand reared lamb that was basically premature, so it's very, very happy around humans, and apparently that's very common that they'll just butt because they think you're a sheep or whatever, I don't know what the psychology is, but they'll butt you in a way that Guto [sheep] would never butt someone, neither would Jake [sheep].

Dan: I guess they haven't got the fear, they've kind of grown up with like being played with and shoved around and it's kind of maybe they're just playing.

As such, many of the farms often made moves to habituate their livestock, interrupting the animals' usual functioning and forcing them to act differently, to present a specific imagination of a ‘therapeutic space’. This frequently involved a ‘sanitisation of livestock’, presenting clean and docile animals with ‘pet’ names (Yarwood and Evans 2000, p. 105), catalysing and paralysing animals to make them suitable for human contact through
practices such as halter training cattle\textsuperscript{44} or wing clipping chickens\textsuperscript{45}. Humans have expectations of what animals should be like (Philo 1995). The habituation of animals to human presence can come to be regarded as necessary and desirable in enabling human-animal relations that produce new human bodily capacities, framed by anthropocentrism and parasitism. There is an irony for animals, such as Jon and Dan's sheep, that their involvement in human-animal relationships, and growing confidence around humans as a result, can then lead to them no longer being considered suitable companion animals. The relations that produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones are distributed among actants heterogeneously, differently defining different actants’ capacities to affect and be affected.

The increased human presence on the farms can also result in a contestation of what forms of non-human are allowed into the space. Lisa, a farmer at a CSA in England discussed having to introduce antibacterial soaps and handwashing facilities to her farm. A process of catalysing and paralysing microbial relations, that leads to an exiling of microbial forms of life as they become positioned as agents of peril (Paxson and Helmreich 2014), associated with fears of zoonotic disease, unsuited and unwanted within the anthropocentric imaginings of a ‘therapeutic space’. Only certain forms of human-non-human relations are positioned within human imaginations as capable of forming the therapeutic relations discussed in Chapter 6. Though equally, these concerns also demonstrate exactly how microbes can be active agents in co-producing spaces which can produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones, as well as the microbiopolitical work often done to ‘therapeutic spaces’ to territorialize them as places of health.

\textsuperscript{44} The process of training a cow to wear and walk in a harness, it allows the cow to be led, and respond to basic commands.

\textsuperscript{45} The process of trimming a chicken’s primary flight feathers so that it is no longer capable of full flight.
Here I have considered some of the parasitic relations emergent between humans and animals on CSAs, and how these affect bodily capacities and opportunities for flourishing. I now move to briefly explore the way in which more commensal relations can also come to produce new bodily capacities and close down existing ones.

### 7.3 Commensal Relations

Commensal relations are those in which one actant benefits from the relationship without causing either benefit or harm to the other actant involved in the relationship. Serres (2007) argues that commensalism is not an infinite process, and sooner or later the relation becomes one of parasitism; taking but not giving. Similarly, Bull (2014) argues that commensal relations are shaped and infused with power, in a way that makes a commensal ‘gifting’ of benefits not as neutral and harmless as may first appear. Serres’ focus on parasitic relations being those based on an unequal exchange (Brown 2002) could include commensal relations; someone benefits, someone receives nothing – an unequal relationship. However, I argue that there is value in exploring commensal relations independently of parasitism. A focus purely on the uniformity of exchanges blurs the dynamics, failing to attend to the full spectrum of collisions and confluences in the ‘transactional dynamics of living things’ (Andrews 2016c, p. 211). There is a large difference between a human feeling some form of positively beneficial therapeutic affect because of an interaction which harms an animal, and a human feeling some form of positively beneficial therapeutic affect from an interaction which causes neither benefit nor harm. Both are unequal exchanges, where something is ‘taken’ and nothing is ‘given’, what Serres may consider ‘analysing’ parasitism (Brown 2002), however these are vastly
different relationships. Thus, commensal relations are worth considering autonomously of parasitism.

Commensal relations are intimately entangled with other symbiotic forms. Indeed, Avila (2012, p. 113) describes how what might start as a form of parasitism might co-evolve as a form of mutualism or commensalism; these are fluid and dynamic relations. Traditional anthropological readings of commensal relations describe the pathways through which certain species came to benefit from living alongside humans; dogs, cats, and rats dwelling among and close to human food and waste stores (Zeder 2012; Larson and Fuller 2014). Cassidy (2007, p. 10) argues that commensals are those that are clearly changed through living alongside human beings, though such changes are not the results of any conscious intervention. There is a sense of human exceptionalism among such conceptualisations of commensalism though, and here I reframe such understandings to instead show how heterogeneous actants can procure new bodily capacities from commensal relations. Commensal relations do not change just animals. Humans are also affected by living alongside other beings. Commensal relations are multidirectional.

Commensal forms of relationships have received little engagement in geographic literature. Drawing on Bull’s (2016, p. 81) earlier mentioned argument around parasitic relations providing a useful ‘analytical tool for engaging with the politics of multispecies codependencies’, I argue that exploring commensal relations proves similarly valuable. Here I briefly explore how human-animal relations on these farms can come to be practiced and experienced as forms of commensalism. Indeed, I am keen not to suggest some form of binary between parasitic and mutualistic, and instead establish the entangled and dynamic relations which exist between humans and animals on CSA farms.
Here, I particularly draw on Haraway’s (2008, pp. 253-254) descriptions of commensals as those who are neither benefactors nor parasites, but ‘devices with their own ends who/which hitch a ride; accompanying rather than companioning, ‘more about “riding along with” rather than “cum panis”, that is, “eating bread with”’. As seen in the discussions on more-than-human commensality in Chapter 6 (see page 206), some of the relations between humans and animals on the farms often did specifically involve an ‘eating bread with’. However, other animals were simply present within the farm spaces, as Jon describes, referring to his CSA projects’ flock of sheep:

*I don’t know if they’d be bothered if we weren’t here or not, they’d probably be just as happy.* [Jon, director of a CSA, Wales]

This commensal relationship between humans and animals at the farm is a useful way to interrogate therapeutic affect. I discussed in Chapter 6 how animals can influence the way in which relations with(in) place can unfold simply by being around, creating affective aesthetic relations and experiences (see page 180 onwards). Here, Jon’s group, as well as the other groups that visited the farm for ‘therapeutic’ purposes, can benefit from a relationship with the sheep that has little impact on the sheep themselves. In this ‘therapeutic’ relationship, the sheep are merely along for the ride (Haraway 2008).

*The chickens, in their new run, further away from the main activity hub, appear to be separated and forgotten about by visitors. Despite being overlooked – people do occasionally remark that it is nice to have the animals around. Simply something that is present within the landscape.* [Fieldnotes, 13 Aug 2015]

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46 The wider agricultural paradigm withstanding. As Bull (2016, p. 87) notes, a ‘mutualism, commensalism, parasitism distinction becomes less significant when considered in relation to longer time frames’. Similarly to Bull, my interest here is to consider the emergent relationships taking place between humans and animals, rather than attending to ultimate goals or end structures (Stagoll 2005; Greenhough 2011).
Here too, the chickens are simply accompanying humans through the emergent ‘therapeutic space’ of the farm. The chickens are left to practice their own animal geographies of the farm, rather than engaged in more parasitic relations that exploit and ab-use animals’ bodies for a human proliferation of health. There are links here to my discussions in Chapter 5 of Annmarie’s feeling of ‘loving the landscape’ (see page 160), and the pleasure she drew from knowing that sheep were present. Annmarie’s sense of thriving and flourishing was influenced by these new relations with the sheep, while the sheep themselves remain unaffected by their relationship with Annmarie; a commensal becoming.

When talking to Albert, founder of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA, on his views on the benefits that visiting the farm provided, he described in detail the potential for new flows of becoming that a relationship with animals provided:

Oh, yes, people benefit from coming and encountering the animals and meeting and interacting with them. Here, they can come closer, they can touch them, they can go in with them even, and so you can begin to get a connection with them which you couldn’t anywhere else [...] as to regards to the numbers of people coming in and looking at them on, and being present, well that’s a little bit more intangible, but, yeah, I’m not sure the animals benefit from that.

This is a purely commensal relationship, based around opportunities for human benefit from the co-presence of animals. Commensal relations can enable a human flourishing but offer little of regard to the non-human actants that produce these relations. Though simultaneously, commensal relations avoid a parasitic symbiosis, producing therapeutic affect for humans without harming or hindering animals. Human bodily capacity is simply changed from being alongside animals. For some however, these more commensal relationship with animals were not enough:
That’s a big part of it for them, that they want animals that do interact with people, and that they can have a relationship with, and they don’t, they’re not so keen on keeping the livestock that are a bit more aloof, and are just there for an end product. [Louise, board member of the CSA Network UK]

A relationship where humans benefit from a proliferation of new bodily capacities, but animals are more neutrally affected, can disrupt both existing and emerging relations. People have a specific desire to engage in a two-way relationship with animals. Encounters that render the non-human more as object can be unfulfilling, and instead diminish the totality of relations and opportunities. However, in this there still exists a tendency to a level of anthropocentrism, the desire for a more-than-commensal relationship between human and animal transcends the animals themselves; the animals must be felt to benefit to enable humans to derive a sense of wellbeing from these relations.

Regarding human understandings and framings of animals’ experiences of these relationships, different animals were positioned differently, as Joyce, director of a mixed horticulture/livestock CSA in England, and Lisa, farmer at a livestock CSA in England, describe:

Rich: What about the animals, do you think they get anything out of all the contact with people?
Joyce: Yeah I think the pigs do, I don’t think the chickens really care that much, but the pigs you know whenever we go up to the field for whatever reason, not just to look after them, but to go and do the harvesting or work on the vegetables, then yeah, they also get, they get a scratch behind the ears and things like, and something to eat perhaps some old cabbage leaves or something that kind of thing, yeah so they, I do think they get quite a bit of personal contact, and they definitely seem to appreciate that, even if there’s not food involved they seem to like, perhaps the friendship.

