Journal of Rural Studies 66 (2019) 119–129

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Rural Studies

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud

'Herding is his favourite thing in the world': Convivial world-making on a multispecies farm

Kelly Donati[1]

University of Melbourne, Faculty of Science, School of Geography, 221 Bouverie St. Parkville, VIC, Melbourne, 3010, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Conviviality
Agriculture
Animal-human relations
Care
Gastronomy
Multispecies ethnography

ABSTRACT

At its etymological roots, conviviality attends fundamentally to the question of how to live well together. This multispecies ethnography of a small multispecies farm in Victoria, Australia employs conviviality as a lens through which to explore the co-constituted world of agriculture and the possibilities of its multispecies pleasures. Engaging with literature in science and technology studies, cultural anthropology and human geography, the farm is approached as a lively site of conviviality, with the writings of nineteenth-century socialist utopian Charles Fourier employed as an alternative imaginary for making sense of animal-human relations in agriculture. Exploring themes of breed, work and care, this paper draws on strategic anthropocentrism to posit a vantage point from which to recognise how animals and their pleasures co-produce the social worlds of farming. The relational dynamic between humans, working dogs, cows, sheep and chickens tells a lively story of material and affective entanglement but also reveals how the intimacies of affection and care sit uncomfortably alongside the reality of slaughter. These social dynamics are explored to propose that the good life in livestock production is one that is co-produced and judged by animals themselves and that a more convivial agriculture is contingent on humans and animals being on better working terms.

1. Introduction

Agriculture is always a more-than-human endeavour. In an industry that too often conceptualises life in mechanistic and economic terms, new stories of farming are needed that transcend humanist and instrumentalist approaches to living and working with others, an alternative currency by which agricultural labour—and its social pleasures—might be valued and accounted for. Drawing on a case study of a small multispecies farm in Victoria, Australia, this paper employs conviviality as a lens through which to explore the co-constituted social worlds of farming. At its etymological roots, conviviality (*con* meaning 'together' and *vivere* meaning 'to live') attends fundamentally to the question of how to live well together. Foundational to the social flourishing of the table, it enacts a gastronomic 'ritual of survival' and commensal practice that 'cannot be celebrated by oneself' (Montanari, 2012, 124). Yet taking seriously the question of co-flourishing—with loved ones, neighbours, urban denizens, citizens of nations or even, as Donna Haraway puts it, other 'terran critters' (2008, 294)—extends the ethical and political significance of conviviality far beyond the table.

My discussion situates itself amongst scholars who make a case for the transformative and utopian potential of doing and, importantly, *feeling* food differently (Carolan, 2016; Stock et al., 2015). As a project that leans more toward a politics of hope than critique, my own commitment is to engender new stories of agriculture and gastronomy that move beyond 'rendering a bad food world more visible' and contribute instead, as Hugh Campbell suggests, to making 'a better food world more thinkable' (Campbell, 2015, 196). To this end, I explore the intersubjective pleasures emerging from the 'co-constructed affectivity, a shared approach to life' that comes through humans and animals living together and, in the case of farm life, working together (Porcher, 2014, 4). Themes of breed, work and care come to the fore in ways that highlight the conditions by which the agency of animals might be recognised in attempts to live well amongst species difference. My paper offers an empirical account of farming that constitutes, as Haraway suggests, a kind of 'worlding' with the potential for 'richer and more responsive invention, speculation, and proposing' in which humans might cultivate new forms of attentiveness to nonhuman pleasure (2008, 92–93). As a practice that feeds humans but also determines the conditions by which many species live, eat and die, agriculture is one of the most fundamental of such worlding projects.

Within cultural geography, animal studies and the environmental humanities, there has been significant focus on contesting human exceptionalism through methodological approaches that explore the politics of living well amongst species difference (Kirksey and Helmreich,

E-mail address: Kelly.donati@angliss.edu.au.
[1] Present address: William Angliss Institute, Faculty of Higher Education, 555 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC, Australia 3000.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2018.12.008
Received 9 April 2018; Received in revised form 11 October 2018; Accepted 15 December 2018
Available online 18 January 2019

2010; Rose, 2005, 2015; Van Dooren and Rose, 2012). This exploration of multispecies entanglements has given over to concerns with the purposive killing of animals for food as well as the commodification of life in systems of capitalist production (Coles, 2011; Pachirat, 2011; Higgin et al., 2011; Porcher, 2017). Within this scholarship, theoretical debates and critical tensions play out between animal welfare literature focused on improving the conditions under which animals live (Buller and Roe, 2018) and critical animal geography with explicit commitments to animal liberation or abolitionism (Best, 2009). This paper supports and is situated within this important body of work on the politics of living and dying in animal agriculture by exploring the affective socialities—as well as the tensions—that shape how humans and animals live, and work, together.

Nonhuman pleasure has until recently been neglected or denied within both animal welfare science and agriculture itself, focusing instead on reducing suffering and other negative affective states without due attention to the unique pleasures of animal worlds (Balcombe, 2009). At the same time, animals and their emotional worlds increasingly appear as 'free' or 'happy' in marketing discourse or, conversely, sad and confined in animal welfare campaigns. I remain conscious of the all-too-easy assumptions behind discourses of 'happy meat' (Coles, 2011; Miele, 2011; Pilgrim, 2013) but remain uneasy with attempts to disentangle the social worlds of humans and animals in agriculture. This exclusionary gesture potentially risks overlooking how animal husbandry—or animal care work, as Buller and Roe (2018) prefer—is critical to the story of how humans and animals have lived together and enabled one another over millennia, a relationship in which mutuality and collaboration sits alongside exploitation and brutality. Conviviality, I propose, offers one way of making sense of agriculture's social relations without reducing these to technoscientific solutions for improving animal welfare. As such, I join animal sociologist Jocelyne Porcher in exploring 'the pleasure of being with animals' as 'a utopia, an impossible country' (2017, xiv), as she puts it, to ensure that the world-making experiences of humans and animals as currently practiced in a range of farming settings are not obscured within broader debates about the exploitative relations of livestock production, industrial or otherwise.

With this utopia in mind, my paper draws inspiration from nineteenth-century writer Charles Fourier whose utopian imaginary positions agriculture as central to the project of re-imagining the economic, social, sensory and gastronomic relations of early capitalism. In drawing inspiration from Fourier (without fidelity to the full spectrum of his ideas), my case study encounters the animal farm as a site for convivial world-making. Porcher's research on animal labour and Vinciane Despret's philosophical ethology inform my empirical analysis in not only recognising how animals 'engage themselves subjectively in the work' on farms but also how they bring their own judgement to bear on the conditions of co-existence created by farmers (Porcher and Schmitt, 2012, 55). Just as Haraway explores how to 'share the conditions of work, including the suffering' (2008, 70), I argue that the shared pleasures of social relations are equally important, even if these pleasures are not equivalent, and propose that imagining convivial pleasure beyond the human might productively destabilise dominant configurations of animal-human relations in agriculture.

The first part of this paper briefly introduces the ontological commitments and methodological approaches following the 'species turn' and emergence of multispecies ethnography, which have generated a flourishing of new questions about the entangled social and metabolic worlds of animals, fungi, plants and microbes. After elaborating on the analytical commitments of multispecies ethnography, I then draw on Fourier's convivial imaginary to challenge the instrumentalisation of animal-human relations engendered by capitalist production. The case study in the third section elucidates how these ideas play out on a small multispecies farm where the relational dynamic between humans, working dogs, sheep, cows and chickens tells a lively story of convivial pleasures. The fourth section explores the possibilities of strategic anthropomorphism for overcoming the 'species barrier' of pleasure between humans and other terrans critters and for fostering greater openness to the affective experiences and pleasures of animals on farms (Charles, 2014). Yet, in considering what it means to take seriously animals as active participants in the making of convivial worlds, there remains a gap between conviviality on the farm and the conviviality of the table within which killing happens. Resolving this gap goes beyond the scope of this paper, but the penultimate section explores the limits of conviviality. I conclude by exploring the ethical possibility for a more radical anthropomorphism.

2. Researching multispecies conviviality

2.1. Allies in disrupting human exceptionalism

The rich arena of 'postdualist' scholarship has expanded ontological definitions of who and what might constitute a subject and sought to resist the epistemological framing of nonhumans as spoken of and for but never as active subjects (Latour, 2004; Braun, 2008; Castree, 2012). These conceptual frameworks have 'stretch[ed] prevailing modes of subjectivity' beyond human concern (Connolly, 2013, 400). The lively scholarly terrain of multispecies ethnography has proven critically, conceptually and methodologically rich for troubling the humanist dualisms and species boundaries of western metaphysics, along with productively accounting for the histories, minglings, transformations and dislocations of living and dying which co-produce social worlds (Kirksey et al., 2014; Van Dooren et al., 2016).[2] Bennett's vital materialism similarly provides important ontological and epistemological strategies for imagining how to 'devise new procedures, technologies and regimes of perception that enable us to consult nonhumans more closely, or to listen and respond more carefully to their outbreaks, objections, testimonies and propositions' in imagining politics anew (2010, 107). Of particular interest in this paper is how humans and animals offer up such propositions to each other and how animals in livestock agriculture might even 'judge the work' of human caregivers (Despret, 2008, 133).

