

RACING BODIES

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Introduction

This chapter explores the bodywork undertaken in racing stables, where thoroughbred horses are trained; it thus addresses an aspect of bodywork which so far has been under-reported, bodywork on/with animals. Racing stables employ around 4000 stable staff (British Horseracing Authority [BHA] 2011a) whose job it is to give care to the horses, to exercise them daily and to transport them to race meetings. During two periods spent with stable staff and some of the horses, either at racing stables or at the racecourse (Miller 2010), it was found that there is a common labour process that involves bodywork, both on the racehorses and by their human caregivers.

Bodywork in racing is therefore conceptualised as paid work on and with racehorses, where the human body is the primary tool of production in a labour process which is labour intensive and cannot be mechanised and where there is huge reliance on lightweight and athletic human bodies to accomplish the production of fit and competitive racehorses. It is low paid but skilled work, where horse(wo)manship is embodied in stable staff (Game 2001), and is a 'skilled bodily craft' (Cassidy 2002:106). Women make up 47% of the basic grade of stable staff (BHA 2011a), offering employers the prospect of meeting a 60 kg body weight restriction imposed by industry requirements that racehorses bear low weights when being ridden. There is thus evidence of commodification of women's embodied capacity to restrict weight (Tolich 1996). In this chapter, therefore, we are concerned with the production of a human body which displays physical characteristics specific to

the labour process, namely athleticism and weight restriction. These workers also 'produce' the horse body, which itself is expected to reach levels of fitness and athleticism in order to compete in races. As it will also be seen in this chapter, the specific demands of the racing labour process require the application of bodies to work, as well as embodied work, and these are inextricably linked.

The chapter is structured as follows: firstly some contextual information about the workplace, then consideration of relevant literature, how the data was collected and a discussion of the data around the multiple bodyworks performed by stable staff. The chapter contributes to the study of bodywork in paid employment and discusses a labour process which requires the performance of several types of bodywork which overlap with each other.

The racing industry

The racing industry is regulated by the British Horseracing Authority (BHA). Membership of the Authority's management committees is drawn from thirteen interest groups, representing trainers, owners, breeders and racecourse owners in particular. The BHA is the licensing authority for trainers and jockeys, holding the power to discipline members of both groups, including withdrawing or denying a license. Prior to 2007, these functions were the preserve of the Jockey Club, a private members' club, which evolved as sporting body for men and into which 'the integration of women remains problematic' (Velija and Flynn 2010:304). The Jockey Club continues run the National Stud, supports and promotes the charity Racing Welfare and is a major landowner, including several racecourses.

In a report compiled for the BHA on the economic impact of racing (BHA 2009), Deloitte records that the racing industry employs 18,600 core employees, of which the largest proportion are to be found in the production and training of racehorses, which encompasses the thoroughbred breeding industry as well as staff employed in racing stables. However, when one focuses on the training of racehorses, it is clear that stable staff and their bodywork on and with racehorses are crucial to the production of racehorses. It is a labour-intensive process in which horses must be cared for and exercised daily, year-round and where there is no possibility of machines being substituted for human labour.

The racing workplace

Horses are trained in 573 small firms (BHA 2011a), racing yards or stables, located in mainly rural areas throughout the United Kingdom, with two racing centres, Newmarket and Lambourn, where larger numbers of stables are concentrated. Newmarket is associated with Flat racing and Lambourn with National Hunt racing. Taken together, racing stables employ 3966 stable staff of which 57% are men, 43% women (BHS 2011a). The BHA statistics show that 3070 of the total 7630 stable-based workforce (including stable staff) is in the age bracket 16-30; it could be concluded that this generally a young workforce.

The industry has wrestled for some time with a change of name for stable staff but seems unable to move beyond the gender specific labels of 'stable lad' and 'stable lass' when referring to the workers who have daily responsibility for the care and well-being of racehorses in training. Their

continued use underlines the subordinate role of stable staff in the racing labour process.

The workplace in racing is generally referred to as a racing stable/yard in which horses are kept in individual boxes/stables. There are two forms of horseracing: Flat racing and National Hunt racing. Flat racing is, as the name suggests, conducted on racecourses without obstacles, while in National Hunt (or jumps) racing horses must also clear a series of high fences, or rather lower hurdles. Trainers are more often licensed to racehorses in both codes of racing, although they tend to be more associated with one code than the other. It should also be noted that we are looking at sports workers, rather than competing athletes. Nevertheless, the use of the body is essential to accomplishing the task of training a racehorse, whose body in turn can be regarded as an athletic body.

