

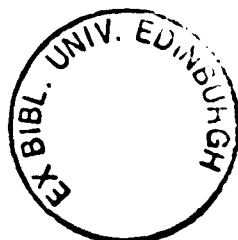
An Anthropological Study of Horseracing in Newmarket

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and is the product of my own work.

Signed:

Date: 14/4/99

Abstract

This PhD examines horseracing in Britain. It is based upon fifteen months fieldwork in Newmarket, Suffolk, often referred to as the International Headquarters of Flat Racing. My research consisted of participant observation within the four main aspects of the racing industry; on a stud, at a training stable, at the Tattersalls sales and with professional gamblers and bookmakers on the racecourse. I also conducted interviews with racing officials and with individuals who considered themselves to be members of 'Newmarket families'. In addition, I examined the consumption of horseracing by gamblers. Betting on horseracing contradicts the ideology of pedigree whereby breeding will determine ability, and is therefore one of the sources of conflict between the suppliers and the consumers of racing. My intention was to examine the idea of pedigree as it is applied to the English thoroughbred. I have sought to specify the mechanism by which this idea can be applied to the human contingent of racing society, such that the hierarchy amongst animals naturalises the hierarchy amongst humans and vice versa.

The thesis focuses particularly upon the ideas of relatedness held by members of racing society who consider themselves to be 'real Newmarket families'. Racing ability is envisaged as born and bred rather than taught, and racing credentials rest upon one's claims to kinship with successful individuals. Despite the apparent basis of this system in the sharing of blood, connections may also be created in its absence. It is argued that the ideology of pedigree contains a descriptive element, according to which relations of blood are mapped, and also a cultural imperative whereby ability must be explained on the basis of breeding. I suggest that it is this imperative which maintains the class based division of labour within racing. The naturalisation of class inequalities through the conventions of the racecourse, the jockey's apprenticeship, and the embodiment of taste (Bourdieu 1984) are all considered at length.

I describe the ideology of pedigree as containing a theory of reproduction similar to that described by Delaney (1986), and ideas of relatedness which Bouquet has identified in the genealogical method (1993). These ideas are most completely worked out in relation to favoured animals, particularly racehorses. However, ideas of nature in Newmarket enable the application of pedigree to humans also. Nature in Newmarket is both a separate realm from humanity and also a realm encompassing humans. Racehorses can thus be made to stand, metaphorically, for persons, whilst in other contexts they may be conceptualised as 'man's noblest creation', such that humans are outside, and opposed to, nature. Both these conceptions of 'nature' are illustrated with relevant fieldwork examples.

The final section of this thesis considers the impact of the new reproductive technologies upon thoroughbred breeding. These techniques are explicitly outlawed by the International Stud Book, and the debate surrounding their use in the future stresses ideas of the loss of control of blood. I argue that racing society in Britain is thus experiencing a literalising process (Strathern 1992b) whereby the class imperatives which inhere in the ideology of pedigree may be exposed.

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Chapter One: Introduction

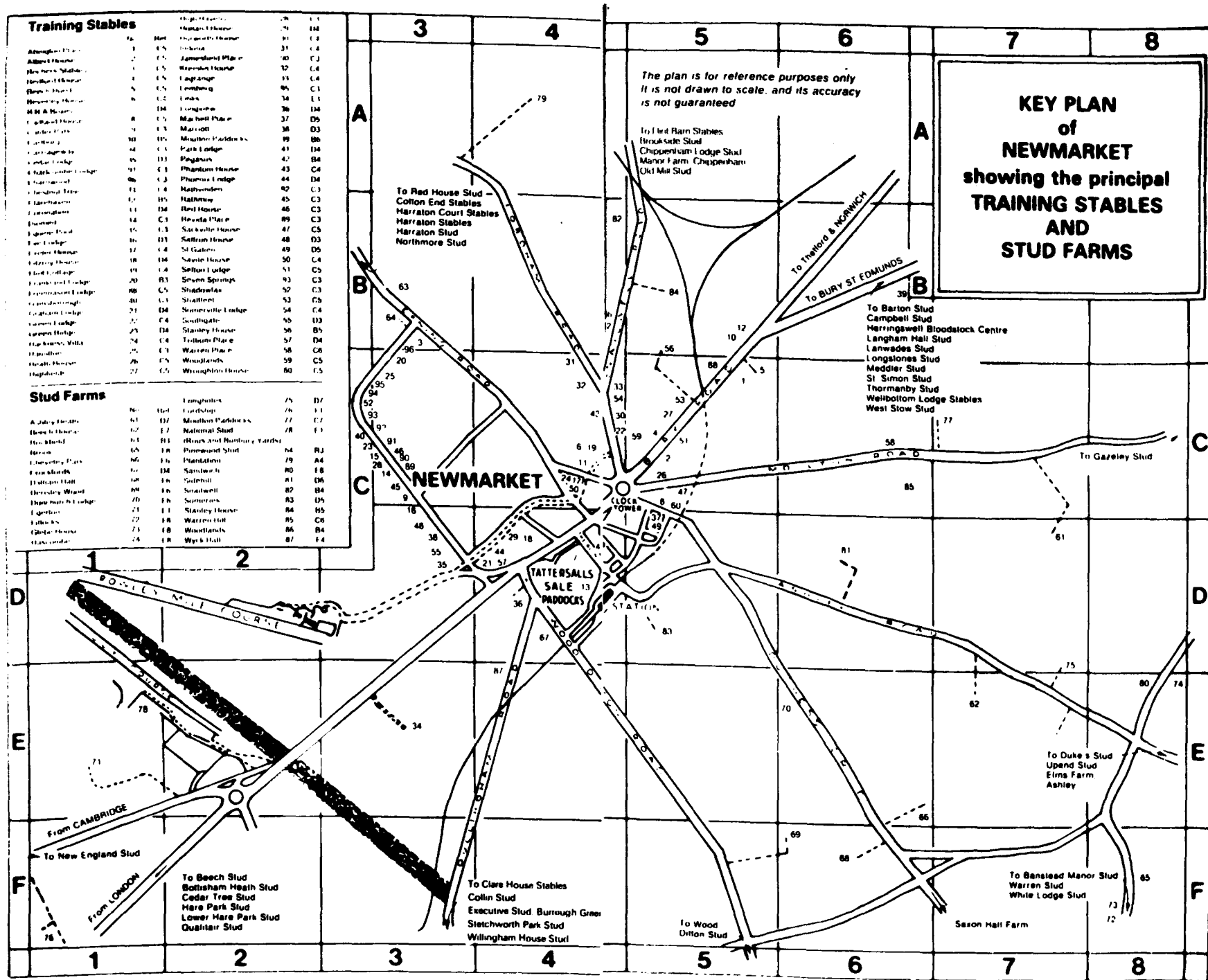
Introduction

Newmarket is a town of eighteen thousand people and four thousand racehorses (Newmarket Stud Farmers Association 1998). It is located on the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border, and its windswept Heath has been the site of horseracing in a multitude of forms, from the scythed chariots of Boadicea to the massive finances and internationalism of thoroughbred flat racing today. It is often assumed that the history of Newmarket *is* the history of horseracing. It is occasionally stated that Newmarket *is* horseracing.

I chose to study in Newmarket because it epitomises English racing. It is thus not typical of, nor entirely different from, other racecourse towns and cities. What makes Newmarket interesting is that it was the site of the codification of horseracing in the eighteenth century, and became the favoured location for the most powerful opinion-makers in horseracing society at that time. Newmarket still accommodates the Jockey Club Rooms. The result of this concentration of power has been the identification of the town with a single industry which still dominates its landscape, daily routines, and social relations.

As well as being the site of two racecourses, the July Course and the Rowley Mile, Newmarket has become a racehorse training centre, the largest of its kind in the world. It accommodates sixty-eight trainers, and two thousand racehorses. In addition to training stables, there are forty-two studs, covering approximately 10,700 acres in and around Newmarket (Jockey Club 1997a). Services associated with the racing industry, including vets, farriers, corn merchants, saddlers and transport companies, are also in high concentration. The fortunes of all of the retail and service industry in Newmarket depend upon the fortunes of the racing industry, since 'of a total working population of seven thousand, over half are involved, directly or indirectly, in the racing industry' (Jockey Club 1997a).

1.1 Map showing Newmarket's training stables and stud farms
(1997 Houghton Sales Catalogue: 72-73)



Forest Heath Council recognises that, 'the town's unique character...is derived from the horse racing industry' (Forest Heath District Council 1994: 19) and provides a planning environment in which non-racing land use is discouraged, whilst racing land use is protected:

Within the Horse Racing Interest Area...the District Council will consider favourably all proposals for horse farms and training establishments...there will be a general presumption against developments not related to the needs of the horse racing industry, agriculture or forestry, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that no unreasonable disruption or disturbance to horse breeding or training would be entailed. (FHDC 1994: App. C)

The Council also identifies Newmarket's environs as similarly distinctive:

The fact that the grassland is carefully maintained and cut gives a carefully manicured appearance to these open areas, more akin to parkland than to an agricultural area. Beyond the gallops there are further extensive areas which are given over to studland for the purpose of thoroughbred breeding. These establishments are, again, particularly distinctive and provide an extremely high quality landscape setting. (FHDC 1994: 2)

Both Newmarket's social structure and landscape are strongly influenced by the racing industry, an influence which is protected by the local planning regime. This thesis will interpret the social logic and landscape of Newmarket, identifying the central attitudes of the society which influenced their formation.

Giddens observes that:

the combination of the sources of mediate and proximate structuration distinguished here, creating a three fold class structure, is generic to capitalist society. But the mode in which these elements are merged to form a *specific class system*, in any given society, differs significantly according to variations in economic and political development. (Giddens 1973: 110)

This thesis is thus a case study of a 'specific class system' - that of the trainers, owners, breeders, bloodstock agents, racing administrators, stallion men, lads, farriers, stud-workers and work-riders who contribute to the production of racing as a sport, industry and betting medium, referred to throughout as 'racing society'. It offers a characterisation of this system as well as an explanation of how it is maintained in dialogue with both those who bet and visit the racecourse, and with the aristocrat of the animal world, the English thoroughbred racehorse.

I am using 'class' to refer to a combination of Weber's 'status', (one's position in relation to a prestige hierarchy) and 'class' (determined by economic position) whilst putting aside issues of 'party', (determined by position in relation to political power):

'classes' are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas 'status groups' are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special 'styles of life'. (Weber 1970: 181)

In Newmarket, class and status are strongly correlated, 'class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions' (Weber 1970: 187). This study will explore some of the forms this relationship takes within racing society.

My working definition of class is taken from Marwick, and is both broad and colloquial:

classes are groupings across society...involving inequalities, or, certainly, *differences*, in such areas as power, authority, wealth, income, prestige, working conditions, lifestyles and culture; people of any one class, it is assumed, associate much more with one another than they do with members of other classes. (Marwick 1981: 19)

However, my argument is that, in racing society, class denotes a far more specific idea. Class arises from the idea that people can be ordered in accordance with the ideology of pedigree. I shall argue that members of racing society envisage order through pedigree amongst both humans and favoured animals, particularly racehorses. The one order reinforces the other: the upper class, as the orderers of the aristocratic racehorse become, 'naturally', the aristocracy of human society. My intention is thus to understand, "How class can be culturally constructed and yet continue to be 'real'." (Ortner 1995: 270), by examining its construction in and by racing society.

This introduction will begin by offering a brief outline of my fieldwork, the details of which are described throughout the main body of the text. In addition, I shall describe the lifecycle of the racehorse and offer a few useful terms with which to navigate the rest of the text. A knowledge of the lifecycle of the racehorse is made necessary by my contention that racing society and the racehorse cannot be understood in isolation from each other:

The constraints imposed by the animals' biological nature and the practical purposes to which their owners dedicated them turned out to be not very restrictive of human understanding or interpretation. Even the interactions apparently most tightly structured by economics or anatomy, such as the treatment of disease and the production of meat for market, were often influenced by apparently unrelated social concerns. As material animals were at the complete disposal of human beings, so the rhetorical animals offered unusual opportunities for manipulation; their position in the physical world and in the universe of discourse were mutually reinforcing. (Ritvo 1987: 5)¹

This study therefore discusses the processes by which racehorses and racing society are mutually constituted.

The second section of this introduction discusses the treatment of sport by anthropology and sociology. The status of racing, as either sport or industry, is controversial amongst its practitioners. However, I shall adopt insights from both disciplines without any commitment to the treatment of racing as a sport exclusively. I shall then offer a very brief history of British horseracing. This history is designed to highlight only those aspects of racing history relevant to contemporary Newmarket. The series of financial arrangements by which racing is funded are also introduced.

The fourth section of this introduction discusses how connections are made by racing society, and how this process relates to discussions of relatedness in

¹Ritvo examines the historical process whereby animals came to be classified in ways that implicated human social order, particularly during the Victorian era (1987, 1991, 1994, 1997). I shall argue that many of the attitudes she identifies historically can still be identified in contemporary Newmarket.

anthropology and of the family in sociology. This section seeks to locate my investigation in the anthropological literature on kinship and, in particular, in that which discusses 'social' and 'biological' 'facts', and how they are constituted. The fifth section introduces the analytical device that frames my investigation into horseracing society: the nature-culture distinction. Much of this thesis is taken up with meanings of 'nature' in Newmarket, their influence upon social relations, human-horse relations, and landscape. Ideas of class arise from this discussion of nature in Newmarket.

class is real, like the squares on a board game, and landing on or staying in these squares has real consequences. But to say this is not to deny the equally fundamental point that class is discursively constructed, that in some sense it is only called into more statistical being - or not as the case may be - by the prevailing discursive formations as heard in everyday forms of talk as well as in public representations of all sorts. (Ortner 1995: 259)²

This study will consider the 'prevailing discursive formations' of racing society, as revealed (and concealed) on the racecourse, in the betting ring, at the bloodstock auction and in the training yard. The final section of this introduction comprises a summary of the thesis.

Fieldwork and the lifecycle of the English thoroughbred

This study is based upon fifteen months fieldwork in the Newmarket area, living firstly in the village of Westley Waterless (ten months), just outside the town, and secondly on a training yard on the Hamilton Road (three months). Intervening periods were spent in a variety of temporary locations including a hayloft on a stud, a bungalow shared with sheep and a horse lorry. My fieldwork experiences have been incorporated into the text whenever appropriate and these introductory comments serve merely to situate what is described and explained in greater detail in the following chapters (see also Tables 1.1 and 1.2). Although Newmarket was the primary site of my fieldwork, my object of study was in fact 'racing society', a collection of people involved in the production of racing, found in high concentration in the town. Data has also been gathered from a variety of locations outside Newmarket, specifically, from racecourses all over Britain, from the Ascot and Doncaster bloodstock sales, from racing's service providers in Weatherby (Weatherbys) and London (the Jockey Club and the British Horseracing Board) and from Lambourn, the centre of National Hunt racing in Britain.

²Ortner studied her former high school class mates and discovered that 'class has this fleeting quality, floating through discussions of almost every subject under the sun, rarely focalised, barely textualised' (Ortner 1995: 267). However, in Newmarket, class is more easily identified.

I arrived in Newmarket in October 1996, an experienced rider, with my own horses at home and knowledge of a wide range of equestrian disciplines, particularly polo and show-jumping. My knowledge of racing, however, was limited to an aesthetic appreciation of the racehorse. During my undergraduate degree I had acquired the habit of driving over to Newmarket to watch the horses on the Heath, and it was during this time that I began to notice the interesting characters surrounding the practice of horseracing.

As later chapters reiterate, my pre-existing knowledge of horses and my ability to ride and handle them was one of the most significant factors influencing my fieldwork:

'cherchez la vache' is the best advice that can be given to those who desire to understand Nuer behaviour. (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 16)

Of course, in relation to Newmarket this advice reads instead, 'cherchez le cheval'. My acceptance by many racing people depended upon my ability to perform tasks involving horses with the minimum of difficulty and fuss. On meeting people for the first time, I was often asked to 'just grab hold of that old mare for me', or 'hand me that scraper will you?' Though the manner was casual and the task usually straightforward, its completion often depended upon a confidence with horses and a knowledge of their specialised equipment, which indicated to 'horse-people' that I was 'one of them'.

I began my fieldwork in the autumn, when most of the important sales take place at Tattersalls Park Paddocks in the centre of Newmarket. The breeding season for English thoroughbreds runs from February 14th to July 15th, and all thoroughbreds share a nominal birthday of January 1st. It is thus advantageous to be an 'early' foal, born as soon after this as possible, in order to have an advantage over those foals born later in the year. Foals are the produce of a particular 'dam' and 'sire', a mare and a stallion. Female racehorses are referred to as 'fillies' up to and including the age of four, after which time they become 'mares'. If the filly is 'covered' (mated) before she is five, she automatically becomes a mare. A 'stallion' refers to a male horse at stud, a 'gelding' is a castrated male horse, a 'colt' is a male horse up to and including the age of four years who is not at stud or gelded. A 'horse' is a male horse over the age of five who is neither gelding nor stallion.

Most English thoroughbreds are sold as yearlings, ready to go into training and to race the next season as two-year-olds. Yearlings are either brought straight from the stud on which they were born to the sales, or go through a 'preparation' with a sales agent. This process is described in greater detail in chapter six. I spent the first few months of fieldwork watching yearlings go through the sales ring, trying to understand the process whereby they are bought and sold. I built up racing contacts

through playing polo during the winter, and offering to exercise ponies in the freezing cold often produced offers of further introductions. By sales time the following year I had a chance to lead a filly through the ring myself. The sales run until the end of the year, and once they had finished I began working on a stud, at the beginning of 1997.

My experiences of working as a studhand are described in detail in chapter eight. The early part of the year was dominated by foaling and then by 'covering' (mating). Once the foals had been born and the mares covered, the emphasis changed and the turf flat season began (all-weather flat racing continues throughout the winter, but is not as prestigious or valuable as turf racing). My fieldwork also moved, from stud to training stable, where my own initiation into riding racehorses began. My experience of working as a 'lad' is described in chapter seven. The yearlings bought at the sale are sent to the training stables chosen by their owners. Racehorses are trained on behalf of their owners by professional racehorse trainers, who may board between six and two hundred 'horses in training'. Training stables are staffed by 'lads' and 'lasses' or 'girls', who look after the day to day welfare of the three horses for whom they are responsible, 'yard men' and women, who muck out and sweep, 'work-riders', who ride important trials called 'work', 'head lads' who are in charge of the other lads, 'travelling head lads' who are in charge of the lads and horses when at the races, 'assistant trainers' and the trainer him or herself.

Once a yearling has been placed with a trainer, it becomes a 'horse in training', and is 'backed' and 'broken', that is, accustomed first to a bridle and saddle, and then a rider. Two-year-olds may be too 'backward' to race and need time to grow before they can withstand the pressures of training. Other yearlings are quick to learn, growing into what is referred to as an 'early' two-year-old. Once the two-year-old is broken, he will be 'tried' against his peers, to see whether he 'shows' any speed. A two-year-old who is 'showing' at home will be tried in a race, the outcome of which will determine his future. The majority of two-year-olds will be given several chances to race as they may not show their ability due to being 'green', i.e. lacking in experience. At three, the racehorse is thought to be mature enough to have 'shown' his ability although there are some who are 'slow to come to themselves' and continue to develop. Once a racehorse has established his ability, after several runs at two and three, it is unlikely that he will ever run in a better 'class' of race, and will run at the same level until he loses his physical 'soundness' or 'form'. At this point the horse may be retired. Mares are likely to be 'put into foal' whilst only the best bred and most successful colts become stallions.

The major phases of my fieldwork were thus spent working on a stud, a training yard, on the racecourse, and at the sales showing yearlings. In addition, I met

members of racing society who were eager to describe their families. These interviews were conducted throughout fieldwork, at the races, and in informants' homes. My association with the professional punter, who explained a great deal about gambling, stemmed from an introduction by a racecourse commentator with whom I spent a day. I then went racing regularly with my professional punter friend, particularly towards the end of fieldwork when my grant was running low. Over the course of fieldwork I also spent time with breeders, owners, farriers, vets, bloodstock agents, Jockey Club officials, racing correspondents, bloodstock experts, local councillors, the local MP Richard Spring, the London Racing Club, and at Weatherbys, the Jockey Club and the British Racing School.

I choose not to describe this thesis as an example of 'anthropology at home'. In Newmarket, I was 'at home' in relation to my nationality, skin colour, up-bringing and affinity with horses. I was also, of course, not 'at home', because I was always a member of a community of anthropologists, that membership being the purpose of my presence in Newmarket. Writing up has reinforced this separation:

Crucial to social anthropology is not only trying to present the picture 'from the inside', but also trying to throw that picture into relief, highlighting cultural specificities which insiders - by the very fact that they are insiders - easily take for granted. In other words, anthropology is not just about 'telling it as it is' (which can only ever be an aspiration, of course) but about telling how it might be otherwise. (Macdonald 1997: xviii)

If 'anthropology at home' refers to a purely geographical notion of 'inside Britain, Europe, or North America', then it is merely uninformative. However, if it implies something more profound, such as a sharing of concepts significant to the conduct of anthropology in that area, then I believe that it is misleading. It is not necessary to leave the society in which one feels 'at home' in order to question the founding principles of that society, whilst, as Maryon McDonald indicates, it is perfectly possible to go to the most contrasting society imaginable, only to return with fulfilled and unquestioned expectations:

We now realise, I think, that some anthropology never left home, or never really returned with its home categories and values seriously challenged in any way other than that in which we might expect them to be disturbed. We expected the natives to have lots of ritual, religion, kinship, metaphor, myth and meaning, and that is what we found. (McDonald 1987: 123)

I would therefore prefer to emphasise Cohen's statement that:

any mind beyond the ethnographer's own is Other and, therefore, requires to have interpretive work done on it. (Cohen 1990: 205)

Whilst it no longer seems necessary to rail against exoticism within anthropology, it does appear that some societies remain more suitable subjects of anthropological enquiry than others. In particular, anthropology seems suited to understanding the most under-represented and least powerful societies. Part of the purpose of this study was to discover whether anthropology was equally well-suited to characterising a Western, aristocratic elite. I feel that anthropology met this challenge,

with the anticipated benefits to the relationship between fieldworker and informant. Shovelling muck at 6 a.m. one freezing morning, with a broken finger and a strapped ankle, covered in horse secretions of various sorts, I pondered my place in the scheme of things that was my fieldwork. I was shaken from my reverie by a loud shout from 'the boss': 'Rebecca! Get your anthropological arse out here!' As Ortner said of her high-school colleagues whom she made objects of study:

it's healthy to be in this more symmetrical position vis-à-vis my informants. Nobody can accuse me of silencing *them*. (Ortner 1995: 271)

The study of sport in anthropology and sociology

I have chosen not to frame this study within the anthropology of sport because this would beg the question of whether racing is indeed a sport or an industry, a major debate throughout racing history, the contemporary incarnation of which can be found in chapter five. Furthermore, both the anthropology and sociology of sport proved restrictive, and incapable of providing explanations for those features of horseracing that I wished to investigate. This section offers a brief outline of some of the anthropology and sociology of sport, and offers explanations for my decision to look elsewhere for theoretical inspiration.

Anthropology has flirted with sport, enjoying some periods of indulgence, and others of rejection. It is difficult to account for the changing status of sport in anthropology, although the residual overtone that sport is perhaps too frivolous a concern for a serious discipline remains constant, with various exceptions, including the recent collection edited by MacClancy (1997):

the study of sport is not some tangential topic to be pursued occasionally as an intellectual form of light relief from the 'real stuff' of economics, politics, and public morality. Sport is a central activity in our societies, one embodying social values, and, as such, as deserving of systematic investigation as any other. Sport might be fun. That does not mean it should be disregarded by academics. (MacClancy 1997: 17)

Whilst I agree with this sentiment, I do not feel that it goes far enough in imagining the significance of sport to a place such as that of Newmarket. 'Politics', 'economics', 'public morality', as well as kinship, personhood and landscape in Newmarket embody aspects of horseracing, rather than vice versa.

In the past, sport seems to have become relevant to anthropology only when and if it can be used to reinforce the particular theoretical positions of the day. In general, sports have been used as evidence for the grand theories within anthropology. Tylor, in 'The History of Games' (1879), for example, wrote that whilst 'simple games' may 'spring up of themselves', others, being 'distinctly artificial' are not likely to be hit upon twice' (1879: 736). Those who rejected diffusionism and adopted Malinowski's 'organic analogy' explained sport in terms of its integrative or economic

function. George Gmelch (1972), for example, analysed the role of magic in American baseball, and concluded that the more unpredictable the role of the player, the greater the likelihood that he will resort to magic, a contention that finds support in *Magic, Science and Religion*:

We find magic wherever the elements of chance and accident, and the emotional play between hope and fear have a wide and extensive range. We do not find magic wherever the pursuit is certain, reliable and well under the control of rational methods. (Malinowski 1948: 139-40)

Structural functionalism cast sport as assisting the persistence of other institutions within any particular society by, for example, providing an outlet for aggression, thus supporting the institution of the law. Thus, Fox characterised sport as the means by which the Pueblo diffuse the potentially disruptive intrusion of competition into their society, by submitting it to categories of witchcraft which they already know how to contain (1961: 15). Symbolic approaches, as found, for example, in the work of Manning (1981), who studied the cricket festival in Bermuda, concentrated upon those aspects of the social organisation of a community which may be communicated by its performance.

Subsequent to, and derivative of, symbolic approaches was the interpretive approach found in the work of Geertz. Geertz defines ethnography as 'an elaborate venture' in 'thick description' (1973: 6), the subject of which is 'our' constructions of 'their' constructions, the task of anthropology being 'to sort out structures of signification...determining their social ground and import' (1973: 9). The cockfight in Bali is famously characterised as a text 'which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong' (1973: 452).

Despite the sophistication of Geertz's analysis, a large proportion of the anthropology of sport retains an uncritical, almost quaint, style:

Not all anthropological research is tied to or defined by a major theoretical model. Some basic ethnography, cultural description, is guided by only a few assumptions or definitions. Ethnographic description is the essential raw data of anthropological analysis and cross-cultural research. (Blanchard and Cheska 1995: 82)

These remarks are especially ironic when iterated in relation to sport, which has been subjected to a variety of interpretations according to the theoretical inclinations of the anthropologist. Sport has thus been characterised as functional, institutionally significant, the product of the material base of society, symbolically charged, or as a text to be read, but most often, sport has been used in order to support an evolutionary thesis. Evolutionism, employed not so much as a methodological tool, but as an organising metaphor, arises at all stages in the development of the study of sport in anthropology.

