

ARTICLE

Distancing animal death: Geographies of killing and making killable

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Abstract

At the intersection of death geographies and animal geographies, the topic of animal death offers crucial insights for how we understand death and how we define human/nonhuman boundaries. This review piece brings rich discussions of animal death across anthropology, critical animal studies and the environmental humanities into conversation with work in geography. This article takes a two-pronged approach; first, in recognition of the intensely spatial nature of death, this article explores where animal death takes place. This section observes how spaces of animal death are physically concealed and how this spatial distancing is aided by verbal concealment and dismemberment of the animal body, as well as how justifications for killing are organised along spatial lines. This helps to make animals killable in these spaces. The second section focuses on who is killed and made killable as well as who kills. The degree of being killable or grievable is highly uneven amongst animals, as it is amongst humans. Moreover, those individuals who routinely inflict animal death are subject to discrimination and vulnerability due to this proximity. Finally, the article concludes with reflections on what the topic of animal death can contribute to the death geographies and animal geographies literatures, and how we can move towards more animal-centric approaches to animal death.

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KEYWORDS

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1 | INTRODUCTION

At the intersection of death geographies and animal geographies, the topic of animal death offers crucial insights for how we understand death and how we define human/nonhuman boundaries. There has been long-standing work in geography on cultural practices surrounding death and dying, and even a special issue in the journal *Progress in Physical Geography* on 'necrogeography' (Nash, 2018). For instance, work on 'deathscapes' (Maddrell & Sidaway, 2010) seeks to draw attention to the intensely spatial nature of death (Stevenson et al., 2016), focusing on spaces of dying such as cemeteries and hospices (Brown, 2003; Kong, 1999). However, this body of work has so far failed to pay sufficient attention to the death of animals (for an exception see Romanillos, 2011). Published reviews of animal geographies (Buller, 2014, 2015, 2016; Hovorka, 2017, 2018, 2019) reveal the lack of attention paid to death within this area, even though as Baker et al. (2006) point out, killing is the most common type of human-animal interaction, although more recent interventions such as Gibbs (2020) have started to address this, as well as calls to politicise animal geographies (White, 2015). This review piece brings rich discussions of animal death across anthropology (Dave, 2014; Mukherjee, 2014; Parreñas, 2018; Reinert, 2007; Serpell, 1986), environmental humanities (Ginn et al., 2014; van Dooren, 2010, 2014), vegan geographies and critical animal studies (Cole, 2011; Gillespie, 2011; Stanescu, 2013, 2015; White, 2015) into conversation with work in animal geography and geographies of death. Several edited volumes in the field of animal studies have been dedicated to the topic such as *Killing Animals* (Baker et al., 2006) and *Animal Death* (Johnston & Probyn-Rapsey, 2013). These discussions help to illustrate that 'killing an animal is rarely simply a matter of animal death. It is surrounded by a host of attitudes, ideas, perceptions and assumptions' (Baker et al., 2006, p. 4). This study largely draws upon examples from Anglophone contexts (reflecting current biases in the literature), but shares with Hovorka (2017) a recognition of the need for future work to 'globalize' the scholarship by focusing on diverse examples.

In recognition of the intensely spatial nature of death, this article first explores where animal death takes place. This section observes how spaces of animal death are physically concealed and how this spatial distancing is aided by verbal concealment and the dismemberment of the animal body, as well as how justifications for killing are organised along spatial lines. This helps to make animals killable in these spaces. The second section focuses on who is killed and made killable as well as who kills. The degree of being killable or grievable is highly uneven amongst animals, as it is amongst humans. Moreover, those individuals who routinely inflict animal death are subject to discrimination and vulnerability due to their proximity with animal killing. Finally, the article concludes with reflections on what the topic of animal death can contribute to the death geographies and animal geographies literatures, and how we can move towards more animal-centric approaches of exploring death and pain.