The job of a stable lad or girl is largely physical, involving the manual labour of mucking out, grooming and feeding, coupled with the skilled physical work of riding racehorses during the exercise routine. In addition, staff are responsible for the transportation of horses to and from race meetings. During the course of their working lives they develop skills around equine veterinary matters and from being involved in associated care work, often detecting injury or illness. Their working day is arranged around these activities, year round. For some there will be the additional work of breaking yearling horses, another skilled activity where year-old horses are initially trained to accept saddle and rider. In the daily routine stable staff will be in close contact with at least three horses from early in the morning until early evening. They will check on the health and general well-being of the horse,

moving on to grooming and preparing it for exercise. They will ride each horse, in turn, at the trainer's instruction, 'feeling' how it 'goes' when on the gallops and reporting back to the trainer. They will then settle the horse back in its stable. It must be acknowledged that some duties require more than one form of bodywork but it is very difficult to completely separate tasks from each other into discrete types.

Stable staff are thus akin to Beardsworth and Bryman's (2001) zookeepers in that they are working with a live, but domesticated, animal. They are coaxing the performance of certain 'tasks' out of the horse as part of the training process. This is not for daily consumption by the public as part of a regular daily display in the captive surroundings of the zoo or theme park. They are, however, caregivers to a large and dependent animal towards which they already have a predisposition, if not feelings of love. The majority of stable staff come from a background with horses as evidenced in my earlier research (Miller 2010).

Bodywork in the racing labour process

In racing stables, the labour process reflects the three 'simple elements' of Marx's (1976:284) description, namely purposeful activity; the object on which that work is performed; and the instruments of work. In racing these are respectively the exercising, care and transportation and racing of racehorses; the racehorse itself; and the equipment and physical environment of the stable and racecourse. From my earlier study of this labour process (Miller 2010), it was clear that two bodies were being produced: that of the stable lad and that of the horse. However, bodywork, paid or unpaid, has largely been defined with regard to the work that women (and some men) do on their own

bodies or on the bodies of other women and men (Wolkowitz 2006; Gimlin 2007; Sanders 2008), in occupations such as nursing, beauty therapy, hairdressing and sex work. There have, as yet, been fewer attempts to encompass the bodywork undertaken by humans on animals, such as veterinarians or farm labourers. This section therefore discusses the three categories of bodywork identified as part of 'purposeful activity', namely body production work, care work, and communication work.

The production of human bodies has been discussed in a range of ways, both in work situations (Wolkowitz 2006) and as the subject of practices such as piercing and tattooing. Some of the discussion, for example Warhurst et al (2000) and Wellington and Bryson (2001), is taken up with the different aesthetic reasons for producing a certain type of body. The athletic body has been the subject of research, by Wacquant (1995) who studied the use of boxers' bodies as a means of production and the training methods used to produce a particular type of body. The making of the athletic body is also taken up by Brace-Govan (2002) in her study of women body builders, ballet dancers and weight lifters. She finds that a specific physicality is being sought in each case to meet the demands of the chosen discipline.

Attaining different bodyweights forms part of these bodily demands, in boxing to meet the conditions of fighting at different levels (Wacquant 1995) and as a result of the desired physicality of athletic forms (Brace-Govan 2002). In the specific context of racing, Tolich (1996) identifies the capacity of women to meet the strictures of body weight production amongst female jockeys, echoed by Velija and Flynn (2010) in a study of embodied female qualities in

racing. There is a link here with embodiment since it is impossible, of course, to separate bodily practices from the physical body of the stable lad/lass.

It is argued by Mewett (2008) that horse care is predicated on human ways of caring, which have been discussed in the context of care home workers (Twigg 2000; Fine 2005) and nursing (Shakespeare 2003; Van Dongen and Elema 2001), for example. One of the problems highlighted in the literature is the fact that care work with humans often involves dirty work of some variety (Twigg 2000), dirty work being defined by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999:413) as 'tasks and occupations which are likely to be perceived as disgusting or degrading'. This in turn is often associated with low status because society stigmatises this work and as Twigg (2000) points out dirty work attracts the double stigma of physical and moral 'dirtyness'. In looking at another form of work with animals, veterinary work, Sanders (2010) finds that although vets are closely involved with animal treatment, it is the veterinary technicians who do the dirty work of cleaning up faeces and blood. It seemed likely therefore that staff working closely with individual horses would experience the same division labour; they would be the ones cleaning up after the horses, in the stables and in connection with injury or illness. Another part of the care work in racing involves sensory work, discussed by Hockey (2009) in his study of infantrymen in the British Army. Hockey identifies the sensory activities of working, particularly those using the senses of sight, hearing, touch and smell, and how these are deployed in the skilled work of infantry patrols in conflict situations.