The work of Dunning and Elias (1986) dominated the sociology of sport until recently when, for example, Christian Bromberger (1995) and contributors to a special

edition of Terrain (1995) introduced a perspective from which sport itself became a forum for the manipulation of social norms and values, its practitioners increasingly self-conscious. Whilst offering interesting insights into the nature of sport, the work of Dunning and Elias had remained subordinate to the wider evolutionary thesis of the 'civilising process', summarised below:

the social standard of conduct and sentiment, particularly in some upper class circles, began to change fairly drastically from the sixteenth century onwards in a particular direction. The ruling of conduct and sentiment became stricter, more differentiated and all-embracing, but also more even, more temperate, banning excesses of castigation as well as of self-indulgence. (Dunning and Elias 1986: 21)

The 'civilising process' offers an impoverished explanation of discrete events and trends which have been subject to their own historically and politically specific influences. The histories of sports are no less specific, and reducing British horseracing to a phenomenon which merely reflects a broader trend of increasingly mannered behaviour conceals what is a much more intricate story.

I have chosen to adopt some of the insights of the sociology of sport associated with Dunning and Elias, without accepting the sum of the 'civilising process' itself. I pursue the idea that:

sport, rather than acting as a means for transcending class and racial barriers, tends to become accommodated to the existing structure of class and racial inequalities in the societies where it is played. (Dunning 1971: 233)

The significance of inequalities within sport finds support in this thesis, and the idea of sport as a 'levelling mechanism' is rejected as simplistic. I also challenge a number of the dichotomies which may have contributed to the relative neglect of sport by both anthropology and sociology:

in terms of the pervasive Western tendency towards reductionist and dualistic thinking, sport is perceived to be a trivial, pleasure oriented leisure activity which engages the body rather than the mind and is of no economic value. (Dunning 1986: 14)

The anthropology of sport has suffered from an uncritical notion of the body. The work of physical educationalists and sports scientists, in particular, has accepted the ideology of 'sport-for-all' without investigating the notion of sport and of the body this pronouncement implies. The 'common-sense' appeal of sport as neutral, and concerned with the body, reproduces the separation between mind and body, and fails to address the class associations of particular sports and bodies, reducing the politics of sport to questions of access (Hargreaves 1982: 16). The sporting body has, however, been a subject of inquiry to those theorists who take seriously the embodiment of class through taste:

there is no accounting for tastes...each taste feels itself to be natural - and so it is, being a habitus - which amounts to rejecting others as unnatural and therefore vicious. (Bourdieu 1980: 252)

The embodiment of taste is a theme pursued throughout this thesis, but particularly in the discussion of the bodies of the main protagonists within racing society (chapter two), in the description of learning to ride as an example of Legitimate Peripheral

Participation (chapter seven) and through an appreciation of sumptuary distinctions and manners. Racing bodies (both human and equine) cannot be taken for granted, for they embody clear messages about the constitution of class.

A Brief and Selective History of Flat Racing in Newmarket

The earliest English horse race of which we know, took place, not at Newmarket, but at Weatherby in Yorkshire, in the reign of the Roman Emperor Severus Alexander (a.d. 210). (Lyle 1945: 1)

This study does not concern itself with identifying the first ever English horserace or tracing the ancient history of racing generally. It is concerned with the modern period of horseracing, from the time at which it was codified in the eighteenth century, to its contemporary form. The main impetus for this codification came from the Jockey Club.

The Jockey Club was established in 1750 as a gentlemen's club, meeting most often in the Star and Garter in Pall Mall. The Club also met at the Corner, Hyde Park, owned by Richard Tattersall. When Tattersall moved to Knightsbridge the Jockey Club moved into the Bond Street residence of their agents, Weatherbys (Black 1893). This trio of institutions; the Jockey Club, Weatherbys and Tattersalls are still dominant forces in English racing, though their roles have changed since the formation of the British Horseracing Board in 1992.

The records of the Jockey Club do not reveal its original purpose, and there does not seem to be any explicit statement of intent to control racing. Membership was almost exclusively aristocratic. The term 'jockey' referred, at the time, to the owner of the horse, rather than its rider, and so it could be said that the Club was, initially, a racehorse owners association. In 1752 the Jockey Club leased a plot of land in Newmarket, and the original 'Coffee Room' was built. The Jockey Club was soon approached for advice where disputes arose on 'the turf' (Jockey Club 1997b: 1).

Horseracing at Newmarket had been established well before the Jockey Club chose to locate itself on the High Street. Newmarket's place as the 'HQ' of racing developed with royal patronage, beginning with Richard II, 'But it was under James I that the village really became Royal Newmarket' (Lyle 1945: 4). This royal association culminated with Charles II, who conducted the court from Newmarket during autumn race meetings:

Thus we find the turf, rising like a Phoenix from the ashes on the accession of Charles II, thoroughly reinstated as our great national pastime during the Merry Monarch's reign...To this resuscitation the king extended his powerful patronage and support. (Hore 1886: 92)

Newmarket's royal patrons reinforced the existing association of racing, and the horse itself, with prestige and status, as in this extract from *Religio Regis, or The Faith and Duty of a Prince*, written by James I:

But the honourablist and most commendable games that a king can use are on Horseback, for it becomes a Prince above all Men to be a good Horseman. (quoted by Lyle 1945: 7-8)

In more recent times, Princess Anne has ridden in amateur races and both the Queen and Queen mother are substantial racehorse owners. Britain remains the most prestigious of all racing nations, and although its prize money is lower than in France and America, the five annual Classic races still attract the richest owners in the world, most obviously, the Dubai and Saudi Arabian royal families. Royal patronage still exerts a strong influence upon the image of British racing, as the rest of the thesis will confirm. This influence was partly preserved by the work of the Jockey Club in codifying the rules of racing according to aristocratic ideals.

The Jockey Club famously established the right to 'warn off' in 1821, when a tout known as 'Snipe' was banned from Jockey Club land. This right was legally established in 1827 when an action for trespass against 'Snipe' was upheld (Black 1893: 82). The practice of 'warning off' whereby the individual is forbidden from entering any Jockey Club land remains. Two men were warned off for ten years in 1998 after collaborating in the formation of an allegedly fraudulent syndicate. There is no right to appeal, and a 'warning off' ends any professional involvement in racing. The Jockey Club retains the right to end individual careers where it feels racing has been brought into disrepute.

The authority of the Jockey Club extended beyond Newmarket after 1832 when a notice in the *Racing Calendar* effectively called the bluff of all other local authorities by announcing that the Jockey Club would only adjudicate on Newmarket races, as those elsewhere were run under such a wide variety of rules:

This announcement clearly had for its object the uniting of all meetings under the single control of the Jockey Club, and placing all others outside the pale of recognised authority. This small start towards uniting the various race meetings in Britain under a single authority finally culminated in reciprocal agreements with the Jockey Club, and Turf Authorities of practically every country in the world where racing takes place today. (Jockey Club 1997b: 2)

The introduction of a series of revised rules of racing after 1858 reflects the rapid period of change undergone by racing at this time. Although the old rules had remained unchanged for over one hundred years, the new rules lasted until 1868, only to be revised again in 1871 (Jockey Club 1997b: 2-3). Where race meetings had been a haphazard affair with the atmosphere of a local fair or carnival, they were now becoming highly organised with formalised procedures for starting, weight allocation and judging. Of course, the increased sophistication of the rules of racing succeeded in reinforcing the role of the Jockey Club and its place in the government of racing.

Weatherbys employees still describe themselves as the 'Civil Service' to racing. Weatherbys is a family business, its current head being Johnny Weatherby, descendant of the original agent of the Jockey Club. Weatherbys holds the records of owners' colours (the unique colour and design of the silks worn by the jockey on a particular owner's horse), names (horses' names must be registered with Weatherbys before they may race), and financial affairs for the Jockey Club. It takes entries for races and deals with the administration of licences and permits. It has recently registered as a bank and can provide a variety of financial services in addition to handling racing accounts which pay entry fees, Heath tax, and hold winnings.

Richard Tattersalls, the original host of the Jockey Club when they held their meetings at the Corner in Hyde Park in the 1750s, founded his own dynasty of thoroughbred racehorse auctioneers (Orchard 1953). Tattersalls is no longer family-owned or run, but remains the most prestigious bloodstock auctioneers, located in Park Paddocks in the centre of Newmarket. Tattersalls attracts the best bred yearlings each year to be sold at the annual Houghton Sales, which sold horses worth a total of £35 million over four days in October 1998.

The role of the Jockey Club has changed since the inception of the British Horseracing Board in 1992. The Board is now responsible for racing's finances, political lobbying, the form taken by the fixture list, marketing (an innovation) and training:

The BHB will strive to maintain significant improvements to the finances of Flat and Jump horseracing, as an important spectator sport, leisure industry and betting medium. It will aim to do this for the benefit of all those who invest in Racing and derive enjoyment from it, and in order to enhance British Racing's competitive position internationally. (BHB 1993: 1)

The Jockey Club retains responsibility for discipline, security, 'the conduct of a day's racing' and the licensing of racecourses and individuals. The membership of the Jockey Club is still internally elected and retains its male-dominated, aristocratic emphasis, thus in 1997, of 112 members, 89% were men, 44% were titled. Of the fifteen honorary members, five are British royals, four are Sheikhs, two hold military titles and two are Weatherbys (Sporting Life 10/11/97: 6).

In addition to regulating racing, the Jockey Club is the major land owner in Newmarket. The Jockey Club estate extends to 4500 acres in total, of which 2800 are training grounds, plus three stud farms, a farm, seventy-five residential properties, twenty commercial properties and The Jockey Club Rooms. This portfolio includes both the Rowley Mile and July Racecourses, the Links Golf Club, the National Stud land, the National Horseracing Museum, twelve leasehold training yards and, in a surprising diversification, two Happy Eater restaurants. Trainers pay a Heath Tax to the Jockey Club (£69 per horse per month in 1997), that entitles a horse to use the

training grounds. The Jockey Club has defined its new role as 'setting and maintaining standards for racing' (Jockey Club 1997a).

The Jockey Club's public image continues to be informed by ideas of snobbery, conservatism and chauvinism:

The days when racing was the preserve of a self-perpetuating clique of privileged upper class folk - short on chins and long on blinkers - should have gone. Instead of being in the hands of the wrong people, this sport should belong to the people. (Sporting Life 15/5/97: 3)

The Jockey Club is historically predisposed to autocracy, and despite the changing emphasis from single ownership of racehorses to syndication, and the increasing openness of the racing establishment, the social logic whereby breeding determines ability, in both humans and horses, continues to ensure the most conservative of distributions of power. This logic of heredity contextualises the structure of racing society, and makes the opinion that: 'it is high time...that the whole edifice of vested interests with its clanking chains of ancient prejudice was swept away' (ibid. 3), seem rather naive.

The funding of racing in Britain has developed in accordance with its executive growth. The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB) was instituted in 1961, in order to assess, collect and apply the 'monetary contributions from bookmakers and the Totaliser Board (the Tote)'. A levy is raised on all legal bookmaking, at a level of 1.37% of turnover (approximately £50 million annually). Betting off-course is liable to General Betting Duty, which is presently set at 9%, of which the government takes 6.5% (approximately £300 million annually). Betting on-course is tax free. Racing also has its own betting enterprise, the Tote, the profits of which go directly into racing. The HBLB spent £30,946,000 on prize money in 1996, which constituted 54.3 % of expenditure (HBLB 1996: 6).

Racing is therefore funded primarily by contributions from the betting public, collected by bookmakers and distributed by the HBLB. Many owners complain that ownership is unprofitable, and that bookmakers should pay more for the privilege of using racing as a betting medium in order to boost prize money and thereby sustain what is the sixth largest industry in Britain. The bookmakers invoke the plight of the punter and say that he should no longer subsidise what is a rich man's sport.

Both French and American racing developed 'in conversation with' the British tradition. In France, the Jockey Club was founded by Lord Seymour, in 1833 (Slaughter 1994: 4), and this link was concretised in the language of racing, which still includes 'le Jockey Club', 'le yearling', and 'le turf'. In America, the Jockey Club was formed by August Belmont I, in 1837, and the Stud Book was opened in 1896. The same equine bloodlines are followed in America, and as August Belmont IV was elected chairman of the American Jockey Club in 1982, it may be suggested that

similar concerns also appear to inform the human contingent of racing in the States (cf. Reeves 1994).

Thoroughbred racing in America is standardised in a way that the British racing establishment finds unseemly. Thus all American tracks are dirt (as opposed to turf), tight, and left-handed. The tight tracks make the draw much more significant in America, whilst in Britain courses are sufficiently wide and sweeping to facilitate manoeuvres which make the draw less important. British racecourses are all different, some are left-handed, some right-handed, undulating or flat, narrow or wide, they are thought to offer a more thorough test of a horse (and therefore of its breeding). Furthermore, American horses are permitted to run on drugs including Lasix and Bute, which disguise bleeding and lameness respectively. No drugs are permitted in Britain, further encouraging British breeders to assert the superiority of their bloodstock. In Britain, thoroughbred racing enjoys a monopoly, whilst in both America and France, trotting and harness racing are also popular (Slaughter 1994). These forms of racing employ non-thoroughbred racehorses, and were universally condemned by my British informants.

Apart from the intrusion of more recent forms of racing, perhaps the most important difference between Britain and France or America is the system of wagering. France enjoys a Tote monopoly, a pool betting system which returns its profits to racing. In America, bookmaking is only legal in Nevada, and the majority of betting is with the American Tote (Munting 1996: 111). All bets with the Tote are settled at odds calculated according to the weight of support for each horse. They do not, therefore, involve the personal contact on which the wager with the bookie depends:

Nowhere have bookmakers come to play such an important role in the betting market as in Britain and Ireland, though they remain legal in many other parts of Europe and the world. (Munting 1996: 110)

The significance of the axis of competition which lies between the upper class of racing society, who breed, train and own racehorses, and the bookmakers who bet that they will not be able to predict the outcome of races is described in chapter five. More generally, the cultural mores of each society in which horseracing takes place are obviously assimilated into its structure, and perhaps in the future I shall be able to pursue my ideas about the reasons for the significant differences between racing in Britain and elsewhere.

Making Connections

People in Newmarket are obsessed with connections, between people who are related, people who are not related, between horses and people and between horses.

Anthropology has exhibited its own connection fetish throughout its history, 'Kinship is to anthropology what logic is to philosophy or the nude is to art; it is the basic discipline of the subject' (Fox 1967: 10). This section briefly delineates those aspects of the field of kinship to which this thesis responds, in particular, the relationship between 'social' and 'biological' 'facts' and the separation of 'nature' and 'culture'.

Although kinship was central to anthropology throughout the twentieth century, English kinship was not the focus of any sustained or influential study until the 1980s. Even after this time, it did not receive the same attention as more 'exotic' kinship systems/patterns might:

We seemed to be apologetic for taking up readers' time with descriptions of systems and processes which were manifestly less elaborate, exotic, mysterious and, therefore, intellectually demanding than those to be found in Africa, Asia, the Pacific or the Middle East. In short, we were defensive. (Cohen 1990: 218)

Part of the explanation for this defensiveness can be extrapolated from the centrality of kinship to the classic anthropological texts and its perceived peripherality 'at home'. The proper subject of anthropology before the latter half of the twentieth century was 'primitive society', studying kinship 'at home' required an explanation where studying elsewhere did not. In more recent anthropology, however, 'primitive society' has been revealed as illusory, a construct fashioned in opposition to the society to which early social anthropologists belonged:

In practice, primitive society proved to be their own society (as they understood it) seen in a distorting mirror. (Kuper 1988: 5)

Kinship had been presented as the source of sociality in those societies that apparently lacked an institution which anthropologists could equate to either a state or a commercially driven division of labour. Thus unilineal kinship governed politico-jural affiliations in, for example, Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer* (1940). English kinship, described as 'cognatic' or 'bilateral', apparently lacked the ability to do so. The main organising principles of 'Western' or 'civilised' society lay elsewhere, whilst kinship was a purely domestic affair, concerned only with the nuclear family. Cognatic kinship, conceived in opposition to unilineal reckoning became a sort of 'non-kinship', the significant features of the society in question thought to lie elsewhere:

The question was how you could both have cognatic systems and have groups. It seemed commonly the case that cognatic kin reckoning co-existed with cutting or bounding classifications that rested on other-than-kinship criteria such as residence. Interest lay rather in the (non-kinship) conventions by which such systems achieved the kind of closure necessary if they were to be, in the parlance of the time, the building blocks of society. (Strathern 1992c: 89)

English kinship, recast as the study of the family, was the province of sociology, rather than anthropology, a division of labour which reinforced the belief that kinship was somehow more fundamental in non-western societies:

(Anthropologists) have investigated kinship in more primitive societies where it is of so much greater importance than our own that the study of it is sometimes in large part the study of kinship. (Willmott and Young 1960: 187)

The sociology of the family traced a historical progression from a pre-modern era in which roles were ascribed by birth, and tradition was looked to as an authority for the present, through a modern period in which tradition was replaced by scientific rationality, faith in progress and individualism (Jamieson 1998: 10). The nature and even the name of the third stage of this progression, most commonly described as 'post-modern' remains contested. The relative fluidity of the second phase was the subject of Bott's work on *Family and Social Networks* (1957):

the individual constructs his notions of social position and class from his own various and unconnected experiences of prestige and power and his imperfect knowledge of other people's...He is not just a passive recipient assimilating the norms of concrete, external, organised classes. (Bott 1957: 165)

Though these observations seem unremarkable now, they make a stark contrast to descriptions of the pre-modern era, characterised by Jamieson:

the intimacy of close association did not necessarily result in empathy, because this was a highly stratified social world in which each knew his or her place in the social order...Marrying and having children were economic arrangements and the relationships which resulted were ones in which men were assumed to rule and own women and children. This was sanctioned by religion, law and community norms. (Jamieson 1998: 11)

These descriptions reproduced the common sense version of 'progress', from a society in which social position was fixed, determined by birth, to a society in which the 'individual' created a unique lived trajectory, unhindered by social mores and restricted only by hugely depleted structural limitations, a version of progress reproduced by one of Bott's informants in 1957:

It might have been simple in the Middle Ages, everything being so definite you know exactly what your place was and did not expect to be anything else. Now it is all uncertain and you don't even know what your place is. (Bott 1957: 174)

Bott, working amongst the middle-class, was reluctant to correlate class status with extra-familial kin contact (Bott 1957: 122). Firth, however, was prepared to reproduce, however apologetically, a sweeping framework in which upper and lower classes were characterised by the greater importance of extra-familial kin, whilst the middle class exemplified the Parsonian nuclear family:

Crudely generalised, such views seem not too implausible. They place the kinship attitudes of the middle classes somewhere between the interest - both co-operative and competitive - in perpetuation of economic and political assets shown by the upper classes and the warm protectiveness of the propertyless working classes. (Firth et al 1969: 16)

Firth concludes that extra-familial kinship amongst the middle-class is 'expressive rather than instrumental' (Firth 1969: 461-2).

The dismissal of cognatic kinship and the accompanying reduction of English kinship to family and class was halted in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Cohen identifies Fox's *The Tory Islanders* (1978), and Strathern's *Elmdon* (1981), as particular instances of this 'coming-of-age' (Cohen 1990: 208). Whilst Tory Island

kinship provided a framework, manipulation of which could enable the distribution of scarce resources in a harsh setting, Strathern went further in showing that:

Village and kinship together provide images of class. It is not just that they are about particular classes in the direct way in which Elmdoners experience their situation, but they are about class in general. A person's own particular position need not totally determine his view of the overall structure. (Strathern 1981: 200)

The insights of *Elmdon* inform much of this thesis, in the sense that kinship is portrayed as 'something to 'think with' rather than just to 'act out' (Cohen 1990: 209). The sociological work which attempted to find correlations between 'family', 'extra-familial kin' and 'class', was thus replaced by an anthropological method sensitive to differences in the meanings of the terms themselves.

Racing society fails to reproduce the sociological story of the family. Members of racing society envisage their place in the racing hierarchy according to their 'breeding'³. Breeding strongly implies occupation, and few people have any doubts of their 'place', or of the means by which this is determined and justified. Extra-familial kin may be of greater significance than the immediate family when racing 'credentials' are at stake. Though fieldwork in Newmarket may be dismissed as concerned with an aristocracy, the axiom that breeding determines ability is engaged with by all sections of racing society. This situation arises from the resilience of class relations formed in the eighteenth century which, I would like to suggest, gain some of their strength from their continual re-enactment in the privileged breed of the English thoroughbred. Well-bred racehorses are more expensive, win more races, and go on to reproduce, thereby exerting a far greater influence on their breed than their less well-bred equine inferiors.

Recent anthropological discussions which focus upon the meaning of relatedness have also proved helpful to this analysis:

Postcolonial critiques of anthropology as a Eurocentric panopticon have extended the possibilities for the discipline to include its own knowledge production practices within its scope of explanatory techniques. Before this intellectual overhaul and retuning, anthropology 'black-boxed' its own undertaking with artefactual distinctions such as that between biological and social facts. (Franklin 1995: 169)

Whilst mainstream social anthropology until the middle of the present century concentrated upon the 'other', recent work has attempted to redress this balance by considering the tools of anthropology as similarly 'constructed'. In particular, the 'natural facts' of kinship - of biology and reproduction, have been scrutinised by anthropologists wishing to stress their contingency:

This tradition, combining anthropological relativism with ethnographic empiricism, has begun to establish a trajectory that interrogates the history and foundations of ideas of the natural within anthropology, which in turn work at a deeper level to provide, by implication if not directly, a bridge between the two cultures in anthropology. (Franklin 1995: 170)

³The term used continually by members of racing society when referring both to themselves and to their fellow members.

Thus Haraway (1989), Strathern (1992 a,b,c), Yanagisako and Delaney (1995), Franklin (1997) and Carsten (in press) (amongst others) have undermined the 'taken for granted' background to kinship theory. In *Reclaiming English Kinship* (1993), Bouquet identifies 'pedigree thinking' as the culturally specific impetus behind early twentieth century kinship theory and, particularly, the genealogical method which graphically reproduces (literally) the salient ideas of relatedness of that era.

My own contribution will be to examine how connotations of pedigree embedded in the genealogical method might be connected with English ideas about animality, personhood and distinction. (Bouquet 1993: 187)

The genealogical method reified the distinction between biology and society, by purporting to represent reality stripped of social embellishment. By casting biology as pedigree, Bouquet re-opens the question of the basis of kinship theory that was previously represented as ideologically neutral. The consequences of this revision are stated by Holy:

Once we have realised that data about relatedness that were collected through the genealogical method were far from objective but our own constructions which might have been at odds with the constructions of the people we studied, we have become critical of almost every aspect of the received kinship theory and we have abandoned the once fashionable formulations, reformulations and refinements of the basic analytical concepts in the study of kinship. (Holy 1996: 172)

This study will use local ideas of relatedness in Newmarket in order to illustrate how kinship looks when the biological 'facts' of pedigree that support it are exposed. Bouquet attributes 'pedigree thinking' to early twentieth century anthropologists, I attribute it to contemporary racing society's ideas about relatedness between both animals and humans. Members of racing society articulate a pedigree theory of heredity, a particular 'way of seeing' reproduction. The 'facts of nature' which inform kinship in Newmarket will be seen to contain their own resources for the separation and reconstitution of connections. Using the model identified by Edwards and Strathern in relation to Alltown (Edwards and Strathern in press), it will be shown that Newmarket families 'interdigitate' between social and biological factors in order to embrace or deny kin.

Nature in Newmarket

The breeding and racing of horses in Newmarket makes visible the ideas which govern human relations within racing society. In order to understand this contention, the origin story of the thoroughbred racehorse must be understood. The English thoroughbred is a breed of racehorse which originated with three Arabian stallions; the Darley Arabian, the Godolphin Arabian and the Byerley Turk, and a number of domestic mares in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. It has been 'selectively bred' since this time, so that all of the present generation can be traced

back to these three stallions through the General Stud Book, which has recorded every mating and its produce since 1791. It is the fastest breed of horse in the world over any distance further than quarter of a mile (cf. Doust 1996). Racing in Britain is concerned almost exclusively with thoroughbred racehorses, which became a specific breed in the era in which racing society began to define itself, the two developing in parallel. Ideas of 'nature' in Newmarket thus concentrate upon the racehorse, and the prediction of ability on the basis of pedigree.

The idea that nature is everywhere and always the same thing and that it always stands in opposition to culture is no longer uncontroversial within anthropology:

The point to extract is simple: there is no such thing as nature or culture. Each is a highly relativised concept whose ultimate signification must be decided from its place within a specific metaphysics. No single meaning can in fact be given to nature or culture in Western thought, there is no consistent dichotomy only a matrix of contrasts. (Strathern 1980: 177)

Ideas of nature to be found in Newmarket include its separation from humans as the object of human efforts directed towards its improvement. The thoroughbred racehorse has been selectively bred for over two hundred years, in the belief that racing ability is hereditary and therefore one must 'breed the best to the best to get the best'. Nature, in this context, is perceived as a recalcitrant but talented child who refuses to fulfil its own potential and so must be strongly directed. However, the opposite notion, that animals, particularly horses and dogs, are fundamentally the same as humans, and that all are part of nature, is also present, thus providing a parallel with Schneider's description of American kinship:

The formal category of nature, as it is defined in American culture, includes within it both man and animal. Yet in another context, the meaning of the word 'man' is sharply differentiated from the category of nature and set apart from it. (Schneider 1968: 110)

Just as the meaning of 'nature' can no longer be taken for granted, landscape has become the subject of intense anthropological inquiry. The plasticity of landscape has been stressed, where previously ideas of 'environment' may have emphasised technological or biological functions and constraints. Several collections have emphasised the manipulation of the environment by societies in accordance with their:

gender, age, class, caste, and...social and economic situation. People's landscapes will operate on very different spatial scales, whether horizontally across the surface of the world, or vertically - up in the heavens, down to the depths. They will operate on very different temporal scales, engaging with the past and with the future in many different ways. (Bender 1993: 2)

The tidy severity of Newmarket impresses even the most inattentive visitor, and the landscape, though superficially 'rural', reflects intensive human endeavour. Driving the enormous droppings vacuum cleaner up and down immaculate paddocks (no longer 'fields') every day gave me ample time to reflect upon the landscape which I was helping to maintain. Raking gravel, geometrical mowing and picking up individual pieces of straw by hand offered further insights. I was even called upon to

staple flower heads onto stems for a stud's open day. It seemed that every natural resource, be it flower, grass, hedge, pond, bird or animal, seemed subjected to some form of 'improvement'.

The 'improvement' of nature implicit in the landscape of Newmarket submits to several possible explanations. Firstly, one may imagine that racing society is inscribing upon the environment evidence of its own amazing and hereditary ability to control nature. Secondly, one may see vacuuming droppings as an inconsequential gesture by a society which seeks to map talent in racehorses, but ultimately fails, leaving untouched the foundation of horseracing and breeding on unpredictable guesswork. In addition, the class structure of the racing industry inheres within the landscape such that the monotony of the tasks undertaken by the working class facilitates the grandeur of the environment, on the basis of which racing's upper class makes its claim to superiority. The class structure is thus literally naturalised - inscribed upon the countryside. These ideas are pursued in greater depth in the following chapters.