Within this context, cultural geographers Hinchliffe and Whatmore consider the ontological and epistemological implications of conviviality for articulating 'a more broadly conceived accommodation of difference, better attuned to the comings and goings of the multiplicity of more-than-human inhabitants' with whom humans live and work, knowingly and unknowingly (2006, 125). This politics of conviviality expands 'civility' to encompass the 'practical intercorporeality of civic associations in which particular kinds of individual entities thrive in combination with others whose capacities and powers enhance their own' (Hinchliffe and Whatmore, 2006, 135). However, as van Dooren and Rose note, rethinking interspecies living-togetherness places the onus firmly on humans to 'find multiple, life-enhancing ways of sharing and co-producing meaningful and enduring multispecies' arrangements, including how humans live and work with animals (2012, 18–19). A 'commitment to flourishing biosocial conviviality' must take seriously the affections, pleasures and charms of working with nonhumans while acknowledging their needs, desires and interests (Rose, 2015, 130). Within agriculture, this necessitates new methodological approaches and material practices for engaging with and making sense of the

[2] Just as the figure of the "human" is contested within postdualism scholarship, Kirksey & Helmreich highlight how the notion of 'species'—multispecies ethnography's 'hidden ontology'—is also up for contestation (2010, 563). Rather than offering stable ontological categories for describing and sorting life forms, species are better conceived as 'discernible forms animated by life' that reflect epistemological projects as much as reproduction, behaviour, morphology or location (Hartigan, 2016). Species distinctions are not merely a question of taxonomy but represent a material formation that cannot be set apart from the entangled histories with other life forms that gave rise to it. Or, as Haraway puts it, 'every species is a multispecies crowd' (2008, 165).

creaturely relations of food and farming.

2.2. Methodological approaches

The standard toolbox of ethnographic methods goes some way in providing descriptive and interpretive accounts of how people make meaning from their worlds. However, an ongoing challenge for researchers is to develop ethnographic accounts that also 'appreciate the multi-sensory energies and intelligences of human and nonhuman bodies, gestures and events' (Lorimer, 2013, 63). The particular, descriptive and heuristic nature of the case study focuses on specific problems or questions of everyday life, often mobilising narrative approaches to enable new framings of a phenomenon in vivid detail (Yin, 2009). The value of the singular case here is not its generalisability but its detailed exploration of species entanglements—that is, as Haraway suggests, the 'here, not there; there, not here; this, not everything; attachment sites, not case studies for the general' (2010, 53). This paper's 'attachment site' offers an entry point into the convivial possibilities of agriculture, in full acknowledgement that such stories are always particular and, at best, partial.

While the attachment site of this paper focuses on a particular farm, it is predated by a cultural history and landscape that has long nourished the Dja Dja Wurrung people for whom an epistemology that is open to nonhuman subjectivity is not new. Australia's history of dispossession and genocide is inextricably entangled with agriculture through, amongst other things, the political and legal doctrine of terra nullius by which Indigenous lands were declared devoid of people due to the ostensible absence of cultivation and land ownership that accorded with European legal and agricultural epistemologies, despite strong evidence of sophisticated precolonial systems of Indigenous agriculture and aquaculture (Gerristen, 2010; Pascoe, 2014). Within the Indigenous concept of 'nourishing country', the nonhuman world is not an object to be brought into production but acts as 'a self-organising system that brings people and other living things into being, into action, into sentience itself' (Rose, 2005, 303). There remains much work to be done in understanding how Indigenous epistemologies for living amongst species difference might inform a politics of more-than-human conviviality that works to decolonise agricultural policy, practice and knowledge systems in Australia more broadly.[3]

Drawing on the analytical leanings of multispecies ethnography, my study is based on semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with Brian. Over multiple visits to his farm, discussions focused on his personal background and commitments to animal welfare; the pleasures, challenges and ethics of farming; his formative experiences in agriculture and how, collectively, these ideas, experiences and practices relate to his hopes for the future. This case study sits within a broader research project with producers in regional Victoria, Australia across 2014 and 2015, preceded and informed by six months of living and working on a farm. This was not a period of detached observation but a 'bodily and sensual apprenticeship' (Wacquant, 2011, 88) in working with many species.

This embodied conditioning with the vital 'force of things' schooled me in 'becom[ing] more perceptually open' to nonhuman agency and the social and metabolic entanglements inherent to farm life (Bennett, 2010, 14). In particular, I became acutely aware of the constant struggle for life and livelihood amongst the voraciousness of nonhuman appetites. Rabbits ran amok eating crops; I watched horrified as cats hunted the youngest and then regurgitated them, partially digested, on the kitchen floor. When I fed kitchen scraps to the chickens, I observed the hierarchies of colour and texture by which they eat. Making my morning omelette meant negotiating with a shed full of hens fiercely protecting their eggs. As I cracked eggs into a bowl, their blood temperature recalled the feathered bodies I had stolen from. Earwigs sought refuge and sustenance in the coolness of lettuce hearts picked for dinner. During the drought, an explosion of pill bugs—which normally eat decaying matter in soil—turned their appetites to young seedlings, munching them to the ground before they could grow. When rain came, powdery mildew flourished on the leaves of zucchini and cucumber plants. As I adapted to the rhythms of watering needed to sustain the soil's vitality during the drought, my body developed a feel for farming and, at the same time, became attuned to the 'local, situated conditions necessary for tolerable, sustainable, shared lives' (Lorimer, 2005, 91).

These visceralities of farming followed me in my analysis, while multispecies ethnography offered a framework for making sense of how more-than-human life worlds and socialities were both 'emotive and embodied' (Law, 2004, 3). I became aware of my own species limitations in what I could know, or never know, about the worlds of others. As my theoretical orientations increasingly leaned towards the vital assemblages around me (Kirksey and Helmreich, 2010; Ogden et al., 2013), my writing and reading—including of Fourier—lingered on how different species resist or collaborate with human attempts to live with them.

2.3. Fourier's convivial imaginary

The discussion that follows represents only a limited engagement with the vastness of Fourier's wildly imaginative work.[4] I focus on two important and related ideas within his critical treatises and satires of early industrial capitalism: firstly, the theory of 'attractive labour' and secondly, the significance of gastronomy—or *gastrosophy*, as he describes it—in organising social and political life. Fourier's cosmology actively rebuffs the gastronomic writing of his contemporary Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1994) for its lack of critique of what he perceives as the corruption of not only the economy but also systems of *alimentation,* or nourishment, focused on the frivolous connoisseurship of the elite. What makes Fourier's unique ideas germane to this discussion is that the pleasures of food emerge not through the performance of connoisseurship but rather from heterogeneous associations bound up in the act of farming and eating. His framework for organising taste, pleasure, ingredients, agricultural labour, politics and social life offers, as Haden notes, a 'prototypical ecology of connoisseurship' and, importantly, 'an alternative vision of gastronomy and taste for which there have been no takers' (2011, 257–258).

Centuries before Slow Food and local food movements advocated for the 'reconnection' of agriculture and consumption, 'gastrosophy' or the 'art of allying the refinements of consumption and production' proposes them as mutually constitutive (Fourier, cited in Sipe, 2009, 220 [my translation]). In his utopian ideal aptly named 'Harmony', gastrosophy's four threads of practice—'agriculture, preservation, cookery, and gastronomy' (Levi 2015, 45)—serve as a sensual weapon against contemporary political, economic and moral frameworks—otherwise known disparagingly as 'Civilisation'—that Fourier believes suffocate the sensory and social pleasures upon which human

[3] The ongoing implications of the doctrine of terra nullius are evident in the *Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015) which proposes to 'unlock [the] full potential' of remote landscapes and communities through industrial agriculture and mining (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, 5). Northern Australia, which covers approximately one-third of the entire country, is represented as vast land, empty and underdeveloped—a new colonial frontier of late capitalism. Here human progress (read: economic development) is framed as hindered by the 'red tape' that comes with the requirement of industry to consult with traditional landowners. This document is perhaps one of more nefarious ways in which the doctrine of terra nullius remains alive and well in contemporary agricultural policy.

[4] It also does not critically attend to more problematic ideas such as his celebration of the 'noble savage' which, consistent with Romantic inclinations of the period, is presented as untainted by the social ills and economic dysfunction of postrevolutionary France.

happiness depends (Haden, 2011). In Harmony, conviviality—the social dimension of gastronomy—begins in fields, paddocks and orchards rather than the table, enlivened by multisensory and multispecies associations of agricultural work.

Fourier takes aim at the wretched drudgery of industrialised work and agricultural labour for its absence of 'intrigue, charm and variety' (Fourier, cited in Beecher and Bienvenu, 1971, 290). His writings anticipate Marx's critique of the alienation of workers in capitalist production from the potential pleasures of labour: 'the less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, …the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be' (Marx, 1906, 127–128). This affective estrangement applies as much to nonhumans as humans for, as Watts (2004) notes, industrial capitalism's 'deepening of the market' in the nineteenth century is accompanied by the brutal enclosure of animals in agriculture and the commodification of their bodies and lives, manifesting most egregiously in today's factory farms.

