"Stable staff are also expected to produce their bodies in certain ways."

**Communication work**

It is the third category that embraces the bodywork which 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. Game's (2000) 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 equestrian sport, horses rely on bodily instructions that are given by their riders to know whether to go forward, stop, or to be prepared to take off over a jump. Humans have to tell the horse these things by using a combination of weight in or out of the saddle, the riding ‘ aids’ of leg pressure and manual 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 box, to stand still when being bashed up, and 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. For stable staff this is part of a ‘skilled bodily craft’ (Cassidy 2002: 106). However, it is not quantified or measured and recognised through a formal qualification, a fact that probably contributes to the low wages received by stable staff.

**Conclusion**

Stable staff do have a strong bond with horses but this is formed from not only a desire to work with horses but also from the way they undertake this work. This bond was often expressed as one of ‘love’ by its participants. It is not, however, emotional labour as defined by Hochschild (1983) and taken up in the literature on the new workplace of the service sector (Taylor 1998). Unlike the customer service situation, staff are not being expected to put on an act in order to satisfy human customers and it is not unrealistic to say that their love of horses is a genuine, rather than an "acted" emotion (Hochschild 1983). However, being a successful horsemanship is bound up in the emotional bond between horse and human. This reflects Wolkowitz's (2005) concern with the way in which our bodies are implicated in particular labour processes. 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. It was also found that worker status in the industry is inextricably linked to body work while the work is skilled it is low paid because the skilled element goes unrecognized in a formal sense, overlaid by the stigma of undertaking dirty work.

**References**