Nature is not exclusively characterised as subject to improvement by human endeavour. It is also, as mentioned above, an encompassing community in which both humans and animals (particularly horses and dogs) are implicated. In Newmarket, as amongst the circumboreal peoples of Eurasia and North America studied by Ingold:

animals can sometimes be regarded as persons, no different from human persons except in their outer garb; so that what we might see - say in hunting - as a confrontation between subjects and objects, or persons and things, they would see as an encounter between persons, and therefore, just as much a part of social life as the encounters that take place entirely within the human domain. (Ingold 1986: 13)

The Achuar Jivaro of Upper Amazonia, similarly, 'consider most plants and animals as persons' (Descola and Palsson 1996: 7). It is this idea of nature which facilitates the intersubjectivity of breeders and trainers with their equine charges.

In discussions of racehorses and humans, monism was as frequently invoked as dualism:

the shift from a dualist to monist perspective appears to have been triggered by fieldwork among peoples for whom the nature: culture dichotomy was utterly meaningless. (Descola and Palsson 1996: 7)

In Newmarket, neither position is meaningless, both are adopted with alacrity, depending upon the context in question:

whether some thing is natural or cultural may depend on the level of abstraction in our arguments, our methodology, or on time phase or context, not on any intrinsic qualities. At different levels nature and culture are identified in different ways. (Ellen and Fukui 1996: 15)⁴

⁴I pursue this argument through an examination of relations between particular animals and humans, placing their formulation in specific social and historical contexts. Theorists such as Sahlins (1977), Ingold (1986, 1989), and Haraway (1989), amongst others, have examined this process in relation to the discipline of biology, 'Ever since Hobbes placed the bourgeois society he knew in the state of

In addition to the contextually sensitive ideas of nature in Newmarket, I should add that racehorses are polysemic. In relation to racing society, the racehorse is an ambivalent creature. Not animal, not person, not object, not subject, not entirely artificial and not entirely natural. The obtaining relationship between horses and racing society, in which racehorses are sometimes part of 'nature' to be improved, sometimes part of a 'nature' which includes humans, is comfortable. It is the 'literalising process' (Strathern 1992b) implied by the technologies of Artificial Insemination and cloning which threatens this comfortable fuzziness, and which led racing society to explain their ideas about nature with such forcefulness.

Summary

The thesis begins by introducing the town of Newmarket. Chapter two describes the landscape of Newmarket and the surrounding area, suggesting that the desire to improve nature is reflected in the incessant mowing, trimming and vacuuming of fields and hedges. I also describe the specialised language of racing, which can exclude and include, but which can also serve to disguise the absence of knowledge, through its substitution with jargon and clichés (Burke & Porter 1995).

The appropriate body shape for each of the major roles in racing is also discussed. Bourdieu's description of 'the body for the job' (1984: 191) is invoked in order to explain the mechanism whereby the taste appropriate to an individual's class becomes embodied. I am not suggesting that people are, or even could be, 'bred' to fulfil these roles, but rather that their success and failure in one or other of the roles of racing is overdetermined by the ideology of pedigree which predicts where their future will lie, and is very difficult to transgress.

Chapter three describes the means by which racing people are reproduced. It concentrates upon the elite of racing society, those who see themselves as 'real Newmarket families', who claim a familial connection to Newmarket and to racing. Making and dissolving connections is the central preoccupation of the upper class of racing society. A particular family, and their ideas about their own 'pedigrees' and those of others, is described in order to suggest that racing is thought to be 'in the blood'. The operation of pedigree in this context can be seen as an interdigitation between social and biological factors (Edwards and Strathern in press).

nature, the ideology of capitalism has been marked by a reciprocal dialectic between the folk conceptions of culture and nature' (Sahlins 1977: xv). Ingold advocates the assimilation of anthropology into a reformulated biology, and attributes to Sahlins and others an impoverished notion of this discipline, 'What they fail to realise is that such an astringent biology could not begin to provide an adequate account of the life of any organisms, let alone human ones' (Ingold 1989: 211).

Chapter four is a guided tour of the racecourse, where racing is made public. It suggests that what is revealed is carefully managed, and that what is systematically obscured is equally important in terms of understanding racing. The differentials between the variously priced enclosures of the racecourse correlate with sumptuary distinctions and dress codes. Bourdieu (1984) is again invoked in order to account for these variations. Whilst segregation is a central feature of the racecourse, it is de-emphasised, whilst what is shared is stressed. The saying that 'all men are equal on the turf and under it', refers to a deep seated idea that equality exists amongst those who are at the mercy of fortune in the betting ring.

Chapter five discusses betting on horseracing, the dominant form of gambling outside the lottery in Britain. Betting depends upon an appearance of fluidity which disguises the fixity of obtaining social relations within racing. The 'get rich quick' systems and the legends of the punters who 'beat the book' imply that betting can radically change an individual's fortunes and therefore their place in society. The work of Munting (1996) is used in particular to trace the history of betting which has internalised an antagonistic relationship with the supply side of racing since blacklegs chased nobles all over Newmarket Heath trying to bet on the outcome of private matches. The contemporary relationship between racing and bookmaking is described and its historical development explained.

There are meaningful distinctions to be found amongst those who bet, and a hierarchy no less resilient than in other sections of racing. Fieldwork spent in betting shops revealed that some betting has become domesticated to such an extent that it no longer reflects any real hope of a radical change in fortunes. The aristocrat of gamblers, the professional gambler, is also described. In contrast to the highly agitated mug punter described at the racecourse, the professional gambler divorces betting from its sensuous component, treating it as a business proposition. I suggest that the professional has come to embody certain aristocratic traits which disassociate him from the mug who is condemned by the supply side of racing. The professional is unmoved by loss or success, according with the sporting ideal of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, 'the same in victory as in defeat'. The professional behaves as though in control of the outcome of his wager, as does the trainer of the outcome of the race.

Chapter six suggests that racehorses are both persons and things at different points during their lifecycle, and in different contexts at any particular time (Kopytoff 1986). The idea that racehorses are sometimes treated as persons is pursued in greater detail in chapter seven, whilst chapter six concentrates upon the phase during which a racehorse most closely resembles a 'commodity'. The price paid for a thoroughbred

yearling at auction is most strongly influenced by its pedigree. In other words, at the auction, each pedigree is given a value expressed in guineas⁵. The purpose of the chapter is to present the ideology of pedigree in the context in which it is most fully played out, amongst horses when they are being treated as objects.

Chapter seven describes the process through which pedigree translates into racing ability, described as 'embodied practice' or 'embodied knowledge' by anthropology. It draws upon the work of Wacquant (1992, 1995a, 1995b) on boxing and Lave and Wenger (1991) on Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). Horsemanship is not taught in Newmarket, because it is thought to be inherited as a latent talent, which is therefore merely 'discovered' by the individual. The main roles within racing are partly placed outside teaching by the definition of learning in Newmarket as concerned with desks, books and classrooms. It is shown that riding skills are learnt through LPP, which is cast as discovery by racing society because it falls outside their definition of learning and also reinforces the ideology of pedigree.

Chapter seven also offers an alternative explanation for the lad's choice of occupation. In Newmarket, lads are often characterised as lacking ambition and ability. Fieldwork suggested that the lifestyle of a lad was attractive because it offered responsibilities and opportunities far greater than the alternative which was often perceived as factory work. Lads are responsible for extremely valuable racehorses, they develop techniques which enable them to gain respect amongst their peers and superiors and they are part of an industry which offers a seasonal renewal of possibility in the next generation of two-year-olds.

Chapter eight takes as its starting point Ingold's assertion that:

Contrary to the normal assumption, the borderline between humans and animals is anything but obvious, clear and immutable. (Ingold 1988: xii)

I also accept Ingold's contention that in asking the question 'What is an animal?' we ask a question about ourselves (1988: 1). The chapter draws upon the work of Tambiah (1969) and Lévi-Strauss (1963, 1966) in order to conceptualise the relationship between horses and humans in racing society. Fieldwork spent on a stud in the spring of 1997 revealed the personalisation of horses, and the attribution of traits valued in humans to horses and vice versa. Thus mares could achieve femininity by being good 'mothers', whilst stallion men could achieve a virile and thus highly masculine image through their association with a fertile stallion. This intersubjectivity is a contemporary example of the process identified historically by Ritvo (1987, 1991, 1994, 1997):

the classification of animals, like that of any group of significant objects, is apt to tell as much about the classifiers as about the classified...Each of the ways that people

⁵Racehorses are still sold in guineas, units of a pound and a shilling. The shilling pays the fee of the auctioneer and the auction house.

imagined, discussed, and treated animals inevitably implied some taxonomic structure. And the categorisation of animals reflected the rankings of people both figuratively and literally, as analogy and as continuation. That is, depending on the circumstances, people represented themselves as being like animals, or as actually being animals. (Ritvo 1997: xii)

Chapter nine uses the work of Delaney (1986, 1987, 1991), Franklin (1995, 1997), Strathern (1992b) and Bouquet (1993) in order to identify the 'natural facts' of reproduction assumed by the ideology of pedigree. The sales catalogue is examined as the site of graphically reproduced ideas of heredity and gender. The ideology of pedigree is presented as assuming a version of monogeneticism similar to that identified by Delaney (1986). The impact of Artificial Insemination (AI) upon the racing industry, and the means by which it is opposed are discussed in order to suggest that the blood of racehorses is perceived as gendered, noble, finite and English by its human custodians.

My conclusions respond to the urgings of Latour (1993) and Haraway (1989), by casting Newmarket as a nature-culture. Racing society does not recognise an absolute boundary between humans and other animals, despite the centrality of this separation to many definitions of 'modern' societies (cf. Ingold 1994). Whilst recent anthropological discussions of the relationship between humans and animals have criticised the 'absolute distinction between...the cultural and the natural' (Willis 1990: 3), the means by which this criticism is pursued is most frequently in terms of the absence of this distinction from 'non-western' societies (Descola and Palsson 1996). This can result in a reiteration of the opposition as between two sorts of societies, characterised by their relationship with nature. Thus, for example, Willis identifies two 'polar types of cultural universe', those 'primarily oriented towards the world-making dimension of continuity and the syntagmatic', and those 'primarily oriented towards separation and the paradigmatic' (Willis 1990: 6).

Willis' perception of societal change as an oscillation between two types of society does little to disguise what are merely 'premodern' and 'modern' societies. Willis also glosses continuity as 'primitiveness' and separation as 'modernisation'. Am I to conclude that Newmarket is somehow 'primitive'? Willis is responding to the question of whether a unidirectional evolutionary progression is an ethically acceptable vision of social change. My concern is whether the binary opposites of societies which separate nature and culture (so-called 'modern') and those which do not (so-called 'primitive') is an accurate rendering of any society's lived relationship with their idea of 'nature' defined according to that relationship.

The conclusions of this thesis thus criticise the assumed separation of nature from culture, and particularly the assimilation of nature with 'science' conceived as an autonomous realm outside human influence. By examining the 'facts of nature'

behind the ideology of pedigree, and thus the mutual constitution of 'nature' and 'pedigree' this thesis seeks to provide an example of a 'symmetrical anthropology' (Latour 1993) in which all preconceived distinctions are treated with suspicion.

Conclusion

These preliminary comments are supplemented throughout the main body of the text which describes my experiences of Newmarket and its inhabitants in far greater detail. My fieldwork has not been segregated from my theoretical engagement, rather, the two co-exist and hopefully feed into each other throughout the thesis. Where the little known conventions and technical language of racing demand explanation I hope that this has been offered, although I suffer from over-familiarity which may have led to some omissions.

I do not provide an extensive history of British horseracing, though I have mentioned Newmarket's history in chapter two, and the history of betting in chapter five. Most sources of general racing history concentrate upon the famous figures of the turf, both horses and humans (Campbell 1977), (Onslow 1983), though some offer a more critical engagement⁶.

Those who might feel that horseracing is too technical and specialised a world to comprehend from so short a piece of work have succumbed to the exact state of befuddlement that racing knowledge is intended to induce. No understanding of the handicap weighting system or the tongue strap/blinders controversy is necessary in order to approach this thesis. I hope that it becomes obvious that the technicalities of racing are strangely unfounded, and therefore that their significance lies less in what they enable an individual to *do* and more in the appearance of knowledge they communicate. This awareness is intended to help the reader to concentrate less on what they do not know about horseracing and more on what I can tell them about the people who have racing lives.

⁶Amongst the historical sources I found which went beyond lists of famous victories to engage with the politics of racing were; Birley (1995) who described the commercialisation of racing and Brailsford (1991) who provided valuable statistics on the effects of enclosure. Munting (1996) and Vamplew (1976, 1988) presented class-sensitive histories of gambling, whilst Fitzgeorge-Parker (1968) concentrated on bookmakers and corruption. Hill (1988) discussed the politics behind the failure of the call for a Tote monopoly whilst de Moubray (1985) explained the rise of internationalism in racing.

Chapter Two: Introducing Newmarket

Introduction

The nature of a first encounter with Newmarket is determined to a large extent by the season and the time of day at which the unsuspecting visitor arrives. Arrive on a wintry afternoon and an eerie calm permeates the town, the most energetic activities being shopping, pensioner-style. Late at night, particularly during the summer, the lads, who have been asleep all afternoon, venture out into the town. One may find a brightly clothed, noisy mass of people moving between the four night-clubs and numerous pubs of the High Street, buzzing with excitement and creating an atmosphere described by locals as 'like a street party!' Arrive in Newmarket early on a spring morning, however, and something of its true purpose will be revealed. The hundreds of racehorses who spend the rest of the day hidden away in the stables that are tucked into every corner of the town take over, and standing amongst the milling horses one is reminded that this is a town in which, as I was told, 'everything is horse'.

This chapter is based upon a discussion of landscape, language and appearance. I shall begin by introducing the town of Newmarket through a historical account of the development of its link with horseracing. This account reflects the dominance of racing voices amongst the historians of Newmarket. I have not found a history of Newmarket told independently from that of horseracing, and my own account reproduces this symbiosis and is thus 'bad' history, but consciously so. This is followed by a description of contemporary Newmarket which attempts to communicate the influence of the racing industry upon its landscape and daily and seasonal rhythms.

The landscape of Newmarket and the surrounding countryside will then be discussed in order to illustrate the attempts to improve the environment that appear as the corollary of controlling the processes involved in breeding and training racehorses. The landscape of Newmarket is that of immaculate hedges and white painted fences, raked gravel driveways and chessboard lawns. Attempts to control nature disguise the minimal human ability to explain, and therefore repeat, many of the breeding and training successes thrown up by the breeding industry.

The language of racing, and its capacity to include and exclude, will then be considered. Racing language not only serves to distinguish between insiders and outsiders, but also offers a field of expertise in which knowledge is scarce or even absent. Proficiency in breeding racehorses, perhaps unobtainable, may thus be

replaced with fluency in the language associated with this proficiency. As the people called upon to explain why a horse ran badly, jockeys must be experts in this language, or, as Frankie Dettori stated, a jockey 'must be able to bullshit.' Communication maps class relations amongst the insiders of racing society, such that the lad is taught the virtue of silence, whilst some trainers feel justified in verbally abusing their staff¹.

The distinction between upper class and working class in Newmarket is virtually impermeable. There is no recognised career path between, for example, working as a lad and training, and the two roles are created as separate social spaces, across which communication and mobility are discouraged, as a trainer explained to me:

The best lads know their place...they tell me what I need to know in order to do my job and get on with the rest themselves. This is what good lads should aspire to, just as I aspire to training winners.²

Physical appearance, including factors such as weight and body shape, as well as dress, will then be considered. Racing society is obsessed with weight. Part of the explanation for this obsession lies in its importance to those who ride, for whom it is preferable to be below nine stone seven. In addition, the language of weight is a constant preoccupation to those involved in racing due to the attribution of a 'weight' to each horse by the 'handicapper'. The amount of weight carried by a horse in a race is intended to reflect its ability, such that a pound in weight is said to equate to a distance of three lengths, and horses running in a handicap race should all cross the line at the same time if the 'handicap' has been accurate. A horse will go 'up or down in the weights', the handicapper may be 'on top of it', i.e. giving it sufficient weight to prevent it from winning, whilst a winning horse is said to be 'ahead of the handicapper'. Discussions of weight are thus both part of the structure of racing, and also the concern of a society obsessed with appearances.

¹A project to run a public training stable as part of an exhibition for the museum was rejected on the grounds that trainers would be unable to speak to staff as they do in private. In my experience, some trainers spoke to lads in the most disrespectful terms, calling them 'fucking idiots' when they made mistakes, for example.

²A similar separation of roles was found by Newby amongst agricultural workers in East Anglia in the 1970s. Interestingly, it is the system of inheritance that appears to support the division of labour responsible for the 'deferential worker', 'most farmers have not achieved the ownership of their land or their position as employers by demonstrating their expertise in agricultural skills but because they have inherited their property and the rights and powers attached to it from their fathers. Their dominant position in the local social structure is therefore based upon the almost unquestioned acceptance of the right of the farmer to acquire his farm on the basis of birth. Since the possibility of upward mobility from farm worker to farmer is so remote in East Anglia as to be virtually non-existent, employer and employee roles tend to be ascribed rather than achieved' (Newby 1979: 420). In this agricultural example, the farmer inherits the land. In the case of the trainer, the inheritance of the *means* to become a trainer is de-emphasised by the ideology of pedigree which insists that the significant inheritance is that of the *ability* to train.

Like Willis, I am attempting to account for the means by which racing society reproduces itself, particularly within such a self-evidently hierarchical structure:

We need to understand how structures become sources of meaning and determinants of behaviour in the cultural milieu at its own level. Just because there are what we call structural and economic determinants it does not mean that people will unproblematically obey them. (Willis 1977: 171)

Newmarket's history

Running across Newmarket Heath and beyond is an enormous defensive rampart, called the Devil's Dyke. Excavations of the Dyke have revealed something of the early history of the Heath. People frequently thought that I was studying the Dyke, on the grounds that anthropology was 'about digging up bones'. The past is important to Newmarket people, and is constantly employed as a source of justification for the present:

Racing has developed from a pastime for the few to a massive global industry since Herod, Matchem and Eclipse established their reputations at Newmarket. Forty generations on from the founding fathers of the breed, the town's unique status is preserved, its history and traditions preserved, its commitment to the sport and the industry more vigorous than ever. (Morris 1998: 4)

Newmarket's history is perpetually told through its association with thoroughbred horseracing and royalty, thus the first figure of Newmarket history is that of Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, the chariot racing Roman rebel of the first century. Heath opinion states that lasses still model themselves upon her warrior-like tendencies. Boadicea was based in Exning, a small village just outside Newmarket, and it is thought that she used the Heath for hunting and racing. The origin story of Newmarket itself has two versions, the romantic and the pragmatic. Tony Morris cites the 'wooing and winning' of Cassandra de l'Isle by Sir Richard d'Argentine in the thirteenth century as initiating 'a truly momentous sequence of events' (Morris 1998: 4), whilst other historians emphasise a plague that forced the relocation of the population of Exning and the establishment of a 'new market' (Lyle 1945: 2).

From romance to disease, historical accounts of the growth of Newmarket's importance to the racing industry progress via a consideration of royal patronage, focusing particularly upon James I and Charles II. James I's first visit is dated as February 27th 1605: 'From that moment began Newmarket's rise from a little wood built hamlet to the metropolis of the turf' (Lyle 1945: 4). Charles II's influence is also highlighted:

An accomplished horseman, he rode in races, winning his share, shifted the royal stud to Newmarket, had a palace and racing stables erected there, and turned the town into the unofficial capital of England, with the entire court in residence there for long stretches of time. His neglect for his nation and fondness for East Anglian fun were neatly summarised by the sardonic poet Alexander Pope: Newmarket's glory rose, as Britain's fell. (Morris 1998: 4)

Historical portraits tend to linger over Charles II's affair with Nell Gwynne, whose house was apparently attached to the palace via an underground tunnel, and the sporting exploits of the King and his followers:

Take him all round he was a thorough English sportsman, who could hold his own against all-comers in the chase, on the racecourse, at angling, shooting, hawking, billiards, tennis; none could excel him in his morning walk from Whitehall to Hampton Court. (Hore 1886: 93)

Charles II even took his nick-name 'Old Rowley', from his favourite horse. Contemporary Newmarket historians discover in their predecessors the qualities they admire in themselves, qualities admired by all Newmarket men, who should express their masculinity by being charismatic, 'sporting', good horsemen and successful lovers.

The topography of Newmarket and in particular of the Heath, combined with a proximity to both Cambridge and London, promoted royal patronage initially stimulated by the hunting and hawking possibilities on offer. The town's association with racing was consolidated by the relocation of the Jockey Club from the Star and Garter in Pall Mall, to the Coffee Room on the High Street in 1752. The Jockey Club gradually became the governing body of racing, resolving disputes and determining the rules of racing, as described in the introduction.

Newmarket's status as the HQ of racing since the eighteenth century has been subject to fashions, such that, at times, the Heath was considered too hard, the climate too drying to provide good ground on which to train, leading to injuries and lameness (Onslow 1983: 105). However, this association has been resilient, and has reached a peak in recent decades.

Contemporary Newmarket



2.1 Welcoming town sign, on the Cambridge Road (Author's Photograph 1997)

Two thousand racehorses are trained on the sixty miles of Newmarket gallops by sixty-eight trainers. Racehorses travel between gallops and stables on the fifty seven miles of 'horsewalks' (concrete paths that criss-cross the town, with trigger-operated traffic lights at rider height at every road crossing). Despite the horsewalks, racehorses can also be seen on the roads every morning, weaving in and out of cars and jogging along paths reluctantly deserted by pedestrians. Newmarket residents complain bitterly that whilst the horsewalks are strictly maintained the roads themselves are pitted and in disrepair. As the horses head for the gallops and the commuters head to work, the antagonism between the two kinds of road users is often in evidence. Petulant horseriders smoking cigarettes cross roads in front of cars without acknowledgement, assuming that drivers will give way. Cars squeeze through lines of horses, separating stable mates and causing panic amongst the horses, before careering off at top speed in anger at having been held up again.



2.2 Rush hour in central Newmarket
(Author's Photograph 1997)



2.3 Two views of the gallops on Warren Hill
(BHB 1993: 23 & 1995: 28)

Surveying the Heath from the top of Warren Hill, one sees an expanse of trimmed green, scarred by artificial gallops, separated by white plastic rails and dotted with hundreds of horses and riders in all colours. The sight is suggestive of order on the brink of chaos. Horses are easily startled and 'shy' at anything from puddles to suspiciously shaped leaves. Moreover, when one horse 'shies' in this way, the adjacent horses will follow suit, the fright travelling like a shock wave across the Heath, often dislodging riders in the process. Riders are particularly vulnerable whilst waiting for their turn to travel up the gallop, when horses become excited in anticipation of their run. On winter mornings, when the turf is frozen and the horses must use the artificial surfaces, backlogs of circling horses build up at the bottom of the gallop, like queues of skiers waiting for a place on the lift. The potential for chaos is enormous, and yet most mornings pass without incident, the rhythmic movement of horses travelling up and down and to and from the gallops is repeated six days a week, in all weather. Rates of attrition on the Heath are higher for horses than humans, although there were two human fatalities on the gallops whilst I was riding. The Jockey Club provide emergency phones on the Heath, as well as two horse ambulances and a carcass collection service. Newmarket in the morning is a surreal place, buzzing with the activities of hundreds of centaur-like figures, nonchalant but serious, as though unaware of the danger and absurdity of answering rich men's whims by teaching racehorses to run faster.

Contemporary Newmarket fields, on average, just under a third of all British race winners in a season, and these wins are often concentrated in the better races, referred to as 'Group' races. In 1996, for example, Newmarket trained horses won 72% of English Group One races and 60% of Group races overall (Jockey Club 1996: 42). They also won all five of the English Classics (Jockey Club 1997a: 42). Newmarket is conscious of its status as a flagship and as a centre of excellence, and reflects Cohen's observation that, 'We are not...merely aware of our distinctiveness, but we tend to value it as well' (Cohen 1982: 5). Despite the rivalries that exist between individual yards in Newmarket and all of the other training centres, such as Lambourn, competition between racing centres is mainly along the axis of Newmarket versus the rest. Yard rivalries may be ritually resolved in organised football matches, or less formally in scraps after closing time. Rivalry between Newmarket and other training centres focuses upon results and the quality of the lads. A Northern trainer told me that: 'Newmarket lads are the worst in the world, ham-fisted yobbos', whilst Newmarket lads told me that other lads had no idea of the modern job and were: 'playing a different game to us', seeing themselves as the standard-setters for the industry.

Landscape



2.4 The front of the Jockey Club Rooms, High Street
(Author's Photograph 1997)



2.5 Road sign at entrance to July Course
(Author's Photograph 1997)

In Britain, the best example of a town which is intimately identified with sport, and owes its *raison d'être* and visual character to it, is, in my view, Newmarket, home of British horse racing. It is impossible to visit Newmarket and fail to identify it with racing. Not only does it have the headquarters of the Jockey Club but also the museum of horse-racing, a huge number of stud farms, numerous training grounds, its own famous racecourse and a large collection of retail outlets relating centrally and marginally to horse racing. My own impressions are that it is somewhat more 'horsy' than Saratoga, New York. (Bale 1994: 137)³

Every possible resource necessary in the training of racehorses is available within the town, from two racecourses and the gallops to the three public equine swimming pools. Newmarket is the focus of veterinary research of relevance to racing, in particular, the Animal Health Trust, the Equine Fertility Unit, and the Horserace Forensic Laboratory. In addition, it houses Tattersall's sales ring in Park Paddocks where the most expensive British thoroughbreds are auctioned, and the British Racing School where jockeys and lads are taught their trade. Newmarket also has the Jockey Club, five saddlers, a specialist cobbler, several corn and hay merchants, manure disposal services, specialist accountants and solicitors, and farriers. Every corner turned in Newmarket reveals further examples of the dominance of racing in the town. Residential streets conceal stable gates that swing open first thing in the morning, spewing strings of racehorses into the centre of the town. Less directly, the four night-clubs and numerous pubs and restaurants service the needs of both lads and also trainers who wish to entertain their owners, the town centre generally providing the focus for the former, and the outlying villages that of the latter.