Lisa: The sheep, I don’t think they really care as long as they’ve got grass and they’re not hassled, I don’t think they really care. Whereas the pigs, they like scratches and cuddles.
For Joyce and Lisa, the everyday relations between the chickens/sheep and the visiting humans is a much more commensal one. People enjoy their relationships and encounters with both the chickens and the sheep, affective engagements that produce the variety of relations discussed in Chapter 6 that proliferate a capacity to affect and be affected. However, the chickens and sheep are understood to be accompanying actants (Haraway 2008) that co-constitute these possibilities. Not sharing in the affective benefits of these relations, yet not suffering because of them either. Here, animals become positioned more as tools to provoke some form of therapeutic encounter for humans, jettisoned as subjects of health in their own right, instead becoming positioned more as therapeutic ‘handmaidens’ (Hanrahan 2014).

However, for both Joyce and Lisa, pigs are attributed a different relationship. The pigs are positioned as affective recipients of their relations with humans, appreciative of the interspecies sociality, viewed as partners in a ‘friendship’ that multidirectionally distributes new bodily capacities for heterogeneous actants. Drawing on this, I turn now to examining how relations between humans and animals in the spaces of CSA farms can instead be framed and practiced in a more mutualistic manner.

7.4 Mutualistic Relations

Mutualism involves a relationship in which both actants benefit from the relationship. In biological terms, it specifically refers to a relationship between different species (as opposed to co-operative relations, used to describe similar relations within a species). Harrison et al. (2004, p. 436) argue that geography has paid ‘insufficient attention to the nature and meaning of the mutualisms and adaptations that have evolved between the species’ particularly in applying understandings of mutualisms to ‘structures involving
humans’. Thus here I explore how human-animal relations can be mutually beneficial to heterogeneous actants’ capacities to affect and be affected.

The idea of ‘mutual support’ (Masuda and Crabtree 2010; Wood et al. 2015) and associated ideas of ‘mutual respect’ (Gesler 1993) and ‘mutual relationships’ (Kennedy et al. 2004) have been discussed by several researchers exploring how place can produce new bodily capacities. However, such understandings of mutualism remain grounded in an anthropocentric sociality. I build on these discussions of mutual support, respect, and relationships, but instead apply them with a more-than-human focus. Here I explore how relations between humans and animals can co-produce mutual therapeutic possibilities, enabling and enacting what heterogeneous actants may become.

Hatch (2007) argues that the prevalent perspective in literature surrounding therapeutic relations with animals is ‘what can animals do for us?’, with little consideration as to how such relations may affect animals. Hatch goes on to argue that there is a dearth of material that focusses on the possible ill effects of such ‘therapeutic’ relations on the animals themselves. I certainly agree with Hatch that considering the experiences of non-humans is important, and the previous sections in this chapter have sought to contribute to the gaps she identifies. However, I would also argue that focussing solely on the potential ill-effects to animals and simply assuming that animals do not receive anything of benefit from these relationships at all is equally problematic. Indeed, as Haraway (2008) has argued, overly emphasising animal suffering tends to give rise to a view of animals as passive and lacking agency, simply receiving human action.

Part of this is about recognising the ‘sociability’ of animals, and that relationships between humans and animals flow both ways. Indeed Malamud (2013) argues that the non-human
enjoyment of an emotional bond between human and animal should not be overlooked. Emotions such as joy, fear, love, despair, and grief are not the prized reserve of humanity (Bekoff 2000). As Haraway (2008, p. 22) notes, ‘what if work and play, and not just pity, open up when the possibility of mutual response’. I consider this here by discussing how the relations between humans and animals on CSA farms can allow for a more-than-human flourishing. I also specifically explore the opportunity for mutualistic relations within the agricultural practices and context of the CSA farms I explored. Finally, I move to consider and discuss the role of shared narratives between humans and animals, and how this further produces spaces which are mutually transformative.

7.4.1 More-Than-Human Flourishing

A ‘therapeutic’ relationship with (an)other species does not always have to be asymmetrically and anthropocentrically parasitic or commensal. In his discussions of animal-assisted therapy, Zamir (2006) considers that some animals may not ‘enjoy’ being involved in such schemes. Again, this is an important concern, but lessens animals’ ontological status regarding an affective capacity. Indeed, this focus on how animals may ‘not enjoy’ human-animal relations results in only half the story. Instead here, I consider how animals can ‘enjoy’ and may benefit in certain ways from their relations with humans to produce mutually therapeutic geographies.

Relations between humans and animals can result in a mutual proliferation of affective capacities. One of the farms were involved with rescuing horses who had been neglected or abandoned, rehabilitating and training them. This rehabilitation work specifically involved working with vulnerable human groups, as Alys explains:
We got to train the horses, so, the students would use a clicker and a treat reward system, and that was amazing. There was a boy with ADHD, and we said, ‘you’ve got to really consider your behaviour, no sudden movements’, so it was amazing to see him, having to really manage himself, which he did beautifully and then when he got a horse to do something, and then he rewarded it and clicked it, he was like ‘wow’, he saw, I guess he saw the benefits of realising his actions on others, and how his behaviour, if it’s altered, might have a positive effect on others, so that, for him, was massive. [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]

The relationship between horse and human creates a productive line of flight, a movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization that acts to re-train physical attributes and responses (Maurstad et al. 2015), an experience which, importantly, reshapes the capacities of both horse and student to affect and be affected, defining new possibilities for the bodies of horse and human alike. The relationship is one of mutualism. The equine participants receive a level of care, rehabilitation, and opportunities for flourishing. However, this relationship also provides new ways of being for vulnerable and at-need human groups. Relationships of mutuality allow us to ‘take joy in the flourishing of others’ (Plumwood 2003, p. 196).

In addition, to draw on Zamir (2006, p. 185), ‘the utilitarian benefits for such horses – they get to exist, lead safe and relatively comfortable lives, are not abused or exploited’. While quite a blunt statement, it is a particularly valuable one, given that the horses that Alys describes had been abandoned by their previous owners. While such an existence may still result in the closing down of certain ways of being from how the animals are kept, it still results in the horses having a much greater power to act and the expansion of their capabilities than in their abandoned and neglected state; health is processual and relational.
Thus, in the same way in which animals can provide care and services to humans with various health conditions, humans can provide care and services to non-humans with specific needs and past experiences. Yet, equally and importantly, neither is this about framing caring for non-humans as 'with strings attached' (DeVerteuil 2015b, p.49), selfishly requiring some form of benefit for the Anthropos in return for a stewardship of needy animals. Instead, the mutualistic relationship emerges here from the generative potential of human-animal relations; relations of mutuality are co-produced (Rose D. B. 2012).

Alys also mentioned that the horses in this mutualistic relationship received ‘training’. The training of animals is often placed as an uncomfortable matter within certain animal liberationist philosophies (Zamir 2006) and it is worth bearing in mind the constraints within which these forms of flourishing operate and might be understood. However, training can also be conceptualised as a co-produced partnership and relationship that involves mutual co-operation and mutual sensitivity – a becoming involved in another’s life-world, and as Evans and Franklin (2010) and Argent (2012) argue, it is not only humans that value the synchronised corporeal behaviour of human-horse interactions, but horses too can take pleasure from these relations. Horse-human entanglements have affects on both species (Maurstad et al. 2015). These training encounters bring humans and horses together in practices that result in new capacities for both species, and can enable actants to move towards flourishing, even if only in the most incremental of steps. This could be about reducing an animal’s anxiety and fear of humans by gradually increasing its interactions with people, thus producing new flows of becoming, creating new possibilities, and opening up new lines of flight. Rather than an existence shadowed by apprehension of people, these encounters may enable a horse to live a more healthful life.
To quote Clark (2014, p. 159), ‘one should not assume that every [lab] animal is subjected to the most extreme forms of domination that one can imagine’; instead, Clark argues that power relations should be analysed on an animal-by-animal basis. Clark’s argument equally applies to human-animal relations in a more ‘therapeutic’ context too. While DeVerteuil (2015a) has argued that health geography often follows an overly accentuated positive approach, literature on therapeutic relations with animals has instead frequently taken a more exceedingly pessimistic attitude. While this is a welcome change in a body of work that has too often rendered animals as objects, the failure to acknowledge the possibility for mutual flourishing emergent from human-animal relations presents a two-dimensional representation of non-human life.

Chaplin (2010, p. 84) studied a similar equine therapy project to the one which Alys describes, discussing how the ponies ‘benefit’ from the relations they form with humans: ‘from arriving as untrained wild animals, the ponies leave as a trained useful commodity’. Chaplin’s approach, however, completely disregards the animal experience, reifying the animals as objects and property. Rather than considering the horses solely in relation to their utility to humanity, the project that Alys talks about attempts to produce new flows of becoming for humans and animals alike mutually, proliferating a capacity to affect and be affected across heterogeneous actants. A more-than-human therapeutic space emerges from these mutualistic relations, framed through a multidirectional and voluntary relationship that produces benefit to each being in their own right, rather than a means to an end (Tannenbaum 1989).

The farms thus become spaces that provide new relations and new bodily capacities for a wide range of vulnerable and heterogeneous beings. Not solely spaces for caring for humans on the outskirts of society, but neglected animals too. Taking on animals in this
way was a common practice; Victoria, the farmer at a recently founded horticultural CSA in Wales, told me how she was contemplating taking on a working donkey who was in need of rehoming. In these circumstances, the farms come to serve almost as 'animal sanctuaries':

> Spot the pig was not for food, he had been donated to the farm to be cared for onsite. [Fieldnotes, 9 April 2015]

> The farm was getting two more rabbits the next day, from a family who could no longer look after them, and had asked the farm to take them on [Fieldnotes, 9 April 2015]

The farms provide both a permanent home and eager and caring human companions for the relinquished animals. Indeed, given Taylor’s (2004) findings that due to space limitations, the capacity for non-dog or cat animals at traditional animal shelters is often fairly limited, the farms provide a crucial place for resisting and subverting territorializations (Fox 2002). Relations with surrendered animals in this way again allows for a mutual flourishing between human and animal actants, rather than a parasitic harvesting of health (Malamud 2013). The opportunity for those relinquishing their animals to visit the farms and their ex-companion animals can also lessen the potential for feelings of guilt and victim blaming often associated with animal surrender (Frommer and Arluke 1999) and care transition (Milligan 2005). This can allow for some form of human-animal bond to continue to exist, on the part of both the humans and animals involved in the relationships.