2 | SPACES OF ANIMAL DEATH

The deathscapes literature acknowledges that practices of death are highly spatial, where 'death and bereavement are intensified at certain sites (such as the regulated spaces of the hospital, the cemetery and the mortuary)' (Maddrell & Sidaway, 2010, p. 2). This is reflected in the concentration of animal death in certain spaces such as the slaughterhouse, the research laboratory, and wildlife conservation centres and in how the location of killing is vital in determining the legitimacy of the death. In fact, Elder et al. (1998) argue that one factor that defines what type of harm towards animals is defined as 'civilised' and what is deemed as 'savage' is the site of harm, and whether the harm occurs in concealed places such as abattoirs or in visible mundane places. Convery et al. (2005) discuss an

example of death 'in the wrong place' during the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic, where large numbers of cows and sheep had to be killed on their farms. Farmers in Cumbria who were interviewed expressed grief because, despite acknowledging that the animals would have gone to slaughter eventually, they felt that the killing 'transgressed this emotional geography of the farm as the appropriate place of livestock management and the abattoir as the appropriate place of livestock death' (Convery et al., 2005, p. 105). The location of killing can equally play a part in making animal death unremarkable, where animal corpses in certain places such as 'roadkill' on motorways is a routine sight (Monahan, 2016), although there have been efforts to make this less mundane and acceptable through art activism (Watson, 2015).

Spaces of animal death such as the slaughterhouse and the research laboratory are often concealed and physically distanced. Literature in animal ethics has explored how humans are physically and figuratively distanced from animal death, especially in relation to meat consumption. For example, animal ethicist Serpell (1986) identifies concealment as one of the key 'distancing devices' that allow meat consumers to disconnect from animal death; he notes how abattoirs are often hidden from consumers' eyes in isolated rural locations. Similarly, within animal geography Philo (1995) describes how in Victorian London urban slaughterhouses and live meat markets, previously the norm, began to disappear as they were seen to violate public propriety and cleanliness. Indeed, 19th century Britain saw a whole host of legislation controlling witnessing of all types of animal death, including vivisection and bear baiting as well as slaughter (Burt, 2001). This physical concealment of animal death is not unique; it is part of a wider 'civilizing process' (Elias, 1978) of modernity where violence and other unfavourable sights such as nudity and excrement are hidden from view (but not eliminated), such as the move from public to private prisoner executions (Morin, 2016). Morin (2016, p. 1317) identifies a number of commonalities between human and animal carceral spaces, for instance highlighting how both the prison execution room and the slaughterhouse are physically concealed and have similar 'locations, design and layout'. Morin (2016) further makes links between prisoner and animal carcerality, including shared restricted mobility and exposure to emotional and psychological violence.

Given this widespread concealment, instances where animal death is made visible, such as cases of urban backyard slaughter (Blecha & Davis, 2014) and slug killing in domestic gardens (Ginn, 2014), can therefore be unsettling. Distancing of animal death is of course variable across different societies, and this level of concealment is more often a characteristic of highly industrialised nations. Even within the same nation there can be cultural differences, as seen in Kupsala's (2018, p. 202) work on Finnish rural sub-cultures, where older individuals and rural residents were more likely to value 'overtly animal-like ingredients' such as tongue and offal. Across different societies, Kunst and Haugstad (2018, p. 356) found that US consumers, who were randomly shown a pork roast with the head intact or absent, were 'more sensitive to cues linking meat to animal origins' than Ecuadorian consumers and theorised that this was because they were less exposed to unprocessed meat. It is important to acknowledge the prevalence of 'domestic' as well as 'post-domestic' societies; Miele (2016) describes slaughter in an Egyptian seaside town where animals were routinely killed onsite in butcher shops and dismembered in front of customers. Also, in contexts where animal death is not hidden, there may be contrasting issues of desensitisation and normalisation; in fact, Dave (2014, p. 453–454) argues that, in the case of violence against animals in India, 'it is more the apathy of ubiquity that is the problem than the tendency to conceal'.