Even those retail outlets and services with no apparent connection with racing maintain links of sorts through their names; 'The Gift Horse' (gift shop), 'Golden Horses' (take-away), 'Chifney's' (restaurant). Others feature menus or advertising slogans which make reference to racing, such as the menu in the White Hart that offers dishes 'in the starting gate' (starters), or 'Derbys' (main courses). Mobile telephone companies urge customers to 'Place your bets on us!', the football team is, of course, called the 'Jockeys'. The Clocktower Cafe pays photographic homage to the famous racing people who have breakfasted on fry-ups throughout its history. The local newspaper, 'The Newmarket Journal', advertises itself as, 'A Thoroughbred staying the distance in the Newmarket field for more than 124 years'. Ubiquitous in all shops

³ Bale traces the antecedents of modern sporting landscapes and concludes that. 'sports have emerged as highly rationalised representations of modernity which, as much as...any other form of culture, possess the potential to eliminate regional differences as a result of their rule-bound, enclosed and predictably segmented forms of landscape' (Bale 1994: 3). In fact, the opposite tendency can be detected within British racing. American racecourses are all standardised ovals, on which horses race left-handed. The variety of shapes, directions, landscape features and relief of all of Britain's racecourses is celebrated as one of the distinctive qualities of British racing, each racecourse constituting a unique test for a horse. Aintree, Ascot and, in particular, Prestbury Park, Cheltenham could be said to inspire a form of 'topophilia', a love of place, reflected by the practices of scattering ashes or marrying at racecourse winning posts.

and pubs are the inevitable racing prints, seeming particularly incongruous in the Wimpy on the High Street, where, it is joked, some of their less-fortunate subjects may be consumed.

The training stables themselves differ in scale and particular layout, but share the essential features of courtyards and clocks. The structure of the courtyard enables the gregarious horses to see each other, and also the head lad to keep an eye on his juniors. Just as the High Street is headed by a huge clocktower, clocks loom large in the yards themselves, governing the activities of horses and lads. Horses are creatures of extreme habit, hypersensitive to any change in their routine, such that a feed an hour late or early can induce colic in the most fragile. Yards strive for efficiency, slow lads are continually chided for falling behind and holding everyone up. 'Going like clockwork, sir' was a favourite response to trainers enquiring of the lads as to how the morning was progressing. Basing a routine on the authority of the clock of course detracts attention from the true source of authority - the trainer.

As feeding presents a possible opportunity for the security of the yard to be compromised through the introduction of drugs which may 'stop' a horse, feed stores are locked and feeding is the task of the trainer himself or his trusted head lad. The trainer is responsible for, and must explain, the presence of any illegal substances in the samples of any of the horses in his charge. The Jockey Club may enforce the ultimate sanction of a 'warning off', should the trainer fail to provide a convincing explanation as to the origin of the drug in question. The fortunes of the yard can be judged according to the state of the paintwork on the stable doors, and by the appearance of the lads in the yard. The most successful yards have colour co-ordinated jackets, caps and stable doors, the least successful make do with peeling paint and whatever moth-eaten jacket and hat come to hand.

Riding on the gallops suggested to me that a familiarity with the landscape was expected and even demanded. I often had no idea where I was going when told that we were heading for 'the back of the flat', or 'the woodchip', names referring to particular gallops that were learnt by experience. Thus my instructions were often something like: 'Trot round the rings first, then go half way round the sand, canter up to the four furlong marker, pull up and come back down the woodchip.' Which sand?, Where is the four furlong marker?, Which woodchip?, Am I in control? I remember the exasperation of my colleagues when I asked for directions, before I had worked out which paths were referred to in each vague instruction:

Such imprecision has a precise meaning. Once you already know where 'Over there' is, or where old Julio Felipe is making his garden, you can locate the spatial meaning of the incident. If you do not know, how could it matter? You, as a listener, are not implicated in the landscape in which these things happened, so can only relate to them in the abstract. As you become implicated in the landscape, these stories take on new

meanings...implication depends upon actively moving around in the landscape, and leaving traces in it. (Gow 1995: 51)⁴

In keeping with Gow's suggestion, old-timers preferred to give instructions in the form of 'you know, where we took the new filly for her first blow', or, even better, 'you know, where Sophie fell off!'⁵

Although the town and the surrounding gallops are the focus of these activities, it could be said that 'Newmarket' is equally the network formed by the stud farms and racing stables of the surrounding countryside. Horses are present in almost every conceivable form wherever one looks in the town itself, in sculptures, shop names, paintings and in the flesh, but the surrounding environment is no less a reflection of the monoculture of the area:

Traditionally, the gallops have been open areas...more akin to a parkland than an agricultural area. Beyond the gallops there are further extensive areas which are given over to studland for the purpose of thoroughbred breeding...This Local Plan, therefore, contains policies which seek to continue to preserve the special landscape setting of the town, including Exning. In considering future policy for the industry, the issues of employment, the well-being of the horse racing industry, and particularly the character of the town, are inextricably tied together. (Forest Heath District Council 1994: 2)

Studs, in particular, require more land than training stables where horses are generally permanently stabled. Villages within a ten mile radius of Newmarket, such as Cheveley, Dullingham, Exning and Fordham, house many of the forty-two 'Newmarket' studs. The landscape changes once the outskirts of the town are reached, the unsegregated land use of the town itself giving way to the striped green expanses, clipped hedgerows, painted fences and sweeping driveways of the stud farm.

Driving from Newmarket to Cheveley one exchanges urban landscape and the purpose-built artificiality of the gallops for some of the neatest countryside imaginable. During the breeding season in the spring, in particular, the hedgerows and verges of all the major studs in Cheveley are pristine, as if to say: 'We humans are in control here'. The fields are cleared daily of droppings by enormous vacuum cleaners mounted on tractors, leaving a striped effect like a cricket pitch or bowling green, a

⁴ Gow (1995) discusses the implication of landscape in kin relations in Western Amazonia, since kin co-operation results in landscape modification. In Newmarket, this modification often takes the form of the training yards, built by successful trainers. These yards are then used as reference points by descendants in order to navigate their stories of the town.

⁵ Bender identifies the importance of acknowledging the multiple experiences of landscape, 'The intention is to force a recognition of the multiplicity of experience through time and space, and at any given moment of time and place; to relativise 'our' own experiences and to recognise both their partiality and that they are part of a process and therefore continually open to change' (Bender 1993: 3). In Newmarket, I would argue, the most significant experience of the landscape comes from riding a racehorse. The perspective gained from the back of a racehorse differs enormously from that of a car or bicycle. This is the perspective from which local knowledge is accumulated, 'There is thus the landscape we initially see and a second landscape which is produced through local practice and which we come to recognise and understand through fieldwork and through ethnographic description and interpretation' (Hirsch & O'Hanlon 1995: 2).

reminder of the obsession with the removal of those products that betray the presence of horses. Stud grooms, where possible, like to put mares and foals in the field adjacent to the car park so that visitors will see them on arrival, and thus be reminded of the purpose of paying their bills, whether 'their' foal has been born or not.



2.6 Stud landscape, Cheveley
(Author's Photograph 1997)

A stud groom explained the importance of the appearance of the perimeter of the stud in the following terms:

Punters need to believe that they can send their mare to us and she will be safe, for a start. But just as important, we want to reassure them that we take at least some of the guessing out of a mating. They have to have confidence in us.

The stud groom uses the language of betting by calling the client a 'punter', reflecting the uncertainty inherent in the breeding of racehorses. He also implies that by mowing and clipping, the stud is communicating its ability to manipulate the environment, a message that he hopes owners may extend to the process of breeding. The pitiful inadequacy of this gesture is a reflection of how much influence the stud can actually exert upon the outcome of a mating. The landscapes of the countryside surrounding

Newmarket have thus become an analogue for the genes that the stud farms are attempting to map:

The landscape is never inert, people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate it and contest it. It is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group or nation state. (Bender 1993: 14)

Language and communication

In order to 'belong' in Newmarket it is necessary to be able to 'talk racing', or to at least 'talk horse':

Get a crowd of racing people together and they will talk horses for sure and with such extreme gravity that many parties to it forget that racing is a sport and sometimes confuse themselves with normal people. (Leach 1970: 21)

Fieldwork taught me that when racing people get together they talk about racing, often in what was initially an incomprehensible language, filled with references to horses, people and places of which I had little or no knowledge. I was fortunate in being able to 'talk horse' before I arrived in Newmarket, and it was onto this related, but simpler, language that I grafted the pieces of racing vocabulary that I managed to pick up in the field. My pre-existing knowledge of horses was essential to the progress I made in the field, and my interest in racing was capable of stimulating a rapid learning process that was rewarded at a Christmas party just before I left Newmarket. Kipper Williams, a retired jockey, and I had 'talked racing' throughout the evening, and as we left Charles, my partner, said to Kipper, 'I'll have to learn something about racing before we meet again Kipper'. Kipper paused and frowned before replying curtly, 'Don't bother mate. It's not something you can learn you see'.

The world of leisure generates jargon as well as the world of work, and has done especially since the later eighteenth century, when a number of sports were institutionalised, commercialised and formalised. Obvious examples come from the worlds of racing and boxing in England around the year 1800, a world vividly evoked for us by John Bradcock and Pierce Egan: the 'turf' for the racecourse, 'round-betting' for what would later be called 'hedging' one's bets, 'leventing' for what would be called 'welshing' on them...In France the language of 'le turf' was a variety of *franglais* and members of the Jockey Club ('le Jockey') could be heard commenting on 'le yearling', or 'le meeting'. (Burke and Porter 1995: 9)

The most commonly identified purpose of jargon is to exclude outsiders from that which does not concern them whilst enabling insiders to communicate with greater efficiency: 'The use of jargon is one of the most potent means of inclusion and exclusion' (Burke and Porter 1995: 14)⁶. In Newmarket, however, any practical

⁶ Burke and Porter identify three possible 'functions' of jargon, all of which are closely inter-related. The first of these is the practical convenience of a 'restricted code', or 'shop talk', 'The result is to communicate more quickly and effectively than otherwise to the initiated. Outsiders will not understand but then this kind of talk does not concern them' (Burke and Porter 1995: 13). The second function is that of secrecy, which in turn blends into the 'imposture or 'mystification' theory of jargon. The second and third functions of jargon are particularly relevant in Newmarket, where the act of communication is more significant than the substance of that communication, 'Jargon is not only

benefit gained by excluding outsiders is overshadowed by an ideology of exclusivity as intrinsically valuable⁷. Status in Newmarket is often determined by access. Access to the training yard is determined by wealth. Access to the Jockey Club is subject to wealth, business success and pedigree. The more exclusive the institution, the greater it is valued by Newmarket racing society:

Those whom Proust calls 'the aristocracy of the intellect' know how to mark their distinction in the most peremptory fashion by addressing to the 'elite', made up of those who can decipher them, the discreet but irrefutable signs of their membership of the 'elite' (like the loftiness of emblematic references, which designate not so much sources of authorities as the very exclusive, very select circle of recognised interlocutors) and of the discretion with which they are able to affirm their membership. (Bourdieu 1984: 499)

The style and content of the language is also significant, because communication is not only intended to exclude, but also to create the impression that the interlocutors are in possession of greater power than is really possible. The content of the language serves to mystify the outsider or newcomer by implying that the speaker holds powers over uncontrollable processes.

The language of racing offers opportunities for mystification on two levels; primarily through the use of a specialised vocabulary, and secondarily through discussions of whole relationships that are taken for granted by racing society. Thus, discussions of 'stayers', 'sprinters', 'tongue straps', 'blinkers' and 'prickers' initiate the distancing process of excluding outsiders, a process that may be completed by whole conversations based around 'the influence of the going on a field of maiden hurdlers with good flat form but unproven jumping pedigrees.' Whilst the specialised language of equipment for horse and jockey seems warranted, much of the discussion of the taken for granted relationships within racing are contradictory, and even absurd. The complexity of the vocabulary and style of the language of racing conceals the uncomfortable truth that fluency will not enable the speaker to predict which horse will win a race or which stallion will produce champion racehorses. I would suggest that the language of racing serves to conceal the unknowable aspects of the industry, replacing proficiency of action with that of speech⁸.

Successful communication of accomplishment in racing is role-dependent. Thus lads learn at the British Racing School or during their apprenticeship that 'keeping schtum is usually the best option'; jockeys speak in clichés, changing horses

'shop talk' but also 'show talk' a means of impressing the uninitiated... What is being shown off may be knowledge, but it may also be one's membership of a group from which the listener is excluded.' (Nash 1993: 14).

⁷ As in the case of the revelations of Baktaman initiations, 'it is their secrecy and exclusiveness, not their potential for enlightenment, that give them value' (Barth 1975: 221).

⁸ This explains the tendency of racing conversations to alternate between highly technical and entirely mystical notions, the one often unfamiliar, the other untestable. Discussions are thus often either hypothetical or emotive. Like Baktaman discussions of ritual, racing conversations are exercises in mystification, 'instead of developing a 'theory' of growth and health and fertility, the Baktaman develop a 'mystery' of these themes' (Barth 1975: 221).

and owners names, distance or other variable whilst keeping interpretative variables fixed, and trainers speak with self-assured composure, slowly, whimsically, often turning the question back onto the interviewer, delighting in their own cunning. In all cases, as if to prevent the realisation that nothing definitive can be stated with complete certainty regarding the ability of a horse, information is restricted. In this way, the horse's performance cannot contradict pre-race statements, thus undermining the role of trainer and jockey, and explanatory 'space' is always left in order to accommodate whichever excuse may be called into play to account for the horse's poor run.

Jockeys' explanations of failure invoke the variables of distance, ground and style of running, thus an explanation takes the form of: '(S)he needs a trip (further)/ (S)he didn't stay. (S)he didn't like the ground, needs more cut / it was too soft. (S)he needs blinkers / to be held up / to be in front'. The vast proportion of debriefings after a race take this form. Explanations such as 'The horse was slower than the others / not fit / 'dogged it' (gave up), are avoided because the jockey hopes to retain the ride and these explanations are implicitly critical of either the trainer or his horse. These explanations are particularly avoided within earshot of the owner, since they may prompt the sale or movement of the horse out of the trainer's yard. The trainer may receive one explanation from the jockey and give the owner another, less fundamental excuse, suggesting a problem that can be solved 'at home'. This is another of the mechanisms by which less successful trainers remain unsuccessful because they are forced to retain as many horses as possible, regardless of talent, in order to guarantee an income.

'Talking racing' in Newmarket involves displaying a familiarity with the significant places, horses, people and relationships that exist locally and throughout the racing world. All discussions of racing involve casual references to individuals whose fame rarely extends beyond this limited social world. Particular sentiments and modes of expression are role-specific, and thus capable of expressing the relations which obtain between different sections of Newmarket's insiders. Lads are seen but not heard, jockeys are heard but only within a strict framework that does not permit them to compromise the position of the trainer to whom they refer as 'the boss', or 'the guv'nor'. Trainers impose restrictions on who *hears* what they say, in order to limit the damage of ambitious predictions⁹. Communication thus prefigures

⁹ The significance of the information withheld by the trainer does not inhere in its practical value, but in the fact that it is concealed, 'Secrets cannot be characterised either by the contents of the concealed message or by the consequences and outcomes that follow exposure; instead they are understood by the way concealed information is withheld, restricted, intentionally altered and exposed' (Bellman 1984: 143). Bellman treats secrecy as a 'communicative event' (ibid. 139), after Goffman's 'expression games'. In Newmarket, secrecy often communicates class difference, and almost always depends for its force upon the communicative event itself. Thus the content of the secret is almost always secondary to its status as such.

association as an indicator of social equality. It is therefore possible to map social equivalence by analysing interactions, as observed by Littlejohn:

Among male parishioners deference is institutionalised in the naming system, the essence of which is that a person of higher class status may address a person of lower class by his Christian name but the person of lower status must address the person of higher status by the title of 'Mr.', followed by the surname. (Littlejohn 1963: 85)

It is amongst racing pundits that 'talking racing' assumes its most comprehensive and thus most absurd composition. Calculations as to which horse will win a race are routinely undertaken in the light of comments such as: 'Well, if you ran the race five times you could get five different winners', or 'It's a wide open race and it just depends whether the filly is having a bad day or not'. Pundits ponder unknowable factors, and in doing so sound knowledgeable and well-informed. They can 'talk racing'.

Appearance and embodiment or 'the body for the job' (Bourdieu 1984: 191)



2.7 Trainers and jockeys
(Pacemaker 10/96: 41)

There are two obvious body shapes valued by Newmarket racing society, and they can be described in mutually opposing terms. A friend who visited me in Newmarket, and commented that: 'It's just like Gulliver's Travels', was referring to the contrast between the body shapes of the jockey and the trainer. Bourdieu's argument (1984) that class is literally embodied is almost too obviously illustrated in Newmarket. The ideal jockey is short, thin, tough, quiet, hunched, reticent. The ideal trainer is tall, elegant, straight-backed, self-assured and charismatic:

one can begin to map out a universe of class bodies, which (biological accidents apart) tends to reproduce in its specific logic the universe of the social structure. (Bourdieu 1984: 193)

The lad's body is not valued at all, and is generally lightweight, but not sufficiently so to be a jockey. His hands are rough and large, his face chapped and windburnt. Lads often look tired from their early mornings and late nights, but they are not credited with any definitive qualities. When I asked my trainer the favourable shape for a lad he replied: 'Nondescript'.

Taste, a class culture turned into nature, that is, embodied, helps to shape the class body. It is an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, physiologically and psychologically. It follows the body is the most indisputable materialisation of class taste, which it manifests in several ways. It does this first in the seemingly most natural features of the body, the dimensions (volume, height, weight) and shapes (round or square, stiff or supple, straight or curved) or its visible forms, which express in countless ways a whole relation to the body, i.e., a way of treating it, caring for it, feeding it, maintaining it, which reveals the deepest dispositions of the habitus. It is in fact through preferences with regard to food which may be perpetuated beyond their social conditions of production (as, in other areas, an accent, a walk etc.), and also, of course, through the uses of the body in work and leisure which are bound up with them, that the class distribution of bodily properties is determined. (Bourdieu 1984: 190)

The oppositions between the important bodies in Newmarket extend to the culinary preferences that enable the body to express these differences. Trainers were most often associated with expensive and scarce foods, which are difficult to prepare and perhaps an 'acquired taste', for example, seafood, particularly shellfish, game, salads, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, high quality preserved meats and vegetables, champagne, gin and tonic and whisky. Jockeys are limited to small, low-fat meals of chicken, fish, dry toast, salad without dressings, black tea, mineral water and, occasionally, champagne. Lads eat crisps, tinned soups, sliced bread, chocolate and take-aways and drink beer and fizzy drinks. The prevalence of smoking amongst all of the groups is stunning. It was suggested to me that genetic engineering had been extended to humans in Newmarket, but of course the body is worked on by society rather than being simply genetically determined. The sixteen-year-old son of a former jockey, for example, who weighed 4 stone 4 lbs fully clothed, and had gone straight into a yard at fifteen, told me that he would rather have finished school.



Jockeys were originally boys, thrown up onto horses at a time during which a premium was placed on weight rather than strength. Racing has become increasingly tactical and modern jockeys must be strong as well as light-weight. Strong jockeys can 'anchor' keen racehorses at the beginning of the race in order to preserve their strength for a fast, hopefully winning finish. In addition, a jockey must be able to 'ride a strong finish', squeezing the last ounce of effort out of his horse by pushing with his hands and legs, and by using his whip. Modern jockeys are thus incredibly strong, fit and athletic, capable of riding out in the morning as well as riding six races in the afternoon, all on a negative calorie count. Naturally lightweight jockeys have less of a struggle than those who are tall or heavy, but almost all jockeys have to 'waste', a combination of dieting and sweating, that is potentially debilitating. Ex-jockeys told me that their appetites were permanently affected by their need to waste. In one case the jockey had gained four stone when he gave up race riding through bingeing, returning to ten stone through a diet of oysters, jalapeno peppers and raw onions. This individual had retained an obsession with his weight, and told me how he had been disgusted by himself when weighing fourteen stone. His friends told me that they were worried about how ill he looked since returning to his racing weight.

The most recent high profile case of a jockey experiencing problems with weight was that of Walter Swinburn, nicknamed 'the Choirboy' because of his angelic looks. Swinburn's high profile fall from grace was attributed to an eating disorder and a resulting intolerance of alcohol. After a near fatal fall in Hong Kong in February of 1996, Swinburn lost control of his weight, culminating in an assault on the owner of a popular Newmarket Italian restaurant. In his defence, Swinburn said:

Wasting does get you down and I was fasting for two days and then eating. When you haven't eaten for two days, you suddenly eat too much. I want to get back to eating like normal people. (Sporting Life 28/3/97:1)

Similarly, jockey Richard Pitman told journalists that:

the thought of going into another sauna to lose weight makes him physically sick...I always had it in my mind that I would ride until I was 30 but I couldn't continue to put myself through that regime of keeping myself so light, it wasn't natural to be that thin. (Sporting Life 29/5/97: 22)

The healthfood shop in Newmarket's shopping centre was packed with weight loss products, and energy supplements. I used vials of guarana root in order to give a boost of energy for the early mornings, which were apparently very popular amongst lads, jockeys, and those members of racing society who had no practical need to regulate their weight but were still obsessed with dieting, yoghurt energy drinks and wonder drugs. I would suggest that these members of racing society were modelling themselves upon the racehorse itself - lean, fit and muscular, thus making sure that the racehorse could be seen as created in the image of its 'connections'.

Jockeys bodies are routinely damaged by the accidents common to race riding, particularly over jumps. The death of Richard Davis in 1996 prompted an inquiry into safety, but the foregone conclusion was that riding over jumps is a potentially fatal occupation. Jockeys routinely break bones and speak of their injuries in terms of how long they will take to return 'to the saddle'. Lorcan Wyer, for example, was kicked in the face during a fall, and suffered a smashed cheekbone, a split palate from the top to the bottom of his mouth, a fractured pelvis and collarbone, two broken eye sockets and a broken jaw. He returned to riding after three months, and said:

I don't want to sound like a punch-drunk jump jockey full of bravado but I don't feel my confidence has been affected in any way. More often than not this game gives you up before you give up the game, but, though it's a brave shot for me to say it, I don't think that's happened yet. (Sporting Life 6/12/97: 10)¹⁰

Retired jump-jockeys to whom I spoke cited injury as the reason behind the end of their career, and always attributed to others a loss of 'bottle'.

Dress

The two most contrasting body types in Newmarket are those of the jockey and the trainer, that of the lad lies in a devalued position between the two. Physical differences amongst racing society which betray class affiliations are embellished by the additional markers of dress:

Clothes are not just things which a person possesses but are a part of the human being. Clothing expresses who he or she is, what he or she wants to be, or pretends to be; it defines identity and group adherence in a social context; in this way it gives self-assurance and emotional stability. The demonstration of one's favourite mode of dress is the most successful compromise between self-image and the role everyday life expects us to play. (Hoffman 1984: 10)¹¹

An obsessive preoccupation with weight extends to all sections of society in Newmarket, but those who ride face the particular challenge of wearing appropriate clothing, which is tight and unforgiving. Jodhpurs and chaps are tight, following the contours of the body in order to prevent the chaffing which loose material generates as it accumulates between the body and the horse or saddle. On the Heath, jockeys often wear jeans and boots, and brightly coloured jackets, often emblazoned with a

¹⁰Lorcan's surgeon came to speak to his wife after repairing her husband and told her that the operation had been a success and that they had even managed to save the gap between his front teeth. Nora Wyer, somewhat surprised asked 'What gap?', and Lorcan was wheeled back into the operating theatre.

¹¹ Recent anthropological considerations of clothes have stressed not only their communication of semiotic messages, after Roland Barthes, but also the fluidity of these messages, 'It is very rare that wearing apparel carries messages that permit unequivocal interpretation' (Hoffman 1984: 7). In addition, the purpose of a particular outfit may not always be assumed, 'clothes are not merely defining, but they are also self-consciously used to define, to present, to deceive, to enjoy, to communicate, to reveal and to conceal' (Tarlo 1996: 8). Recent anthropology has sought to historicise and denaturalise clothes, in order to make explicit the processes of political economy to which they may be a response, 'The problem of what to wear is formulated within the framework of the specific historical development of a culture' (Tarlo 1996: 330).

prestigious meeting such as The Breeders Cup. They wear jeans because very little of their leg will be in contact with the horse at any time. Trainers wear jodhpurs because their legs are long, and they have long stirrups. On the Heath, which is really the domain of the horse and jockey or lad, the trainers look ridiculous, they do not have the right body in this context. The absurdity of the trainer out of his element is completed by his horse, referred to as his 'hack', that is usually of a different type to the thoroughbreds he helps patrol. Hacks must go calmly away from their stable mates so that the trainer may gain a vantage point from which to watch his string. They must then stand motionless whilst the other horses gallop by, something few thoroughbreds would tolerate. Thus the hack is usually a thicker set pony type.

Trainers on the Heath employ two techniques in order to deflect the impression that they are, in fact, out of place. The first of these is that attempted by the more confident trainer, who seeks to make a virtue of his physical difference, by riding flashy, spotted or patchy ponies whilst wearing colourful and outlandish clothes which jockeys or lads would 'not be seen dead in'. Alternatively, the confident trainer may adopt the traditional role of trainer, wearing breeches modelled on the fashions of circa 1930, combined with a dark hacking jacket and hat, on a sombre and solid coloured large hack, probably a retired racehorse. His tack is English whilst the outlandish trainer may prefer to take a chance with a Western saddle. In opposition to those trainers who seek to make a virtue out of necessity are the actions of those who detract from their discomfort in this setting by being extremely casual, thus disassociating themselves from any active attempt to fit in, as though preserving the excuse that should they try, they also could move unnoticed amongst the jockeys and lads. These trainers are scruffy, and may have one glove, a cigarette, a scruffy old hack of indeterminate age and breed, stirrups of unequal lengths, and no riding skill whatsoever¹².

The difficulties of the trainer on the Heath should not suggest that the clothes worn by jockeys and lads, those who are in their element, are somehow devoid of symbolic impetus:

Even when garments are used for a specific and apparently mundane purpose we may find that the form they take is not always purely dictated by rationally appropriate requirements. (Barnes and Eicher 1992: 5)

Lads on the Heath often wear caps which bear the trainer's colours, and may also wear uniform jackets. Lads with aspirations to race riding wear their stirrups far shorter than those who have given up this dream. Most obviously, jockeys wear the silks of

¹²As I stood on the Heath one day with a scruffy trainer, he was accosted by a traditional trainer, who had just won the Derby, and was offended by the appearance of my scruffy friend. My friend dismissed his advice whereupon the traditionally attired trainer found purchase in a hole in my friend's jodhpurs and tore them from knee to hip. He rode away, shouting, 'Get yourself some new trousers, you're a disgrace to the Heath'.

the owner of the horse they are riding during a race. The colours have been chosen by the owners of the horse, and registered with Weatherbys, the equivalent of the racing civil service. 'Colours' are unique to their particular owner, and still retain an element of the significance of the livery worn by servants from which they originated. They signal ownership of the horse, and an element of control over the jockey, who must doff his cap to the owner as he enters the paddock and the winners enclosure. As Hoffman states. 'dress communication is always a mirror of the social condition' (1984: 11).