Alys also described how her students had been involved in the creation of a multispecies reading programme, where children and adults learn to read by reading to animals in animal shelters. The schemes help animals to become used to human companionship and presence, in the hope of finding a permanent home, while allowing the readers (often young adults with special educational needs) to overcome barriers to learning to read:
They don’t feel that they’re reading for themselves, they don’t feel like they’re reading coz they’re thick [...] you’re breaking down a barrier [...] they’re reading to the cat, they’re no longer learning to read because they failed in school [...] they are reading to the cat, because the cat needs to be read to, the cat needs company, they’re helping the cat. [Alys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]

This example does however once again draw attention to the constraints within which these forms of ‘flourishing’ operate and might be understood. Questions arise as to whether these cats want to be read to, and whether they want to become habituated to human contact. Yet equally, these encounters offer the best chance for the cats to ensure longer-term flourishing, by becoming habituated, in order to avoid potentially being classed as unadoptable and euthanized. Thinking about how these interspecies encounters can produce mutualistic benefits often requires, to quote Law (2007, p. 599), ‘entertain[ing] the possibility that there are different and not necessarily consistent realities’ operating simultaneously.

Hines (2003) and Hatch (2007) note that using ‘shelter animals’ for ‘therapeutic’ purposes is controversial. While historically shelter animals had been associated with the rise of animal-assisted-therapy practices, by the 1990s the focus had changed to utilising ‘practitioner’s’ individual companion animals. It may be that the use of shelter animals for therapeutic purposes is slowly resurging, however. Perhaps a main difference in this new wave of engaging shelter animals is that the relationships between humans and animals are taking place within a more neutral space; a space that allows animals to ‘inject what might be termed their own agency into the scene’ (Philo and Wilbert 2000, p. 13). Shelters are hybrid spaces, co-produced by human and animals together (Alger and Alger 1999). While previously (reading Hines and Hatch), animals were taken out of shelters to meet different human groups in humanly convenient places, having the relations instead
emplaced in an environment more familiar to the animal participants creates the opportunity for these more transformative mutualisms (Tsing 2015). Thus, this is not about saying that these encounters fundamentally are therapeutic for the animals involved, but instead recognising ways of working and practicing interspecies therapeutic interactions in ways that provide opportunities for what Haraway (2008, p. 74) calls ‘living responsively’ and allowing more-than-humans prospects for resisting territorializations (Fox 2002).

In the example of reading to cats in an animal shelter, a space emerges which opens up new relational and bodily possibilities for both human and cat, a place in which interspecies relations produce a continuing vitality among different actants (Tsing 2015). Rather than the more utilitarian or parasitic human-animal relationships described earlier, it creates opportunities for co-produced mutuality (Rose D. B. 2012) with transformative possibilities (Tsing 2015). To again draw on Milligan (2006, p. 326), humans’ ‘own sense of health and wellbeing is intimately bound up with the health and wellbeing of the care-recipient’ (with the care-recipients here being animals). However, this is not just about deriving a feel-good factor from looking after animals, it is a relationship that enables a mutual flourishing. Reciprocity is intimately interwoven in a co-production of care (Milligan 2015). Here, animals are not just distant commensals along for the ride, they are affective companions in healthful practices and flows of becoming. I move now to explore how a specific agricultural context affects these mutual relationships of flourishing.

7.4.2 Mutual Relations in Agricultural Practices

Emel et al. (2015) argue that certain forms of farming can work to enable, rather than overcome, animal agency. This ‘enabling’ creates the opportunity for what Emel et al. (2015, p. 171) describe as, ‘livelier livelihoods’, where humans and non-humans exist as counterparts in a socio-ecological system that produces viable and potentially enriching
lives for all. Rather than forcing animals to act differently to allow for new bodily capacities to emerge from human-animal relations, an opportunity for a more mutual flourishing is produced. The community support structure of CSA allows the farms to mobilise different knowledge practices and technologies in their management of animals, permitting less intensive agricultural practices to be deployed that are better suited to maintaining and supporting the health of the animals involved. In Gloria’s apicultural CSA for example, the groups’ work with schools attracted a large wealth of additional funding, allowing them to diversify their project and harvest honey less intensively, a process better suited to maintaining and supporting the health of the animals:

We became much less about honey production, so although we have had some honey this year, we’ve had about 50 jars, maybe 60, and we have shared that out with members who have wanted some, on the whole we decided we needed to work more on the environmental and education side of it, so that’s actually where we started heading, so working with schools […] we’re not forced to try and produce as much honey as we can or anything like that, we take excess honey, so a thing beekeepers often do, especially if they are honey producers primarily, they will take as much honey as they can and then substitute back with sugar syrup, which isn’t as good for the bees, so again it’s another way of, because honey is partly their immune system that they make, it’s their immune system, they don’t have an internal one, so they put all of the goodies that help them fight pathogens off into these substances and then if you remove it then, you know turns stress on them. So, what we try and do is we take excess honey, so it’s very much taking what’s available, and what is excess, so I think that’s again another way, because we can have the flexibility to do that.

Tsing (2015, p. 279) argues that social relations across differences of both vitality and species is essential to ‘good living’, a concept she calls ‘neighbourliness’, a ‘mutuality across difference’. The more regular contact with humans because of the additional human bodies on the farms has the potential to normalise livestock to human presence, in turn, constituting a less stressful experience for livestock during agricultural practices of moving animals and collecting their produce, as Diana and Valerie both explain:
I think also because we're with the animals all the time, they are more used to people being around, which means that sort of catching them for slaughter, ‘oh look, there's my friends, I'll just get in this trailer’, it makes it less stressful for them, collecting eggs from the chickens as well [...] they're more used to us being in there, they're not frightened of us. [Valerie, care farming project co-ordinator at a CSA in England]

I mean we're actually going in and feeding them every day so they're actually getting more used to bigger groups of people every day, so I think you probably can minimise the risk on, the negative impact on the animal. [Diana, manager of a care farming programme based at a CSA in England]

Here, although being involved in an agricultural system may not necessarily end well for animals, they do conceivably experience certain benefits from their relations with humans. New bodily capacities are produced from mutual entanglements between humans and animals. Humans come to benefit from the various relations discussed in Chapter 6, while animals benefit from an ability to thrive and flourish, resisting and refracting territorializations of a ‘health-denying’ place (Fox 2002; DeVerteuil and Andrews 2007). While having additional people visit the farms can produce parasitic relations (as discussed previously), these are only some of the sets of relations that can emerge in the taking place of health (Murdoch 2006; Andrews 2016a). Human-animal relations are situated and contingent, a consequence of particular relations between particular actants. Instead of harming or hindering, opening up farm gates to visitors may instead serve to enrich the lives of the farm animals, providing new stimuli and new affective relations (Hosey et al. 2013). Having additional people visiting the farms (whether CSA members or groups explicitly seeking to use the farm for therapeutic purposes) also creates a level of transparency and visibility for the livestock, forcing farmers to ensure that their animals are kept in better conditions, as Lisa, farmer at a CSA in England, describes:

We can't get anything with the sheep, if you know, you can't have a sheep die of maggots or you can't have something lame for too long, so they do get a better care because they've got more people looking at them, and feeling responsible for them [...] they get better care coz there's more people looking at them.
Thus, while the additional human bodies on the farms can limit the relations available for non-humans as discussed earlier (page 240), this can also produce new potentials on the farms. Diana and Valerie describe similar themes:

*It’s about caring in the rural environment, for people, but also for the environment, and actually, we can give that little bit of extra care to the animals, that little bit of extra care to the environment, that little bit of extra care to potentially the hedges or the vegetables or whatever, just because of the care for people we do, and that’s what I like [...] I think in one way I feel that probably a lot of our guys can give the animals more positive attention, you know, like say, I think, if I think of sometimes the livestock team, how they would round up a load of chicks or whatever, I can assure you they do it much quicker than we do, but from the animal welfare point of view, I’m sure that we do a better job.* [Diana, manager of a care farming program based at a CSA in England]

*I think welfare wise, one of the arguments that I think, for us doing this, is that we’ve got time to be able to do it, whereas I think the livestock team, they’re often rushing to get things done, whereas we have the time to actually spend because these guys are paying to be supported here, we have time to be able to sit and watch sheep, and watch their behaviour and think, ‘okay that one’s not right today’ or ‘why’s that not right’. [Valerie, care farming project co-ordinator at a CSA in England]*

I discussed in Chapter 6 how developing a level of familiarity with animals was often a key relation in establishing spaces conducive to human health and wellbeing (see page 210 onwards). As Valerie discusses, these relations of familiarity can create beneficial affects for both the humans and animals involved. The attachment and attunement to individual animals that produces new capacities to affect and be affected in humans, also draws new relations into an animal’s health assemblage. As Milligan (2006, p. 326) describes, informal care-givers, like the visitors to the farms, ‘can offer crucial insights into the wider social, cultural, and biographical back-ground of the care-recipient […] and can be important in contributing to the overall quality of care’. Although the visitors are not professional agriculturalists, their ability to notice that an animal is ‘not right today’ as
Valerie describes, due to the closer relationships formed with the livestock, can produce benefits for the animals. Fox (2002, p. 360) describes how ‘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’. Here the mutualistic alliances between interspecies ‘friends’ comes to define what heterogeneous actants can do.