Fourier's 'attractive labour' takes inspiration from what he perceives as the convivial pleasures of animal 'industry':

> Labor, nevertheless, forms the delight of various creatures, such as beavers, bees, wasps, ants […] God has provided them with a social mechanism which attracts to industry, and causes happiness to be found in industry. Why should he not have accorded us the same favor as these animals? (cited in Salvadori, 1968, 92)?

Fourier does not reduce the work of building homes or sourcing food to biological survival or the satisfaction of individual achievement; it is the convivial entanglements of social reproduction that enable the work of living to get done. As Fourier would have it, the social mechanism that organises bees, beavers and other animals offers a pleasurable model for shaping human social arrangements and affective entanglements of work.

This notion of 'industrial attraction' also re-imagines processes of domestication from a relation of domination and mastery to one of mutualism and sociality, diagnosing the social incompetence of Civilisation in interacting with other creatures:

> our stables and our social customs are governed by a brusqueness and disharmony which stand in the way of the procedures necessary for the domestication of these animals … [A]ny number of other animals … will become friendly with man when they find him enticing enough to remain near him, which will never happen in the civilised order (Fourier, 2008, 46).

Fourier's understanding of domestication is akin to Porcher who describes it as an engagement with animals 'with whom we can live and work and who want to live and work with us' (2017, 107). Here domestication and interspecies conviviality are bound up together and cut both ways through a process of mutual recognition. In Fourier's account, animals do not occupy the realm of the "wild" only to be domesticated by human mastery. Rather, animals reach out for human company when they recognise that humans have escaped the barbarous conditions of Civilisation. Finding humans 'enticing' enough for coexistence also suggests, in the context of Harmony, the willingness of animals to recognise humans' suitability as working collaborators. It is through the lens of Fourier's convivial imaginary that my empirical research develops its approach for making sense of the more-than-human pleasures of agriculture. The case study that follows provides an account of Brian learning to become a free-range chicken producer and the centrality of the labour of claws and paws (Haraway, 2008) to the convivial pleasures of farming.

3. The social pleasures of farming

3.1. Entrepreneurial experimentation

Brian became a farmer late in life. His family owned a large cattle farm in New South Wales, where he experimented in his early twenties with growing soybeans and raising cattle in what he describes as a 'classic industrialised system'. At the age of 45, after many years working in Melbourne, he and his wife Nancy bought a 50-acre property (where Nancy continues her city work remotely). Brian's decision to take up farming was not rushed, taking several years to build the relationships with both humans and animals on which his enterprise now depends. Though his farm has cows and cattle, today the commercial aspect of his business is dedicated to, and enabled by, chickens.

As a former management consultant, Brian speaks the language of entrepreneurialism fluently. While the work of the entrepreneur is often reductively perceived as 'individualizing and normalizing forces of control and efficiency-seeking management' (Hjorth, 2005, 390), profitability for Brian is a 'third tier motivator', allowing him to fulfil his primary and secondary goals of enjoying his working life and caring for animals well. The lens of economic rationalism is insufficient for making sense of the entrepreneurial space between 'acceptable affective practices and acceptable economic practices' which many small-scale livestock producers negotiate on a daily basis (Finan, 2011, 94). Animal husbandry, as Porcher notes, is often a vocation: 'a shared life with animals' because 'we want to live with them' (2017, 104); earning a livelihood is what enables the co-existence. Brian's return to farming later in life encapsulates this vocational attraction to animal carework: ' … the notional romance and emotional pull-back to grow things and to have animals … That pull has been strong throughout my life.' This 'industrial attraction', which he acknowledges as somewhat idealised, is caring for nonhumans, tending to their needs and finding solutions for what is not working so that animals and the farm more broadly might flourish as a community. Part of the pleasure of caring for others—of work more broadly—is being recognised, in this case by his animals, for a job done well. Caring for cows and sheep proved relatively straightforward; chickens, as discussed later, provided a greater and unexpected challenge.

3.2. Reconnecting with cattle and sheep

Brian's first step was to 're-engage with cattle' for which he felt a strong affinity after his years on the family farm. He began taking in unwanted cows from a neighbouring dairying property, which lacked commercial value, either because they were insufficiently productive or failed to conform to milking machinery designed for a 'standard' cow body. This afforded him the pleasure of interacting with cows again while ensuring that their lives were not 'wasted'. Welcoming unwanted and economically unproductive animals expanded the social collective of the farm, with sheep added later to keep the grass down and feed the family.

Brian's care for cows and sheep began with creating refuge from the extremes of winter and summer. Planting rows of oaks, wattles and tree lucerne produced an agrobiome of shelter and nourishment. Trees made the lives of the cows more comfortable, establishing multiple scales of care in which diverse species create the conditions for others to live and flourish with greater ease:

> We put these trees [behind the house] for our own protection …. We'd always see the cows tucked up in that corner where that little shed is to stay out of the wind … Given a choice, they will always seek protection and shelter. For me, any sustainable animal system has to have good protection but, not only that, shelter provides a great carbon sink. The trees provide shade for the earth so that it doesn't get baked in the summer and so it retains moisture and therefore provides greater feed. That enables the soil, when you

> combine the leaf litter and the fallout of the litter from the trees …. it provides a covering. It provides fungi sources of food for sustaining organisms to live within the soil.

The 'multispecies world' of soil constitutes a critical component within the 'politics of care' by which farmers might 'maintain, repair and foster' the subterranean communities that sustain livestock and support humans in producing food (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2015, 703). The metabolic appetites of photosynthesis and decomposition enable a 'convivial assemblage' of trees, fungi and microbes by which the needs of many are attended to (O'Brien, 2013). By caring for the ancient and now much-degraded soils of the Australian landscape, this shelterbelt cum foodweb connects Brian to a broader project of responding to the uncertainties of climate change.[5] Layers of species enablement—soil organisms, cows, sheep, trees—strengthen Brian's attraction to the land and its myriad inhabitants, engaging him more deeply in the lives of known and unknown others.

3.3. Canine collaborators

The pleasures of agricultural labour are not Brian's alone. Henry, the keen border collie with whom he works and lives, has his own investment in farm life. Brian is more experienced working with cattle but knows less than Henry about working with sheep. Reciprocity rather than domination guides their working life: 'I had to learn to butt out and just let him get on with the job. He can do the job better than I can if I don't over-control him.' A productive working relationship is not only a matter of training and commanding Henry but Brian himself learning from and being guided by Henry. This serves as a reminder, Porcher notes, that living and working with animals 'transforms us; animals educate us and give us skills that we ourselves are lacking' (2017, 101). Henry is a young dog and still learning, sometimes spooking the cattle by running at them too directly. Brian decides when it's safe to let him near the cows, a constraint not always appreciated by Henry:

> Herding is his favourite thing in the world. Sometimes when the cattle are in the yards, I don't want him in the yards because it's dangerous … He just howls and howls. It's like he's crying; it's so terrible. You can't console him; he loves that most of all of anything in the world.

Henry's exuberance for herding is in his blood. Recalling Marx, herding 'gives play to his bodily and mental powers', a task that speaks to his very DNA (1906, 127). But is ascribing joy to a border collie herding animals simply indulging an anthropomorphic fantasy about working dogs' enthusiasm for engaging in behaviour that serves the economic interests of humans?

Border collies are renowned for their work ethic. An article in *Modern Farmer* describes them as: 'exceptionally obedient, grounded and the most rational dogs on the planet … They would rather work than breathe'; this, suggests the author, obliges the humans of border collies to ensure their hard-working nature is not exploited (Swearingen, 2014). Border collies—and all dogs with jobs—could, on the one hand, be regarded as capitalist macrotechnologies, or 'biological artefacts shaped by humans to serve human ends' (Russell, 2004, 1). On the other, these biotechnologies, engendered through intergenerational and interspecies entanglements have shaped what humans themselves have become capable of achieving (Pearson, 2013). Processes of domestication have long been an animal–human collaboration, in many ways 'initiated as much by animals as it was by man [sic]' (Korthals, 2002, 128; Clark, 2007). Over millennia, working dogs and humans have gathered livestock together in workable ways, each engaging in diverse but also mutual interests (Lorimer, 2006).

Henry's breed may serve the interests of capitalism, but his keenness to herd could not be further from a capitalist agenda. As Henry expertly navigates the bodies of sheep in the paddock, he flexes his canine intentionality, making decisions about what, when and how to act. Border collies are known for being quick-thinking and keen observers of human body language—'rational' even, as noted earlier. At the same time, howling from inside the car—the inconsolability and heartbreak, as Brian sees it, of not being able to do with his companion what he loves most in the world—is not rational. Henry is emotional. He was born to herd—or rather, he shares an ancestral history with humans whose livelihood also depended on herding animals. With this shared history comes a deeply social desire to work closely with Brian and to interact with other animals in particular ways. He protests against being denied this simple pleasure.