The importance of clothing also extends to that of the horse in Newmarket. Whilst it has been suggested that clothes fuse the biological and cultural bodies, merging private and public (cf. Tarlo 1996), in Newmarket, animal and human bodies are also merged. Riding a horse fuses the two bodies so that it is difficult to establish where one ends and the other begins, both are wearing whatever either is wearing. All racehorses wear rugs during the winter when they are ridden out, which bear the trainer's monogram. Often they may need several rugs as well as the towel and two pads which fit beneath the saddle. All of these items must be put on in a specific order, and folded back from the shoulder in accordance with strict conventions, which vary between trainers and must be learnt. The horse must always be immaculately clean, as I discovered when I left the yard with straw in my horse's tail. The trainer for whom I was riding jumped from his horse and brushed it clean, saying sharply, 'Do you want me to be the laughing stock of the village?' The horse is thus an extension of the rider's body as are clothes, but the horse is also an extension of the trainer whose reputation and monogram he carries. This explains the role of clothing in Newmarket, which is important:

Because of the unique and peculiar role that clothing plays in perceptions of identity. For clothes are frequently perceived as expressions and even extensions of the people who wear them. (Tarlo 1996: 16)

The horse's clothing reflects its status throughout its career. The racehorse is naked whilst a foal, and before it is sold as a yearling. Once a yearling, the racehorse is most closely worked upon by its human handlers, and begins to wear rugs in order to control growth of its coat. These rugs must be tolerated and mark a point from which the horse will wear rugs for the majority of the rest of its career. Only rarely are racehorses left 'naked', even when stabled. One of the horses in our yard was adept at removing his rugs during the night, after which he would delicately pull all of the fluff from one of his woollen blankets. When his lass found him 'naked' each morning she would blush, as though he was being inappropriate in some way, and say: 'Oh gosh, he's undressed himself again!' Perhaps the most significant horse clothing of all is the

rug presented to the winners of big races, usually brightly coloured and bearing the name of the race and its sponsor, the horse carries its status on its back.

What of those members of racing society who are not giving away their status as such by riding a horse or shouting at people on the Heath? It is still possible to discern racing elements amongst the shoppers in Newmarket. Racing society in mufti does not submit to sociological exposition, but is rather an overall impression forced upon the observer:

Paradoxically, ethnographic observation did for its part offer an appreciable glimpse of the 'existential reality' of the bourgeoisie. (Le Wita 1994: 25)

The ability to recognise racing society grows from an accumulation of small experiences which gradually fuse into a single semiotic pattern. For example, watching the tall, middle-aged man who drives his Mercedes Estate (the Mercedes is the trainers' car) along the High Street, swings into a miraculously appearing parking space and rushes into the bank. The first impression is of his height, which is above average. He is wearing a yellow V-neck pullover (definitely no logos or brand names), and light moleskin trousers, a solid blue shirt, open at the neck and suede Gucci loafers (essential). In addition, he has a healthy, but not too obvious tan, straight white teeth and smells clean but not of scent. He is in a hurry, does not lock his car, and leaves it running. His expression is preoccupied, although when, as is inevitable, he is hailed by an acquaintance, he breaks into a smile, shakes hands and offers excuses to hurry on with his mission.

Details are obviously where the fine distinctions within racing society can be made. New shoes are not a good sign, whilst a trainer friend spent a week in mourning for his deck shoes which were pinched whilst he was in the sauna at the gym, 'You know Rebecca, I'd just got them to that perfect worn stage, I hadn't undone the laces *ever*'. New clothes are also undesirable, clothes that are worn in, without being scruffy are favoured. New clothes may provoke some sort of judgement by others, whilst older clothes go unnoticed. New clothes imply an investment of energy and taste that reveals something of the wearer, whilst older clothes do not express an active choice which can then be scrutinised, and possibly found wanting. The detail on a shirt can be significant, particularly the collar which must be wide cut and should not be button-down. Ties are silk, and often decorated with horses heads, bits or stirrups, in a style that echoes not only equestrian links but also a traditional or classic style: 'The obsession of the gentleman is to avoid all extremes at all times' (Lurie 1983: 130). The penchant for the traditional extends throughout racing and reflects an innate conservatism that naturalises class membership by making it apparently effortless.

The best place to see racing women is in Waitrose on the High Street. A trainer's wife described her diminishing fortunes to me thus: 'I used to shop in Waitrose, but now I go to Tesco's', I nodded in sympathy. Newmarket is the smallest population in Britain capable of supporting a Waitrose, and its stock reflects its place in racing life as a source of food for racing families who have to entertain visiting owners at short notice. Thus the freezers are full of vast seafood platters, to be defrosted at a moments notice, and ridiculously luxurious desserts, with curled caramel trimmings and fantastic price tags. Racing women are usually what I was repeatedly told was 'petite', which seemed to mean short and slim. Many trainer's wives ride out, thus in the morning they are to be found in boots and jodhpurs, short jackets and perhaps a neck scarf. Their boots are particularly well fitted, and old enough to have adopted the precise curve of the ankle and calf without being the least bit scruffy. The leather is soft and well treated, self-evidently expensive. They are usually picking up a few rushed things in the morning such as butter or eggs, orange juice and bread.

Later in the day jodhpurs have been replaced by jeans, and, as in Paris, 'there are jeans and jeans' (Le Wita 1994: 64). Women's jeans are tailored and cut fairly tight in the ankle. Jeans in Newmarket are certainly not unisex, thus whilst men may wear Levi's or Wrangler, women told me that they preferred Moschino, and a specifically 'feminine' cut. During my stay in Newmarket the staple top of the racing woman, the polo neck, had been embellished with tiny patterns, often of animals or flowers. This style was championed by Lesley Graham, the female presenter of Channel 4 Racing, and trainer's wife. These polo necks were sold from a stand at a Fair held just before Christmas on the racecourse, which sold out. Jewellery is simple, restricted to discreet earrings (not hoops), watch and wedding ring. Handbags are leather, plain but smart, again of good quality and classic rather than fashionable shape. The same rules apply to shoes, often loafers or moccasins. Jackets are Puffas or Goretex, often of a strong single colour, rather than earth tones, which are avoided due to their association with the waxed jacket which has been appropriated by people outside racing and is thus strongly rejected. Racing families share with bourgeois families a preoccupation with group identity:

never do bourgeois clothes serve to express idiosyncratic behaviour. On the contrary, they conform to what a woman should present of herself. In this way they create an element of distinction understood in the sense of separation (separating, for example, bourgeois jeans from other jeans). (Le Wita 1994: 67)

The dilemma of the racing man or woman is that the rules of their dress code dictate that they must look wealthy, whilst at the same time remaining discreet and understated, because being wealthy and displaying wealth are aspects of two opposing value systems. The motivation to express wealth is particularly strong in racing

society where success translates directly into wealth, via the mechanism of prize money. The fine line between being obviously wealthy without appearing vulgar is negotiated by the wearing of items of high quality but of conservative styles, thus appearing effortlessly and therefore 'naturally' of high class. The display of wealth thus becomes almost accidental, and the desired effect is achieved. Where brash styles are preferred, wealth is obviously on display, reflecting the cardinal sin of racing society: insecurity. In order to function successfully as a badge of high class, wealth must literally be worn lightly.

Conclusion

The reproduction of the two important types of body in Newmarket is facilitated both genetically and socially. Jockeys' children are more likely to be short and lightweight, whilst trainers' children are often tall and well-built. However, both are likely to 'inherit' their father's occupation because of the expectations generated by the ideology of pedigree. This chapter also introduced themes of landscape, language and appearance. The introduction to the landscape of Newmarket and its environs identified a concern with the improvement of nature. Controlling nature yields prestige and status through selective breeding which enables racehorse breeders to claim credit for the English thoroughbred as 'man's noblest creation'.

The specialised language of racing society recurs throughout the thesis, but particularly in relation to the sales. Language can serve to exclude outsiders, but it also reflects distinctions within racing society. Communication maps class boundaries in Newmarket, and terms of address, silence and body language all reflect negotiations between classes. In its most extreme form, lads of all ages may be classified as children by their trainers, in accordance with the Victorian principle whereby they are 'best seen but not heard'. In addition, racing language serves to obfuscate the scarcity or even absence of knowledge. In keeping with the emphasis on appearances, competence in racing talk can compensate for an absence of real knowledge. Throughout my fieldwork, maintaining the appearance of confidence and expertise got me into all sorts of interesting situations for which I was entirely unqualified. Although I could 'talk racing' or at least 'talk horses' with no effort at all, my body was on the margins of acceptability, being what was described as 'horizontally challenged'.

Although I was sufficiently light to ride any of the racehorses, I was seen as larger than I needed to be and therefore desirous of every weight loss pill and potion available in Newmarket. I received tips about weight loss constantly, and took a

variety of high-energy, low-fat supplements whilst working on the stud and on the training yard. Whenever I was under physical pressure, such as when a horse was pulling with me, or generally misbehaving, I would hear the inevitable comment, shouted from the following horse: 'That'll sort you out!', as if I should be grateful for the exertion. On an early morning gallop up a hill, Bill, who was on the lead horse, complained about the sun having been low and in his eyes, whilst Mick, who was behind me, retorted that he had been fine because my backside had eclipsed the sun.

The obsession with appearance amongst racing society is one mechanism by which 'pedigree' is elicited from the racehorse. It arises from the importance of embodied knowledge as the mechanism by which pedigree is translated into class. Ability is determined at birth, knowledge is expressed as talent, not learnt, and thereby, an individual's future is envisaged in accordance with his breeding. This is the 'natural' order in Newmarket, and belonging there depends upon knowing one's place and on perpetuating the mechanisms guaranteeing both that place and also the hierarchy of which it is a part:

In order to have a satisfying explanation we need to see what the symbolic power of structural determination is within the mediating realm of the human and cultural. It is from the resources of this level that decisions are made which lead to uncoerced outcomes which have the function of maintaining the structure of society and the status quo. Although it is a simplification for our purposes here, and ignoring important forms and forces, such as the state, ideology, and various institutions, we can say that macro determinants need to pass through the cultural milieu to reproduce themselves at all. (Willis 1977: 171)

The next chapter considers this process in relation to the upper class of racing - those who consider themselves to be 'real Newmarket families'.

Chapter Three: 'Real Newmarket families'

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss those people who identify themselves as 'Newmarket families'. These are individuals involved in the training, breeding, buying and selling of racehorses, and I shall refer to them as the upper class of racing society. They are the major source of ideas of pedigree, and it is their position in the social structure that is safe-guarded by this ideology. This chapter uses a case study in order to illustrate the ideology of pedigree as it is employed by members of a particular family. The case study is supplemented by more general observations. Like Schneider, I shall be discussing ideas of relatedness, rather than behaviour:

This book is concerned with the definitions of the units and rules, the culture of American kinship, it is not concerned with the patterns of behaviour as formulated from systematic observation of each of its actual occurrences. (Schneider 1968: 6)

Although informants' names have been changed, in Newmarket there are a small number of interconnected eminent families who could be named by most people involved in the racing industry. Almost all of these families are represented to some extent within the extensive genealogy I recorded during 1997¹. Although at the opposite end of the social spectrum, this chapter takes the form of an analogue of Paul Willis' quest to understand, 'How working class kids get working class jobs' (Willis 1977), asking instead 'How do racing families produce racing individuals?'

I begin by introducing the family I have chosen to present as a case study, and describing the methods I used in order to record them. I draw upon informants' discussions of marriage, and, by extension, their ideas of gender. The male dominance of the sport of racing is described, and suggestions made as to its resilience. The idea that male dominance is achieved by the association of women with 'nature' is considered (Ortner 1974), and rejected on the grounds that the status of 'nature' cannot be generalised.

In the second section of the chapter I deal with death as it was described by informants. In relation to the ideology of pedigree, death represents a loss of blood, and is thus opposed to possible gains through marriage. This loss is less pressing when the individual in question has fulfilled the ideal life path and reproduced². Those who fail to do so are seen as incomplete, ideal candidates for ghosts, whether in the

¹The true extent of the dominance of a few families is not the focus of this chapter, 'When Elmonders say, then, that so-and-so is a real village person, or a newcomer that real Elmdon families have been there for generations, we should ask not so much whether it is true but why it matters' (Strathern 1981: 17).

²A life path which takes for granted a 'person's desire to reproduce, and to reproduce themselves' (Strathern 1992b: 52).

memories of the living only, or gliding around the stables of Newmarket. When remembering the dead, either in conversation or in obituaries or tributes, members of racing families focused upon those qualities admired in the living; humour, easy risk-taking, and an affinity with horses.

The 'connection' crystallises notions of identity and relatedness which recur throughout Newmarket society. In racing parlance, 'connections' refer to the humans associated with a particular racehorse, its trainer, owner and jockey. Thus access to the exclusive zone of the paddock is restricted to the 'connections of horses in the present race'. In this way, a 'connection' has come to signify an object as well as a relation. It is interesting to note that a connection is a particular type of person made such by a relationship with a horse, a reversal of the convention whereby animals depend upon an association with humans in order to gain status. For to be a connection is, in Newmarket, to be somebody.

Whilst 'connections' may refer to the owners and trainer of a particular racehorse, an association which confers prestige, connections as relations can also be made to apply to kin, to good business, and to Newmarket itself. Both being a connection and also being connected in and to Newmarket are intrinsically valued, as in Alltown:

Belonging, like association, relationship and a host of similar connective terms, carries positive overtones. It is almost as though there were something productive and generative in making connections as such. At least for English-speakers, it seems natural that persons should want to belong (to whatever it is) as it is natural to want to have things in one's possession which belong to one, or as it is obvious that there is analytical virtue in making connections and tracing sequences of events. (Edwards and Strathern in press)

Those who describe themselves as 'Newmarket families' thus claim two important connections. The first of these is to Newmarket itself, described in the third section of the chapter. Newmarket families also claim connections with racing via individuals successful in its sacred arena, the racecourse.

I shall consider the resilience of this particular system of relatedness in the fourth section of the chapter. I will suggest that although specific ideas of heredity appear to govern membership, the system is actually infinitely flexible, the most significant variable being successful involvement in the racing industry. Thus, although it appears that membership of the Newmarket families depends upon birthright, this birthright can be negated by a lack of interest in racing, whilst kin can always be arranged for those whose commitment to racing is strong enough. The ideology of pedigree and its consequences will be discussed in greater depth in chapter nine.

Finally, I shall examine the response of Newmarket families to outsiders (those perceived as lacking connections to Newmarket or to racing) in the context of events

which framed my fieldwork in 1997, these were, the bomb scare at the Grand National, the General Election and the ban on British Beef. Though these seem unconnected events, the response to them was consistent. Newmarket families resented any force which they considered a threat to their freedom, independence and right to self determination. Thus, the Referendum Party provided a refuge from European invasion, animal rights activists 'should all be shot', and banning beef was the act of a 'nanny state': 'I'll eat what I bloody well like!'

This chapter is not a systematic description of the kinship practices of Newmarket's racing families, although I believe that it gains coherence from the idea of pedigree as a way of imagining connections between people. It is fieldwork led, in that it focuses upon those concerns repeatedly articulated by informants, as in Strathern's study of Elmdon:

In so far as my account imitates a case study in the traditional anthropological sense, its main line of enquiry takes its cue from what Elmdon people themselves seem to be interested in. (Strathern 1981: xxxi)

A 'real Newmarket family'

I was introduced to the trainer whose family I chose³ to research in a local pub, by Julian Wilson, then Senior Racing Correspondent for the BBC⁴. Charles was introduced as a fourth generation racehorse trainer and member of a Newmarket racing dynasty. I told him that I was an anthropologist studying racing in Newmarket, and he immediately began to tell me about his family, much to my surprise. The technique I found myself employing, described by some anthropologists as 'talking family' (Bouquet 1993), was immediately hi-jacked by Charles, and became a means of 'talking family trees'. My own wariness of the genealogical method became an irrelevance as Charles called for paper and pen from the landlord, and the relationship between anthropologist and informant assumed a heightened symmetry as he quizzed me on my knowledge of 1940s Classic winners and their associations with his family, attempting to locate me within his own frame of reference. By the time I had known Charles for just over an hour he had plotted some fifty individuals on seven napkins, and pressed them into my hands, pointing out discrepancies where the pen had smudged or blotted. The detail imparted with each family member was remarkably consistent; names of stables, horses, owners and significant races, all connected by the inevitable trunk and branch formation.

³It might be more accurate to say that they chose me to research their family.

⁴Julian had shown some interest in my research despite some initial misapprehension, 'Anthropology...That's about feet isn't it?'

Charles is currently training, fairly successfully, in Newmarket. He trains from a famous old stable, and had approximately fifty horses in training when I visited him, and around fifteen staff. He and his wife have three children, including a baby. When I revealed the genealogy I had reproduced from his drawings he showed the baby her entry and said, 'There you are!' Charles is authoritative, confident, impatient and serious. He talks about his family as though this information is a matter entirely fitting for the public realm, since these are his racing credentials. He frames the information as genealogy, as this is the recognised form taken by evidence of heredity by racing families in Newmarket, as amongst the bourgeoisie of Paris:

By arranging the generations in order and giving each individual his place, genealogy makes a title of social function, thereby transforming it into privilege. (Le Wita 1994: 5)

'Talking family' was, for Charles, the same as 'talking racing', and did not involve doing violence to his idea of what sort of information could be shared with a virtual stranger:

Talking family is charged with latent violence quite as much as affectivity...It is a discourse that deserves comparison with sorcery which, as Favret-Saada shows, is about power rather than knowledge or information. She recounts that she sometimes had the sensation of having burst into some forbidden zone, forcing an intimacy in which she did not participate. This intrusion appeared to deprive the person with whom she was speaking of part of his or her identity. (Bouquet 1993: 46)

'Talking family' with Charles was also imbued with power, but the power was his. I was bewitched by the breadth and depth of his knowledge of connections and every individual he introduced drove home his point, which was that racing ability was bred into his family, it was 'in their blood'. That I should wish to map this precious blood was not in the least bit extraordinary to him.

Charles suggested that I should also meet his aunt. At the same time, I met a representative of the Thoroughbred Breeders Association (TBA) at the National Stud trade fair. Jane was very interested in her 'family history', and took me to meet her mother, Mary. Mary was also Charles' aunt, thus illustrating the importance of the saying that in Newmarket you only get one chance, because if you offend someone it is more than likely that they are related to everyone else. It is absolutely necessary to be circumspect regarding gossip, of which there is plenty in Newmarket.

I recorded approximately five hundred individuals of nine generations in many sittings with various members of this family who found it perfectly natural that I should want to know about them. Not surprisingly, I tended to be introduced to those members of the family who were involved in racing. Jane was perhaps the most staunch advocate of the argument that racing was 'in the blood', and that, therefore, in recording their blood I was recording racing. A lot of family tree had already been recorded, in a format that revealed a preoccupation with those individuals who cultivated a career in racing.

It was the marriage of John and Isabel that marked the beginning of this particular racing dynasty. Of John's eight sons, six became trainers and two of his three daughters married trainers. Brother Tom was a doctor and greyhound keeper:

I like to think that, as well as skill in looking after dogs, he passed onto his family a tradition of expertise in the care of horses; after all, it would be essential that a doctor's horses were well cared for.

A tenuous link, perhaps, but one that coincides completely with the thinking that pervades this record. The sons and daughters of these founding members each married into other families acknowledged to be the original racing families of Newmarket⁵.

The present relative decline in the family's involvement in racing is unsurprisingly regretted:

It is sad, that of our large family only Charles is still training horses, though good to know that he is doing well. Jack retired some time ago as did his brothers Tom, and John, until recently stud manager at Stud. Dick is also retired after many years managing studs. However, John's son Alec is of course working at a stud in France. It is also a great source of pleasure to me that Spring Lodge, where I was brought up, has at last been beautifully renovated, after a long period of dereliction⁶.

The story was told exclusively from the perspective of the family's association with racing. Links created by male lines, particularly those associated with racing, were pursued, whilst female links were neglected unless they initiated contact with a significant racing line. This tendency was reflected by the trace of surnames which were lost by marriage 'out of racing', whilst marriage 'into racing' could introduce a brand new association, as in Elmdon, 'The kinds of choices made at marriage are crucial to the evaluation of family status' (Strathern 1981: xxx).

Marriage

each marriage provides the occasion for a festival, developed more or less elaborately over longer or shorter periods, a festival which celebrates and keeps alive sentiments and relationships which go way beyond the marrying couple themselves. (Charsley 1991: 194)

During my stay in Newmarket, an important wedding took place, between a jockey and the daughter of a famous racehorse vet. Their wedding in the centre of Newmarket reflected many of the features of the networks of kin and connections

⁵ The abridged family tree of this dynasty, showing the links between the seven original racing families, is reprinted in an appendix of Onslow's book 'Royal Ascot' (Onslow 1990). The family tree is set alongside two others; the first is of those members of royalty who have been credited an association with Ascot, and the second is a trace of the tale-male line of a particular stallion from the nineteenth century to the present day. No comment is made upon the mixing of species, and the symbiosis between royal patronage and famous racing families, both human and equine, is neatly captured in three pages.

⁶The present occupier of 'Spring Lodge' is actually related to the family through marriage, and went to Harrow with Charles.

common amongst racing families⁷. Horizontally, the wedding list read like a 'who's who of racing', vertically and horizontally, Frankie Dettori and Catherine Allen represent two racing families well-known in Newmarket, Italy and New Zealand. Frankie is the son of the champion jockey of Italy. He was sent to Newmarket as an apprentice to Luca Cumani, the Italian trainer, with £300 in his pocket, and has been incredibly successful, particularly as the retained jockey for Godolphin and Sheikh Mohammed. Frankie rides for John Gosden, David Loder and Saeed Bin Suroor amongst others. He is currently the most famous and popular jockey riding, rising to stardom by riding all seven winners on the card at Ascot in 1997, costing the bookmakers £25 million.

Catherine Allen is the daughter of 'Twink' Allen, Professor of Equine Reproduction at Cambridge University, revealingly referred to by many as 'Professor of Racing'. Professor Allen is based at the Equine Fertility Unit at Wood Ditton. Catherine's brother is a vet and Captain of Cambridge University Polo Club, whilst her sister Felicity was married to Larry LeGgatt, owner of Cambridge and Newmarket Polo Club⁸. The couple met when Catherine was riding out for John Gosden.

This was racing's wedding of the year, and it was reported in all of the newspapers in exactly the same way, concentrating far more upon 'racing' than on 'wedding'. The concentration of racing people was highlighted, to the extent that some of the papers reproduced partial guest lists which recorded only this category of guest. There were few pictures showing family, and none of the quotes were from guests other than racing guests, apart from that of Ronnie Wood, of the Rolling Stones, who owns a racehorse. The anecdote most frequently recounted of the wedding was that Frankie had been pleased to lose a bet of £50 to Bernie Curley, a professional gambler, that the day would be sunny. Also quoted were members of the two hundred and fifty strong crowd of well-wishers who gathered around the church, telling the journalists how much money Frankie had won for them through bets.

The public reporting of this wedding concentrated solely upon its significance for racing. Reassurance as to the 'horsy' nature of the bride, a strong show from racing folk, a wager on the weather, all of these things submit easily to the idioms in which racing identities are expressed. Amongst those of us who were not invited, but who knew people who were, this wedding was discussed as a family matter. Discussions of marriage amongst racing families focus upon compatibility, which is a

⁷I have chosen to describe this wedding because it was in the public sphere, whilst weddings within the family I studied were not.

⁸I groomed for Larry LeGgatt during the 1997 season, and thereby made a vast number of contacts in the racing industry as Larry's 'day job' is that of tailor to racing's great and good.

family matter. Despite the variation in celebrations arising from marriage, I was struck by the relevance of family to their predicted outcome.

Discussions of the likely success or failure of a marriage amongst upper class informants were conducted within a familial frame of reference. Most commonly, the parents of the couple were discussed. Where either of the couple had divorced parents this was identified as a possible threat to their future. This belief was summarised by a farmer friend, 'like begets like':

Serious horse people look at the breeding, for today's aspirant or hero is merely the culmination of the mingling of bloodlines; of the collision between dam and sire. Sire: a champion jockey, a single-minded man who demanded respect which crossed the boundary of fear. Dam: a trapeze artist. Produce: Frankie Dettori, out of a show-off with perfect balance and a love of danger, by a ruthless 'sonofabitch'. (Barnes 1997: 24)

Apart from a tendency towards divorce and infidelity, parents with no affinity with horses were also seen as a potential weakness, particularly where the individual in question lacked this affinity his or herself. All discussions of compatibility were skewed towards considerations of the compatibility of women with men. As racing is such a male dominated sport, the man became the fixed point in many of these conversations, the women were characterised as suitable or unsuitable in relation to him. The dominance of men in racing's most powerful roles is overwhelming, to the surprise of one male racing administrator who I interviewed:

We get quite a number of women trainers and there are no restrictions in operation. I don't really know why there aren't more women, they have equal opportunities. There are a lot of female administrators, 11% in the Jockey Club for example. It manifests itself more in the press room, when on a day to day meeting you wouldn't get a single girl (sic).

That the 11% female membership of the Jockey Club was singled out as an example of a field in which there are 'a lot' of women reflects their virtual absence from other racing spheres. The highest concentration of women in racing occupations is, predictably, amongst 'lads', the least prestigious role. The ratio of male to female 'lads' through the years 1991 to 1995 ranged from 1712: 1395 to 1473: 1202 (The Racing Industry Statistical Bureau Statistics 1996: 210). At apprentice jockey level, the ratio of men to women (or 'boys' to girls' as the industry would prefer) is greater than five to one for these years. Even this ratio is not upheld into the professional ranks⁹. Racing society is controlled by men, and this situation is self-perpetuating. Accordingly, women in racing are often perceived as strident and self-assured, having struggled against this bias:

⁹ In December 1992, the Jockey Club had licensed 112 flat jockeys, 8 of whom were women, and 148 jump jockeys, 8 of whom were women. By contrast, amongst apprentices on the flat, 43 of the 205 were women, although over jumps of the 160 apprentices only 7 were women. This distribution is not reproduced internationally. Of the 2791 jockeys licensed to ride in the USA, Canada and parts of Mexico in 1992, 447 were women. In Sweden, two women have been champion jockey, an unthinkable achievement in Britain. Berneklint was champion with 71 wins from 357 rides in 1991, whilst Nordgren was champion in 1982 with 61 wins from 232 rides (Lovesey 1994: 31-32).

She's a truly awful woman Rebecca, you wouldn't like her one bit. One of those women with a terrible chip on her shoulder, you know. Always on the offensive. She knows her stuff, sure, but she's fallen victim of this terrible business whereby successful women seem to need to push it down your throat. You know? (Senior racing administrator)

Predictably, powerful men in the racing industry, such as the administrator I have quoted, dislike these successful women, labelling them 'brash' and in particular, 'unfeminine'.