Ideas of a mutually healthful relationship did not just focus on the visible fauna present on the farms, but also often extended to the microbiome. I mentioned in Chapter 5, Dan’s interest in soil microorganisms (see page 151):

*One of the topics of conversation was the recently published research being discussed in the media about how getting your hands in the soil can help increase mood. Dan was keen to stress how important it is to care for the soil and develop good soil fertility, and build up the microorganisms within the soil. [Fieldnotes, 22 May 2015]*

There is an element of mutualism visible in Dan’s attitude towards soil and microorganisms. A recognition of the benefits of co-habitation and cross-species care; a therapeutic co-existence. This highlights Lien’s (2015, p. 61) argument that relationships of mutuality do not have to be one to one, with singular individuals, but rather can be practiced and expressed with a collective. Again (see page 242), this draws attention to how the microbiome can be co-constitutive of therapeutic geographies. Here however, as well as any potential symbiotic relations from a relationship with *Mycobacterium vaccae* in the soil (Lowry et al. 2007), these new ways of being are also co-produced in a hybrid manner, informed and constituted by a wide variety of other bodies, objects, technologies, ideas, and social organisations, particularly in this case, through the media and the news story which visitors to the farm had heard about and were discussing. Milligan and Bingley (2007, p. 807) have previously discussed how the media can ‘exacerbate anxieties’, disrupting relations and deterritorializing ideas of a ‘therapeutic space’. However, the
media is not always a negative influence. Here, these new knowledges emergent through relations with media instead act to produce new ways to perceive, understand, and experience being on the farm with microbial others, in modes that result in a proliferation of the capacity to affect and be affected. Thinking of how a media story shaped this relationship, I move to explore the idea of shared narratives, understandings, and knowledges in more detail, examining how these can influence and inform a level of mutual flourishing between heterogeneous actants.

7.4.3 Shared Narratives

Greenhough and Roe (2011), drawing on Acampora (2006), develop the concept of a ‘somatic sensibility’, a compassionate concern for the ‘other’ as a proper object of ethical consideration, apprehended through the shared experiences of having a (vulnerable) body. Somatic sensibilities generate relations of ‘symphysis’, a state of growing together emergent through (inter)relationships of sharing (Acampora 2006). These concerns lead to a becoming involved in animals’ lives, in multispecies emotional entanglements that lead not just to a becoming therapeutic ‘with’ (Haraway 2008), but a becoming therapeutic ‘together’ (Van Dooren 2014), producing new bodily capacities multidirectionally through mutualistic relations.

This links to Plumwood’s (2002, p. 175) argument that ‘recognising earth others as fellow agents and narrative subjects is crucial for all ethical, collaborative, communicative and mutualistic projects, as well as for place sensitivity’. Plumwood’s specific reference to place sensitivity bears specific consideration for geographies of therapeutic spaces, highlighting how enculturing a level of more-than-human empathy can lead to a becoming ‘absorbed’ in place (Pitt 2014). Identifying the subjectivity of animals allows for an emergence of mutually transformative relationships between heterogeneous actants.
Doing the work of paying attention (Haraway 2008) through the cultivation of this somatic sensibility elevates animals from ‘bare life’, to instead have ‘qualified lives’, biographical and political (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010). People on the farms frequently and actively invoked animals' ‘biographies’ in this way to produce a ‘mutually beneficial entanglement of multispecies stories’ (Van Dooren and Rose 2012, p. 15). These entanglements act to explicitly draw the care of humans and animals together, producing a flattened relationship between heterogeneous actants that promises mutualistic flows of becoming:

*And they've got a story, so we say the story, so we say, 'Jamie do you wanna come in now and see the horse'. 'Oh no, oh no, no I can't wait to get out of here', and they're all like, 'Oh no Jamie, come on, come and have a go, Lily was an abandoned horse and she's only a couple of years, you know she was very small when we found her, she was very injured, and now we care for her, and she can't do you any harm at all Jamie, do you want to come on in?', 'Oh right', and you see him going in and you know he's not making eye contact, then you see him touching the horse and then by the end, he's feeding the horse! Oh, it's remarkable, it's remarkable!*

[Allys, staff member taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects, Wales]

The mobilising of animals’ biographies in this way links to the idea of ‘narrative medicine’. Charon (2006, pp. 3-4) writes that narrative medicine enables ‘one person to receive and understand the stories told by another, only when the doctor understands to some extent what his or her patient goes through can medical care proceed with humility, trustworthiness, and respect’. By engaging in animals' biographical lives, recognising them as *bios*, rather than *zoe* (Kirksey and Helmreich 2010), a more mutualistic relationship of flourishing can emerge between human and animal. To paraphrase Charon (2006, pp. 3-4), only when humans understand to some extent what an animal has gone through can (therapeutic) human-animal relationships proceed with humility, trustworthiness, and respect. There are links here to Haraway’s (2008) concept of ‘shared suffering’, that recognising animals as significant others produces consequential relationships, preventing unequal relations from becoming commonsensical. Haraway (2008, p. 84) argues that
‘sharing pain promises disclosure, promises becoming’. Engaging in the embodied experiences and histories of animals produces practices and flows of becoming, multidirectionally producing new capacities to affect and be affected.

There are caveats to a biographical narrative approach when thinking about animals, Sorenson (2008), for example suggests that organisations may create and develop identities for animals to acquire visitors, utilising anthropomorphism as a cynical marketing tool. Mullan and Marvin (1999) discuss the performances of Shamu the Killer Whale at Sea World in San Diego, noting that there were three different killer whales which interchangeably took on the identity of ‘Shamu’ for shows. Similarly when discussing Angelica, an octopus at a British aquarium, and her subsequent demise, Bear (2011) discovered that ‘Angelica’ had been replaced without some staff even realising. Though equally this manipulability of animals’ biographies produced opportunities for visitors to the farms to ascribe stories and narratives to the animals themselves:

Throughout the day the visitors to the farm referred to Bess as being Salsa’s girlfriend – I found this interesting, wondering if they have a desire to fit animals into how they see the world and their own social patterns – particularly as relationships (and relationship difficulties) was a frequent topic of conversation during the day. [Fieldnotes, 5 March 2015]

While ideas of ‘girlfriends and boyfriends’ may be human social constructs, the wider interspecies sociality that results from these fictional backstories is not. These narratives made the dogs meaningful to the visitors, which resulted in them becoming entangled in the animals’ lives in ways that constituted new relations and opportunities for human and dog alike. Rather than anonymous non-humans, these (fictitious) narratives draw heterogeneous actants out of alienation ‘building a world of overlapping lifeways in which mutualistic transformation’ might be possible (Tsing 2015, p. 258). Here, this transformation relates to the production of new bodily capacities for human and animal
alike: a transformation from one multiplicity into another, that alters, innovates, and changes relations to produce new ways of being in the world.

Focussing on the lived experiences of the animals involved also serves as a route to addressing concerns over the potential for animals to be mistreated and parasitized within human-animal relations. Attunement to animals’ individual moods, likes, and dislikes, allows relationships to be practiced in a mutually beneficial manner, treating animals as subjective beings, and drawing attention to the multiplicity of ways that individual animals practice relations with humans. Knowledge of individual animals can produce more contingent, sensitive, and situated ways of practicing and performing ‘therapeutic’ relations with animals that allows a more mutual proliferation of new bodily relations and opportunities. As Plumwood (2003, p. 156) describes, an ‘encounter with someone else’s needs and reality’ creates ‘an interactive process in which each transforms and limits the other’:

One of the girls mentioned that she felt sorry for the boy lambs as ‘they just get used’. She also pointed out that some of the sheep were ‘huge’ and ‘looked like they were struggling’ – there is certainly a level of empathy and care for the sheep as the sheep become more ‘real’, the visitors connect to them more due to the realities of lambing. [Fieldnotes, 19 March 2015]

Cacciatore and Thieleman (2014) discuss the salutary impact of collectivity and group experience, and how this can produce a level of resilience, affecting a body’s resistance to forces of territorialization (Fox 2002). This healthful community collectivity can equally apply to more-than-human ‘communities’, such as those which constituted the farms, recognising the close, family and friend-like relationships that can develop between humans and animals (Charles and Davies 2011). Spaces of care are thus ‘shared accomplishments’ (Conradson 2003, p. 508), though importantly here, this shared accomplishment is co-produced by more-than-human agencies.
I argued in Chapter 6 that individual preference can become important as a way of accessing an ethos of engagement that attunes individuals to a possibility of human-animal relations ‘becoming therapeutic’ (see page 214). This ‘individual preference’ equally applies to non-humans too. Certain animals may have their capacity to thrive and flourish enhanced through becoming used to human companionship and presence, such as the cats discussed on page 254, while for others this may be emergent from new relations produced through interspecies play. The desire for interspecies relationships is not purely the domain of humans:

_Bess, Dewi’s dog, was desperate for attention off the visitors to the farm today, crying until she got fussed. Dewi explained that he’d been on a job this morning (he’s a carpenter) and she’d had to stay in the van for a few hours so was now a bit pent up. The young people seemed to enjoy Bess’ need for attention and company – normally it is them harassing the dogs._

[Fieldnotes, 2 April 2015]

Therapeutic affect on the farms, that is, the proliferation of the capacity to affect and be affected, is co-produced by heterogeneous actants mutually involved in processes of becoming emotionally entangled with(in) each other’s lives in a shared experience of space. This emotional entanglement creates what Van Dooren (2014, p. 139) describes as ‘a particular sociality rooted in our being emotionally at stake in one another’s lives’ in a way of being in an unavoidably shared world with others. To quote Plumwood (2002, p. 142):

Just as we do not realise the benefits of personal relationships of care until we have ceased to be primarily motivated by or focussed on the benefits we gain from them, so we can realise fully the rewards of experiencing the other of nature as another centre only when our primary focus is not our own gain or even safety. And to the extent that anthropocentric frameworks prevent us from experiencing the others of nature in their fullness, we not only help to imperil ourselves through loss of sensitivity but also deprive ourselves of the unique kinds of richness and joy the encounter with the
more-than-human presences of nature can provide. To realise this potential, we will need a reconception of the human self in more mutualistic terms as a self-in-relationship with nature, formed not in the drive for mastery and control of the other but in a balance of mutual transformation and negotiation.