Hockey (2009) also argues that we need to look at practical experiences of embodiment, identifying a research gap which also strikes a chord with

Wolkowitz's (2006) concern that more empirical work is needed to extend our understanding of different labour processes. In the particular circumstances of dealing with animals, a number of authors have discussed the use of the human body as a tool of communication. For example, Game (2001) considers the embodied skill of riding horses in the discipline of dressage, which is also taken up by Brandt (2005) in her study of the human-horse communication process. However, communication as a form of paid body work with animals remains under-theorised. In this chapter, attention is paid to the ways in which stable staff use their bodies to bridge a gap in communication, where there is an absence of a common, spoken, language between body workers and the recipient of their labour.

Methodology

This chapter is based on a qualitative study of the racing labour process and employment relations in racing stables, which are an example of the small firm (Miller 2010). Over the period 2000-2004, qualitative research was conducted with stable staff, trainers, and key industry figures, in order to locate the labour process, and associated employment relations, in its widest industry and historical context. This chapter draws on interviews with 90 stable staff and observation of their work. Fifty staff (26 men and 24 women) were interviewed at their primary workplace, the racing stable (14 stables in total), with a further 40 stable staff (22 men and 18 women) who were interviewed at their secondary workplace, the racecourse (11 in total). In the first phase, access to staff was gained through their employer, racehorse trainers while, in the second phase, access was negotiated through the racecourses. This sample was opportunistic in nature, which is regarded by

Buchanan et al (1988) as a realistic approach to the difficulties surrounding access. The nature of opportunistic sampling gives no guarantee of numbers of interviewees, or types of employee and some types of employee are under-represented, particularly women and first line supervisory staff, ie head lad/lasses.

Production of the human body

Stable staff are expected to produce their own bodies in certain ways (Gimlin 2007) undertaking three forms of body production work: firstly, a fit and athletic body; second a weight restricted body; and finally a deferential body. With regard to athletic work, stable staff keep fit by riding every day and by mucking out, both very physical tasks. Women and men are equally expected to be tough and fit; otherwise they will not be taken seriously as riders. However, their bodies are at risk of serious injury since horseracing is a dangerous sport, even for these support workers. Smartt and Chalmers (2008:376) found that of different sports the 'death toll from horse racing is only exceeded by swimming and rugby and the hospitalisation rate exceeded only by rugby'. For those who are injured, there is a high risk of long term or permanent disability, as described by one Newmarket stable lad who, at the age of 17, fell from his horse, fracturing his pelvis in five places. He was not expected to ride again, though made himself get back on a horse after twelve weeks out of work. In the racing labour process, then, the human body confronts the horse body, which may be privileged over the human. Evidence from stable staff was to the effect that human injuries might be overlooked or at least the expectation was that staff would return to work quickly in order to deal with 'their' horses.

Further evidence of the primacy of horse over human is found in the specificities of the labour market, where embodied capacities and attributes (Warhurst et al 2000) of body type and youth are important factors. The British Racing School (BRS), which conducts basic training for new stable staff, clearly stipulates the weight requirement of 60 kg on its website (BRS 2011). Low body weight is particularly required in Flat racing where horses are raced as juveniles whose bodies are not fully developed. In order to avoid strain on the animal, workers are expected to keep to low weight thus transferring potential body stress to the worker, for example through dieting. In National Hunt stables, where horses are older and can carry higher weights workers still have to keep their weight down. At the basic grade, stable staff are predominantly young workers. The British Horseracing Authority (BHA 2011) employment statistics show that in 2010 40% of stable staff were aged between 16 and 30.

Staff are not expected to produce one particular image which would project the success of their employer's business as discussed by Wellington and Bryson (2001) in their work on image consultancy. In fact they are expected to remain 'invisible' when in the public gaze. At the stables there is less emphasis on personal looks and turnout because of the practical requirements of horse management discussed below. However, at the races, stable staff are expected to display a 'deferential body', by remaining in the background when in the public gaze, where all eyes are focussed on the horse, its jockey and trainer. Part of the body production work involved here is to be neat and clean but not to stand out against the horse.