Beyond physical distancing of spaces of killing, concealment of animal death operates through a set of 'broader tacit embodied practices' (Evans & Miele, 2012, p. 6) that disassociate the products of animal death from the process of their production, such as the arrangement of animal-derived foods in shops and the everyday vocabulary relating to food. Consider, for example, the effort to make the animal absent from the act of meat consumption through verbal concealment by the use of words such as 'beef' instead of 'cow-meat' (Serpell, 1986), with distinct euphemistic language employed to describe killing of animals versus the killing of humans (Jepson, 2008). Concealment is also achieved through the butchering and presentation of the animal carcass; Herzog (2010, p. 190) observes that in the United States in the 1960s, most chicken was sold with an intact carcass and internal organs, and contrasts this with the rising popularity of highly processed meat and 'translucent boneless pieces of flesh'. Another phenomenon that aids this de-animalisation is the decline in the number of butcher shops over the past 50 years to be increasingly

replaced by supermarkets, lessening the opportunity for customers to 'see the silhouette of an animal when they bought their meat' (Gillespie, 2011, p. 155). This concealment of (spaces of) animal death may shape meat consumer behaviour; respondents to Blecha and Davis's (2014, p. 72) survey of attitudes towards backyard slaughter in California 'explicitly noted that this psychological distance is necessary in order for them to continue eating meat'. However, Parry (2009) observes an emerging trend in contemporary Western gastronomic culture, perhaps as a reaction to the distancing of death in the meat industry, of not only the acknowledgement, but also the romanticisation of slaughter, and a desire for greater proximity to spaces of animal death. This is through killing animals live on cooking channels, and the promotion of 'do-it-yourself' slaughter. Parry (2009) argues that this 'traditional cruelty' has wide appeal because it is associated with more natural and authentic animal husbandry practices.

Spaces of meat production equally present instances of distancing from animal death, albeit in different ways from spaces of meat consumption. The space of the slaughterhouse helps facilitate mass killing through its infrastructure and apparatus. The mechanisation of slaughterhouses made slaughter 'a rapid, piecemeal, impersonal process' made up of 'discrete and fairly simple tasks'. (Purcell, 2011, p. 62). In a similar vein to Vialles' (1994) claim regarding the assembly line set-up of the slaughterhouse, Serpell (1986, p. 204) argues that the division of labour in the industrial animal agriculture system where every person has a specific role in the larger process creates a situation where 'everyone involved is guilty, but no one is obliged to shoulder the full burden of responsibility'. Techno-mediation in the abattoir reduces interaction with the animals, and, alongside the sheer scale of the operation and the high outputs that necessitate quick, repetitive actions, helps to banalise acts of killing, a process which Gillespie and Lopez (2015, p. 3) argue 'is central to the process of "making killable"'. The move towards increasingly banal, distributed and techno-mediated forms of animal slaughter reflects other modes of human-animal relations which see animals being treated as 'machines' and resources in production, including through selective breeding and genetic manipulation (Noske, 1997) and being transformed into 'docile bodies' in intensive farming (Cole, 2011) where 'every part of the animal's environment' is controlled (Stanescu, 2013, p. 154). Spaces of intensive meat production therefore become not only spaces of killing, but spaces of 'dead life', where animals are deprived of 'social ties, maternal bonds, space to move, the food their bodies evolved to eat' (Neo & Emel, 2017, p. 87). Reinert (2007, n.p.) argues that the term 'bare life' can be applied to the animal without undermining the 'critical, political valence of the term', but 'amplify[ing]' and 'enriching' it. Similarly, Morin (2016) argues that prisoners and some animals share this condition of 'bare life' and 'social death'. Stanescu (2013, p. 149) draws on similar ideas such as Mbembe's necro-politics and death worlds, likewise identifying similarities between violence against humans and animals, however argues that there should be animal-specific terms since 'the ontology of violence' in the factory farm versus in human murder or genocide is fundamentally different.