Plumwood describes how the development of more selfless relationships between heterogeneous actants can produce additional, and importantly, mutual, beneficial new capacities. This ethic of mutuality can be important in realising the very relations which lead to a place becoming constituted as therapeutic; I discussed earlier (page 246) how for some people, more commensal relationships with animals failed to produce affective encounters. Plumwood also highlights how these ‘territories of becoming that produce new potentials’ (Thrift 2004a) can function as sites for the establishment of new multispecies politics, working out new ways to live within the Anthropocene. Indeed, Taylor et al. (2014, p. 147) suggest that human relationships with individual animals can serve to increase empathy towards animals on a wider scale; thus ‘future animals may be protected from potential harm’ while simultaneously strengthening human quality of life through ‘opening up the opportunities to connect with animals’ (Taylor et al. 2014, p. 147). I mentioned in Chapter 6 how humans’ memories and emotions associated with topographically distant animals can be stirred by contact with another member of the species, an act that (re)shapes the relations available within a farm visitor’s actual topographic location (see page 177). Similarly, human memories, emotions, and experiences associated with animals encountered on the farms become implicated in future relations with non-human others. May, a farmer at a CSA in England, highlights this well:

*I think the people that have benefitted are utilising the farm and utilising it for education. We raise hens, from chicks, from eggs rather, so that the kids can see that aspect, they see that the chicks grow. It’s what you’re teaching other people, because the project that we have is, basically I think the main driver is as an educational tool, you’re, you know the last thing you want to do is to teach people to be very frivolous and reckless with an animal’s life.*
A consideration of ‘future animals’ returns to the idea that certain therapeutic spaces have the potential to result in emotional and life course resonances that extend far beyond physical and contemporaneous site-specific relations (Andrews 2004; Foley and Kistemann 2015). Here these relational resonances are not just affective of human health and wellbeing, but can come to relationally constitute what more-than-human actants may become regarding their capacity to affect and be affected.

While arguments can be made regarding the egalitarianism of the relations of mutualism discussed in this section, a focus on mutualism provides a critical and dynamic way of understanding human-animal relations and the potential for more-than-human therapeutic spaces. Reciprocity in care giving can be immediate or delayed, physical or emotional (Milligan 2015), it is not about equal benefit, but mutual benefit. Indeed, as Haraway (2008, p. 74) concludes, complete symmetry is not the point: ‘such relations are almost never symmetrical […] this is about living responsively’.

7.5 Conclusion

Building on Chapter 6, this chapter has further integrated animals into geographic discussions of health and place, producing new understandings of human-animal relations, and how place can produce new bodily capacities (or close down existing ones) for heterogeneous actants.

Here I have broadened my interrogation of the heterogeneity of emergent places conducive to health, exploring who ‘therapeutic spaces’ are ‘therapeutic’ for. I discussed how the relations between humans and animals that can produce therapeutic affect are often ones of parasitism. A series of relations that produce new bodily capacities for humans while subverting and refracting the relations available to non-humans. These
relations can also interrupt animals’ usual functioning, causing them to act in ways that they would not ordinarily, to perform certain imaginations of spaces conducive to human flourishing. It highlights the anthropocentrism of describing and understanding such spaces as ‘therapeutic’.

Though equally in other cases, I demonstrated that therapeutic affect can emerge through more commensal relations in which animals are simply present, ‘along for the ride’ (Haraway 2008). New bodily capacities are produced for humans through a co-presence with animals, while animals remain unharmed and unhindered. However, humans often have a specific desire to engage in a two-way relationship with animals; encounters that do not allow for non-human expression can be unfulfilling, and instead can come to diminish the totality of relations and opportunities at play.

Thus, alongside these parasitic and commensal relations there were also more mutualistic relations. Animals are active and subjective partners within these relationships, and similarly to humans, are capable of enjoying a level of flourishing emergent from human-animal relations. Therapeutic spaces therefore do not have to be based around purely anthropocentric notions of health and wellbeing, but rather can emerge as mutually transformative, producing new bodily relations for heterogeneous actants. These entanglements lead not just to a becoming therapeutic ‘with’ (Haraway 2008), but a becoming therapeutic ‘together’ (Van Dooren 2014).

I move now to conclude, drawing these themes, and those from the previous chapters, together to show how health, place, and animals are intimately entangled.
8. Conclusions
8.1 Introduction

This thesis has produced new ways of critically understanding the dynamic links between health and place, particularly, the place of animals within therapeutic geographies. I have demonstrated the value in exploring animals’ presence within ‘therapeutic spaces’, the role of animals in affecting how places can emerge as ‘therapeutic’, and animals’ relationships within ‘therapeutic spaces’ as subjects, actants whose bodily capacities are equally shaped by the relations at play.

This thesis creates a framework for future research within health geography to attend to the more-than-human. Rather than reducing animals to components of broader black-box categories, I have shown the value in attending to the intricate specificities of human-animal relations; situated relationships with animals have a generative potential for shaping what a body can do. Although I grounded my work specifically within health geography, I have engaged in detail with animal geography and wider multispecies and more-than-human scholarship. There are opportunities for these areas of work to think about ‘health’ as much as I have demonstrated that health geographers should think about animals. Indeed, there is a significant trend within animal geography of focussing on human-animal encounters (Barua 2015, 2016), and people’s lived relationships with companion animals (Fox 2006; Fletcher and Platt 2016) and other non-humans (Bear and Eden 2011; Ginn 2013; Bull 2014). These relationships have the potential to be transformative, enacting, defining, and enabling different actants’ capacities to affect and be affected. How human-animal relations shape health is a topic that can prove of wide geographical interest.
I move now to draw together the themes of this thesis, outlining how I have answered my research questions. Here, I explain the contributions this research has made, and how this influences future research directions and agendas.

8.2 Research Overview

This research sought to explore the dynamic relationships between health and place. My focus has been on the relational nature of space and place, building on a fruitful paradigm within human geography (Andrews et al. 2013a). I sought to demonstrate how therapeutic affect can emerge through heterogeneous relations, and that thus, any space, no matter how mundane or everyday, has the potential to ‘become therapeutic’, regarding how place can define, enact, and enable new bodily capacities and ways of being in the world. Therapeutic spaces are open and dynamic, constantly in the process of emergence.

My approach provided a way of attending to the ‘taking place’ of health, exploring the detail of what is actively happening in the moment (Andrews 2016a), a focus on the generative potential of situated relations, and how ongoing lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari 2008) continue to shape therapeutic possibilities. This involved moving from a conceptualisation of health as the state of an ontologically prior body towards one where health is a series of relations and affects that define what a body can do (Fox 2016). This approach produced a more critical way to understand how certain places can affect health, exploring how place (re)shapes a body’s capacities and limits (Buchanan 1997; Duff 2011). Health is not something that is simply achieved or taken from place, but rather, place can produce precarious and ceaseless experiences of ‘becoming well’ (Andrews et al. 2014).

In particular, I was keen to unpack the homogeneous depictions of place prevalent in pre-existing geographic literature surrounding the idea of therapeutic spaces, and instead
attend to the way in which these places are co-produced by a diversity of heterogeneous actants and agencies. I was critical of approaches to understanding the dynamics between health and place that erased and silenced non-humans (Hallman 2007) or condensed animal actants to hidden components of ‘nature’, ‘forests’, or ‘wildernesses’ (Gesler 1998; Palka 1999; Parr 2007; Lea 2008; Curtis 2010; Meijering et al. 2016) – processes of ontological ‘blackboxing’, that reduced discussions of ‘therapeutic spaces’ to exploring ‘inputs and outputs’, rather than the ‘internal complexity’ of the actual practices and relationships that exist between heterogeneous actants (Latour 1999).

Instead, this thesis has explored the situated spatial relations between humans and animals, discussing the co-production of therapeutic spaces, and the roles of animals in affecting health opportunities in place, showing how human-animal relations can influence a production of new bodily capacities and the closing down of others (Buchanan 1997). Importantly, this was not just about the capacities and limits of human actants, but my approach embraced animals as subjects. I was keen to attend to non-humans’ experiences of these emergent spaces and relationships and consider the potential of ‘more-than-human therapeutic spaces’, exploring how care for humans and animals can be brought together.

I located this research within Community Supported Agriculture, an alternative system of food production. This was not with the aim of simply labelling and applying the ‘bumper sticker’ of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ to yet another area (Andrews 2004, p. 308). Rather, I sought to show how new bodily capacities can emerge from everyday spaces (Wilson 2003), and how relational processes of ‘becoming therapeutic’ play out in (de/re)territorializing a place as having (a reputation for) therapeutic affect.
My interest in the more-than-human also had a particular relevance when considering CSAs. The place of animals in such systems had generally been neglected within existing research (Cooley and Lass 1998; Cone and Myhre 2000; Sharp et al. 2002; Oberholtzer 2004; Schnell 2007; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli 2007; Cox et al. 2008; Bougherara et al. 2009), with little consideration of how animals shape and influence practices and performances of CSA. Given my attention to the role of animals in co-producing space and place (Wolch and Emel 1998; Philo and Wilbert 2000; Latour 2005), I was keen to look at how non-human actants were imbricated within spaces of CSA, to produce an understanding of the place of animals within CSA systems, and the human-animal relations that exist within CSAs.

Based on the themes of health and place, animals, and CSA, a series of research questions emerged which guided my research. I now move to discuss how I answered each of these in turn.

### 8.3 Animals and Community Supported Agriculture

My first research question sought to explore what motivated Community Supported Agriculture farms to engage in livestock farming, and the roles and places that animals came to occupy within CSA spaces and practices. Here I was interested in contributing new knowledge and understandings to geography by addressing gaps within existing literature on CSA. Specifically, I wanted to ‘bring animals back in’ (Wolch and Emel 1995) to discussions of CSA, and draw attention to the heterogeneity of these spaces.

I demonstrated that CSA spaces are regularly co-constituted by a diverse and lively arrangement of human-animal relationships. Importantly, these human-animal relations emerged shaped by both humans and non-humans, and resulted in a range of intentional
and unintentional presences and relationships across different temporal scales. These ranged from the contested and messy entanglements of horticulturalists and animal ‘pests’, to CSA members’ enjoyment of engaging with passing ‘wild’ animals, as well as the variety of relationships that CSAs had with livestock on the farms: the sheep and pigs that existed as food animals; the chickens and goats there to produce food, but not become food; the working animals on the farm; the ‘pet’ animals that were brought into the farm spaces; even certain animals that ended up being ‘donated’ to the farm to be cared for. Animals come to be implicated within CSAs for diverse reasons.