Watching Henry in action does not reveal whether he works for the exhilaration of the chase, the thrill of anticipating a sheep's next move or, always alert to nuanced gestures of instruction, the pleasure of working with his human companion. Humans certainly cannot claim to see the world through a dog's eyes. Yet equally important is the recognition that, within the shared space of the paddock, dog and farmer are more than the sum of their parts. Marshalling sheep through paddocks together, they 'forge connections and understandings across species and cultural boundaries', cultivating a 'somatic sensibility' that brings a playful and convivial dimension to the work of herding (Greenhough and Roe, 2011, 62). Though Henry and Brian do not experience conviviality in the same way, each renders the other more capable through their collaboration in the paddock (Despret, 2008). This intersubjective enablement brings its own pleasures to the task of herding, co-producing an intricate choreography between dog and farmer that mixes farming work with social pleasure.

3.4. Industrial chickens

Creating the conditions for chickens to live well on the farm was less straightforward than for cows, sheep and dogs. Brian unwittingly and somewhat naively entered into a far less convivial realm of breeding technology and animal welfare science with his decision to raise meat chickens. Standard broiler chickens in Australia are Ross and Cobb, hybrid breeds developed specifically for commodity meat production. They rarely figure as living creatures in marketing discourse, except as consumers of grain, optimised assemblages of poultry genetics and an end-product for consumers. The Cobb is heralded as setting new industry standards for achieving the 'highest eviscerated and breast meat yield with the best live production efficiency' (Cobb-Vantress n.d.). Issues of animal welfare and sustainability, ostensibly addressed through genetic improvements in leg and cardiovascular strength, are rolled into commitments to 'a future that achieves economic growth' (Cobb-Vantress n.d.). These corporate assurances elide how the bodies of industrial chickens are subordinated to labouring for the mass production of protein (Boyd, 2001). Perhaps more than any other livestock animal, the industrial chicken is both the manifestation and object of Foucauldian biopower, subject to disciplining biotechnological interventions: 'the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls' (Foucault, 1990, 139).

In this brutal system for converting animal feed into protein through the unacknowledged alimentary labour of chickens, the pleasures are few. Large, noisy ventilation fans diffuse the stench of ammonia created by the concentration of manure. Individual chickens are undifferentiated and interchangeable. Without opportunities to scratch or forage for food of different textures, shapes, flavour or colour, eating is bereft of interest. Living in enormous crowds, they are stripped of meaningful social life. Studies have shown broilers bred for industrial production exhibit poor social skills (Grandin and Deesing, 2013).

[5] As noted later, chickens also play an important role in soil care. As Hilimire's (2012) study of small-scale poultry farmers demonstrates, soil fertility balanced equally with profitability as a reason for and benefit of engaging in pastured poultry production.

Denied the social hierarchies by which interactions are managed, they resort to acts of violence against each other. Feather picking and even cannibalism justify debeaking in the name of animal welfare, a practice commonplace since the 1950s (Lonsdale et al., 1957; Bock and Buller, 2013). For social animals, this constitutes a profound deprivation of conviviality, one that entails 'kill[ing] animals twice—taking their life along with their living' (Galusky, 2010, 24).

Rearing industrial broiler chickens is unconvivial, even for humans. Those who raise chickens do not own the birds and are contracted to manage the facilities in which they are raised with limited agency in how they do their work. Poultry sheds themselves often generate conflicts between chicken farmers and neighbouring residents. 'Unsightly, smelly and polluting' (O'Connor, 2005), they are more likely to generate conflict, sickness and suffering than the conditions for conviviality. This is not to suggest that individual workers within industrial livestock production do not care for animals; much research demonstrates they often do (Porcher, 2017; Buller and Roe, 2018). Nonetheless more convivial forms of care that build trust and affection are often 'defeated', suggests Porcher (2014), by a lack of autonomy and flexibility in shaping the conditions of production along with the temporal and spatial rationality of efficiency that determines animal-human relations in industrial settings.

3.5. Failures in conviviality

This is precisely the industry Brian sought to avoid when he purchased sixty Ross and Cobb birds at the start of 2013. With the best intentions, he planned to care for them 'as nature intended'. Because *Gallus gallus*, ancestor of the domesticated chicken, originated in the jungles of southeast Asia, he hoped the expanding thicket of trees behind his house would recall their ancestral roots and provide a comfortable environment in which to live, eat and socialise. By day, the chickens could access pasture for scratching around and foraging under the tree canopy that offered protection from birds of prey. At night, heated sheds protected them from foxes and the elements.

To Brian's dismay, the chickens proved lethargic and disinterested in foraging. Within several weeks, two or three birds were dying each day. A poultry veterinarian bluntly informed Brian that the chickens must be fed medicated high-protein feed and the runts be 'culled' as they were too weak to compete with larger birds. This was not how Brian expected to care for his chickens. As he learned from the vet, Cobb and Ross chickens are designed to sit next to feeders, expending as few calories as possible to obtain food. Their fast-growing bodies are structurally ill-suited to foraging, and open paddocks stress the birds. Their deaths were a refusal to accept the conditions for living offered to them—their testimony that, despite Brian's attentive care, this was the worst possible life for them. The unconvivial biotechnology of industrial broilers presented a challenge to Brian's aspirations to live well with chickens. As it transpired, another breed— an alternative biotechnology—was needed, one demanding a different modality of care. In his search for an expert poultry breeder, he found Michael Sommerlad.

3.6. Convivial biotechnologies

While industrial chickens are designed for feed-conversion efficiency, the eponymous Sommerlad breed has been developed for an outdoor free-range environment, comprising a mix of different heritage birds selected for strong bone density, keenness to forage, robustness against seasonal extremes and good growing capacity (Sommerlad Poultry n.d.). Despite the commercial interests at work in rearing Sommerlads for meat, the breed demands a different way of living with chickens, one that accounts for individual needs and inclinations. The Sommerlad Poultry blog instructs farmers to feed according to the 'free choice feeding method', a dietary regime that offers the birds the '*opportunity to select* between a mixture of six grains' (Sommerlad Poultry, 2015 [emphasis mine]). Acknowledging that individual birds have different preferences, this feeding regime allows them to 'take a position in relation to what is offered' and exercise agency in their own nutritional flourishing (Despret, 2008, 125).

Starting with sixty Sommerlad chickens, Brian now works with between 400 and 500 birds that sleep and shelter in mobile heated coops, moved on a weekly basis. Four weeks after the coops are moved, the pasture is covered in thick, glossy grass that helps to build soil carbon and retain moisture in the soil. Integrating soil care and chicken care sit at the heart of Brian's farming philosophy. He also aims to make sure that the chickens have, as he puts it, 'fun and interesting lives'. Spending much of their day outdoors, two Maremma sheepdogs guard the chickens from predators. The birds' daily routine involves skirting along the forest fringe, meandering into the open paddock to catch insects and sit in the sunshine, then darting back under the tree's canopy. The unhurried task of feeding birds allows him to observe social dynamics and individual personalities as well as identify and respond to sickness. He describes falling into a reverie as he observes young chicks leaving their heated shelter: 'You watch them take their first steps out into the big wide world … I find myself wasting time watching the animals. I quite like that … They'll also follow you around the garden … You can often pick them up and hold them. I love watching them.'

The willingness of the birds to be held is experienced by Brian as a kind of gift, a moment of convivial exchange that deepens his attachment and intensifies his desire to give them a good life: 'It's a really contented … not a cluck exactly … but you'll hear the noise. You know that they're happy; they're content and enjoying what they're doing, so that's quite rewarding to get that feedback from them.' These 'offerings of subjectivity' are how animals testify to their experience: to protest and resist or receive assistance and affection (Despret, 2008, 134). For Porcher's, response-able animal carework operates as a gift relation: 'animals give a lot; they give their presence, their trust, and their affection' just as Bruce offers affection and respect in his attempts to give the chickens a good life (2017, 14). In contrast to industrial production which conceptually and materially refuses chicken pleasure, the cultivation of an affective attachment to the chickens extends to them the status, as Plumwood suggests, of 'fully intentional others whose strivings, interactions and differences in life strategy are intricate, amazing and mysterious' (Plumwood, 2003a, 135). In this convivial scene between chicken and farmer, the birds are acknowledged as subjects in their own right with their own intentionality, personalities and social worlds in which Brian takes a deep interest. At the same time, he actively searches for signs that his work is legitimated by his chickens. These are not only obvious indicators of vigour and good health but also signals that suggest they are enjoying the diverse tasks, foods and social relations comprising their daily rituals.

Practices of self-care set the rhythm for the chickens' day. A collective ritual begins with languid stretches in the sun, followed by a dust bath and mid-afternoon nap:

> They'll put one leg back, and you think, 'oh my God, something is wrong', and they just stretch. Then they'll stretch the other leg out …. Then they'll dust bathe. A big bunch of them will get together, and they'll shake up the dust. Then they'll sleep … heads fallen forward on their beak.

These convivial moments demonstrate how chickens care for each other: 'they'll group up with their friends, and they'll lie in a little pod of six or ten or 20, and they'll have a little snooze together, and someone is always watching out for threats.' These mutualist practices of social care constitute more than instinctual reactions against possible threats. The chickens choose to watch over or dust-bath and nap with some and not others. Brian's role within these scene is to enable the conditions in which chickens are, as Buller puts it, '"empowered to care" in matters like their own uses of space and choice of food' as well as the company they keep (Buller, 2012, 66). Brian acknowledges the chickens' work of guarding 'friends' that enables the convivial practice of collective

napping. Such labour easily goes unrecognised for, as Despret notes, it is only through 'recalcitrance that cooperation becomes perceptible' (2016, 181).