The resilience of this dominance requires an explanation. Racing society is wealthy and traditionalist, and presents change as a bourgeois quality. Impermanence is seen as evidence of weakness, and institutions gain authority with age. Tradition is thus invoked as a justification for practices which are subject to criticism. These beliefs have had practical consequences for women in racing, whose position has changed far less than those outside. For example, it was not until 1966 that women were able to take out training licences (Jockey Club 1997b: 7), though a few women trained before this time under the names of their head lads. The Honourable Mrs.

George Lambton discussed the possibility of women being granted licences in 1950: the Jockey Club have always been adamant over this question, and I must say I think rightly so; once the door was open and women allowed into the sacred precincts of the weighing room on the official footing as trainers, what is to stop them from becoming jockeys too? No doubt many in these days have that ambition, but although there are plenty of embryo 'National Velvets' in the making, I think it will be a long time before feminism asserts itself to this extent; in fact, the Turf will remain a last ditch! (Bland 1950: 181)

Jockey's licences have been granted to women since 1972 (on the flat) and 1976 (over jumps) (Hargreaves 1994: 276), however, attitudes towards them remain largely unchanged:

There is no doubt that you will find more male chauvinism in racing than in any other industry, apart from male bastions like coal mining. (MacDonald quoted in Lovesey 1994: 32)

It is perceived in racing that women are weaker. Therefore if you have a strong horse and you want it to be ridden hard, there is, as I understand it, a reluctance on the part of owners and trainers to put up a woman jockey when the chips are down. (Turner quoted in Lovesey 1994: 32)¹⁰

The place of women within racing has been determined by a theory of gender based upon physical attributes:

To say that the Sex Discrimination Act came as a shock to the British racing world would be an understatement. A large majority of the men who make their living in that world are, to say the least of it, conservative by nature and their reaction to the idea of female jockeys ranged from genuine horror to chauvinistic mockery - with a fair amount of ribald humour in between. Lester Piggott, never a man to use two words when one will do said simply, 'their bottoms are the wrong shape', and, as usual, he had a point. (Oaksey 1978: 7)

Julie decided that the only way to be treated like a male jockey was to act like one. So she kept her hair short and wore no make-up or dresses. When she introduced herself to

¹⁰ Rory MacDonald is Director of the British Racing School, and admitted that it was 'much more difficult' to place 'girls' (Lovesey 1994: 32) with yards after their training, even as lasses, let alone as apprentice jockeys. Dr Michael Turner was, until recently, the Jockey Club's Chief Medical Officer.

trainers, she shook their hands firmly to show her strength. She fought back tears and smiles - anything she thought might make her look weak. (Callahan 1990: 31)

In relation to jockeys, it's obviously a physical difficulty. (Senior racing administrator.)

Characterising women as 'the weaker sex' has enabled men to justify their exclusion from the roles of jockey and stallion man. Women were thought to require protection from colts and stallions, who were likely to be aroused by the scent of a woman and to cause her harm as a result¹¹. Male attributes are crystallised in the myth of the stallion, potent, fertile, powerful and talented. The mare, in contrast, epitomises the feminine qualities of fertility, nurturing, motherhood and kindness. I would suggest that using a primarily physical idiom of gender has enabled the crossover of ideas from animals to men and women:

You know what lads are like, they want to be jockeys day and night, so we stick to girls, they look after the horses and do a good job. (Trainer.)

There's no difference between a woman and a mare, except that a mare is more agreeable. The mare is a self-contained foaling unit and nursery, and that's all a woman would be if she didn't talk so much. (Bloodstock agent.)

Men compared women to horses and horses to women ('She's a spiteful bitch, just like her owner'):

I have always been fascinated by the way – and it's simply a habit, not an insult – (racing people) refer to women as though they are horses. I remember once asking Fred Winter what he thought of a certain trainer's mistress and he replied, 'Oh, she's very moderate'. Another trainer described a woman as being 'of little account'. I suppose the best sort of woman to spend a day at the races with would be described by Mr Winter and his colleagues as 'promising, useful, scope'. (Bernard and Dodd 1991: 58)¹²

Married couples may also succumb to description as dam and sire, as in the following example. The announcement is an explicit illustration of the married couple as a source of racing individuals according to the breeding template of the English thoroughbred. It is an extended play on a thoroughbred breeding return:



3.1 Breeding return from *The Sporting Life* (5/6/96)

¹¹The rape of a woman by a horse was often described euphemistically by men who advocated the protection of women from colts and stallions. It represents another example of the tendency to elide human and animal categories.

¹² These remarks come from an essay entitled 'Sizing up a Filly', and epitomise the tendency of men who discuss women in this way to dismiss its importance by describing it as a 'habit'. By so doing, they make any offence taken by a woman inappropriate, the result of a misunderstanding. Such offence is often invoked as evidence of the greater 'sensitivity' of women relative to men.

The announcement uses the language and format of both a breeding return and also a race report. It was placed in the Breeding Returns column of the Sporting Life in 1997. When deciphered, the announcement refers to the birth of Matthew Leo David Grouse (weight 7lbs.) on Sunday 2nd June at the District Hospital, York. Matthew's parents are David Grouse and Karen Grouse, nee Andrews (in a breeding return the sire of the dam would be placed in brackets after her name). The phrases in italics are a race finish in the language of Timeform, the company that assesses all races and publishes handicapping guides for punters. These are stock phrases of such a report, but they also obviously evoke the birth of Matthew.

The remainder of the announcement refers to Matthew's existing sibling, Lily Katherine. Matthew is described as her 'full-brother', as he shares both parents, whilst breeding returns often record half-siblings, who only share a dam. This announcement crystallises the tendency of members of racing society to slip easily between speaking of racehorses and speaking of humans, a tendency which I shall explore in more detail in chapter eight.

At first glance, these comments may appear to support Ortner's idea that women's physiology makes them seem closer to nature (1974). Ortner arrives at this contention by asking what every culture devalues, believing that there is only 'one thing that would fit that description, and that is 'nature', in the most generalised sense' (Ortner 1974: 72). However, Ortner's characterisation of nature as universally demeaned in relation to culture is a simplification that masks more than it reveals in Newmarket¹³. Women are associated with birth and nurturing perceived as 'natural' processes, but 'nature' is also powerful and violent, and, in this guise, associated with men:

The business of women and horses reminds me of Roger Mortimer's theory that a stallion needs to be something of a shit to be a success at stud. He even predicted that Mill Reef would be better at stud than Brigadier Gerard because he was nastier, and he was absolutely right. (Bernard and Dodd 1991: 58)

Physical explanations were not so commonly evoked in discussions of the dominance of men in the roles of trainer, agent or administrator, although the explanations I received were similarly uniform. I was told that men were more numerous than women in racing roles due to the unequal opportunities which existed in the past, but that these things were currently changing. When I pressed men as to who they would rather employ, these changes were often attributed to a 'future' which involved people other than the individual in question, for example:

¹³Criticisms of Ortner's argument that 'female is to male as nature is to culture' have concentrated on the fact that meanings of 'nature' and 'culture' cannot be generalised (Strathern 1980, Gillison 1980). Thus amongst the Gimi, for example, the nature/female - culture/male opposition does not hold (Gillison 1980), as *Dusa*, broadly translated as the cultivated sphere, is associated with male/female relations, whilst *Kore*, the uncultivated realm, is associated with men.

I'd rather have a man simply because at the moment we deal mainly with other men. But, as I said, things are changing, and in the future, who knows, I may need to employ women too. (Bloodstock agent.)

The idea that men and women communicate more efficiently with members of the same sex was institutionalised in the maddening convention by which women chatted in the kitchen before supper whilst the men enjoyed a whisky in the lounge. Talk in the kitchen was often of the children, or other domestic concerns whilst conversation in the lounge was of business (so I'm told). These ideas were raised in a number of my interviews with women, for example:

My official role is to look over the stable door and say 'Ahh'. It is a sexist industry, and it is because of being a woman. I don't fit in because I have my own career (as a teacher). I won't stay in and answer the phone like the last two stud groom's wives. This world isn't like a job, it's a culture or a way of life. (Wife of stud groom.)

This woman identifies the expectation of racing society that a woman's status, occupation and lifestyle will be determined by that of her husband, to whom the most powerful roles in racing are open. The only variable capable of transcending the gender discrimination in racing is class:

The few women who broke into horse-racing were exceptional and from middle or upper-class backgrounds. Lower-class women only held supporting, subservient roles such as 'stable girls, cloakroom attendants, payers-out at the Tote windows, barmaids, trainer's wives, daughters and sisters'. (Hargreaves 1994: 120)

Thus, the Queen is perceived as an authority on racing, despite the fact that she is a woman, because her status 'compensates' for her gender.

The dominance of men in all of the powerful professional roles in racing encourages the perception of marriage as consisting of women 'marrying in' to racing, and thus being responsible for adjustment to a racing man. The exception to this rule arises where a woman's class status is capable of 'neutralising' her gender. This exception is a further source of the resilience of the male dominance of racing, since status is only granted to those women who have an existing family association with racing, and no mechanism exists whereby women can begin to create this association, except through their alliances with men. The next section focuses on death. Whilst marriage is a mechanism by which a connection may be created, an entire family line may terminate along with an individual who has failed to reproduce.

Death

At trainer Gordon Richard's funeral in October 1998, the cortège was led by a grey horse named 'Better Times Ahead', who won the 2:10 at Wrexham later that week. At a memorial service earlier in the year I had been told that trainers attend funerals in order to poach owners from their not long dead colleagues. The death of jockey Johnny Haine in October 1998 prompted tributes which highlighted his stylish

riding of hundreds of National Hunt winners, riding with stirrups shorter than any other jump jockey before or since. His epigraph was a story told by John Francome in which the racecourse doctor detained Johnny after he had been sick following a fall. His friend, anxious to catch the train home, told the doctor that he would have been sick if he'd drunk as much as Johnny over the past five days and then fallen off a horse.

The retrospective appreciation of fellow members of racing families reveals traits valued amongst the living. Deaths are greeted with tributes to life in the form of riding skills, training skills, risk-taking and good humour. Racing triumphs are always mentioned, greatest winners listed in newspapers and on television, associations with good horses recalled, whether jockey, trainer or bloodstock agent. The individual's contribution to the particularity of each race in which he had an involvement, his influence upon the accumulated history of racing is acknowledged.

Speaking to family and friends at racing funerals one will find the same traits attributed to the deceased: horsemanship, generosity and good humour. These are the qualities associated with being a good racing person, as made clear by this obituary for Bob Ruttle:

A beautiful horseman, Bob is well remembered for riding a talented but wayward filly, Scarf, as a hack, setting off as many as thirty two-year-olds at the bottom of the Bury Hill canter, before following them up, with a long rein and not a care in the world...One of his great expressions was that when a difficult horse appeared, he would say: 'I'll ride it.' And he did! (Walwyn 1997: 4)

Primarily, one must have an affinity with horses. This affinity may take the form of 'an eye for a horse' in the case of a bloodstock agent, an ability to 'keep them sweet' in a trainer or an 'eye for a stride' in a jockey.

Generosity is valued because it reflects both success and also nonchalance, an absence of anxiety about the future, the confident undertaking of risk and liability. All members of racing families are expected to take risks without revealing discomfort, and successful risk-taking is the means of advancement in all racing occupations. 'Risk nowt, get nowt', is a common saying, and also the name of a horse presently racing. Taking risks is seen as indicative of self-assurance, such that one's place in the racing hierarchy is secure, achieved effortlessly, and not in the least bit threatened by one's behaviour. Those who do not take risks are regarded with suspicion, hence my own risk-taking, which was an attempt to prove that I was 'the right sort'.

Humour in racing is dominated by anecdotes which relate those mishaps which usually originate in taking risks, an excess of alcohol which culminates in potentially compromising exposure, for example. Humour is usually derived from indiscretions of a sexual or financial nature. I would suggest that this humour serves to increase the distance between racing society and the outside world by revelling in the

irresponsibility facilitated by involvement in such an isolated, unaccountable industry. Tales of drunk driving, in particular, were met with admiration for the protagonist, 'Bloody hell, three times over - that's pretty good going!', and defiance of the law and the police, the authority of whom was explicitly dismissed as 'irrelevant to us', 'for the masses' and 'meant for joy riders'.

The death of a member of racing's upper class, as in the case of the death of a successful racehorse, represents a loss of blood - a gap in the genealogy of a particular 'family'. The sudden deaths of popular horses are greeted by behaviour that can only be described as mourning. The death of Red Rum, for example, was followed by a television tribute to an 'equine hero'. The death of One Man live on television was accompanied by the tears of his seemingly hard-bitten jockey, prompting a flood of letters and sympathy to the BBC.

The death of even a mediocre racehorse is, to his stable, a tragedy. My own experience of the death of a horse in the yard revealed that racehorses are mourned as though they are individuals, and, explicitly, persons. The dead horse was discussed, his personality re-evoked and his quirks recalled. These discussions focused particularly upon the things that this horse did that made him distinctive in the way that people are. The horse's straw was left in his box for several days until the girl who looked after him was able to remove it herself. I was told that this was something that could not be rushed, she must do it 'when she is ready', as it was 'part of the process of saying good-bye'. Though this process could properly be described as anthropomorphic, there is no question that the grief expressed was real. Some horses have always been buried in Newmarket, and many of the older yards have equine graveyards and headstones.



3.2 Horse gravestone, Hamilton Road
(Author's Photograph 1997)

The importance of ancestors, now deceased, in determining the ability of the present generation, provides fertile ground for ghosts of both species. Newmarket is riddled with the ghosts of trainers and jockeys, perhaps the best known of which is that of Fred Archer:

they say..(cue hairs rising on the back of your neck)..Fred's still around. 'The lads say they see him from time to time,' says the trainer. 'The older we get, the more whisky we drink, the more ghosts we see. The lads tend to see him on a Friday night.' When the lads called him up on a Ouija board, Fred told them to back Unblest the following day (he won at 6-4), where his grave was and where he committed suicide. Sounds like we could all do with a benevolent ghost. (Armytage 1997: 32)

Fred Archer was the most famous jockey of the second half of the nineteenth century, and he makes a perfect ghost because he had a hard life and met a tragic end. Archer shot himself whilst suffering from a delirious fit brought on by wasting to reduce his weight. His suicide was made more poignant as it fell upon the anniversary of the death of his wife during childbirth. The son to whom she gave birth also died. I would suggest that Archer cannot rest because he did not leave an heir. He is still implicated in Newmarket in numerous ways, due to the presence of his ghost, a street named Fred Archer Way, and the sinister cabinet in the Racing Museum dedicated to his memory, which contains his diary, his boots, and the gun with which he shot himself. The next section considers the connection to the town claimed by real Newmarket families, which does not usually take the form of haunting or museum exhibits, but is to be found in the association of particular training stables with particular families.

Claiming a connection to Newmarket

Most informants credited their family with an association with Newmarket, and the title of 'Newmarket trainer' is generic, and used in opposition to, for example, the 'Northern trainers'. The association of various racing figures with Newmarket has been codified in the street names of the town, to the extent that many of them bear the name of a jockey, race or trainer, as in the case of Fred Archer. Beyond an association with Newmarket itself, many families have developed links with particular yards, as reflected by the description of Machell Place offered by its owner:

Machell Place, built in 1884, was named after Captain Machell and was bought from him by Tony Hide's Grandfather-in-law, Coll. Leader. When Col moved to Stanley House, as private trainer to Lord Derby, Ted Leader moved in, followed by Jock Halsey, Charlie Elliott, Jack Watts - who trained Indiana to win the St. Leger - Brian Lunness and now Tony Hide, who started training in 1977 on returning from Italy, where he trained the winners of their 2000 guineas, 1000 guineas and Oaks and the second in the Derby. Whilst at Machell Place he has sent out Group winners in France Germany and Sweden. (Open Day Programme 1996)

The significant features of this description are those which are introduced in order to convey prestige, by association, upon the present occupant of the stable. Thus the

relationship between Tony Hide and the Leaders is featured, because the Leaders trained for Lord Derby, and all classic winners (even Italian) get a mention. Prestigious winners are listed as though they still exert an influence over the present day fortune of the yard:

Park Lodge is one of the oldest yards in Newmarket and is now the most central operational yard in the town. Many famous horses have been trained here including Blue Peter. Sir Jack Jarvis, who trained Blue Peter and many other classic winners trained here from the twenties to the sixties. (Open Day Programme 1996)

By mentioning the Leaders and Jack Jarvis, both of these descriptions signal an association (to those 'in the know') with a major racing dynasty. Similarly, when recording family members who trained, informants always specified the yard they occupied. Some yards remained in families throughout generations, and the sale of these yards is always regretted, whilst their possession is remembered with great nostalgia.

The relationship between the established Newmarket families and the latest influx of trainers is captured in the difference between the old established yards and the yards built during the 1980s, on Hamilton Road. The stories associated with the stables of Hamilton Road do not concern past glory, or association with famous equine and human figures, but rather the sadness of the recession which caught out many of the new trainers. Marriott Stables remains unfinished, with weeds growing through the concrete, and an uncertain future. Even more sad is the story of the horse left in Rathvinden Stables by his trainer as payment of a debt to his landlord. A trainer told me that the yards on Hamilton Road do not possess sufficient history to sustain a business:

They haven't got the horses in the boxes to talk to the horses and the trainer in the house to talk to the trainer. No history speaks to them, and they're in a vacuum, trying to make history out of nothing.

Some families can claim a connection to Newmarket through residence in, and ownership of, the historic training yards. However, recognition of this connection is contingent upon the success that marks racing people. Thus, whilst an unsuccessful trainer has spent his working life in Newmarket in a yard on the Hamilton Road, he has failed to make a connection. The daughter of a jockey who has never lived on a yard but can trace an association with a historic yard through her uncles is, in contrast, proprietorial about its fortunes, and is acknowledged as having a connection. Connections are thus activated by success, because someone involved in racing who does not ever achieve success does not require explanation in terms of pedigree. Likewise, one may choose not to activate one's connection to racing, but one may not choose to have such a connection. If successful in racing, a connection will be envisaged, but it will take the form, not of a choice, but of a 'natural fact'. The next

section examines in more detail how these 'natural facts' are envisaged by racing people.

Making Connections

Whilst recording relatives with members of my family of informants I noticed that they were omitting people from our record. When I asked about this I was told that they had been missing out those people without any known involvement with racing. Informants were happiest when the ratio of 'racing' to 'non-racing' people was as high as possible, and suggested that I should devise an equation capable of calculating this concentration, although they didn't go so far as to mention 'prepotency'¹⁴.

Eventually, they settled for running a diagonal line through 'non-racing' people, so that my diagrams would be very confusing to an anthropologist, depicting people seemingly reproducing from 'beyond the grave'. This is racing's answer to Schneider's question of:

What, then, determines whether a relation will exist or not? Why is there a relationship with one person but not with another on a given genealogy? (Schneider 1968: 72)

In relation to American kinship, Schneider identifies three factors which may lead to non-recognition of a relative, these are physical, socioeconomic / emotional, and genealogical 'distance' (Schneider 1968: 74). Amongst members of Newmarket families, the most significant factor influencing whether a relative will be recognised as such appears to be their racing credentials.

Memories of connections amongst Newmarket families are entirely selective. 'Social interest' is highly focused, so that those with racing credentials (however distantly 'related') will not be forgotten, whilst those without such credentials (however closely 'related') will be recalled reluctantly and in passing, or not at all. Furthermore, those with sufficiently strong racing credentials may have biological links envisaged for them. Where these biological links seem lacking at first glance at an individual's immediate family, they will be attributed to his or her unrecorded 'past'.

Informants describing the contemporary relations between Newmarket families thereby delineated themselves from newcomers. The desire to include some and exclude others became almost farcical, as the transcript of our conversation reveals:

B: The Candys go back, and the Easterbys in Yorkshire are all connected. There are huge families in Epsom too. The Tollers...Tom is in transport, and James' nephew Mark is

¹⁴ The idea which can be found in animal breeding manuals up to the 1950s, and which is still advocated amongst thoroughbred breeders, whereby an individual animal may exert a disproportionate influence over its offspring and those of every ensuing generation. In thoroughbred breeding, it is the stallion that is most frequently credited with 'prepotency'.

from a racing family too. There's a possible connection between the Yorkshire Watts and our Watts via Yvonne. Harry Wragg's father married into a racing family. Harry Carr the jockey married Joan who was connected to the Wraggs, or was it the Barlows? Of course, Frankie Barlow's sister Carol married Kipper Lynch (jockey) so that joined up the families through sisters marrying jockeys. James Eustace's wife's brother trains in Hong Kong.

R: Are the Baldings all related too?

B: Yes, that's right, Toby (trainer) and Ian (trainer) are cousins, Emma's father Peter trained for the Queen after the Rickaby and Marsh time, and then Colonel Robin Hastings is chairman of the BBA, now isn't he the one who can be traced back to Robin Hood? I think there is some connection there.

In order to claim people as family members, informants envisaged connections. These connections were both vertical (moving through generations) and horizontal (moving across generations), either will do and when one is absent the other compensates. Thus the Candys 'go back', whilst the Easterbys are 'all connected'. This is an example of the Alltown phenomenon whereby, 'Connections appear intrinsically desirable' (Edwards and Strathern in press). The connections informants were prepared to acknowledge depended almost entirely upon the individual concerned, and whether they wished to admit him or her to their ranks. Thus although a recent recruit to training had a father who had been a major owner, they did not permit this connection. In other contexts, in order to provide a link between two major families, for example, this connection was permitted:

Kinship reckoning only appears endless when a chain is created through a series of similar (homogeneous) elements. Thus one could count genetic ancestry forever, or the contacts of contacts. But in practice few such chains get very far. They quickly encounter other (thereby heterogeneous) elements. A purist might point to these as non-kinship factors; we think that it is the interdigitation of diverse kinds of linkages that gives English kin reckoning not just an expansive but also a *self-limiting* character, and that this self-limiting character is fruitfully regarded as part of kinship thinking...It is arguable that what makes twentieth century kinship, and its Euro-American cognates, distinctive is precisely the division and combination of social and biological facts. (Edwards and Strathern in press)

As Edwards and Strathern note, 'biology is never the full story' (in press), however, this leaves open the question of exactly what, in Newmarket, constitutes 'biology', and 'society'. In the case of Newmarket, biology is the pedigree theory of heredity, based upon the inheritance of 'racing blood', whilst society is success in the sacred arena of the racecourse. An 'interdigitation' (cf. Edwards and Strathern in press) thus occurs between the ideology of pedigree and the reality of the successes of those who do not qualify biologically for such achievements. Where links neglect to provide success in racing they are killed off, thus biology is banished by the diagonal line through non-racing relatives. Where success occurs without biological connection such a connection is imagined or assumed.

I am not suggesting that this is a particularly exceptional feature of kinship particular to Newmarket families:

kinship ties themselves have always contained an element of selectivity. In other words, it is not the case that once upon a time people gave automatic loyalty to kin and that

this has been eroded by late modernity, relationships with kin were always qualified by personal preference. (Jamieson 1998: 87)

What does appear specific to this context is the ideology that family cannot be separated from occupation and thus class, all are determined by birth. The fluidity of racing ideologies such as, 'the big win', and that 'all men are equal on the turf and under it', that anyone can back a horse and therefore become rich, the camaraderie of the racecourse and the idea that everyone in racing has more in common with each other than with anyone outside racing emphasises what is shared at the expense of what separates, blurring the reality of class distinctions. Thus, whilst modern Britain may be perceived by some as having separated class from birth, the dominant ideology of pedigree in Newmarket is a double bind. What appears fixed (kin) is actually relatively fluid, though what seems to be mobile (class) is fixed. In relation to anthropology, the 'natural facts' are recognised only selectively, and are subordinate to the fixed social reality that without success one cannot be a member of a racing family. 'Success' is a composite notion involving appearance, residence, connections and winning, a way of 'being in the world' which offers (self-fulfilling) proof of the theory of pedigree. The next section discusses how members of racing families patrol the boundary with those who lack connections, to Newmarket and to racing success.

Reactions to outsiders

A contrast was drawn between 'newcomers' and 'Newmarket families' in the same way as was made by 'real Elmdons' (Strathern 1981) and 'Muker people' (Phillips 1986). Newmarket before the world wars was characterised as a place in which everyone really was related to each other, where bicycles featured heavily, and a policy of helping one's neighbour held sway:

The sense of Elmdon 'as a village' is summed up in the notion that residents can be divided into those who belong, the 'real Elmdon', and 'outsiders' or 'newcomers' with no such claim. (Strathern 1981: 3)

The idea that 'everyone's related to everyone' is a collective representation of the local community which Muker people represent to people from the outside world. Kinship is depicted as being at once a mechanism of inclusion in, and exclusion from, the core set of locals. (Phillips 1986: 143)

Newcomers were distinguished from 'real' Newmarket people by two things: their money and their lack of breeding. As a female informant told me, 'They were already millionaires, what on earth would they possibly want with training racehorses? Geoff Wragg has twenty-six phones in his house!' The newcomers were described by those with Newmarket roots as 'businessmen rather than horsemen', and I was told that the nature of training horses had in fact changed from the days when a trainer would have a maximum of forty horses. Newcomer trainers with strings of two hundred horses

were thought to be training as a 'business' rather than 'for the love of it'. 'New money' was thus cast as destabilising the 'old order' based on breeding and therefore talent, to the extent that the nature of training itself was actually seen to be changing.

However, whilst the relationship between Newmarket families and outsiders is antagonistic, the boundary between the two is permeable, and kinship performative. Thus by proving oneself to be 'the right sort' one will be assimilated into Newmarket society by revelations concerning one's own family. Although the only mechanism available for infiltrating Newmarket society is pedigree, biology is entirely subordinate to social performance. Thus, whilst birth into a racing family appears the obvious means by which a connection may be claimed, it is not a necessary or sufficient condition of entry, since 'natural facts' can be conjured up for insiders, whilst those who remain outsiders by performance will remain so by birth. In other words, both marriage and birth only serve to connect where proof of a connection exists in the individual's performance.

This section raises questions regarding my own relationship to informants during fieldwork, and my place in their perception of 'insiders' and 'outsiders':

the biggest problem of the present study lay in the play of looks between investigator and informants, with its concomitant risk of always thinking in the categories of knowledge produced by this group being observed. (Le Wita 1994: 6)

Throughout my fieldwork I succumbed to the schizophrenia induced by participant observation, such that I would experience each interaction as both myself and also as an anthropologist. This role was further complicated by the demands of some of the tasks I undertook with horses, which required immediate responses. Reflection whilst performing these tasks could actually be dangerous. It was attractive to cruise through days merely following instructions, really being just a studhand or lad, but I always felt guilty for having neglected my 'fieldwork' afterwards¹⁵.

My entry into this society depended on my ability to display my affinity with horses. As other chapters will indicate, being comfortable with horses is perceived as an absolute quality that does not admit to degrees, because it is a birthright. Thus, when I complained that my riding ability was limited, I was told that some people would never be able to do this thing. My ability was a matter of degree, and would improve with experience, but I was already on the right side of an absolute divide between those who could ride and those who could not. This ability was often explained in terms of my breeding, despite my insistence that I could not recall any racing ancestors. My Irish surname made this specificity unnecessary, because according to most of my informants, all the Irish have 'racing in their blood'.