Spaces of wildlife conservation are also important sites of animal death (Gibbs, 2020), where saving some species often involves sacrificing others (Palmer, 2020). Both Parreñas' (2018) and Palmer's (2020) multi-species ethnographies focus on orangutan rehabilitation centres in Borneo. Parreñas (2018) highlights how such centres can be spaces of violence in order to uphold species survival, such as forced copulation in orangutan captive breeding programs. She (p. 159) also mobilises the metaphor of such spaces as 'hospices' for dying species, providing 'palliative care...without expectation of the species' survival'. Justifications for killing in conservation are often organised along spatial lines, namely 'native'/'alien' distinctions, reinforcing the spatial nature of animal death. Conservation of certain species is often accompanied by violence towards 'invasive alien species' (Srinivasan & Kasturirangan, 2017). This discourse of 'alien' species, such as the demonisation of possums in New Zealand as 'alien invaders' (Potts, 2009) helps to make them killable. Crowley et al. (2018, p. 120) observe how such rhetoric gives legitimacy to kill grey squirrels in the United Kingdom 'opportunistically' and even 'recreationally'. Likewise, Trigger et al. (2008, p. 1278) demonstrate that the framing of cane toads as 'highly alien' in Australia legitimises certain methods of killing such as bludgeoning that 'would never be tolerated in relation to native or domesticated animal species'. Trigger et al. (2008) argue that this designation of native/alien is precarious, pointing to the example of the dingo's ambiguous native status in Australia, echoing van Dooren's (2011) assertion that species 'invasiveness' is a socially constructed concept, and in Australia based on an arbitrary historical moment of European arrival. As in contexts of animal agriculture, moments where

death becomes visible in spaces of conservation are controversial. In the Dutch rewilding project the Oostvaardersplassen, de-domesticated cattle and horses were considered 'wild' by the government and therefore could be left to starve in the winter (Lorimer & Driessen, 2014). This decision however prompted a public backlash, and a pre-emptive 'eye of the wolf' lethal control method was used instead where wildlife rangers would identify and shoot weaker animals unlikely to survive the winter (Lorimer et al., 2015).

3 | WHO KILLS AND IS KILLED?

As well as where animal death occurs, who is killed and who performs the killing is crucial in shaping the nature and perceived legitimacy of death. Much work goes into constructing animals as 'killable', where human beings have the exclusive capacity to be 'murdered' (Haraway, 2008). What determines the boundary making of who is and who is not killable is often aligned with the human/nonhuman boundary and is upheld by human exceptionalism, although as Agamben (1995/1998) shows, this can apply amongst different groups of humans as well; he draws a distinction between citizens, whose death is treated as murder, and those non-citizens who are reduced to a state of 'bare life' or, in Haraway's (2008) terms, are 'made killable'. Indeed, we might say that those reduced to bare life become in many ways, like animals. The distinction Agamben (1995/1998) makes depends on political status, yet when it comes to making animals killable, distinctions are more often made along the lines of (seemingly biologically defined) capacities. For example, death functions as an important boundary-making object to uphold human exceptionalism (van Dooren, 2014) because humans are theorised as being uniquely able to 'know' death (Romanillos, 2011) and therefore, according to Heidegger (as cited in Agamben, 1982/1991) animals cannot even die: they can only perish. Other authors seek to destabilise this human exceptionalist idea of humans being the unique agent to understand and consciously recognise death; van Dooren (2014) uses the example of crows showing signs of mourning for the deaths of their fellows in an attempt to make the concept of grief more inclusive to the nonhuman, alongside other vivid accounts of animal grief and emotional lives (Bekoff, 2007; King, 2013a, 2013b; Masson & McCarthy, 1994).