The social relations of chickens are not inherently convivial, nor even benign. Stronger chickens often harass or even kill those weakened by illness or injury. This necessitated Brian's construction of 'chicken hospitals', small huts where ill birds can be easily monitored but also protected from others. In recognising the care work that chickens refuse to do, Brian learned that the conditions for conviviality went beyond offering chickens the scope to find their own means of caring for each other. It also meant acknowledging the limits of conviviality in chickenly social relations. In this case, caring for sick and injured chickens is work best left to humans. I return to these limits of conviviality in the penultimate section of this paper.

4. Strategic anthropomorphism as multispecies courtesy

As noted earlier, humans cannot assume to know the psychic interiorities of other animals. Plumwood warns that making claims about animals' social and emotional worlds and their pleasures risks taking the human as a 'basic model' of lived experience, effacing species difference by 'inscribing that agency with the cast of the conscious human mind' (2003a, 127 & 136). While this cautionary approach is sagacious, to deny that animals might like to eat, play, relax, socialise and, indeed, care for one another is limiting if new ways of living with others are to emerge in practice. Animal geographers Philo and Wilbert advocate for a cautious anthropomorphism that treats 'some non-humans in *some* situations *as if* they could perceive, feel, emote, make decisions and perhaps even "reason" something like a human' (2000, 19). This more generous and convivial stance does not presume pleasure is the unique endowment of humans nor that human pleasure is the benchmark against which all other pleasures are measured. Instead it assumes that animals are capable of experiencing far more than humans can know—that the limitation is our own inability or unwillingness to understand nonhuman pleasure rather than in animals' capacity to experience it. The epistemological limitation of human animals to understand other animals highlights the need for greater interspecies civility. Such courtesy includes extending to animals 'the decencies of life, space and place that we (humans) would expect and want for ourselves and others, in a manner that maybe does stem from a certain anthropomorphism (reflecting the possibility that in certain respects animals are *not* so different from humans)' (Philo and Wilbert, 2000, 24).

Jonathan Balcombe argues that the paucity of scholarly attention on a 'pleasurable animal kingdom' reflects hypocritical assumptions about the nature of human and animal experience; despite the benefit of language, he notes, 'the physical privacy of individual experience is as unbridgeable between two humans as it is between a human and a nonhuman animal' (2009, 209). His work in hedonic ethology offers insights into how scientific approaches to animal behaviour frequently subject pleasurable activities—for example, gustatory pursuits, play and social affection—to the utilitarian explanatory horizon of evolutionary biology. This instrumentalisation of pleasure privileges the evolutionary advantages for species survival over the immediacy of pleasurable lived experience. Balcombe argues this is akin to reducing the culinary practice of seasoning food to a purely adaptive behaviour that serves an antimicrobial function in the gut. Seasoning food might proffer some evolutionary advantage, but this inadequately accounts for why humans might eat basil with tomatoes or finish a salad or curry with a splash of fish sauce. The animal kingdom likewise comes with its own social and sensual pleasures that exceed species survival, some easily recognisable and others impossible for humans to know or understand.

Mellor and Beausoleil's work on animal welfare assessment goes some way in redressing the limitations of animal welfare science by incorporating the aforementioned affects of pleasure and other physical and emotional comforts in their model of animal welfare (Mellor and Beausoleil, 2015, 243). As such, their work potentially offers a conceptual framework for acknowledging the relevance of conviviality as an assessment metric in conventional animal welfare science. However the rhythms and tempos of work needed to not only assess but also materially support convivial relations within larger animal populations raise questions about scale. The kind of animal 'feedback' described earlier necessitates a care-full attentiveness to animal socialities that is rendered difficult in industrial livestock production.

Despite growing consumer interest in animal welfare, technoscientific approaches for minimising suffering may not go far enough in extending the courtesy of convivial pleasure to animals. As Smith argues, they insufficiently challenge 'a cultural logic that defines [animals] as "dumb," as lacking the ability to express themselves, or indeed lacking any self to express' (2002, 49), thereby perpetuating the abuse in production and slaughter even where legislative frameworks exist to protect animals. Activist and president of United Poultry Concerns Karen Davis notes that the poultry industry represents chickens as 'mentally vacuous, eviscerated organisms' that are naturally aggressive towards one another (Davis, 2012, 18). Her experience running a chicken sanctuary suggests quite the opposite. Like Brian, she observes that chickens possess sophisticated social lives, complex modes of communication, strong bonds with conspecifics and other species, and the capacity for 'enjoying their lives and pursuing their own interests' such that 'when chickens are happy, their sense of well-being resonates unmistakably' (2012, 30). It is perhaps this that Brian senses when he receives 'feedback' from his birds. Or, as Despret puts it, he experiences the 'judgement that is brought to bear on the work [of humans] by the animals themselves'; this mutual judgement and recognition provides the 'vector of pleasure' by which humans learn to be affected by the animals with whom they live and work (2016, 183). As Brian's experience suggests, practices of care in which the needs of others must be attended to are central to convivial, 'sustainable and flourishing relations, not merely survivalist or instrumental ones' described in animal welfare science (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012, 198). Convivial care on farms is an ongoing mode of attentiveness rather than a set of fixed principles, the 'persistent tinkering in a world full of complex ambivalence and shifting tensions' (Mol et al., 2010, 14).

The Sommerlad chicken is no more 'natural' than the industrial Cobb and Ross chickens. The difference is in the nature of care they engender. While the latter is designed for discipline, optimisation and control, the former demands modalities of care that multiply and amplify affective intersubjective relations on the farm. The biotechnological natureculture of the Sommerlad necessitates greater 'response-ability' in order to flourish, more co-constitutive entanglements that encourage those that work and live with Sommerlads to devise new ways of listening and responding to chickenly propositions and making space for their interests and pleasures. For Haraway, response-ability takes the form of a multispecies politics of care in which good manners are critical in responding to the tensions of co-existence. Just as politeness shapes social interactions of the convivial table—that is, in what manner resources are shared and diverse perspectives exchanged and accommodated—it is 'the little things that makes lives' within the politics of co-existence (Haraway, 2008, 93). The complex totality of these affective experiences, both positive and negative, produces encounters of enchantment that imbue Brian's work with meaningfulness and hope, engendering a sense that '*here is something worth continuing*' (Herman, 2015, 109 [original emphasis]).

5. The limits of conviviality

Despite such possibilities for hope, an analytic emphasis on conviviality and care risks producing 'comfy and cosy' stories that reinforce 'encompassing normativities, both the "bads" and—especially—the "goods"' (Abrahamsson and Bertoni, 2014, 141). Such moral dualisms risk imagining a world in which eating is unsullied by messy material

entanglements, much as Thomas More's Utopians had slaves to do the dirty work of slaughter and butchery.[6] The intractable problem and complex intimacies of eating others well necessitate that we do not become lost in utopian imaginaries. This brings us to the limits of conviviality and, indeed, of utopian thinking more broadly. In the section that follows, I explore two limitations to the utopian ideal of multispecies conviviality on farms. The first relates to the cost of conviviality, while the second concerns two contradictory positions held in tension: living well, on the one hand, and killing, on the other.

5.1. The cost of convivial relations

In the late nineteenth century Melbourne, Australia's most populous city, was home to more poultry than humans (Gaynor, 2010). Australian urbanites were intimately entangled over generations with chickens, sharing not only their domestic spaces but also their food; for chickens often ate scraps from the human table. 'Chooks'—the affectionate colloquialism by which they were and still are known—provided eggs and meat as well as manure for backyard gardening and often income from selling eggs. Through practices of cooking, caring for animals and gardening, chickens and humans were messmates at the table, each enabling the other to eat in their metabolic exchange of food scraps and manure.

However, two significant developments changed Australians' relationship to chickens after World War Two. Municipal regulations were introduced in the late 1950s, severely restricting commercial backyard production. At the time, small urban and peri-urban producers dominated the chicken meat industry, comprised predominantly of spent laying hens; that changed dramatically in 1959 when the first commercial meat breed was released, leading to a five-fold increase in production over the 1960s, fuelled in part by the opening of Kentucky Fried Chicken in 1968 (Dixon, 2002). Since the late 1960s, the nation's appetite for chicken has grown exponentially, even if beef and lamb maintained their primacy for some time as the cheapest and most popular meats for home cooking and chicken remained a special occasion meal well into the 1970s.

In 1966, just over 13 million chickens were slaughtered nationally; by 2016, this figure climbed to 646.5 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This extraordinary 50-fold increase in 50 years is the difference between each Australian eating just over one chicken per year compared to consuming an entire chicken every two weeks. Far from being a special occasion food, it is today by far the cheapest and most consumed meat in the country, fetching only $4/kilogram for a whole raw chicken. This low price has been artificially maintained by an ongoing price war between Australia's two major supermarkets that claim to be 'working closely with our suppliers to invest in value for our customers and lower the cost of living for Australian families' (Chung, 2018).