Animals’ presence in these spaces emerged as an important feature in how CSAs came to define and practice their own food and agricultural systems. Animals became strongly linked to the food based values and identities of what each individual community group conceptualised as being important. Having animals present broadened the ability for consumers to make claims to specific discourses and identities, and position themselves as being concerned about particular issues in ways that horticultural practices alone could not, such as advocates of animal welfare or connoisseurs of heritage breeds. Animals came to influence the identity of both the people and places of CSA, changing imaginations and enactments of ‘alternative’ agriculture. Animals’ roles in CSA emerged as being as much about producing an ‘alternative place’ as about producing and consuming ‘alternative food’.

Indeed, this led me to challenge the assumption that people involve themselves in alternative food networks for purely food based reasons (Stagl 2002; Brehm and Eisenhauer 2008; Cox et al. 2008). Several CSAs included people who engaged with the farms, not from a desire for specific qualities of food or practices of agriculture, but rather as an opportunity to encounter animals, even in some cases, from a desire to know that
animals were present in a certain place or landscape, rather than from a desire for a physically mediated encounter. The animal presence caused a big change in what the CSAs actually produced, reterritorializing them as spaces of encounter. This interest and engagement in animal encounters highlights that despite being spaces of agriculture, human-animal relations within CSA go beyond a positioning of ‘animal as food’.

In placing animals in CSA, I have contributed new understandings and enhanced academic insight and knowledge of CSA, and the human-animal relations which co-constitute these alternative food networks. My work has demonstrated that geographic discussions of alternative food networks should direct attention to the more-than-human elements of food systems.

Although not wishing to simply label CSA with the ‘bumper sticker’ of ‘therapeutic landscapes’ (Andrews 2004, p. 308), my work has demonstrated the potential health affects that emerge from participation within such spaces. There are thus potential future policy implications in my work, in considering the everyday strategies and spaces that people employ to cope in adverse contexts and seek ‘health’ (Power and Hall Forthcoming). CSA has previously been connected with health only in vague terms, with nebulous references to ‘health benefits’ resultant from eating organically, taking part in physical activity on the farm, or simply through being outdoors with ‘nature’ (Cooley 1996; Stagl 2002). Instead, here I have demonstrated how health affects can emerge through the human-animal relations on the farm, and how CSA farms can come to produce new bodily capacities.

As part of this, I drew on the idea of care farming (Hine et al. 2008a; Hassink et al. 2010), as a set of relationships and practices emergent in agricultural spaces which can affect
health. My focus here offered a new way of thinking about existing understandings of care farms. I have demonstrated that health emerges not simply through visiting a care farm (Boogaard et al. 2010), but rather from the relations and affects drawn together in the practices and performances that constitute care farming. My discussions here are also the first to specifically consider how CSA spaces come to engage in such care farming practices, again highlighting that human-animal relations within CSA go beyond a positioning of ‘animal as food’.

8.4 Animals and Health

My second research question sought to explore how human-animal relations can come to influence human experiences of health in place. Here I was interested in highlighting the multiple ways in which human ‘health’ can be shaped and reshaped through the influence of non-human actants. Again, I sought to produce original contributions in ‘bringing the animals back in’ (Wolch and Emel 1995), this time, to geographic understandings of health and place.

Having argued that health geography has overly focussed on putting ‘people centre stage’ (Andrews 2015, p. 338), I instead moved to explore the generative potential of situated human-animal relations in (re)shaping the diverse affective relations gathered together to affect bodily capacities (Buchanan 1997; Duff 2010, 2011; Fox 2011, 2016). My approach here has served to critically unpack the heterogeneity of ‘therapeutic spaces’, and has instead engaged with their more-than-human constitutive elements. My arguments have demonstrated that human understandings and experiences of health and place can be shaped and reshaped by human-animal relations, animal presence, and animal agency. By addressing these literature gaps around health, place, and animals, I have produced a framework and rationale for future work within health geography to attend to animals,
navigating around existing tendencies to package the more-than-human into indiscriminate and superfluous categories (Gesler 1998; Palka 1999; Parr 2007; Lea 2008; Curtis 2010; Meijering et al. 2016). Broad categories can have a reductive effect on producing understandings of the dynamic interrelations between health and place. Instead, here I have argued for paying attention to the individual relations between individual actants.

I positioned these discussions around existing themes within literature surrounding the geographies of therapeutic spaces, a process which has also involved me critically reframing such prevailing themes to further decentre the human in geographical discussions of health and place. I argued that animals are an important part of an engagement with health and place, not just constituent parts of a homogeneous ‘landscape’ (Lea 2008; Windhorst and Williams 2016), but specific elements with which individuals engage and enter relationships with. Animals’ very (potential) presence can lead to the emergence of affective places. I demonstrated how animal agency produced new modalities of sharing space with others, influencing how people navigated the spaces of the farms, whether lingering, exploring new spaces, or simply enjoying the thrill of moving together. Animals produced new ways of being in place; new emotions emerged from human-animal relations, along with new knowledges, experiences, socialities, and even ways of thinking about and understanding oneself and one’s place in the world. I have shown that human-animal relations can produce new bodily capacities, changing what a body can do, its capabilities and opportunities to function and flourish; animals act to (re)define, (re)enact, and (re)enable what a body can become.

I was keen not to indulge in the often overly positive focus of health geography (DeVerteuil 2015a) and not to simply position animals as linear and definite agents of healthful affect.
Indeed, I demonstrated that human-animal relations are equally as capable of closing down existing bodily capacities as they are of producing new capacities. Human-animal relations do not produce health as such, rather, ‘health’ is something that can contingently emerge through these relations. While human-animal relations can produce familiar places, where people develop a sense of comfort and ownership, equally this growing familiarity with individual animals can also diminish the totality of relations and opportunities that a body has. In this way, exploring the co-existences and dependencies of these heterogeneous relations also acted to highlight the fluidity, multiplicity, contingency, and indeterminacy of ‘therapeutic spaces’, and move understandings away from more rigid and static conceptualisations; any therapeutic territorialization is a tenuous and precarious achievement (Allen 2011).

Drawing on my interest in human-animal relations, I also moved to introduce more engagement with the senses within geographic understandings of health and place. This area of work has largely been visually orientated (Evans 2016), and instead I have demonstrated how a proliferation of new bodily capacities is not built up from solely visual cues, but informed by other sensuous engagements too: taste, sound, and smell. The variegated places that impact on people’s health assemblages are always emplaced and embodied, continuously being (re)constituted and idiosyncratically interpreted. Sensuous experiences actively influence practices and engagement with(in) place, and the ways by which place can have a meaningful affect on health. Engaging with the senses provides the opportunity to further understandings of ‘therapeutic landscapes’, moving beyond a visual hegemony to a means which more fully engages with the sensory richness of places of health and wellbeing. While my work here has drawn mainly on the sensorial aspects of animals, there are a whole host of sounds, smells, and tastes worth exploring in considering how perceptions, reputations, and experiences of health emerge in place. My
original approach here in considering these more-than-visual aspects within the relationship between health and place opens new agendas for research within health geography.

8.5 Mutual More-Than-Human Therapeutic Spaces

My third research question sought to explore how becoming entangled in ‘therapeutic’ relations with humans affected animals. Here I was interested in furthering my project of decentring the human in geographic discussions of health and place. I wanted to consider non-humans’ experiences of these emergent spaces and relationships too, further integrating animals within geographic discussions of health and place; animals are subjects in their own right. In thinking through the relations that affect health possibilities in place, consideration must be given to the fact that these affective relations are multidirectional. Health is not solely the preserve of humans.

I thus moved to attend to Andrews’ (2016c, p. 211) call for health geographies to recognise ‘the transactional dynamics of living things’ and consider how heterogeneous actants come together to co-produce opportunities and constraints for one another (Hinchliffe 2007). I moved to further my interrogation of the heterogeneity of places conducive to health, by exploring for whom ‘therapeutic spaces’ can be ‘therapeutic’. I demonstrated how a more-than-human approach can trouble understandings of places becoming territorialized as ‘therapeutic’. Certain relationships that produced new bodily capacities for humans emerged through a ‘parasitic’ subversion and refraction of the relations available to non-humans (Serres 2007). Attempting to perform and realise human imaginations of ‘therapeutic’ affects, spaces, and relationships can rely on processes that interrupt animals’ functioning, making them act in ways in which they would not ordinarily
(Brown 2002; Puleo 2013); animals’ emergent ethical and ontological positions were often subjacent to human health concerns and considerations.

Though equally, in other cases, I demonstrated that new bodily capacities can emerge through commensal relations; encounters and relationships in which animals are simply present, ‘along for the ride’ (Haraway 2008). This involved reframing predominant understandings of commensalism (Cassidy 2007; Zeder 2012; Larson and Fuller 2014); I moved to show that commensal relations do not just change animals, but rather, commensal relations are multidirectional, humans can also be affected by an ‘accompanying’ (Haraway 2008) of other beings. In these commensal relationships, new bodily capacities can emerge for humans, resultant from a co-presence with animals, while the animal actants themselves remain unharmed and unhindered by the relationship.

However, alongside these parasitic and commensal relations, there also emerged more mutual therapeutic affect. While I argued that there is a danger of elevating the human experience and relegating non-humans to a state of utility, simply assuming that animals do not receive anything of benefit from these relationships at all is equally problematic. Overly emphasising animal suffering tends to give rise to a view of animals as passive and lacking agency, simply receiving human action (Haraway 2008). Animals existed as active and subjective partners within these relationships, experiencing a cultivation of new bodily capacities as a result of human-animal relations in similar ways to humans. Relations between humans and animals can result in a mutual proliferation of affective capacities, reciprocally beneficial. Animals thus emerge as affective companions in healthful practices and flows of becoming. These human-animal entanglements can lead not just to a becoming therapeutic ‘with’ (Haraway 2008), but a becoming therapeutic ‘together’ (Van
Dooren 2014). These discussions provide new insight into human-animal relations, in a context which has seen previous little academic interest.