If animals' capability to grieve is in question, so too is the matter of whether or not they should be grieved. Butler (2006, xiv) observes a 'differential allocation of grievability' amongst human lives, and authors within animal studies have called for this theory to be applied to nonhumans due to the unevenness with which animal deaths are considered as grievable (Gillespie & Lopez, 2015; Stanescu, 2015). This selectiveness is illustrated in DeMello's (2016) volume on mourning animals, which highlights how some animals, particularly those that are edible, are 'ungrievable'. Herzog (2010) compares the treatment of different classes of animals (livestock, pests and pets) in his book titled 'Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat' highlighting the inconsistency at the crux of how we think about animals, also highlighted in 'pet/pest/profit' categorisations (Taylor & Signal, 2009). Fox (1999) similarly describes the 'compartmentalizing' of animals we kill from the animals for which we care. This relates to Bulliet's (2005) thesis of the contemporary condition of 'post-domesticity' where humans are cut off from the domestic animals that they eat, yet simultaneously form increasingly intimate relationships with domestic pet animals (although this is culturally variable as highlighted in the 'domestic' societies mentioned earlier [Miele, 2016]). Amongst edible animals, the chicken is one of the most widely consumed and exploited (Potts, 2012), and the body of the chicken has become a 'site of accumulation' (Watts, 2000), and is particularly susceptible to biotechnological and market manipulation (Buller & Roe, 2014). Potts and Armstrong (2013) argue that the modern farming industry has reduced chickens from admired creatures known for their bravery and parental protective instincts into symbols of cowardice and exploitation and thus less grievable due to the tendency of thinking of them as commodities rather than individuals (Marino, 2017). This unevenness of grievability is further reflected in patterns of memorialisation, where we venerate the deaths of some animals and not others; Sharp (2018) points to memorials of war horses for example but there is a comparative lack of veneration of laboratory animals, with the exception of laboratory mice memorials in South Korea (Veldkamp, 2016).

Grievability is moreover often determined along the lines of nonhuman charisma (Lorimer, 2007), where ethical concern is more chiefly directed at individualised mammalian nonhumans and less is afforded to smaller animals or to

those constructed as 'pests' (Moran, 2015). This is especially evident in biodiversity conservation, where species loss is represented by individual charismatic megafauna (Yusoff, 2012). This individualisation may be valuable as a way to bestow grievability; van Dooren (2010) argues that writing about the pain and suffering of individual animals as opposed to at the abstract level of a species helps these animals to be perceived as ethically significant. This highlights that lack of grievability is not a fixed state, which some authors have built on by explicitly seeking to enact mourning through writing, such as Rose and van Dooren (2011) who attempt to redress unevenness of grievability in an entire special issue of the 'Australian Humanities Review' dedicated to the 'death of the disregarded' and 'unloved others' such as vultures and ticks. Similarly, van Dooren (2014, p. 142) frames his piece on Hawaiian crows as a 'narrative form of mourning' for that species and Gillespie and Lopez's (2015) edited volume is a self-declared act of grieving for countless dead animals. Brooks Pribac (2016) asserts the legitimacy of grief 'at a distance', where we mourn animals we do not personally know who die or suffer as a result of large-scale anthropogenic violence and exploitation.

Linguistic framing also plays a role in shaping grievability. The complexity of the spaces and relations which shape animal death is reflected in the highly charged nature of the language used around it, such as the politically significant use of the terms 'alien' and 'invasive' in conservation (Potts, 2009). This is highlighted by Blecha and Davis (2014), who opt neither to use words such as 'murder' and 'corpse' associated with animal rights activists nor words adopted by the meat industry such as 'processed'. Instead they propose 'slaughter' and 'kill' as terms which seek 'neither to convey judgment nor to hide the reality of ending the lives of other beings' (Blecha & Davis, 2014, p. 67). Practitioners that deal with animals in violent contexts, such as in the context of animal research laboratories, employ terms such as 'killing well' (Holmberg, 2011) and a 'good kill' (Higgin et al., 2011), which serve to distance if not the act of animal death at least the violence associated with it. In a volume dedicated to 'nonkilling geographies', Gillespie (2011, p. 158) challenges the notion of 'humane' slaughter in smaller-scale establishments by arguing that although it does result in a better experience for the animal until point of slaughter, it still 'fails to confront the violence of slaughter itself'. Tayob (2019, p. 1207) similarly argues that ethical observances of slaughter do not 'elide the violence of the act'. This links to discussions of whether animal death is intrinsically ethically problematic; influential arguments in animal welfare science posit that death is not a welfare issue if carried out painlessly (Webster, 1994), whilst others argue that it is problematic if it forecloses the opportunity for positive experiences (Yeates, 2010).