The extraordinary cheapness of chicken is not a matter of value for money; it points to the material ways by which certain lives are made to matter, or not; as Patel and Moore put it, cheapness is 'a strategy, a practice, a violence that mobilizes all kinds of work—human and animal, botanical and geological—with as little compensation as possible' (23, 2017). 'Working closely' with suppliers to reduce the price of chicken means forcing efficiencies in an intensive system described earlier in which one would imagine little additional value could be extracted from the labour or bodies of birds or of those who work within broiler sheds. Ironically this price war has run alongside increasing public discourse and consumer concern about animal welfare. The poultry industry (particularly the egg lobby) and major retailers have been at pains to shape their own voluntary standards for free-range production, many of which bear only a distant semblance to what consumers might reasonably imagine a free-range system to be (Carey et al., 2017). Where 'free-range' is concerned, confusion and increasingly skepticism reign.

In this broader industry context, Brian's chickens (and the handful of other Sommerlad producers around the country) are Australia's most expensive birds. Organic and non-medicated feed, longer lives and space for 'interesting lives' do not come cheap. Averaging between three to four kilograms and priced around $20/kilogram, a single bird can cost upwards of $60—in the exclusive reach of top chefs, boutique butchers and privileged consumers. While a competent home cook can produce several meals with a single bird, this is nonetheless a high price for multispecies conviviality. Herein lies one of the fundamental tensions of food utopias in practice. A production system that recognises the agency and subjectivity of chickens—one that goes beyond cheapness—makes one kind of world possible while revealing the impossibility of another. While strategic anthropomorphism might enable imagining more utopian ways for chickens, working dogs, cows, sheeps and humans to live together, it is impossible for 646.5 million chickens to live and, importantly, die well in industrial conditions. Multispecies conviviality is incompatible with a national appetite for chicken at its current proportions. The modalities of care demanded by the Sommerlad render chicken a special occasion meal once again, which is precisely what Brian would prefer (even if Fourier might not). But who gets a choice in the system of production from which they eat? If we care about the equity of such arrangements for humans, then it demands a broader political project committed to 'equality and re-imagined relations for humans in the web of life' (Patel and Moore, 2017, 34). This remains a seemingly intractable challenge of doing food differently: how to resist the logic of cheapness that brutalises animal life in agriculture without ignoring, or worse exacerbating, inequities between humans.

5.2. Staying with the trouble of conviviality

Just as chickens do not extend conviviality to the sick and injured of their kind, likewise Brian has his own limits. On his farm, convivial intimacies of affection and care sit uncomfortably alongside the reality of slaughter. It is precisely the act of killing that shifts the multispecies relations of conviviality from the arena of agriculture to the realm of gastronomy. Brian is unequivocal about the deliciousness of his birds, as are the chefs he supplies: 'our chefs are saying to us, "this is the best chicken I've ever used" because it's old. It's got flavour. The texture is different. The skin is different. The bones are different. The colour is different.' By "old", Brian means his birds are slaughtered at 16 weeks rather the five to eight weeks for chickens sold at $4/kilogram. A life lived differently—and longer—produces a different gastronomic outcome, albeit one that sits squarely in the interests of humans. Buller reads this gastronomic difference as a function of 'vital co-authorship' between human and animal that emerges from the animals' own engagement with 'wider ecological assemblies' on the farm (2012, 63–64). Like the social pleasures of conviviality on farms, gastronomic 'goodness' is co-produced through the agency of how animals eat, move around and express themselves socially. Critically though, even the "happiest" of animals do not offer themselves up for consumption.

Brian is emotionally challenged by the slaughter of chickens in whose lives he has taken such deep interest. For reassurance that they are slaughtered humanely, he confronts his discomfort by sometimes attending the abattoir to observe his chickens being 'processed', an industry euphemism for killing. Despite these reassurances, slaughtering practices are materially structured by capitalist processes of efficiency with limited scope to account for the subjectivity of the millions of birds which pass through the abattoir's doors. Its systems of efficient operation are ultimately designed to silence 'the disquieting cacophony' which mark an animal's transformation from sentient being to meal on a plate (Smith, 2002, 56). Animal welfare issues within the industry are confirmed in a recent report regarding a Melbourne

[6] In many ways, industrial abattoirs—where the work of killing is out of sight and out of mind—fulfil this role today.

abattoir (not Brian's) in which spent laying hens were filmed by animal activists being boiled alive in a scalding bath (McGrath, 2017). The dearth of options to operate outside of this system further forecloses opportunities for farmers to better account for animal subjectivity behind the doors of the abattoir.

The visceral confrontation of watching his chickens die has motivated Brian to seek out alternatives, with the aim to de-industrialise the killing process to whatever extent he can. This is not to deny the violence of the slaughter but to seek out a relational ethic of killing guided by care rather than efficiency. Working to establish a multispecies abattoir co-operative shared with other like-minded farmers in the region, he seeks greater agency over what happens behind closed doors. Brian's aspirations are to bring the slaughter more directly into a contact zone of co-presence where he and other farmers can bear witness to death rather than eschew its realities. I see these efforts as a means of 'staying with the trouble', as Haraway (2010) suggests, in ways that 'account for coexisting in a world we must consume to survive' and in which killing well—or at least better—is more explicitly attended to alongside living with and eating others (Mikulak, 2009, 78).

5.3. The possibilities of radical anthropomorphism

Remembering that humans are also food—or, in other words, 'everyone is on the menu' (Haraway 2008, 287)—opens up for consideration how an even more radical approach to the strategic anthropomorphism discussed earlier might be ethically productive. For example, how might we humans prefer to be killed if we were on the menu for others? In what way might we want to live our lives in the meantime? In considering these questions, we slip rapidly from utopian possibilities to dystopic nightmares, for to imagine the human body as food crosses ontological boundaries in ways that even the most strident posthumanists may struggle to digest. Indeed, it is the stuff of horror, and yet hugely compelling as evidenced by the recent revival of the zombie genre. In the transformation from 'master to meal', the hubris of humanity's position at the top of the food chain is revealed and monstrously undone (Tenga and Zimmerman, 2013, 80).

Temple Grandin's book (with Catherine Johnson), *Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior* (2009), offers a far more palatable and less dystopic version of radical anthropomorphism. Using her experience of autism to imagine what a cow experiences as it moves through a slaughterhouse, the book has contributed to the redesign of industrial slaughterhouses in order to more humanely accommodate the sensory experiences of animals. Her claim that 'stress is horrible for profits' (21) suggests, however, that a spatial redesign of slaughterhouses does not go far enough in re-imagining the gap between the conviviality of the farm and that of the table. It fails to counter the temporalities of industrial killing which take life according to the same logic of speed and efficiency that rears pigs or chickens without regard for their pleasurable social worlds. It is this logic that Brian seeks to challenge by bring the same intersubjective ethic of care to his birds' deaths as he does their lives.

Plumwood's (2008) reflections on humanity's own 'foodiness', based on her experience of finding herself locked within the jaws of a crocodile, offer perhaps more meaningful propositions for thinking about the possibilities of radical anthropomorphism. Western culture suffers, she argues, from 'lifeless' mortuary practices that seek to materially and ontologically separate not only humanity from nature—but also life from death—by denying the return of our bodies to the earth as nourishment for others. At funerals, we tell ourselves the cycle of life ends with ashes and dust. Only the ghoulish would point out, as Plumwood might if she were alive today, that the worms crawl in and the worms crawl out. Our last act in death is to give forth life.

Humans are also food in life, as much as in death. Eating may be agricultural as Wendell Berry (1990) suggests, but it is also sympoietic: the coming together of two agents each acting on and constituting the other in ways that are unpredictable, risky and mutually transformative. Even if humans sometimes eat alone at the table, digestion itself is always commensal. Gut bacteria help to digest our food while parasites simultaneously eat of us. Taking seriously the 'with-y' ontology of conviviality means acknowledging, as Lisa Heldke evocatively puts it, that 'all life on this planet, including humans life, is threaded through with relationships in which one creature sinks its "teeth" into another and hangs on for dear life' (Heldke, 2018, 249). With the vulnerability that such intimate proximity presents comes an opportunity to better understand how the self is constituted through messy encounters with nonhuman others. Humans are always co-produced by those we eat, those that help us eat others and, just as importantly, those that eat us. In understanding our own edibility, it becomes clearer how food itself is not, by necessity, a 'disrespectful category'; instead, Plumwood proposes that the good life involves eating in ways that 'acknowledge our kinship with those whom we make our food, which does not forget the more than food that every one of us is, and which position us reciprocally as food for others' (Plumwood, 2003b, 11).