¹⁵The irony of this guilt, which was a response to times when I really did assume the 'native's point of view', suggested two things to me. Firstly, that observation is the dominant partner in 'participant observation', and secondly, that I was heavily predisposed to undertake fieldwork in racing.

Discussions of outsiders amongst myself and informants thus assumed, from quite early on, my complicity with members of racing families. When a bomb scare forced the postponement of the Grand National, and the evacuation of the course, the response in Newmarket was extreme. Some informants considered emigrating because they believed that, 'you can't do anything in this bloody country'. The belief that animal rights activists had disrupted the race infuriated them. Animal rights activists are perceived to be ignorant of the countryside, town dwellers with abstract ideas rather than empirical knowledge, prompting comments such as, 'What do they know about the countryside? I suppose they've read something in a book.' The contempt in which intellectual or 'bookish' learning is held stems from its contradiction with lived knowledge as embodied and inherited. As I was told on a number of occasions, 'racing people don't think, they *do*.'

Banning British beef was also seen as an infringement of an individual's right to choose by a government too weak to stand up to European pressure. Refuge was sought in the policies of the Referendum Party in the General Election, which received double the national average of votes in Newmarket (Reed pers comm). James Goldsmith's video was widely circulated in Newmarket, and its message appreciated.

Although the beef ban, the Grand National and the General Election brought ideas of peripherality, and even persecution, into focus, these ideas are a continual undercurrent. The most frequently cited justification for racing's antagonistic relationship to the government is the level of General Betting Duty, which is seen as prohibitively high. Racing is often described as a goose laying golden eggs for the government. Although betting duty is cited as the prime example of the inability of outsiders to comprehend the problems facing the industry, I would suggest that it is indicative of a more general attitude towards outsiders. The self-image of the upper class of racing society as an exclusive, inter-related, highly specialised minority promotes 'peripherality as a self-image' (Cohen 1982: 7):

In general, a successful 'fiddle' against authority or the evasion of a regulation means that the world of officialdom has been outwitted. This does not reinforce esoteric culture, however, inasmuch as it is legitimated by the view that the benefits (as defined by mainstream culture) of the wider society are absent from the island partly because of the way it is treated by central government. Outwitting the government bureaucracy is therefore a symbolic gesture of taking for themselves what the islanders feel they have been deprived of in the first place. (Mewett 1982: 229)

This section has suggested that the upper class of racing society mistrusts outsiders, believing itself to be misunderstood and badly treated by government particularly. Gaining entry to racing society, as I did, depends upon displaying those features it believes to be bred rather than taught. These things are an ability to talk horses, ride horses, and understand horses and horse people. Having exhibited these qualities I was credited with the breeding which explained them. Outsiders remain

such because they continually exhibit an inability to appreciate the singular difficulties faced by members of this society. Moreover, how could they ever understand without the breeding and connections this requires?

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the 'upper class' of racing, that is, the individuals preoccupied with the training, owning, breeding, buying and selling of racehorses, who sometimes identify themselves as 'Newmarket families'. I have attempted to establish that tracing connections in Newmarket families depends upon a combination of both 'social' and 'biological' factors. Furthermore, both social and biological facts can determine each other. Biology is in no sense the prime mover in this form of relatedness, despite its explicit reification in the ideology of pedigree. Thus Newmarket trainers embody Newmarket by being successful, whilst parts of Newmarket embody particular Newmarket trainers by absorbing their good fortune into their bricks and mortar.

Those born into generations of trainers prompt a description in terms of a vertically and horizontally extensive genealogy, whilst those who are successful without genealogical depth are spoken of as horizontally well connected. Both men and women can serve as connections. The pedigree thinking explicitly employed in Newmarket, that ability is determined by breeding, is a stark characterisation of a far more complex system. Various mechanisms ensure that pedigree thinking is unchallenged, such that kin may go unrecognised where they do not accord with its principles. Similarly, connections may be imagined in order to connect those exhibiting obvious evidence of success and good taste in order that they do not begin to constitute an alternative ideology. Where kin cannot be imagined, individuals may be treated as 'freaks', the exception that proves the rule, i.e. the contradiction to the system that must be belittled and ignored.

The self-fulfilling operations of the ideology of pedigree in Newmarket, such that in order to be successful one must be well connected, and in order to be well connected one must be successful, is mirrored in numerous small ways, but particularly through appearances. In order to be successful in Newmarket, one must appear to be successful. This preoccupation with appearance extends to racing residences. Yards assimilate the fortunes of their occupants and come to be associated with particular successes or failures. A yard steeped in history (perhaps with a resident ghost) is more prestigious than one of the new developments on Hamilton Road, associated with disappointment and financial ruin. Older yards with their

ancient walls, clocktowers, roses and ivy appear more permanent than the Hamilton Road equivalents which change hands every season, devoid of the connections necessary to keep them solvent. Training yards are associated with their owners to the extent that the fortune of one affects the fortunes of the other. A successful yard will continue to embody the successes of a previous occupant though the occupant may have left long ago. Training yards are not fully alienated from their human owners or their equine inhabitants.

I suggested that I had managed to become part of the upper class of racing society to the extent that I could share in discussions of those people who were not. In particular, the bombing of the Grand National, the ban on British Beef and the General Election provided a platform on which informants discussed their separation from the rest of society and from the government in particular. This was a world in which one was defined by what one does, and what one does is (thought of as) determined by one's breeding:

Horsy people 'do' - they don't waste time philosophising or thinking deeply. It's very hands on. It's an obsessive industry, which permeates all other aspects of life. It's exclusive. (Wife of stud groom.)

It seems that being related to a Newmarket family by what Rivers and his intellectual descendants might characterise as a 'descriptive' blood relation is not a necessary or sufficient condition of claiming a connection. In order to be a member of a Newmarket family one must be active in racing, and if one is active in racing one may find that kin are created in order to account for this involvement. The flexibility of this system does not threaten the ideology of pedigree in the least, since its greatest exponents practice interdigitation between biological and social factors as a matter of course.

In the following chapter I describe the racecourse, the primary site of the encounter between the upper class described in this chapter, and those who sustain racing through their betting.

Chapter Four: The Racecourse

Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the connections that are envisaged by the individuals who consider themselves to be 'real Newmarket families'. These families were concerned particularly with training, breeding, buying and selling, and owning, racehorses. They were the upper class of racing society. In this chapter I focus upon the racecourse, because it is here that the supply side of racing, including members of the class described in the preceding chapter, encounter racing's consumers. I spent approximately fifty days of my fieldwork at racecourses all over Britain, from Mussleburgh to Brighton. I went racing in a number of different roles, including those of 'lad', trainer's assistant and owner's representative. As a spectator myself I went racing with gamblers, touts, groups of friends and virtual strangers. On all these occasions I spoke with as many people as possible, recording as much information as I could in note books, and on an assortment of betting stubs, racecards and cigarette packets.

It is not surprising that several of the most famous, successful and well-connected trainers dislike going racing. It is at the racecourse that the client base that sustains the industry is to be found: the spectators, and in particular, the punters. The central paradox of horseracing is that it is a sport intimately associated with, and some would say driven by, the betting activities of the lower classes whilst many of its professionals (excluding most jockeys) are members of the upper class or aristocracy¹. The obfuscation of this uneasy symbiosis is achieved through the conventions which occur on the course, which form the subject of this chapter.

I shall argue that both the supply and demand sides of racing collude, at times, in the naturalisation of class distinctions on the racecourse. The supply side of racing focuses upon the owner in order to obscure the fact that they are providing a service for consumers of betting. The spectators and punters are patronised by clichés of equality perpetuated by those who depend upon their custom. My fieldwork suggested that some racing spectators collude in their own subordination on the racecourse because their attraction to horseracing lies in its prestigious associations. This association precludes their involvement in its central rituals, but permits their

¹This is a stark characterisation of what is, of course, a far more complicated situation, but it is an opposition which I found in the perceptions of many people who work in racing or who attend race meetings. Despite the exceptions to the generalisation whereby the suppliers of racing are upper class and its consumers are lower class, this chapter will argue that it is this idea that informs many of the activities on the racecourse.

presence on the periphery. Exploring segregation on the racecourse, for example, and particularly its origin in class distinctions and the contemporary form these take, makes relations on the racecourse explicit. This sort of inquiry was therefore a source of discomfort to almost all of my informants, regardless of their structural position in relation to racing.

Racing is made public at the racecourse, but what it reveals is systematically obscured by secrecy, impression management and a perverse rendering of chance and risk as skill and calculation. Racing is supposedly a simple contest in which horses run around a field and the fastest horse wins. Crowds dress up and cheer the winner home, praising the bravery of horse and jockey, the skill of the trainer and the beauty of the scene in a world where it is always an English summer day at Ascot. How does this image of racing fit with the recent arrests of jockeys on doping and race-fixing charges?² How does this image fit with the recent High Court action against the Sporting Life by the Ramsdens and Kieran Fallon?³ How does this image fit with 'coups' and 'non-triers'.

The racecourse circumscribes the majority's experience of horseracing. In fact, most will think that this is all racing 'is'. I hope to present an alternative perspective to those writers who focus upon the racecourse as the culmination of the efforts of the racing industry. What is really being revealed, and obscured, at the racecourse only becomes evident when one has a certain amount of knowledge about the industry and its professionals, enough knowledge to puncture the ideology faithfully reproduced at three racecourses, every day of the year. This chapter functions as a guided tour, moving inwards from the fringes of the racecourse boundary, via non-members and members, in order to reach the paddock, the centre of the racecourse universe. I shall describe what happens within all these areas, whilst drawing upon knowledge from outside the racecourse to 'make strange' that which is taken for granted. Possible explanations for this systematic obfuscation will be suggested, themes which will recur throughout the ensuing chapters.

²Fifteen men have been arrested during 1998 and 1999, including five well-known jockeys and a trainer. Although three of the jockeys have since been cleared, a report to the Criminal Prosecution Service has been submitted (Racing Post 21/2/99) which is expected to identify a link between doping horses and laundering drug money on racecourses.

³The Ramsdens have since retired from training. They and their jockey, Kieran Fallon, took the Sporting Life to court over comments regarding the running of one of their horses, Top Cees. The horse ran badly in a small race (at long odds) before winning a far more difficult race soon afterwards (at short odds). The suggestion was that, since Jack Ramsden is a well-known professional gambler, whilst his wife is a trainer, Top Cees may not have run to the best of his ability in the first race, in order to create better odds for the second.

The image of racing presented by a day at the racecourse will be seen to rest upon more complex dynamics that are concealed rather than expressed by behaviour determined by racecourse conventions.

What sets the cockfight apart from the ordinary course of life, lifts it from the realm of everyday practical affairs, and surrounds it with an aura of enlarged importance is not, as functionalist sociology would have it, that it reinforces social status discriminations (such reinforcement is hardly necessary in a society where every act proclaims them) but that it provides a metasocial commentary upon the whole matter of assorting human beings into fixed hierarchical ranks and then organizing the major part of collective existence around that assortment. Its function, if you want to call it that, is interpretive, it is a Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves. (Geertz 1973: 449)

Like Geertz I shall seek to grasp the sense of the public ritual unfolding before me. Unlike Geertz, my interpretation of this ritual is not that it reveals racing society to me or to itself, but that it is only through knowledge gleaned outside this sphere in the secret, private world of racing that one comes to understand what is really happening at the racecourse. I am fortunate in that my knowledge of horses predated my fieldwork. Had it not done so, the sole finding of my fieldwork may have been the realisation that I was looking merely at appearances. My knowledge of horses made this my starting point, and my grasp of equine vocabulary provided a means whereby I was able to pursue the sources of this image. As a racing journalist, told me, inadvertently including me in his society, 'it's not quite a private language, it's just the way we talk'.

In the context of a world in which information is traded, jealously guarded and highly valued, I continually had to bargain with something of myself in order to be told the official version, let alone the truth. Of course, this in itself reveals something fundamental about the people I was trying to understand. Secrecy, gossiping and jealousy partly stemmed from the 'image of limited good' in the industry. For trainers there are limited numbers of owners, for owners there are limited numbers of good horses, for lads there are few good jobs, good horses and good betting opportunities, and for the gambler the odds are literally determined by how many people know a horse is a 'good thing'. My entry into this society whose defining feature is scarcity of information was on the basis of blatant risk taking. I risked my physical well-being by playing polo and riding racehorses. I risked money on bets with lads, farriers, trainers, people I'd met in the pub and a petrol pump attendant. I sat with a bloodstock agent as he spent 100,000 guineas on an unproved yearling. I 'walked' crazy yearlings who had to be drugged before they could come out of their boxes, and led a filly around Tattersalls ring, attracting the highest price for a filly by her sire that year, of 36,000 guineas. My nerve was continually tested by those who sponsored me in the racing world. My credentials depended upon their testing me, and their reputation required me to risk without flinching.

My entry and access to racing society was thus dependent upon the specialised knowledge I already possessed. However, this knowledge had to be significantly augmented before I could pass unnoticed amongst my informants. In particular, I had to learn to rank appearances above substance, in that knowing how to present oneself in a particular situation was far more important than being able to resolve the situation itself. The importance of appearances is emphasised in the following consideration of behaviour on the racecourse. These appearances are expressions of taste, class, status, and rank. Once again, the important factor is having sufficient knowledge to be able to map the language, signs and gestures of the racing hierarchy.

This chapter seeks to capture the surface layer of the racecourse experience whilst suggesting that these experiences are not simply dependent upon the nature of racing and horses, as the naturalised hierarchy of racing society would have us believe. It will be suggested that experiences of racing take a form determined by the particular concerns and attitudes of the human members of that society, concerns and attitudes which are expressed more clearly away from the racecourse itself. Later chapters will capture these attitudes in more detail in contexts where they are more unequivocally expressed. In this way, behaviour on the racecourse will become increasingly transparent.

Inside the racecourse, the 1997 Epsom Derby

As much of America surfaces in a ball park, on a golf links, at a race track, or around a poker table, much of Bali surfaces in a cock ring. (Geertz 1973: 417)

No matter how far I leant out over the rails at Epsom, I couldn't separate Benny the Dip and Silver Patriarch as they flashed past the post in the 1997 Derby. I swung round, leant on the winning post and looked at the crowds behind me. The favourite saying of the racing fraternity that 'all men are equal on the turf and under it' drifted into my mind, and I tacked on the relevant qualifying phrase, 'however, some are more equal than others'. Inequality is a defining feature of racecourses, but at Epsom on Derby day it was particularly rife, expressed spatially, and through dress. Top hat and tails: Queen's Stand, suit and tie: Club Enclosure, t-shirt and jeans: Tattenham Enclosure, bare chests and bikinis: Centre of the Course. 72,000 people made up the Derby crowd, and they were spread out in front of me, in zones, categorised according to how much they were prepared to pay to see the biggest race of the European flat racing calendar.

The 1997 Derby provided me with a fantastic opportunity to observe segregation on the racecourse at its most extreme:

Dress Standards at Epsom

While we try to keep restrictions to a minimum, we would be very grateful if all customers could be guided by the following:

Queen's Stand Derby Day

Morning dress or service dress is obligatory for gentlemen, ladies should wear formal day dress with hat.

Queen's Stand other days

Suits, or jackets and trousers, with shirt and tie, are preferred for gentlemen. Denim or shorts are not permitted.

Club Enclosure (Derby meeting only)

Suits, or jackets and trousers, with shirt and tie, are preferred for gentlemen. Denim or shorts are not permitted.

Other Enclosures (all days)

Reasonable standards of dress are expected elsewhere. Customers in all enclosures are reminded that the removal of shirts is not allowed.

Although everyone is welcome at Epsom, we do reserve the right in extreme circumstances to either refuse admission to, or to eject any person from, any enclosure or the racecourse. (from The 1997 Vodafone Derby Official Racecard)

Although there are more and less expensive seats available in most arenas, it is difficult to think of another sport in which the spectators are required to conform to such strict dress codes. Segregation is one of the most striking features of the racecourse, and can be seen as an effort to overcome the paradoxical structure of the racing industry, driven by betting, mainly in off course shops, patronised on the racecourse by the aristocracy and the upper class. As long as the horse owning public does not need to encounter the betting public at the races they can maintain that racing is a sport funded by their contributions for their enjoyment, rather than an industry sustained by and for two pound punters in smoky betting shops in cities all over the country. Conversely, punters can 'back' their judgement, and in doing so oppose members of the upper class, thereby achieving brief ascendancy over them.

Segregation at the racecourse is no longer primarily based upon membership of the course or the Jockey Club as it was in the nineteenth century. However, rather than do away with the category of 'member', racecourses have provided a contemporary perspective thereon. Whilst membership used to involve being forwarded and seconded, and paying a large fee for the privilege, 'membership' now resides in the payment of a fee to the racecourse. The category of 'day member' provides the racecourse with a convention whereby they may extend the privileges of membership to those prepared to pay extra on the day. The predictable effect of this is that day members now dominate the category of members, and life, annual or Jockey Club members are provided with smaller but even more exclusive facilities and benefits. Tickets are in all cases called 'badges' suggesting something less transient than the equivalent 'ticket' bought for the cinema. Member's badges fall into the categories of Life (metal), Annual (metal) and Day (cardboard). These badges offer access to the majority of the racecourse enclosures and facilities, and are correspondingly more expensive than the non-members badges, which have a variety

of inoffensive names such as Lonsdale or Tattersalls, and offer limited access to enclosures and facilities on the racecourse. Thus, whilst membership was once a meaningful concept whereby individuals were vetted before being granted their badge, 'membership' now means only 'prepared to pay more'.

Dress standard requirements at the Derby are complemented by the appropriate cuisine within each enclosure:

whereas the working classes are more attentive to the strength of the (male) body than its shape, and tend to go for products that are both cheap and nutritious, the professions prefer products that are tasty, health-giving, light and not fattening. (Bourdieu 1984: 190)

Thus whilst the Queen's Stand boasts a Pimm's bar serving Champagne, Pimm's, fresh orange juice and soft drinks, plus a Ben and Jerry's ice cream cart, the Grandstand and Vodafone Village prefer traditional hog roast and sausage baguettes, scrumpy on draught, jazz bands and Cockney dancers. The correspondence between dress, badge price and assumed preferences and tastes reveals the racecourse administration's perception of its customers and their group characteristics. The wealthy are to dress up, appreciate the racing and enjoy 'sandwiches, cakes, tea, coffee, cold drinks and other light snacks', whilst 'the masses' can go to the fair (outside the racecourse), eat roasted meat in bread and toast their recent peasant ancestry with scrumpy:

'Something tasty' is the key phrase in feeding: something solid, preferably meaty and with a well-defined flavour. The tastiness is increased by a liberal use of sauces and pickles, notably tomato sauce and piccalilli. (Hoggart 1957: 37)⁴

Sumptuary discrimination is present at all racecourses, in that seafood and champagne bars are the quintessential member's snack, with fish and chips being the most common form of sustenance found in Tattersall's. Seafood and champagne have become institutionalised as the celebratory meal par excellence for owners and trainers:

in the working classes fish tends to be regarded as an unsuitable food for men, not only because it is a light food, insufficiently 'filling'...but also because, like fruit (except bananas) it is one of the 'fiddly' things which a man's hands cannot cope with and which make him childlike...but, above all, it is because fish has to be eaten in a way which totally contradicts the masculine way of eating, that is, with restraint, in small

⁴Hoggart's consideration of the working class is based partly on anecdotal recollection, and partly on a survey of practices of literacy. It reproduces the association between the sensual and immediately gratifying that can be detected in the attitudes of racecourse administrators to their customers. It is dated in that its description of working-class life as essentially static and unchanging, with correspondingly fixed attitudes towards food, dress, entertainment and work, 'The world of many a middle-aged working-class couples is still largely Edwardian, their living rooms little changed from the time they equipped them or took them over from their parents, except for the addition of an occasional ornament or chair' (Hoggart 1957: 31). Anthropological work on culinary practices has suggested that 'taste' is a culturally constructed, historically contingent variable (Mintz 1985, Goody 1982). The stereotypical view of the fixed tastes of the working class informs the sumptuary distinctions on the racecourse, but may no longer reflect the views of the racegoers themselves. Consumption has recently come to be seen as a process of appropriation (Miller 1993), such that goods are consumed by social groups as a process of self-definition. The products of modern capitalism are thus de-alienated through a process of creative consumption.

mouthfuls, chewed gently, with the front of the mouth, on the tips of the teeth (because of the bones). (Bourdieu 1984: 190)⁵

Fish is attractive to the elite of racing society for the reasons that it is unattractive to the French working class. Fish is low in fat, comes in small portions, and is fiddly to eat, therefore less is eaten, pleasing ultra-weight-conscious racing society. Furthermore, fish, and particularly shell fish, requires specialised knowledge of conventions as to which parts are eaten and how they are prepared, and therefore serves to distinguish insiders from outsiders.

When Bill had a winner we always returned to salmon or oysters and Champagne, despite the measly value of the win and the overwhelming presence of losers in the yard. Seafood on the racecourse is expensive, and the price of Champagne is a continual gripe amongst those with something to celebrate. Celebrations of betting wins generally take the form appropriate to their subject's enclosure. Those with a big win in the non-members and day members are likely to be men in male company, and are celebrated with rounds of drinks. Men accompanied by their families in these enclosures tend to bet in small quantities and spend winnings on ice cream or chips. Betting wins amongst the members or owners and trainers will not necessarily provoke any sort of celebration, as they may be large and unpublicised, as in the case of professional punters. Smaller wins may be celebrated with Champagne, certainly with some form of alcohol, and quite often with another bet. The importance of alcohol at the racecourse can hardly be over-emphasised.

Not all racegoers adhere slavishly to the pursuits attributed to their particular enclosure, however. Even before entering the Derby, creative and suggestive forms of consumption were in evidence. The car park culture of American style 'tailgating', a picnic technique, was interpreted in various, sometimes extreme, ways by racegoers and others who were simply there in order to eat and drink in the extensive grassed areas. The two extremes of tailgating behaviour were by far the most common, with very few examples in between. 'Tailgaters' either had Range Rovers, wicker chairs and trestle tables weighed down with smoked salmon, haunches of venison and Champagne, or Ford Cortinas with plastic garden furniture and tables made out of crates of beer. Whilst those in Range Rovers seemed almost perverse in their pursuit of home comfort, and had brought along silver cutlery and crystal glasses, the point

⁵Bourdieu develops a theory of consumption around the notion of 'habitus', developed from a critique of the Kantian concept of pure beauty as universal and inherent (Bourdieu 1984). He relates taste to 'habitus', the class experience which is determined by both cultural and economic capital. He restricts the free-play of signs and symbols in the consumption theory of Douglas and Isherwood (1979). Consumption is thus politicised, related to working conditions, but ultimately determined by class-specific habitus, a combination of cultural and economic predilections.

for those in Cortinas seemed to be simplicity and relaxation, appropriating the racecourse through a process of creative consumption (cf. Miller 1993).

Whilst those going into the enclosures were emphasising manners and convention by employing them entirely out of context, those who were not even going to enter the racecourse relaxed conventions, and set up barbecues as if they were in their own gardens. This latter group were reminiscent of the historian's image of the pre-enclosure atmosphere of the racecourse. The presence of a huge fair with rides, gaming booths, food stands, and all Gypsy Rose Lee's living relatives in caravans, further encouraged this comparison. The walk from the car park to the racecourse entrance was lined by women in head scarves selling lucky heather and carnations, and touts offering us spare tickets. These attractions ceased a respectable distance from the entrance to the racecourse, where men and women in smart uniforms punched holes in our badges and waved us through the metal detectors and bag search, into the midst of the official Derby entertainments.

It is possible to present these differences in terms of Bourdieu's notion of 'taste' (1984), etched onto the landscape of the racecourse itself. The difficult to appreciate, the scarce and the complex are valued by the members, the immediate and sensorily stimulating often appear in the repertoire of Tattersall's. The credentials of those of racing society include a penchant for seafood and Champagne, extended knowledge of thoroughbred families, and a vast memory of race results. Those who buy a once a year badge for the Lonsdale enclosure at the Derby are catered for in terms which emphasise ease and speed of service, large portions and 'simple fare':

The denial of lower, coarse, vulgar, venal, servile - in a word, natural - enjoyment, which constitutes the sacred sphere of culture, implies an affirmation of the superiority of those who can be satisfied with the sublimated, refined, disinterested, gratuitous, distinguished pleasures forever closed to the profane. That is why art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences. (Bourdieu 1984: 7)⁶

The next section discusses the origin of the physical and conceptual separation between the producers and consumers of racing in the social history of the racecourse.

⁶The racecourse administrators with whom I spoke reproduced the idea that the occasional visitors to the racecourse had different needs to those who were regular racegoers, or were involved in the industry, in terms very similar to those used by Bourdieu, 'Once a year customers have a very short attention span, they want something that is satisfying and cheap, and they don't want to wait for it, for a beer, or something. The people who are used to coming racing understand more about the experience, and so put less emphasis on the non-racing parts of the day, you know, the eating and drinking. They want to eat well, but that pleasure is secondary to seeing their horse run' (Racecourse administrator). In addition, these pleasures are ranked so that the regular racegoer's attitude is valued as superior to that of the occasional visitor, 'The enjoyment of the regular is obviously a higher pleasure. The once a year couldn't care less where he is really, just so long as something is going on to distract him. The regular is enjoying a much more sophisticated experience, because he invests more of himself in the day, and he understands more about racing' (Racecourse administrator).

Enclosure: inside: outside

Behaviour inside the gates of a racecourse differs in significant ways from that outside. The racecourse boundary marks the separation of the racing world from the outside world. It thus becomes clear why racing professionals such as trainers, to whom the racecourse is a display cabinet, dress as trainers whilst inside, even though they may wear wellingtons and waterproofs tied up with bailing twine whilst shovelling muck at home. Outside the racecourse, trainers are less well known than many other sporting people, however, once on the racecourse they are stars amongst knowing fans. Conversely, whilst trainers, journalists, professional gamblers and officials come to the racecourse to work, the majority of racegoers are intent on enjoying themselves, having left their workplace identity behind at the gate. Racing is a sport and also an industry; hence at the racecourse there are those earning a living and those trying to forget about just that by engaging in a frivolity.