Furthermore, animals are made less grievable by framing their deaths as 'sacrifice'; Haraway (2008) contends that a 'logic of sacrifice' is created to justify animal death. Similarly, Serpell (1986, p. 207) identifies the use of ritual sacrifice in ancient societies as a distancing device that he labels 'shifting the blame', where death 'was a sacred duty and therefore forgivable'. The term is deployed widely, encompassing both sacrifices to deities (Govindrajana, 2018), to species survival (Palmer, 2020) and, in the animal research sector, sacrifices to science and human health (Birke et al., 2007). Theorising killing as 'sacrifice', particularly in the context of scientific research, 'inevitably frames understandings of lab-based practices as, at the very least, quasi-religious or ritualistic' (Sharp, 2018, p. 128). Grandin (2006, p. 239) believes that ritual has the potential to preserve the capacity to be affected by death, arguing that rituals, like a moment of silence, should be re-injected into the conventional slaughterhouse to prevent slaughterers from becoming 'numbed, callous or cruel'. This nostalgia is critiqued by voices in critical animal studies such as Weil (2006, p. 95), who asserts that the logical conclusion of this 'communion with animal suffering' should be 'the sacrifice of sacrifice' rather than its romanticisation. Whilst Reinert (2007, n.p.) observes that industrial slaughter in its 'quotidian routine and repetitive banality...is almost the exact antithesis' to traditional sacrifice, he argues that they are similar in their scripted and ritualised nature, since the modern slaughterhouse is characterised by 'detailed regulations and precise instructions'. Reinert (2007, n.p.) therefore calls for an expanded notion of sacrifice that captures the 'often unarticulated logics of sacrificial equivalence' in places like the industrial slaughterhouse.

If animal death is often made more acceptable by emphasising the 'otherness' of animals, it is interesting how this 'othering' and discrimination can also be extended to those involved in inflicting animal death. Animal geographers have examined how minority groups' treatment of animals can be used to construct racial difference, where 'one type of harm/death to an animal is seen as more...humane than others' (Elder et al., 1998, p. 74). For instance, Mukherjee (2014, p. 25) argues that the 'debeak[ing] and mutilat[ion]' in a poultry factory of a Celtic coq, 'the symbol of

France's mythic Gallic origins', is perceived as significantly less cruel than the ritual slaughtering of a coq. Burt (2006, p. 126) likewise highlights the often uneven treatment of religious slaughter where Jewish shechita methods are labelled as 'inhumane' without equal focus on other aspects of 'a system that is deeply inhumane by virtue of its scale'. Public discussions of halal slaughter are often tied up with discrimination and politics of belonging (Isakjee & Carroll, 2019). Similarly, Robbins (1998) explores the power dynamics of beef consumption in India amongst minority groups and how identity politics play out with often fatal consequences in the case of cow slaughter, with Hindu cow protectionists threatening Muslim beef producers (Govindrajan, 2018). There is also discrimination linked to proximity to animal death along class lines, with slaughterhouse workers being portrayed as uneducated and violent. Serpell (1986, p. 204) points out that historically 'those directly responsible for killing animals have been regarded with a curious mixture of awe and disgust, not unlike that normally reserved for public executioners'. Slaughterhouses are associated with higher levels of socio-economic deprivation or 'slaughterhouse blues' (Stull & Broadway, 2013); Broadway (1994) found that slaughterhouses locating to an area often resulted in increases in crime, social services use, homelessness, and healthcare strains. Purcell (2011) also draws attention to the intense (physical and otherwise) vulnerability of workers in the slaughterhouse. This is contrasted with animal killing by wealthier groups, where practices such as foxhunting are romanticised and more culturally acceptable (Carr, 1986).