6. Conclusion

Through an exploration of the multispecies socialities of Brian's farm, I have argued that the good life is one that is co-produced and judged by animals themselves, shifting us perhaps ever so slightly towards Fourier's utopian imaginary in which more convivial agriculture is, in part, contingent on humans and animals being on better working terms. Or, bv Porcher's more contemporary account, a utopia for living with animals would entail shared pleasures negotiated more collectively, necessitating humans to invent new ways of taking seriously the 'genuinely sensuous' nature of living and working with animals (2016, 103). Farmers themselves are critical in such inventions because, as anthropologist Tim Ingold suggests, 'those who are "with" animals in their day-to-day lives […] can offer us some of the best possible indications of how we might proceed' (Ingold, 2002, 19), not only in living and livelihood but also in killing and eating others better. This paper also proposed that strategic anthropomorphism might cultivate more courteous attentiveness to the convivial pleasures of animal worlds and more care-full listening to how animals respond to the practices of care offered to them. Central to such a politics of multispecies conviviality are certain 'intellectual, emotional, and critical capacities' complicated by a requisite acknowledgement of how other species—and, in this case, also breeds—'respond in their own particular ways to given worlds', each bringing their 'own life histories, personal developmental dynamics, and the diverse forms of knowledge and truth that they have inherited and been disciplined into' (Van Dooren and Rose, 2016, 90).

While there are certainly better or worse ways to live and work with animals, eating remains a matter of living and dying, as I learned from life's voracious appetites during my time on the farm. Haraway proposes a cultivation of 'shared suffering', a labour of care in living, thinking and learning with animals (Haraway, 2008, 83). I have added to this the need to acknowledge shared pleasures. However, if it is ultimately the slaughter that transforms the animal from a lively social being to a delicious meal on a plate, gastronomy as a cultural discourse and practice for eating and living well must give more explicit consideration to 'who lives well and who dies well under current arrangements, and how they might be better arranged' (Ginn et al., 2014, 115). This is where Fourier's convivial imaginary leaves us little to think with. Radical anthropomorphism provokes methodological questions about new approaches to make better sense of these arrangements but also potentially more generative forms of storytelling that engage more meaningfully 'with the multitudes of others in their noisy, fleshy living and dying' (Van Dooren and Rose, 2016, 91). It may not resolve the question of how to kill well, but it may go some way finding new ways of honouring life in the spaces of slaughter and provoking alternative gastronomic ontologies of conviviality and, indeed, edibility. Just as

postdualist scholars have drawn attention to our more-than-human natures, we also need gastronomic stories about the ways in which animals are, like humans, always more-than-food. Finding new approaches to eating, living and killing well—that is, a multispecies gastronomy—remains a difficult but urgent ethical task, one for the sciences, social sciences and humanities alike as well as for those, like Brian, who work and share their lives with animals.

Declaration of interest

None.

Funding sources

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank the three anonymous reviewers for their generous engagement with this paper and my doctoral supervisor Rachel Hughes for her valuable insights. I am also indebted to Nick Rose and Lilly Cleary for their convivial support and for reading early drafts of this paper and, of course, to my participants who share with me their experiences and stories.

References

Abrahamsson, S., Bertoni, F., 2014. Compost politics: experimenting with togetherness in vermicomposting. Environ. Humanit. 4, 125–148.
Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017. Livestock products, Australia. Jun 2017 (cat. no. 7215.0). Retrieved from. www.abs.gov.au.
Balcombe, J., 2009. Animal pleasure and its moral significance. Appl. Anim. Behav. Sci. 118, 208–216.
Beecher, J., Bienvenu, R., Trans (Eds.), 1971. The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love and Passionate Attraction. Jonathan Cape Ltd, London, UK.
Bennett, J., 2010. Vibrant Matter: a Political Ecology of Things. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
Berry, W., 1990. What Are People for?: Essays. Counterpoint Press, New York, NY.
Best, S., 2009. The rise of critical animal studies: putting theory into action and animal liberation into higher education. J. Crit. Anim. Stud. 7 (1), 9–52.
Bock, B., Buller, H., 2013. Healthy, happy and humane: evidence in farm animal welfare policy. Sociol. Rural. 53 (3), 390–411.
Boyd, W., 2001. Making meat: science, technology, and American poultry production. Technol. Cult. 42 (4), 631–664.
Buller, H., 2012. Nourishing communities: animal vitalities and food quality. In: Birke, L., Hockenhull, J. (Eds.), Crossing Boundaries: Investigating Human-animal Relationships. Brill, Boston, MA, pp. 51–72.
Buller, H., Roe, E., 2018. Food and Animal Welfare. Bloomsbury, London.
Braun, B., 2008. Environmental issues: inventive life. Prog. Hum. Geogr. 32, 667–679.
Brillat-Savarin, J.-A., 1994. The Physiology of Taste. (A. Drayton, Trans.). Penguin Books, London UK (Original work published 1825).
Campbell, H., 2015. Spurlock's vomit and visible food utopias. In: Stock, P.V., Carolan, M., Rosin, C. (Eds.), Food Utopias: Reimagining Citizenship, Ethics and Community. Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 195–217.
Carey, R., Parker, C., Scrinis, G., 2017. Capturing the meaning of "free range": the contest between producers, supermarkets and consumers for the higher welfare egg label in Australia. J. Rural Stud. 54, 266–275.
Carolan, M., 2016. Adventurous food futures: knowing about alternatives is not enough, we need to feel them. Agric. Hum. Val. 33 (1), 141–152.
Castree, N., 2012. Making Sense of Nature. Taylor & Francis, London, UK.
Charles, N., 2014. 'Animals just love you as you are': experiencing kinship across the species barrier. Sociology 48 (4), 715–730.
Chung, F., 2018. Coles kicks off fresh chicken price war. News.com.au Retrieved from. https://www.news.com.au/finance/business/retail/coles-kicks-off-fresh-chicken-price-war/news-story/028a0ab151afe39c3a40e6ac70d7dcf9.
Clark, N., 2007. Animal interface: the generosity of domestication. In: Cassidy, R., Mullin, M. (Eds.), Where the Wild Things Are Now: Domestication Reconsidered. Berg, Oxford, UK, pp. 49–70.
Cobb-Vantress. (n.d.). Products: Cobb 700. Retrieved from http://www.cobb-vantress.com/products/cobb-700.
Cole, M., 2011. From 'animal machines' to 'happy meat'? Foucault's ideas of disciplinary and pastoral power applied to 'animal-centred' welfare discourse. Animals 1, 83–101.
Commonwealth of Australia, 2015. Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. ACT, Canberra Retrieved from. http://industry.gov.au/ONA/WhitePaper/Documents/northern_australia_white_paper.pdf.
Connolly, W.E., 2013. The 'new materialism' and the fragility of things. Millenn. J. Int. Stud. 41 (3), 399–412.
Davis, K., 2012. The mental life of chickens as observed through social relationships. In: Smith, J.A., Mitchell, R.W. (Eds.), Experiencing Animal Minds. Columbia University Press, New York, NY, pp. 14–30.
Despret, V., 2008. The becomings of subjectivity in animal worlds. Subj. Int. J. Critical Psychol. 23, 123–139.
Despret, V., 2016. What Would Animals Say if We Asked the Right Questions? University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis B. Buchanan, Trans.
Dixon, J., 2002. The Changing Chicken: Chooks, Cooks and Culinary Culture. UNSW Press, Sydney.
Finan, A., 2011. For the love of goats: the advantages of alterity. Agric. Hum. Val. 28, 81–96.
Foucault, M., 1990. The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: an Introduction. Pantheon Books, New York, NY (original work published in English 1978).
Fourier, C., 2008. In: Jones, G.S., Patterson, I. (Eds.), The Theory of the Four Movements. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK (Original work published in 1808).
Galusky, W., 2010. Playing chicken: technologies of domestication, food, and self. Sci. Cult. 19 (1), 15–35.
Gaynor, A., 2010. Fowls and the contested productive spaces of Australian suburbia, 1890– 1990. In: Atkins, P. (Ed.), Animal Cities: Beastly Urban Histories. Taylor & Francis, Farnham, UK, pp. 205–219.
Gerristen, R., 2010. Evidence for indigenous Australian agriculture. Australas. Sci. 31 (6), 35–37.
Ginn, F., Beisel, U., Barua, M., 2014. Flourishing with awkward creatures: togetherness, vulnerability, killing. Environ. Humanit. 4, 113–123.
Grandin, T., Deesing, M.J., 2013. Genetics and animal welfare. In: Grandin, T., Deesing, M.J. (Eds.), Genetics and the Behavior of Domestic Animals. Elsevier, Amsterdam, pp. 435–472.
Grandin, T., Johnson, C., 2009. Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior. SUNY Press, New York.
Greenhough, B., Roe, E., 2011. Ethics, space, and somatic sensibilities: comparing relationships between scientific researchers and their human and animal experimental subjects. Environ. Plann. Soc. Space 29 (1), 47–66.
Haden, R., 2011. Lionizing taste: toward an ecology of contemporary connoisseurship. In: Strong, J. (Ed.), Educated Tastes: Food, Drink, and Connoisseur Culture. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NB, pp. 237–290.
Haraway, D., 2008. When Species Meet. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN.
Haraway, D., 2010. When Species Meet: staying with the trouble. Environ. Plann. Soc. Space 28, 53–55.
Hartigan, J., 2016. Species. The Multispecies Salon. Retrieved from. http://www.multispecies-salon.org/species/.
Heldke, L., 2018. It's chomping all the way down: toward an ontology of the human individual. Monist 101, 247–260.
Herman, A., 2015. Enchanting resilience: relations of care and people–place connections in agriculture. J. Rural Stud. 42, 102–111.
Higgin, M., Evans, A., Miele, M., 2011. A good kill: socio-technical organizations of farm animal slaughter. In: Humans and Other Animals: Critical Perspectives. Palgrave McMillan, London, pp. 173–185.
Hilimire, K., 2012. The grass is greener: farmers' experiences with pastured poultry. Renew. Agric. Food Syst. 27 (3), 173–179.
Hinchliffe, S., Whatmore, S., 2006. Living cities: towards a politics of conviviality. Sci. Cult. 15 (2), 123–138.
Hjorth, D., 2005. Organizational entrepreneurship with de Certeau on creating heterotopias (or spaces for play). J. Manag. Inq. 14 (4), 386–398.
Ingold, T., 2002. From trust to domination: an alternative history of human-animal relations. In: Manning, A., Serpell, J. (Eds.), Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives. Routledge, London, UK, pp. 1–22.
Kirksey, E., Helmreich, S., 2010. The emergence of multispecies ethnography. Cult. Anthropol. 25 (4), 545–576.
Kirksey, E., Schuetze, C., Helmreich, S., 2014. The tactics of multispecies ethnography. In: Kirksey, E. (Ed.), The Multispecies Salon. Duke University Press, Durham, NJ, pp. 1–24.
Korthals, M., 2002. A multi-practice ethics of domesticated and 'wild' animals. In: Keulartz, J., Korthals, M., Schermer, M., Swierstra, T. (Eds.), Pragmatist Ethics for a Technological Culture. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, NL, pp. 127–141.
Latour, B., 2004. Politics of Nature. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
Law, J., 2004. After Method: Mess in Social Science Research. Routledge, London, UK.
Levi, J., 2015. Charles Fourier versus the gastronomes. Utop. Stud. 26 (1), 41–57.
Lonsdale, M.B., Vondell, R.M., Ringrose, R.C., 1957. Debeaking at one day of age and the feeding of pellets to broiler chickens. Poultry Sci. 36 (3), 565–571.
Lorimer, H., 2005. Cultural geography: the busyness of being 'more-than-representational'. Prog. Hum. Geogr. 29 (1), 83–94.
Lorimer, H., 2006. Herding memories of humans and animals. Environ. Plann. Soc. Space 24 (4), 497–518.
Lorimer, J., 2013. More-than-human visual analysis: witnessing and evoking affect in human-nonhuman interactions. In: Coleman, R., Ringrose, J. (Eds.), Deleuze and Research Methodologies. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp. 59–78.
Marx, K., 1906. In: Moore, S., Aveling, E., Trans, Engels, F. (Eds.), Capital: a Critique of Political Economy. Volume I: The Process of Capitalist Production. Charles H. Kerr & Co, Chicago, IL (original work published 1867). Retrieved from. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf.
McGrath, P., 2017. Chickens Boiled Alive at Star Poultry Supply Abattoir in Melbourne, Secret Footage Reveals. November 16. ABC News Retrieved from. http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-11-16/chickens-boiled-alive-inside-melbourne-abattoir/9157186.
Mellor, D.J., Beausoleil, N.J., 2015. Extending the 'Five Domains' model for animal