Gender and racing body work

Racing was traditionally a male world, until the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 made it impossible to exclude women legally from the roles of trainer or jockey. Before that time, women who wanted to be trainers had to operate behind the fiction that their Head Lad (male) or husband was the trainer as the Jockey Club would not grant horse training licences to women who were not 'persons' as far as the Club was concerned. A long running legal battle by Mrs Florence Nagle culminated in her winning her case at the High Court in the 1960s on the basis that the Jockey Club were in breach of the rules on restraint of trade by denying her a licence to train racehorses. It was not until the mid 1970s that women were finally 'allowed' to be jockeys – again it was the Jockey Club which stood in women's way by denying them a jockey's licence on the grounds that race riding was 'too dangerous' for women. This very much strikes a chord with the findings of Velija and Flynn (2010) that male attitudes to women jockeys are still much bound up in stereotypes of weaker women. However, they (ibid:304) also find that sexism towards women jockeys still exists in racing and, despite the fact that jockey licences have been granted to women since 1970s, 'attitudes toward female jockeys remain largely unchanged'. Owners and trainers, predominantly male (BHA 2011a and 2011b), are still resistant to employing women jockeys, even arguing that horses could sense the gender of their rider, responding differently to women and men (Miller 2010; Velija and Flynn 2010). The history of women's active involvement in racing reflects Pfister's view (2010:234) that 'The gender of sport in the past was clearly and conspicuously masculine'.

Women had worked as stable staff as early as 1919 - in order to break a strike by male stable staff at Epsom. This was repeated in 1938/9 when a strike over pay and trade union recognition interrupted training in Lambourn. Again women were used to break the strike which was long running and bitter. In both cases, it was the wives, daughters and other female family members who were employed in stable staff roles, this generally being work that was considered 'unsuitable' as a form of paid employment for women. Their bodies were to be protected from exposure to physical dirt in the stables and from the moral dirt of gambling, reflecting the commonly held belief that only 'certain types of sport and exercise were suitable for women' (Pfister *ibid*).

During the 1950s and 1960s, women started to occupy more jobs as stable staff and to become a significant presence in racing stables. Although there is no published evidence, it is not unreasonable to think that this is because of women's embodied capacity to be light in weight, reflecting to an extent Tolich's (1996) findings that women jockeys in New Zealand were only able to get more race riding when men started to become bigger and heavier in the second half of the 20th century. Gendering of roles *within* racing yards 'provided further evidence of continuing gender inequalities within the racing figuration' (Velija and Flynn 2010:310). Here the assumption is that women are more caring, nurturing and domestic than men thus sweeping the yard, or plaiting horses' manes, will be undertaken with more diligence.

[look specifically at how gender connects with bodywork elements]

Horse behaviour in racing is also often explained through applying gender stereotypes to horses. Fillies and mares behave in a skittish fashion because they are female, are generally less successful in the racehorse stakes for the

same reason, and are seen as inferior to colts and stallions. Colts are seen as difficult, moody and uncooperative, rather like a teenage boy, while stallions and geldings are 'brave' and 'fearless' and likened to (male) warriors. It can be seen therefore that all female bodies in racing are judged to be inferior in some way. However, women now make up nearly half the total of stable staff, offering employers the prospect of meeting the weight restriction stipulated in the industry. Women who enter their working lives in Flat racing also tend to stay there, suggesting that they find it easier to continue to meet this weight requirement throughout their working lives. While there have not yet been any studies of the dietary habits of stable staff, their union the National Association of Stable Staff (NASS) has warned employers of the possible adverse effects of not eating properly, eg lack of concentration, illness and absenteeism, impact on health and safety, poor physical strength (NASS 2011). Baum (2006) argues that horse racing is a high risk sport for eating disorders in men, where there is a need to 'make the weight' (particularly for jockeys, through sweating, skipping meals, vomiting, laxative abuse, cocaine and amphetamine use. Evidence from Racing Welfare suggests that young men working stables are more prone to eating disorders than young women and it was obvious from my earlier research (Miller 2010) that levels of smoking cigarettes were high amongst stable staff, both men and women, possibly as part of the need to suppress appetite.