Perceptions of those who kill animals as more or less human(e) in turn shape the experiences of those carrying out the killing. Brooks Pribac (2016, p. 193) draws attention to the emotional and psychological toll on 'those who bear witness to nonhuman animals' torture and deaths en masse'. People who work closely with animal death such as slaughterhouse workers may deliberately or unconsciously develop strategies to distance themselves and often become desensitised (Hamilton & McCabe, 2016; Serpell, 1986). Yet, those who regularly inflict violence and death upon their animal subjects also exert affective labour and exhibit practices of care towards these same animals. Much of the work on care has been in the context of animal experimentation (Holmberg, 2008, 2011). Greenhough and Roe (2018) illustrate how animal technologists (ATs) often exceed the requirements of animal welfare guidelines to ensure the animals' comfort, and form attachments to them, performing 'ethical as well as emotional labor' in their practices of care, occupying a liminal space due to their dual role of caring for and killing animals (Roe & Greenhough, 2021). Holmberg (2011, p. 158) discusses animal technicians' care of animals before and during their deaths when killing 'surplus' animals, where they take 'small, practical measures that make an animal's life and death a bit richer'. Similarly Govindrajan (2018, p. 31), reflecting on goat sacrifices in India's central Himalayas, observes that people interacting frequently with sacrificial animals prior to their deaths often engage in 'everyday gestures of love, care and remorse that open up the possibility of ethical behaviour in the interstices of violence'. Affective labour is crucial to a sacrificial connection; in fact, those performing the temple goat sacrifices believed that it was necessary to have this attachment with the animal in order for the sacrifice to be acceptable to their deities (Govindrajan, 2018). This is echoed in Tayob's (2019) ethnographic study of Qurbani (a Muslim festival of ritual sacrifice) in Mumbai, India, where actively forming relationships with sacrificial animals was perceived as exemplary ritual practice, and it was not uncommon for wealthier individuals to raise a goat for months and even years before slaughtering it.

This complex sacrificer/sacrificed relationship is also reflected in the sometimes contradictory nature of farmer/livestock relations (Convery et al., 2005; Riley, 2011; Wilkie, 2005). Farmers interact with the animals both as companions and friends and then as commodities to be killed, as illustrated by a farmer respondent in Holloway's (2001, p. 303) study who would tell the slaughterman 'they're my babies, look after them won't you'. This is further shown in Convery et al.'s (2005) article on experiences of farmers in Cumbria during the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic who wept over the bodies of their dead cows and sheep. Moreover, much work across animal geographies and the environmental humanities has drawn attention to the intertwined nature of killing and caring, particularly in conservation (Boonman-Berson et al., 2019; Gibbs, 2020; Ginn et al., 2014; Palmer, 2020). Whilst van Dooren (2011, p. 294) doubts that killing can be abandoned in conservation, believing that some killing is inevitable to protect threatened species, he argues that it should be challenged and must be 'a last resort', echoing Atchison's (2019) problematisation of killing with indifference.