welfare assessment to incorporate positive welfare states. Anim. Welf. 24, 241–253.
Miele, M., 2011. The taste of happiness: free-range chicken. Environ. Plann. 43 (9), 2076–2090.
Mikulak, M., 2009. The silence that can speak: nature, ethics and interspecies cosmopolitics. Environ. Philos. 6 (2), 73–92.
Mol, A., Moser, I., Pols, J., 2010. Care: putting theory into practice. In: Mol, A., Moser, I., Pols, J. (Eds.), Care in Practice: Tinkering in Clinics, Homes and Farms. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, US, pp. 7–25.
Montanari, M., 2012. Let the Meatballs Rest and Other Stories about Food and Culture. Columbia University Press, New York, NY.
O'Brien, A.T., 2013. Supporting soil fungi to rebuild soils in agriculture. PAN Philos. Act. Nat. 10, 24–35.
O'Connor, A., 2005. Farmers' feathers ruffled by poultry farm plan. The Age Retrieved from. http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/farmers-feathers-ruffled-by-poultry-farm-plan/2005/08/22/1124562804953.html.
Ogden, L.A., Hall, B., Tanita, K., 2013. Animals, plants, people, and things: a review of multispecies ethnography. Environ. Soc. Adv. Res. 4, 5–24.
Pachirat, T., 2011. Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight. Yale University Press, New Haven.
Pascoe, B., 2014. Dark Emu: Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident? Magabala Books, Broome, WA.
Patel, R., Moore, J.W., 2017. A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet. University of California Press, Oakland, CA.
Pearson, C., 2013. Dogs, history, and agency. Hist. Theor. 52 (4), 128–145.
Philo, C., Wilbert, C., 2000. Animal spaces, beastly places: an introduction. In: Philo, C., Wilbert, C. (Eds.), Animal Spaces, Beastly Places. Routledge, London, UK, pp. 1–34.
Pilgrim, K., 2013. 'Happy cows,' 'happy beef': a critique of the rationales for ethical meat. Environ. Humanit. 3, 111–127.
Plumwood, V., 2003a. Feminism and the Mastery of Nature. Routledge, New York, NY.
Plumwood, V., 2003b. Animals and ecology: towards a better integration. Retrieved from. https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/41767/3/Vegpap6.pdf.
Plumwood, V., 2008. Tasteless: towards a food-based approach to death. Environ. Val. 17, 323–330.
Porcher, J., 2014. The work of animals: a challenge for social sciences. Humanimalia: A Journal of Human-Animal Interface Studies 6 (1), 1–9.
Porcher, J., 2017. The Ethics of Animal Labor: a Collaborative Utopia. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland.
Porcher, J., Schmitt, T., 2012. Dairy cows: workers in the shadows? Soc. Anim. 20 (1), 39–60.
Puig de la Bellacasa, M., 2012. 'Nothing comes without its world': thinking with care. Socio. Rev. 60 (2), 197–216.
Puig de la Bellacasa, M., 2015. Making time for soil: technoscientific futurity and the pace of care. Soc. Stud. Sci. 45 (5), 691–716.
Rose, D.B., 2005. An indigenous philosophical ecology: situating the human. Aust. J. Anthropol. 16 (3), 294–305.
Rose, D.B., 2015. Dialogue. In: Gibson, K., Fincher, R., D, B. (Eds.), A Manifesto for Living in the Anthropocene. Punctum Books, Brooklyn, NY, pp. 127–131.
Russell, E., 2004. The garden in the machine: toward an evolutionary history of technology. In: Schrepfer, S., Scranton, P. (Eds.), Industrializing Organisms: Introducing Evolutionary History. Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 1–18.
Salvadori, M. (Ed.), 1968. Modern Socialism. Palgrave MacMillan, London.
Smith, M., 2002. The 'ethical' space of the abattoir: on the (in)human(e) slaughter of other animals. Hum. Ecol. Rev. 9 (2), 49–58.
Sipe, D., 2009. Social gastronomy: Fourier and Brillat-Savarin. Fr. Cult. Stud. 20 (3), 219–236.
Sommerlad Poultry (n.d.). Slower Growing Heritage-Style Meat Chickens Developed for Optimal Animal Welfare and Food Quality. Retrieved from http://www.sommerladspoultry.com.au/welfare.html.
Sommerlad Poultry, 2015. Hot Weather Poultry Management [blog post]. Retrieved. https://sommerladspoultry.wordpress.com/2015/11/20/hot-weather-poultry-management/.
Stock, P., Carolan, M., Rosin, C., 2015. Food utopias: hoping for the future of agriculture. In: Stock, P., Carolan, M., Rosin, C. (Eds.), Food Utopias: Reimagining Citizenship, Ethics and Community. Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 3–13.
Swearingen, J., 2014. Ruff choice: which farm dog is right for you? Modern Farmer. Retrieved from. http://modernfarmer.com/2014/06/find-right-farm-dog/.
Tenga, A., Zimmerman, E., 2013. Vampire gentlemen and zombie beasts: a rendering of true monstrosity. Gothic Stud. 15 (1), 76–87.
Van Dooren, T., Kirksey, E., Münster, U., 2016. Multispecies studies: cultivating arts of attentiveness. Environ. Humanit. 8 (1), 1–23.
Van Dooren, T., Rose, D.B., 2012. Storied-places in a multispecies city. Humanimalia: A Journal of Human/Animal Interface Studies 3 (2), 1–27.
Van Dooren, T., Rose, D.B., 2016. Lively ethography: storying animist worlds. Environ. Humanit. 8 (1), 77–94.
Wacquant, L., 2011. Habitus as topic and tool: reflections on becoming a prizefighter. Qual. Res. Psychol. 8 (1), 81–92.
Watts, M., 2004. Enclosure: a modern spatiality of nature. In: Cloke, P., Crang, P., Goodwin, M. (Eds.), Envisioning Human Geographies. Arnold, London, UK, pp. 48–64.
Yin, R.K., 2009. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, fourth ed. SAGE Publications, Los Angeles, CA.