Bodywork, skill and pay

Skill is a contentious issue in racing, with 93% of stable staff saying that their work was a 'skilled profession' (Miller 2010), while some trainers asserted that 'anyone' can do the work of a stable lad. While it is true that mucking out,

once accomplished to the standard required, is repetitious work, it is clear that there is skill involved in understanding horse behaviour and in communicating with horses and skill in riding racehorses. For stable staff these represent a 'skilled bodily craft' (Cassidy 2002:106), without which racehorses could not be 'produced'. However, it is not quantified or measured and recognised through a formal qualification, a fact that contributes to the low wages received by stable staff. While the stable staff role in winning may be recognised by prize money, 'presents' from the horse's owner, the 'best turned out' prize on a race day, this is variable pay and not guaranteed as part of the wage-effort bargain.

Part of the problem is the issue of embodied skill, represented by weight, youthfulness, riding skills, sensory skills, communication skills, and deference. These are all in some way required of stable staff but are not formally quantified or rewarded through the wage/effort nexus. They are all essential elements in the labour process, without which the task of training racehorses could not work in its current form.

Fine (2005) also points to issues of the manual nature of work, skill, and gender as arbiters of the status of care work with humans. As already observed, the work of stable staff is manual and physical and contains elements of 'dirty work', itself an arbiter of low wages and status (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Twigg 2000; Sanders 2010). In racing it was found that despite the varied nature of the work and the level of skill involved, stable staff remain in low paid, low status employment; as one stable lad put it 'we are looking after valuable animals but we're paid a pittance'. Stable staff were quite clear that they had to resort to overtime working to improve pay, 75% of those

surveyed saying that they needed to do overtime to improve pay. Stable staff enjoy the lowest status and pay of any worker in the racing labour process. The national wage rates for stable staff are only slightly higher than the National Minimum Wage, and very close to agricultural wages. Although there has been national wage bargaining machinery since 1975, stable staff were represented by a weakly organised staff association, the Stable Lads' Association, which lacked the resources and bargaining nous to press home their undoubted strengths in the labour process.

The 'invisibility' remarked on previously is also suggestive of the low status of stable staff in the racing hierarchy, further evidenced by the canteen and overnight accommodation facilities at UK race courses. The poor quality of some provision was much commented upon by stable staff, some 93% of respondents saying that racecourses should improve staff facilities (Miller 2010).

Producing the horse body

In his historical account of animals in the industrial revolution, Hribal (2003) argues that horses are part of the working class because they contribute to the development of capitalism, while reaping none of the profit. He sees this as analogous with the social relationship between workers and employers. It could be argued that this applies to horseracing also, as the racehorse 'works' and will bring profits to at least some of its investors and its trainer. The value of a racehorse is vested in three sources: prize money, betting and breeding. The first two apply to all racehorses, whether on the Flat or National Hunt while the third applies in the main to stallions raced on the Flat. However, prize money is greater on the Flat which in 2010 was more than double the

prize money for National Hunt racing £67,572,859 as against £31,389,808 (British Horseracing Authority 2011b).

There is a strong relationship between racing thoroughbred horses and breeding from them. The most profitable part of the industry is breeding, specifically stallions' fees at stud. This means that profitability is skewed in favour of Flat racing, since National Hunt horses run as mares or geldings, while Flat racing horses run as fillies or colts (ie young stallions).

Care work

Mewett (2008) finds that horse care predicated on human ways of caring. As we know from the work of Twigg (2000:407) 'bodywork is poorly regarded in terms of pay and employment esteem' (see also Fine 2005). It therefore seems likely that the low status of dirty work has an adverse impact on wages for stable staff also. Care work in racing stables involves dirty work and sensory work, both of which are essential to the care of horses. Stable staff clean up the dirt produced by horses - removing urine and manure soiled bedding as they muck out the stables; from the horse lorry during transportation; and at the racecourse stables. Mucking out will also bring them in contact with dust from clean straw and hay. They also have the job of cleaning muddy tack, rugs, and other horse apparel. They groom horses and keep their bodies clean, which will involve the genitals as well as the coat, mane and tail. They also deal with body fluids such as blood, pus or nasal fluid when dealing with a sick or injured horse, saliva when administering a worming compound. There are clearly parallels between stable staff and Sanders' veterinary technicians, as well as with the care workers whose dirty work was observed by Twigg (2000). We are discussing the nature of work in

a specific labour process which makes particular demands on the bodies of stables staff. Nevertheless, the work of stable staff is often characterised by employers (Miller 2010) as 'a way of life' in which staff accept low wages for 'love of horses', neatly obscuring the real nature of the employment relationship.