When discussing care of animals in violent situations such as animal experimentation, Haraway (2008) stresses the ethical practice of 'shar[ing] suffering' with the subjects, where embracing vulnerability and intimacy in nonhuman encounters can be, as Green and Ginn (2014, p. 167) suggest, a 'productive ethical practice' as it encourages further consideration of animal suffering. However, Holmberg (2011, p. 159) takes issue with this concept as she argues that it may divert attention away from considering the 'obligation to end suffering'. Moreover, such combinations of care and killing have their limits. It is important here therefore to make a distinction between those who are able to form relationships with individual animals facilitated by long-term exposure, such as Govindrajana's (2018) sacrificial goats and Sharp's (2018) laboratory animals and those who are unable to do so, for example in the highly mechanised and fast-paced environment of a slaughterhouse. In the latter, the combination of high-speed assembly lines, pressure to meet quotas, high worker vulnerability, and close physical proximity yet limited emotional attachment with the animals creates conditions of 'cruel intimacies' (Purcell, 2011). Moreover, acts of care in spaces of mass animal death may work to uphold violence; Blanchette (2020, p. 157) describes the efforts of workers to care for baby piglet runts in intensive US pork production and argues that whilst this care is 'an ethical means to commune with animals in spite of all this violence', it also helps to sustain this violence by perpetuating piglet over-breeding. Such acts of care may also only present an example of 'deading life', since in such intensive animal agriculture contexts, 'life is pure resource for death' (Stanescu, 2013, p. 149).

4 | GOING FURTHER

Despite efforts to grieve for a wider variety of nonhumans and to 'share suffering', our understanding of animal death and pain remains very anthropocentric. As Weil (2006, p. 91) points out, it is necessary to ask 'what is a good death and whom or what does it serve?' Work that explores animal death must therefore pay greater attention to animal-centric experiences. Within animal geography more generally, there has been a disproportionate focus on 'animal spaces' (human-animal relations) and a neglect of 'beastly places' (animal experiences and worlds) (Philo & Wilbert, 2000). Lorimer et al. (2019, p. 27) address this with their concept of 'animals' atmospheres', which takes seriously animals' emotional experiences, individuality, social interactions and trophic relations to understand 'the affective intensities of a particular space that gives rise to events, actions, feelings and emotions'. An animal-centric approach to animal death could further engage with Temple Grandin's work on animal experiences of slaughterhouses. Here, she draws on her personal experience of autism, using characteristics and perceived 'disabilities' such as hyper-visibility and hyper-specificity to 'think like a cow' to attempt to understand which details scared animals such as sharp contrasts in light between different spaces (Grandin & Johnson, 2005).

A 'beastly spaces' approach to animal death could also build upon work in animal welfare science that uses scientific measures to measure pain in different killing methods and therefore determines a 'good death' (Anil et al., 1995; Close et al., 1997). Similar insights on animal experiences of different killing methods could also be found in ethology literature; Lorimer et al. (2019) argued that combining methods from ethnography with those of ethology can help us better access animals' lifeworlds. However, it is important to recognise that our access to animals' experiences will always be inevitably limited and therefore there are distances from animal death that cannot be breached. Ultimately, however, these practices of care and seeking to optimise animal death are further limited as they are geared towards providing a 'good death', and therefore do not resolve the violence of killing itself (Gillespie, 2011).

To conclude, it is evident that where animal death takes place, who performs the killing and who is killed, are all crucial to the question of animal death. It is important to understand animal death geographically because questions of distance and proximity to animal death (both physical and figurative), fundamentally shape the meanings humans attach to it. Animal death affirms the intensely spatial nature of death identified by the death geographies literature, with death and mourning being concentrated in certain spaces. The topic of animal death also builds upon debates in death geographies of who kills and is killed by illustrating the commonality of unevenness of grievability amongst certain animal as well as human lives. Further work in death geographies could incorporate these insights by exploring how death and grief are not exclusively human experiences. Moreover, in order for (animal) geographers to attend

more closely to animal lives, this must also necessitate an attention also to animal deaths. How and where animals die, and how those deaths are perceived and experienced by both humans and the animals themselves (insofar as we can access this) is key to understanding contemporary human–animal relations, especially given the fact that killing is one of the most common human–animal interactions.

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The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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