My interest in these symbiotic processes of ‘co-evolution’ also provides a new framework through which to consider healthful practices and flows of becoming. As health geographers become more interested in the ‘ways in which bodies not only interact, but co-evolve with things’ (Hanlon 2014, p. 144), exploring relations of parasitism, commensalism, and mutualism produces a useful way to frame and interrogate the diversity of relations drawn together in the co-production of ‘therapeutic spaces’. Co-evolutionary processes provide an important way in which to consider how relations between heterogeneous actants differently define, enable, and enact what different actants may become regarding their health assemblages. It also provides a framework for attending to the tensions Milligan and Wiles (2010) describe within ‘landscapes of care’, offering an opportunity to explore whether care-giving is based on altruism, guilt, or reciprocity, and the gaps, absences, and negative relationships of care. These co-evolutionary processes also highlight the contested and multiple ways in which spaces conducive to health and wellbeing can emerge. Rather than statically and universally therapeutic, these spaces and relationships can be a ‘kaleidoscopic mix’ (Thrift 2004b, p. 91) of hindrance, indifference, and assistance.

These discussions also have relevance for care farming and animal-assisted-therapy, particularly in thinking about how these practices design and develop future encounters and therapies. There is an opportunity to think about how to practice these interspecies relationships in ways that are less parasitic, and instead framed more by attempts at producing opportunities for mutualistic flourishing. I have shown here that healthful relations between species do not have to be limited to anthropocentric politics, but rather
that human-animal relations can result in a mutual proliferation of the capacity to affect and be affected.

This thesis has provided new ways of thinking about and conceptualising human-animal relations within a context of health and wellbeing. It demonstrates the opportunity for new multispecies politics, and how care for humans and non-humans may be brought together to realise mutual and more-than-human therapeutic spaces.

8.6 Strengths and Limitations

This thesis makes an important contribution to health geography, building on a lot of current debate within the sub-discipline, and attending to calls by numerous authors (Milligan et al. 2007; Doughty 2013; Andrews et al. 2014; Hanlon 2014) to more critically explore the role of the non-human in relation to geographic understandings of health. Indeed, looking back and reflecting on the journey that the thesis takes the reader on, there is an important step-change. From beginning within a context in which animals were erased and missing from discussions of both CSA and therapeutic spaces, to instead recognising animals as critical and often crucial co-constituents of these spatial forms. However, this was not just about describing co-presence, instead I moved to actively explore the roles of animals in co-producing human understandings and experiences of health and place. But then, going one step further again, to consider animals’ experiences within these spaces, and the often-troubling humanism of the way in which interspecies therapeutic practices are framed and performed, as well as questioning, with cautious optimism, whether animals may benefit in certain ways from their relations with humans within these ‘therapeutic’ spaces. This thesis offers new and exciting ways for geographers
to think more critically about ‘health’ and the multiple versions of ‘therapeutic spaces’ and human-animal relations that exist.

However, there are certainly limitations to my discussions within this thesis. Locating my work within an agricultural context privileges a certain set of species, as well as (pre-existing) human-animal relationships. As Bear (2011) argues, further emphasis should be given to non-mammalian life forms within multispecies scholarship. There are therapeutic practitioners who actively use spiders, snakes, and reptiles as part of structured animal-assisted-therapy sessions in a variety of spaces associated with health and wellbeing, including closed psychiatric wards, care homes, and special educational schools (Gorman 2015). Species like spiders and snakes have the potential to realise very different affective encounters. There is further work to do in ‘bringing the animals back in’ (Wolch and Emel 1995) to (health) geography.

Relatedly, my work is also somewhat limited by the specific UK geographies at play. I had originally been keen to highlight the tensions between wildlife, non-human mobilities, and the idea of a ‘therapeutic’ space, however, generally at Bwncath, the most we had to worry about was some of the wild horses from the adjacent common wandering close to the farm (see page 189). However, in a different regional context (North America for example), there are different ‘wildlifes’ to consider, with their own affects and relations. Consider for example, the different affective atmosphere produced by a pack of coyotes howling, compared to the pleasant birdsong discussed on page 210.

Similarly, Foley’s (2011, 2012, 2015) explorations of the relationships between ‘blue space’ and health have brought a much welcome more-than-land focus to discussions of health and place, however I am guilty within this thesis of reifying the terrestrial focus often
seen within the geographies of therapeutic spaces. The opacity of water creates intriguing 
considerations for how health ‘takes place’ (Andrews et al. 2014); the mystery and 
uncertainty of the sea and what lurks within or brushes against one’s foot, whether 
seaweed or shark, creates a different modality of relating to the more-than-human than 
the more visible presence that can be found within the terrestrial spaces of the farms which 
I explored.

I had anticipated that the agricultural context of the farms would lead to certain tensions; 
how does one ‘eat one’s companion animals’ (Haraway 2003, p. 64)? However, from my 
experiences in the field, and speaking to participants, this just didn’t appear to be an issue 
for any of the visitors to the farm (obviously, it affected animals, as discussed in Chapter 
7, page 230 for example), as the quotes from Georgina and Diana go some way to 
demonstrate:

_They’d always say ‘oh where’s Merry gone?’ and I’d say ‘oh Merry’s gone 
now, Merry’s gone off to slaughter’, and they’d be like ‘Oh right, oh ok, so 
who have we got left then?’, and they seem to really get it, we’ve got calves, 
they’re 10 months old now, the guys know that they’re going to be going off 
to slaughter soon, and they’ve named them and they’ve scratched them 
and all that, but they completely get it._ [Georgina, animal coordinator at a 
care farming programme based at a CSA in England]

_We’ve had people in the slaughterhouse, plucking. I mean, at the time when 
they asked me, ‘Can we get involved in it?’, and I was like, oh my god, you 
know, I went back and I just thought, you know, the definition of care 
farming is getting people involved in real farming practices._ [Diana, 
manager at a care farming project based at a CSA in England]

Visitors just simply didn’t seem phased by the culling and slaughter of animals, they 
seemed to understand and accept the agricultural context of the place and the animals’ 
purpose within a productive farm. Indeed, this was often important in establishing the 
‘meaningfulness’ of the farm, discussed on page 187, creating a coded sense of place that
these were not just sites of respite, but places where the visitors were needed in order to contribute to the continued functioning of the farm. Rather than the culling of animals acting to disrupt any therapeutic territorialisation as I had anticipated, instead, this became bound up with producing positive affects for many visitors, in that they were important actants contributing to something productive, reframing them as capable and powerful. As I discussed within Chapter 7, the ability to paralyse and catalyse non-human relations would appear at times to be key in directly affecting how spaces become constituted as a ‘therapeutic space’. However, it is certainly conceivable that in other contexts, and within other human-animal relationships, the death of a ‘therapy’ animal would indeed provoke negative affects. It is perhaps the expectation of death, within the agricultural setting, that preserves the production of therapeutic affect. The unexpected passing away of a Pets As Therapy dog who regularly visits elderly people in a care home would no doubt have a much more adverse affect than the planned slaughter of an agricultural animal. However, this is an area where further research is required. Indeed, rather than purely limitations, I view the confines I have discussed here as opportunities to build on what I have done within this thesis and further explore the links between health, place, and animals in other situations, locations, and contexts. As such, I move now to discuss how my work builds a future research agenda.

8.7 Building a Future Research Agenda

Within this thesis I have demonstrated how health, place, and animals can become intimately entwined. I hope that my work will inspire others to consider how human-animal relations can produce new bodily capacities or close down existing ones. Indeed, I am keen to see my interrogations and reconceptualisations of ‘health’ serve as further
encouragement for geographers to explore how ‘health’ comes to be dynamically and relationally constituted.

My research has focussed specifically on the emergence of health within the context of CSA farms. As I have shown, this has been a useful empirical arena within which to explore how new bodily capacities can emerge within more everyday settings (Wilson 2003). The agricultural context itself provided an interesting setting in which to explore human-animal relations. However, there are a range of formal ‘therapeutic’ 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 who are feeling stressed about revision and exams (BBC 2015). Besides these more formal healthcare settings, there are also opportunities to explore people’s everyday lived relationships with animals, whether affective brief encounters with rats (Clayton 2016) or on-going relationships with pets (Fox 2006; Fletcher and Platt 2016), and how these relations play out in enacting, defining, and enabling what bodies can do, regarding people’s (and animals’) health. Indeed, there are opportunities to revisit and reconsider the way in which more-than-human actants are imbricated in co-producing therapeutic affect within experiences of forests (Thurber and Malinowski 1999), beaches (Collins and Kearns 2007), and zoos (Hallman 2007).

My approach here has focussed on animals, but the conceptual framework I have established allows for health geography to extend its engagement with the more-than-human and consider a whole host of co-evolving and interacting bodies (Hanlon 2014). New bodily capacities can be co-produced by heterogeneous actants, artefacts,
technologies, and elemental forces. Del Casino (2016) has recently called for interrogating the role of robots in the production of ‘caring spaces’. There are large parallels for this with my work here, and the more relational and post-structural approach I have adopted for considering the dynamics between health and place would serve well for opening up such research agendas. Indeed, there is the potential for vast crossover with my work 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 (Calo et al. 2011; 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 care 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.