The other, equally important, part of the care work is in the form of olfactory, sight, hearing and touching work (Hockey 2009), especially when checking horses for injury and illness. Horses cannot tell us when they are ill or hurting and rely on humans to interpret their bodily signs for evidence of problems. This may arise in the stables or when out on the gallops at exercise, often when looking for an explanation of why a horse has performed less well than normal, or is playing up. One of the aspects of horse care which stable staff talked of was that of 'knowing your horse', as a result of daily and repeated contact with the animal as part of the process of 'producing' the racehorse.

Communication work

It is this category that marks out the racing labour process as inherently different from body work with humans. In some ways it is the most difficult to capture because it deals with the embodied skill of communication with an animal. Little attention has been paid to the human/animal relationship where communication has to be organised on a different basis since the horse can only communicate through behaviours. The human, of necessity, fills in the blanks.

Game's (2001) research on the horse-human relationship helps us to understand this. She looked at the ways in which horse and rider interact with each other very closely in a successful riding partnership. In racing, as in

other forms of equine sport, horses rely on the bodily instructions that are given by their riders to know whether to go forward and at what pace, or to stop, or to be prepared to take off over a jump. Humans have to tell the horse these things by using a combination of their body weight in or out of the saddle, the riding 'aids' of leg pressure and manipulation of the reins. As Cassidy (2002:112) observes 'Riding racehorses is conducted according to its own detailed set of rules that cannot be extrapolated from the technology alone, so must be learnt'.

Stable staff must also use their bodies to move a horse around the stable and out of the way when mucking out; to persuade a horse to load on to a horse lorry; and to stand still when being tacked up/untacked, or when 'legging up' a jockey into the saddle at the racecourse. Communication is essentially non-verbal for lack of a common, spoken language and is essential to successful performance of all these tasks (Brandt 2005).

Horse-human relationship

It must be recognised that the horse body also provides moments of pleasure. There is the thrill of galloping and jumping; the pleasure to be gained from grooming and touching; the pride when 'your' horse wins; and the pride drawn from riding skill and communicating with 'your' horse. There is also the possibility of pain from loss of a horse, or from fear of a difficult horse. Stable staff also exercise power with their bodies and power is embodied in them, especially when riding. A further, and important, aspect is the pleasure that workers derive from the highly physical and tactile tasks that make up the labour process. This complexity offers a striking set of reasons why stable staff have such a strong bond with horses. It does not solely derive from the

love of horses, which staff undoubtedly have (Cassidy 2002; Miller 2010), but also from the practical need to avoid being kicked, bitten or thrown off a horse, all potential dangers inherent in the bodywork referred to above. Consideration of the bodywork undertaken by stable staff showed that the reason why stable staff 'love' horses is bound up in the specificities of the particular labour process in racing stables. This reflects Wolkowitz's (2006) concern with the way in which our bodies are implicated in particular labour processes.

Conclusion

This chapter identifies a group of workers, sports support workers, whose labour processes have, so far, been less theorised in the literature than those of sports(wo)men (Wacquant 1995). In studying stable staff, we can see that some bodily practices, such as weight restriction, are passed on to them from other parts of the industry. We can also see that the demands of the production process require athleticism from the large numbers of young people who form the basic grade of stable lad/lass, as well as expecting them to be largely 'invisible' when at race meetings. Stable staff are also dependent on their bodies as a means of communicating with race horses, the other body involved in the labour process. The racing industry also relies on embodied capacities and attributes amongst stable staff which remain unquantified or rewarded in the wage-effort bargain.

The horse body is produced to meet the demands of the industry for fit and competitive racehorses; some horse bodies will also go on to produce more horses through the breeding industry. The animal body has also been under-theorised, particularly in its form as a 'commercial' animal, 'working' in the

racing labour process alongside its human companions. It is argued by Probyn (2000:14) that 'In an obvious manner, sport highlights that bodies do something'. There is firm evidence that the bodies of stable staff make a significant contribution to the production of racehorses. While the success of the labour process in racing stables is highly dependent on a good relationship between horse and human, worker status is inextricably linked to body work. The work is skilled but low paid because the skilled element is in part embodied and in general goes unrecognised in a formal sense, overlaid by the stigma of undertaking dirty work.

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