Exploring new care technologies, like Paro, can broaden current perspectives on health and place (Parr 2002; Milligan et al. 2011). However, this is not just a case of technologies specifically coded as related to ‘care’; I mentioned on page 104 how solar panels could potentially disrupt ideas of rural idylls and the emergence of therapeutic affect. Future research may wish to consider how the presence of technologies within place shape what a body can and cannot to, in the same way as I have considered animals here.
When thinking about future technologies, my work also opens doors of investigation into the past. Health geography has a growing interest in drawing on a historical approach (Andrews and Kearns 2005; Andrews et al. 2006), as well as a strong tradition of exploring the historical contexts of asylums (Philo 1987; Philo 2004). Similarly, animal geography has demonstrated the insights that come from exploring historically situated human-animal relations (Gruffudd 2000; Howell 2002). As I have shown within this thesis, animals are often entangled in the ways in which place can come to produce new bodily capacities. However, these are not necessarily new forms of interspecies relationship; the presence of animal life in places associated with health and healthcare has a rich history, as Figure 9 illuminates:

*Figure 9 - An illustration of a men’s ward in Bethlem Hospital, 1860, from ‘The Illustrated London News’, showing the presence of dogs, cats, and birdcages.*
In the centre of the gallery wall there is a complete aviary full of joyously-caroling birds; and these little songsters seem to possess much power in raising the sometimes drooping spirits and soothing the troubled minds of the unhappy persons who dwell here.

[The women’s ward is] prettily painted, well carpeted, cheerfully lighted, and enlivened with prints and busts, with aviaries and pet animals. [In the men’s ward] there are fewer flowers, and similar little elegancies, but the comforts are the same, and there is the same fondness manifested for pet birds and other animals, cats, canaries, squirrels, greyhounds. [Some patients] pace the long gallery incessantly, pouring out their woes to those who will listen to them, or, if there are none to listen, to the dogs and cats.


The quotes accompanying this sketch of Bethlem Hospital in 1860 highlight a long history of the more-than-human co-production of therapeutic geographies. The cats, canaries, squirrels, and greyhounds actively affected the way in which emotions, mobilities, and social relationships played out in the hospital. The quotes also show how the presence of non-humans was mobilised to create gendered differences in the way in which health and care was enacted. Similarly, Digby (1985) discusses a few interesting, albeit brief, anecdotes about human-animal relationships at The York Retreat, often referred to as where formalised animal-assisted-therapy first began (Serpell 2006), though aside from grand statements like this, there is precious little written about the actual human-animal relationships or the animals themselves. The agency and experiences of animals have been silenced, ignored, and erased within histories of asylums, hospitals, and other historic spaces of health. Whether focussed on the past, present, or future, exploring how therapeutic spaces and healthful relations are co-produced by more-than-human actants offers a critical way to consider the dynamic relationships between health and place.

We live a multispecies life, whether we like or know it (Cudworth 2011b). One of the founding messages during the emergence of the ‘new geography of health’ was that health is experienced within place (Kearns 1993; Andrews 2002). Building on this, I want to close
by arguing that health is experienced and co-produced together with more-than-human others. From an affective encounter with a playful juvenile squirrel that brightened my mood and bolstered my resilience as I walked to my office to finish writing this thesis, to the relationship and mutual partnership between a guide dog and a partially sighted person, human-animal relations matter for health. They can come to enable, enact, and define what bodies can do. Place is affected by health, and health is affected by place (Gastaldo et al. 2004); both are affected by human-animal relations.
9. References


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10. Appendix A – Sample Interview Schedule

Interview guides were adapted and tailored to individual interviews. However, these themes, modules, and sample questions served to provide the basis for my semi-structured interviews.

Introductory and Person Specific Questions
- What is your role and background?
- How long have you been involved with the farm?

Alternative/Additional Questions for Groups Visiting CSAs
- Can you introduce me to your organisation?
- What is your membership? How do people come to be involved?
- How did you get involved with the farm?
- Why visit the farm?
- What are the benefits to your project?
- What benefits does your project provide to the farm?

Broad CSA Questions
- Where did your interest in CSA arise from?
- How would you define CSA?
- Can you tell me a bit about the farm/CSA project.
  - What’s the farm’s history? What were the reasons for starting the community project?
  - How big is the farm?
  - What’s been the key impetus for the growth of the CSA project?
- How would you typify the CSA membership?
- Do you have any relationship with any external organisations?

CSA and Animals Questions
- What animals do you have on farm?
  - How were these species/breeds/individuals selected?
  - Why were these species/breeds/individuals selected?
- Have animals been involved in the project from the start?
  - If not, when where they introduced?
- Who was proponent for the inclusion of animals?
- Why do you have animals?
- What do the animals bring to the project?
- What is the role of the animals on the farm?
  - Do they have any roles beyond that?
  - Do different individual animals or groups of animals within a species have different purposes?
- Are there any challenges that come with involving animals in the CSA?
  - Has there ever been any disagreement, tension or conflict?
  - Do you have vegan or vegetarian members?
  - Have people ever left the CSA because of the inclusion of animals?
Alternative/Additional Questions for ‘Horticultural’ CSAs
- Why do you not have animals?
  o Have animals ever been involved previously?
- Do you have any future plans to involve animals?
- Do you think having animals involved would change the nature of the CSA?
  o Increase engagement? Marketing?
- Do you have much interest from external groups?
  o Do you think having animals would change/increase that?
- Have members ever asked for animals?
  o What are the barriers to engaging in livestock farming?
- Do you think there would be resistance or tension if you did introduce animals?

Human-Animal Relationships Questions
- To what level and extent do people meet and engage with the animals?
  o How does this impact animals’ roles?
- Are the animals individuated in any way?
  o Names? Personality traits? Roles? Anthropomorphism?
  o How does this impact animals’ roles?
- Do you think having the animals involved in the project enhances the interest people have with the project?
  o Or can it put off? Refer back to tension question.
  o If applicable – how about the animal products themselves – is that a big motivator for being to join?
- Who cares for the animals?
- How is the space managed in regards to animals?
  o What strategies are used to allow members and visitors to meet animals?
  o What strategies are used to keep out wildlife?
    ▪ If farmer – do you find members are wanting species on the farm that you would prefer to remove?

‘Health’ Questions
- Do people routinely visit the farm?
  o Who?
  o Why?
  o How does this effect farm practices? How does this effect animal management?
- What sort of voluntary practices and opportunities are involved with the CSA?
  o What do volunteers do on the farm? Activities?
- What do you think people gain from these visits? Are there any benefits to them visiting the farm?
  o What about contact with the animals? Do you think this can be beneficial?
- How do you think being on the farm with animals can affect people’s wellbeing?
  o What do people get out of human-animal encounters?
- Are there any negatives to human-animal encounters?
  o Fears/phobias?
- What has been done to farm space to produce these opportunities?
Have you changed the species/breeds/management of animals to encourage human-animal encounters?
- What do people expect of the farm/animals how does this match up with realities?

More-Than-Human Experience Questions
- How does having people visit the farm affect the animals?
- Are there any positives for the animals?
- What about any negatives?
- Do you think that the animals enjoy this kind of contact or get anything out of it?
  - How do you know/judge this and work out what’s good/bad for animals in this regard?
- Are there any animals you wouldn’t allow people to interact with?
- Conversely, are there any humans you wouldn’t allow to interact with the animals?
11. Appendix B – Schedule of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Involvement in CSA</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of CSA</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aisling</strong></td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>Apicultural</td>
<td>10/03/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Al</strong></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Horticultural (with animals for labour)</td>
<td>14/12/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albert</strong></td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
<td>31/03/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alys</strong></td>
<td>Special Educational Needs teacher, taking students with learning disabilities to animal projects</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td>25/05/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annmarie</strong></td>
<td>Co-ordinator</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>07/01/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Antony</strong></td>
<td>Board member of the CSA Network</td>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td>17/03/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ash</strong></td>
<td>Representative from a care farming ‘matchmaking scheme’ that aimed to match farms with groups seeking a therapeutic outlet.</td>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td>22/04/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ben</strong></td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>Horticultural</td>
<td>20/03/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cara</strong></td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Horticultural</td>
<td>29/04/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dan</strong></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
<td>17/12/2014 (combined interview with Jon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dave</strong></td>
<td>Outdoor activities coordinator on a local council scheme for NEET(^{47}) young people</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td>02/04/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Diana</strong></td>
<td>Manager of a care farming project</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
<td>10/04/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emma</strong></td>
<td>Opportunities co-ordinator for a homelessness project</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Esther</strong></td>
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<td>Livestock</td>
<td>25/02/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Frankie</strong></td>
<td>Grower</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fred</strong></td>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Horticultural</td>
<td>21/04/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Georgina</strong></td>
<td>Animal co-ordinator of a care farming project</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
<td>27/02/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gloria</strong></td>
<td>Founder and beekeeper</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Apicultural</td>
<td>22/01/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guy</strong></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>05/08/2015</td>
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\(^{47}\) Not in education, employment, or training.
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<tr>
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<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
<td>14/01/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Food and farming officer for National Trust</td>
<td>England</td>
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<td>14/07/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Founder and farmer</td>
<td>Spain (but with a British community supporting)</td>
<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Mixed horticulture/game</td>
<td>14/08/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Representative from Organic Centre Wales – a centre which has led the development of CSA as a model within Wales</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td>28/07/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jon</td>
<td>Founder</td>
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<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
<td>17/12/2014 (combined interview with Dan)</td>
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<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>Volunteer Co-ordinator</td>
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<td>Horticultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joni</td>
<td>Beekeeper and founder</td>
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<td>Apicultural</td>
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<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>Mixed horticulture/livestock</td>
<td>12/08/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathryn</td>
<td>Representative from WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) – a volunteer scheme that works in conjunction with many CSAs</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith</td>
<td>Wildlife Co-ordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Representative from the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens</td>
<td>Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Representative from the Soil Association – an organisation which has led the</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
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<td>Horticultural</td>
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<td>Rosa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosemary</td>
<td>Representative from Farms Not Factories – an organisation which (at time of interview) was working with the CSA Network to promote CSA as a model for higher welfare pork.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siôn</td>
<td>Physical activities leader on a local council scheme for NEET young people</td>
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<td>Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Co-ordinator</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Three separate CSA projects: Pig CSA, Chicken CSA, Egg CSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tara</td>
<td>Representative from Community Land Advisory Service – an organisation which several CSA groups cited as crucial in their success</td>
<td>England</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valerie</td>
<td>Care farming project co-ordinator</td>
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<td>William</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra</td>
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*Additional responses to set of written questions via email*
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<th>Industry Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
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<td>England</td>
<td>Horticultural (with animals for labour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tommy</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>England</td>
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