Whilst behaviour inside the racecourse is different to that outside the racecourse, it is the same between racecourses:

sports have emerged as highly rationalised representations of modernity which, as much as, (and arguably more than) any other form of culture, posses the potential to eliminate regional differences as a result of their rule-bound, ordered, enclosed and predictably segmented forms of landscape. (Bale 1994: 1)

The most obvious feature of the racing landscape is the perimeter wall, and the broadest distinction created by the racecourse is between those inside and those outside. This division is now taken for granted, in that everyone expects to pay in order to go racing, barring special promotions or a distant view from an overlooking hill. Entrance fees are, however, a relatively recent innovation, facilitated by the enclosure of racecourses, beginning with the park courses, at the end of the nineteenth century:

The ability to collect gate money was the final piece of the financial jigsaw. Once it was in place, by the end of the century, racing had become, in the words of its most perceptive historian, 'as much part of the economic as the social scene: it was an industry as well as a sport. (Brailsford 1991: 59-60)

Before enclosure, race meetings were essentially local events, associated with annual holidays, and accompanied by all sorts of other distractions such as cock fights, prize fighting, side-shows, and itinerant entertainers. Significantly, racing took place between all sorts of horses, not only thoroughbreds, as hacks, hunters and even ponies were drafted in to satisfy the demand for racing. The supply of horses was obviously limited to those who could walk to the meeting, and so heats served to increase the number of races available as betting media.

The commercialisation of racecourses was facilitated by the advent of enclosure and the expansion of the railways as a means of transporting both horses and

spectators. However, the railway alone would not be enough to provoke the mushrooming of racing's fortunes in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when prize money rose from £143,000 in 1839 to £495,000 in 1905 (Brailsford 1991: 60). Although racecourses made money from the tents and attractions which accompanied the racing itself, collection of tariffs and contributions before enclosure had been uncertain and dominated by physical confrontation. Enclosure provided huge opportunities to both ensure income from every spectator, and also to control the accompanying activities by bringing them within the walls of the racecourse. Sandown Park held the first enclosed meeting in April 1875. Those meetings that remained 'open' managed to do so on the grounds that: 'members and would-be members of high society felt a social obligation to put in an appearance at these meetings' (Vamplew 1988: 58). However, even conservative Newmarket had no alternative than to:

march with the times, to build stands, to make enclosures, to substitute the white rails of modern civilisation for the old-fashioned ropes and stakes of our forefathers. (Earl of Suffolk quoted in Vamplew 1988: 58)

However, the mere fact of enclosure and expanded rail transport does not explain the increasing prize money, number of new meetings, horses in training and volume of bloodstock investment throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. People also had to possess both the money and the desire to go racing. According to Vamplew, racing was benefiting from a more general development on the back of the 70% rise in average real wages between 1850 and 1900:

The 1870s and 1880s are important decades in the history of commercialised popular recreation: they witnessed an expansion of the specialist music halls...the rapid development of seaside holidays for the working class, the take-off of gate money soccer and of course the enclosed race meeting. (Vamplew 1976: 41)

In changing the nature of race meetings from free local carnival to paying and structured events drawing on a huge potential audience linked up by a railway network, enclosure changed the profile of racegoers. Ponies and hacks had by this time been replaced by English thoroughbreds, identified as such by their presence in the General Stud Book, established in 1791. Race meetings ceased to be gatherings of rough necks enjoying the bawdy pursuits of drinking, gambling and beating up fraudulent bookmakers. Enclosed courses sought to attract new groups of people to whom racing had previously held little appeal. These groups were women and the working class. Sandown Park was again the trailblazer, racing on Saturdays and providing its male club members with badges for women. Although women were seen to go racing at Ascot, Goodwood and Newmarket, they spectated from the relative safety of carriages or private lawns. Saturday afternoon racing provided an opportunity for those who worked during the week to spend their wages racing at the weekend. Amateur officials were replaced by professionals, thus reducing the

likelihood of an unpopular result prompting a riot, supplementary activities were restricted to those unlikely to provoke bad behaviour, and 'segregation was also seen as a way of reducing trouble' (Vamplew 1979: 316).

Enclosure enabled the collection of entrance fees to provide prize money. Increasing prize money stimulated the bloodstock industry, encouraging competition between breeders and increasing the value of bloodstock, most of which remained in the ownership of private stables. However, racing itself had become a spectator sport, attracting large crowds who lacked any connection to the producers of racing. Segregation maintained the separation of the different groups at the racecourse. Trainers, owners and members entered the course through their own entrance, as they do today. Owners and trainers enjoyed their own stands and facilities, and retain the privilege of the owners and trainers' bar at modern racecourses.

Within the Inner Circle

Although there are areas even fewer people are authorised to enter, for example, the stewards' rooms, and jockeys' dressing rooms, the paddock is a private zone in the middle of a public area. In order to be inside the paddock one must be associated with one of the horses in the race, or a race official. A sign on the paddock entrance draws attention to this fact.



4.1 The Paddock, The Rowley Mile
(BHB 1993: 8)

Racegoers without a horse in the race line the perimeter fence of the paddock, leaning on the rail and evaluating the horses and, no doubt, the connections. Horses enter the paddock half an hour before they are due to race, and it is their lad's responsibility to get them there on time. The horses are brushed and polished, their hooves are oiled and their manes and tails may be plaited. They wear bridles and rollers, and rugs if it is cold, often with their trainer's initials or sponsor's name on them. The horses are led around the pre-parade ring at a walk, always in a clockwise direction, so that the lad is on the outside. The horses warm up their muscles and the public are able to assess their choice before they place a bet. Horses' behaviour varies in the paddock, some are relatively relaxed, whilst some show signs of anxiety or excitement, either grinding their teeth or pulling hard on the rein. One of the horses I 'led up' was well known for his antics in the paddock, which included bucking and squealing as he jig-jogged round. If horses sweat excessively in the paddock it is usually seen as a sign that they have 'boiled over' and will not run well, although some horses run their best races exactly when they sweat up. Each lad has a number attached to their arm and the horses wear number cloths for clear identification. As I walked round the paddock cheeky punters always asked me whether my horse had a chance, and, of course, I always said 'yes' with a conspiratorial wink.

The Trainer

The trainer arrives with the saddle that he has collected from the weighing room. The saddle has been 'weighed out' with the jockey. The trainer calls his charge into one of the saddling boxes on the outer perimeter of the paddock. The horse is backed in, its sheet and roller removed and replaced with its saddle and weight cloth. Its sheet may be replaced along with its number cloth and roller. The trainer squeezes a wet sponge into either side of the horse's mouth in order to moisten his throat. The lad leads the horse away and the trainer is joined by the owner in the middle of the paddock whilst the horse resumes its parade around the inner perimeter.

The paddock has been seen as a ritual arena which has survived in its original form whilst losing much of its significance. It was conventional in the few sociological considerations of horseracing to maintain that status decreased with increasing contact with the horse. Thus the owner was at the top of the hierarchy and hardly touched the horse, the trainer saddled it, the jockey rode it and the lad cleared up after it and inhabited the lowest rung of the ladder. Kate Fox has recently challenged this view:

Traditionally it has been noted that the status of Connections is inversely correlated with the degree of contact with the horse at the racecourse. The stable lad who tends to the

animal throughout the day has the lowest status; the jockey who rides the horse in the race occupies a higher position in the traditional hierarchy; the trainer whose contact with the horse at the racecourse is limited to the saddling ritual is above the jockey, and the owner who merely gives the horse an occasional pat is at the top. The formal, official, public elements of racecourse etiquette continue to reassert these distinctions, but any reasonably astute observer of social behaviour will soon spot the shifting power-relations behind this facade. (Fox 1997: 16)

These two opposed interpretations of the paddock ritual are equally unhelpful, the first in that contact with the horse is a red herring, status in the paddock is determined by status outside the paddock. Kate Fox's re-reading of behaviour in the paddock as a 'vestigial' ritual in which the jockey is actually the centre of attention: 'the brightly painted warrior, who is holding court and receiving blessings for a few moments before sallying forth into battle' (Fox 1997: 16), seems an overly egalitarian interpretation, possibly influenced by having been funded by the British Horseracing Board.

Events in the paddock have already been referred to as a 'ritual'. My justification for this is that these events are repeated every time there is a race, at all of the different English racecourses, in a practically identical, hence codified form. Action in the paddock serves to reinforce the relations which exist between those taking part and those excluded. Outsiders to this ritual are excluded by the paddock fence, by the specialist knowledge which is apparently being transmitted between actors, and by the specialist knowledge that really is necessary in order to negotiate the ritual itself (including the awareness that what is being transmitted is of very little importance). Behaviour in the paddock also serves to express and reinforce relations between insiders.

A status, a position, a social place is not a material thing, to be possessed and then displayed; it is a pattern of appropriate conduct, coherent, embellished and well articulated. (Goffman 1969: 65-66)⁷

The optimum number of people involved with each horse in each performance of the paddock ritual is four, the trainer and lad, who have already been mentioned, and the owner and jockey. The following exposition of the paddock ritual takes seriously the observation that:

The great big difference between what a performance is to people inside from what it is to people outside conditions all the thinking about performance. These differences can be as great within a single culture as they are across cultural boundaries. (Schechner and Appel 1990: 27)

⁷Goffman (1978), transplanted role-theory from the consideration of structural codes to matters of everyday practice. He considered both role-distance: the freedom the individual may exploit in fulfilling a given role through improvisation and challenge, and role-conflict: the means by which two or more roles are balanced when they produce contradictory impulses. His use of theatrical terms to describe the 'staging' of social life has been taken up by more recent theorists of the performative approach to ritual (Turner 1982, Tambiah 1981, Schechner & Appel 1990). Goffman's insights into impression management (1969) have proved particularly helpful in my analysis of the paddock.

In the discourse that emerges from the official racing sources, both of these sets of differences are denied.

The Owner

The environment in which the main characters in the paddock find themselves is one of danger, excitement, risk and financial possibility, specific to that particular race. The occasion of the race brings all of the features of racehorse ownership into sharper focus, and the owner is most identifiable as such in the paddock. The owner has no formal responsibilities in the paddock. Since the inception of public trainers at the end of the nineteenth century few owners have continued to take responsibility for issuing riding orders to the jockey, a task which has been transferred to the trainer. The question remains as to how the owner communicates his 'ownership', and here Le Wita's analysis of French Bourgeoisie is particularly helpful:

Let us dwell for a moment on the example of dress. Through it we can trace the formation and development of a true culture. The history of costume reveals how the bourgeoisie has repeatedly replaced the aristocracy's ostentatious distinguishing marks with marks that are more restrained, more discreet, though no less formidable in terms of symbolic effectiveness. (Le Wita 1994: 57)

Dress forms a necessary, but not sufficient element in the role of 'owner'. Winter suits are country rather than business, of natural colour and cloth, summer suits are lighter, often linen, the most significant feature of both is their cut and accompanying accessories. Describing the cut of a suit in a way that hopes to transcend my own cultural mores is perhaps optimistic, and to say that a suit is well-fitted begs all sorts of questions. Relying upon anecdotal experiences as a last resort I would say that these suits were of a sort that is recognised by others within racing society as the same as their own, which I know them to think of as well-fitted and well cut. An element of this style that may be identified outside its own milieu is that these suits are classic rather than fashionable. Their price does not determine their value, and many inappropriate designer label suits may be far more expensive. Their greater value to a racing person lies in their approximation to an ideal type of racehorse owner's suit. A new suit is not as desirable as a suit that seems older, comfortable yet bearing up well to the rigours of frequent visits to the races, possibly due to its high quality. Suits that look comfortable reproduce the most desired demeanour of the owner within.

Apart from dress, 'A person must know how to move in a closed world' (Le Wita 1994: 75). Because the owner has nothing to do in the paddock, he does nothing thoroughly. At most, he concentrates and may look at his horse with narrowed eyes. The most accomplished owners do not even look at their horse, because they are confident that everything is as it should be. They are serious, and exude an air of

authority, as if they are performing a difficult and essential task with brilliant ease. In fact, whether they are there or not is a feature of the paddock ritual that affects only them. Owners choose a place to stand in the paddock and remain there until the bell rings and the jockeys enter the paddock and walk to join them.



4.2 Owner and trainer in the paddock
(Jockey Club 1996: 23)

The increasing number of syndicates, partnerships and women owners are gradually changing the constitution of the crowd in the paddock. However, they do not seem to be affecting its symbolic significance. The most 'horsy' women, for example, Lady Tavistock, behave exactly as a man would, and are treated in exactly the same way as a man would be. The class associations of a female member of the aristocracy 'compensate' for her gender, and this has always been the case for the number of women owners from this class. One member of this group to whom I spoke described her presence in the paddock as having an entirely practical purpose:

I go in solely to speak with my trainer, to speak with my jockey, and to look at the horse. It is necessary to have a space in which one may discuss things which are private

and concern only those with runners in that race, and that is all the paddock is. It doesn't make me feel anything at all...Its purpose is entirely practical.

Other women to whom I spoke, who were relative newcomers to ownership, told me that they relished being in the paddock, and in adopting the behaviour of male owners:

It's quite a thrill, to stand and be looked at by those outside the ring. You feel a part of things that were closed off to you before you bought your horse. It's fun to think of all the other people who have horses with your trainer and to imagine that you have something in common with them.

The new syndicate members to whom I spoke were visiting the paddock for the first time. One of these informants told me that she had felt an intense sense of discomfort to be, 'on the inside, looking out, with everyone looking in on me'. To some extent, all of these experiences engage with the template of the archetypal male owner. Women who are well connected may be more adept at being male owners than some less well connected men. New women owners adopted male behaviour, and enjoyed the status this attracted, without challenging the basis of that status. The response of syndicate members arises from their awareness of the outsiders to the ritual, which the male owners take for granted, thereby naturalising the distinctions it symbolises.

The trainer shares many traits with the owner, however, as I was told repeatedly, being a trainer is a way of life rather than an occupation. Whilst the racehorse owner is just that by virtue of his other roles (aristocrat, bank manager, lottery winner etc.), the trainer's other roles seem secondary to, and often dependent upon, training, for example, smoker, drinker, socialiser, gambler, husband to woman from racing family, philanderer etc. After saddling the horse the trainer walks into the paddock with the owner. The two of them will both be carrying binoculars and their racecards, walking slowly and looking down at the ground talking under their breath, as if discussing a life-threatening secret. This discussion consists of a few unhurried words, probably concerning the ground or a rival and will continue after they have come to a halt in the paddock. They will look up when the bell has rung and the jockey is approaching. The atmosphere is, again, serious. The trainer is engaging in impression management. He is paid to train a horse so that it will win races, and in the paddock the potential exists for him to be successful in this task. Therefore he is able to act as if this is exactly what will happen, and as if this is really what trainers do, with the unintended consequence that those who know better accuse them of pomposity:

There are plenty of people who train horses who think that they are saving the world rather than preparing beasts to run round a field. (Richard Edmondson quoted in the *Sporting Life* 23/12/96: 31)

Perhaps the least guilty of all trainers of this indulgence is Sir Mark Prescott, a Newmarket trainer who regularly indulges in self-mockery, particularly regarding the faults he finds endemic in his profession:

When I go to meet my maker at the Pearly Gates he'll ask what I did in life and when I answer 'racehorse trainer, sir' he'll say 'a what, for Pete's sake? I've got the likes of Mother Teresa in here'. (quoted in *The Sporting Life* 23/12/96: 31)

The most common reason for horses getting beaten is trainer error but, thank God, it is seldom reported. (quoted in *The Sporting Life* 24/12/96: 31)

The Jockeys

When the jockeys enter the paddock they look around for the connections of their ride. They will be wearing the silks that are registered to that owner. As they approach the connections they touch the peak of their hat. Although Kate Fox interprets this as a vestigial gesture, belonging to a time when jockeys were servants, she fails to explain its persistence. The jockey is introduced to the owner by the trainer. The trainer and owner stand shoulder to shoulder and face the jockey, who rests one foot and then the other, and holds his hands behind his back. The jockey may smile, his conversation with the trainer will not be as secretive as that between owner and trainer. The jockey addresses both owner and trainer as 'sir', 'boss' or 'guv'nor'.

The final bell rings and the connections look for their horse. The horse keeps walking around the perimeter path as the trainer or assistant peels his rugs or roller off. The trainer then gives the jockey a 'leg up' by catching the jockey's bent left leg and lifting him slowly and seemingly effortlessly into the 'plate' as the horse keeps walking along, controlled by the lad. The trainer may say a few final words to the jockey before turning to walk to the stands with the owner in order to watch the race. The lad detaches his rein and holds onto the horse by his bridle, ready to release him onto the course. A race official enters the paddock and directs the runners out of the paddock, towards the track. Most jockeys are reluctant to be first out in case a horse 'plants' himself, that is refuses to move, requiring a lead. However, as the jockeys pretend to be unready to go, and say to the official, 'May I take a turn, sir?' the official gets annoyed and says that they may not. Races must run on time in order to ensure that they do not clash in the betting shops and courses that run late incur disapproval from the Jockey Club, the BHB and punters.

Jockeys tie a knot in their reins in the paddock, whilst control of the horse still rests with the lad. They gather the reins up during the walk to the track, and the horses begin to jog. The lad runs the last few paces to keep the horses momentum going, again to avoid planting, and says 'good luck' as he lets go of the horse, relinquishing control to the jockey as the horse steps onto the track itself.

It is true that the status of the jockey has changed considerably since the end of the nineteenth century when servant boys were thrown up on horses. However, to merely say that their status has improved is to miss the point. Two examples serve to illustrate the ambivalent position of the jockey in contemporary racing society. The first of these examples is the 'steward's enquiry'. The stewards are the voluntary representatives (not necessarily members) of the Jockey Club at the racecourse, who serve to ensure that the rules of racing are observed. A steward's enquiry takes place when the stewards believe that a breach of the rules may have occurred in a race. The jockeys involved are called to the steward's room, where there are generally four televisions capable of showing a race from all of the different camera angles available. The stewards are guided in their decision to call an enquiry by the professional steward's secretary, who is also responsible for advising them on the rules of racing and the procedure to be followed when they are broken.

The jockeys stand in front of the panel of three seated stewards and are addressed by the chairman, who they address as 'sir'. A recent documentary included a steward's enquiry that involved an apprentice who had used his whip on a horse when out of contention. The atmosphere was that of a headmaster's office, the jockey reminiscent of the naughty schoolboy. The stewards told him off, and when he had left decided that they would like to impose a ban, due to the severity of the offence. They agreed this and asked the steward's secretary for his input. The steward's secretary said that the precedent was to fine the jockey, the chairman reneged without a moments hesitation and the ban was replaced with a fine.

In other professions the possibility of amateur observers disciplining professionals, and imposing fines or suspensions seems unthinkable. It is rarely questioned, of course, amongst racing society, because it is part of the arrangement they work so hard to maintain as 'natural'. The jockey was questioned by the camera crew as to how he felt about the experience and he said that he had been taught how to handle the enquiry at the British Racing School, the technique being that of saying nothing but 'Yes, sir'. When I visited the British Racing School and asked the instructors about this they confirmed that, 'politeness' was part of the 'right attitude'. The 'right attitude', and how it is instilled in apprentices will be discussed in chapter seven.

The second example, which draws attention to the perceived status of jockeys amongst racing society, is that of the Haydock rider's strike. On October 16th 1997, jockeys refused to ride, and simply closed the door of the weighing room when called to do so. They believed that conditions were unsafe, although the Stewards had held an inspection and decided that it was safe to race. The reactions of trainers and owners

to this state of affairs was mixed, but those who disapproved of their actions voiced their opinion very strongly:

They're a bunch of misfits and should be forced to prove they have the necessary bottle for the game...It's a joke. The jockeys can do what they want now. It's the tail wagging the dog...This is a terrible day for racing...The jockeys have taken the mickey...They are spoiled and pampered. (Trainer.)

Any jockey who says he is not going to ride in a particular race because it would be dangerous should not be a jockey - all races are dangerous. (Trainer.)

I'm disappointed that the ringleaders have not been punished. My owners were very angry, and I'm sure they will be disappointed by this verdict. (Trainer.)

I am very surprised and bemused that the ring leaders have got away with no punishment. Where does it end? (Dudley Moffat, father of jockey who wanted to ride quoted in the *Sporting Life* 21/2/97: 28)

The language employed, of 'punishment' and 'ringleaders' is again that of school discipline, reinforced by the idea that a breakdown in 'discipline' will lead to anarchy. Although there were dissenting voices amongst trainers:

We should remember when we are rollicking jockeys that it is a job where the ambulance follows you when you are working. (Bill O'Gorman quoted in the *Sporting Life* 23/12/96: 28)

the relationship between jockeys and trainers is illuminated by these reactions, and their belief that the jockeys' refusal to ride represented a serious threat to the balance of power in racing demonstrates just how that power is distributed.

The observation that the riders' strike constituted the 'tail wagging the dog' reveals the connections' perception of the proper relationship between themselves and the jockeys. The strike was seen as a disaster by owners and trainers. Their fears arose from the questioning of the order that they work so hard to naturalise - jockeys and lads will do as they are told because that is the way things are. That they did not at Haydock both undermines this order and also raises the possibility that justification for the present order will be required before it can be reinstated. In fact, the Jockey Club inquiry was extremely lenient, and only 'punished' Frankie Dettori. Dettori's punishment was perceived to have been incurred for his role as 'ring-leader'. As the most successful and therefore most powerful jockey in the weighing room that day, he was seen as most culpable. Darren Moffat, the young apprentice who had wanted to continue riding, was hailed as a hero. Moffat had become a representative of the old order according to which jockeys obeyed the orders of their horse's connections, whilst Frankie represented a new, and potentially insidious, order, of jockey power.

The Haydock riders' strike is a remarkable example of the ability of a single day's racing to reproduce the naturalised order of the upper class officials and producers of horseracing. The low-key Jockey Club inquiry reflected this ability. It was not necessary to reinforce order, because this was achieved the next day, when racing went ahead on three courses, according to the routine which had changed little

over the past hundred years. A heavy-handed approach by the Jockey Club might have prompted a debate, whilst a slight rebuke merely indicated 'business as usual'. The strike was presented as of individual significance only, and the order that had re-established itself the next day was left unquestioned. In contrast to Kate Fox, I maintain that the jockeys express more than respect for tradition when they touch the peak of their hat as they enter the paddock. The status of jockeys as a group lags behind that of trainers due to entrenched historical factors, and their contemporary mutations.

Conclusion

Even this preliminary wander through the racecourse should indicate that despite its status as the central ritual of racing society, little is made public to those who lack the information needed to sift through appearances in order to establish the significance of actions. This should not, however, be presented as a conspiracy that I shall seek to expose. Everyone who goes racing colludes in order to create a liminal world. As one racegoer said to me when I explained my project: 'Don't spoil the dream will you?' Social relations infused with inequality are only one aspect of the racecourse, which is also an arena in which people are free to assume identities which they may be unable to adopt outside. The impression management of trainers, for example, is supremely attractive to those who have sufficient spare assets to buy racehorses. Those trainers who are considered to be 'characters' sustain the racing industry by attracting owners who wish to be part of a society that seems glamorous, secretive, exciting and successful, features a trainer must embody if he is to inspire confidence in his clients, just as the bookie, the star of the next chapter, must do in order to attract a wager.

The race meeting is the public side of the racing industry, and its features are carefully managed by the elite of racing society. The strong racecourse ethos of equality, and the mobility of the crowd, combined with the rapid turnover of money through the hands of bookies and punters, detracts from the uncomfortable truth that the racecourse is really a map expressing hierarchical relationships between insiders and outsiders. This relationship is informed by the aristocratic history of horseracing, which was codified as a 'gentleman's sport' and has always valued exclusivity, as reflected by the form taken by the racecourse following enclosure. This hierarchy is superficially suspended in the betting ring, however, the next chapter will discuss this dynamic in greater detail, and suggest that a careful examination of behaviour in the

ring reveals that the split between aristocrat and parvenu is reproduced in the role of professional and mug respectively.

The paddock is the exclusive zone in which power relations are most clearly expressed. My experience amongst lads, jockeys, trainers and owners suggested strongly that the paddock 'ritual' is not at all vestigial, but reflects contemporary roles informed by the particular social history of horseracing and sustained because it is from this history that racing gains its status (and thus attracts owners and spectators). I would argue that the behaviour of everyone inside a racecourse is informed by a sensitivity to the place of horseracing in British cultural history. Whilst insiders use this history in order to naturalise archaic social distinctions, owners and spectators attempt to buy into these relations. These relationships are part of the attraction of racing, an association with an aristocratic sport, bought into with a £5 day member's badge. In this way, Royal Ascot sustains the Derby - both are necessary sides of racing which, paradoxically, must be exclusive in order to retain its popular allure.

The following chapter discusses the engine that powers contemporary horseracing, betting. It describes racing's consumers in more detail. The clash between the upper class of racing who attempt to predict ability through pedigree, and the punters who bet that the result will not be so controlled, is made explicit.

Chapter Five: Gambling and Horseracing

Introduction

This chapter seeks to characterise gambling as a form of exchange, the nature of which is determined by its point of insertion into any given society. Thus, rather than attempting to uncover the inherent properties of gambling I shall discuss betting on horseracing as a practice which can fulfil a variety of purposes for the different constellations of people to whom it is significant. The particular contexts that I shall attempt to reconstruct are those of the betting shop and the betting ring.

This chapter draws upon fieldwork spent in the betting rings of a number of British racecourses, and in betting shops. I became a regular at two betting shops in Newmarket, where I enjoyed the nickname of 'Flaps', based (so I was told) on my arm movements during a race. Gambling is based upon the negation of the ideology of pedigree, such that punters bet that the outcome of the race will not be determined by breeding. Very few punters include breeding as a variable in their calculations, concentrating instead upon 'going' (the state of the ground), 'form', and distance. In a variety of ways, punters are opposed to the producers of racing, for reasons I shall explain in this chapter.

Recent anthropological discussions of gambling typically emphasise its positive contribution to the smooth running of the society in question. Thus gambling can be a 'levelling mechanism' (Zimmer 1987, Woodburn 1982, Mitchell 1988), it can facilitate cross over between otherwise distinct spheres of exchange (Riches 1975), it can enable people to 'fall into patterns of sociability with each other' (Maclean 1984: 52), or it can provide a new means of asserting marriageability where traditional methods have been eroded (Zimmer 1987)¹. Conversely, psychological and sociological discussions of gambling, generally based upon data from Europe and America, emphasise its inherently anti-social qualities, specifically through the construction of the figure of the 'compulsive gambler' (Oldman 1978, Dickerson

¹Zimmer has discussed gambling with cards in Melanesia and Australia, concluding that, 'card-playing is an enjoyable pastime that unites rather than divides the societies in question' (Zimmer 1987: 3). Woodburn's consideration of Hadza gambling appears to suggest that it facilitates the distribution of geographically distant goods (Woodburn 1982). Mitchell's discussion of gambling in the Sepik is entitled 'The defeat of hierarchy' (1988), making obvious the casting of gambling as a mechanism for the redistribution of wealth. It seems that anthropologists have been keen to assert the positive contribution of gambling to non-western societies, perhaps in response to its treatment by psychology in the west. However, I would prefer to emphasise that the role of gambling in any society depends upon its point of insertion, the extent of its penetration, and the pre-existing structures of inequality to which it responds.

1984, Thomas 1901)². Gambling has thus been seen as a disease, as a sin, as pathological and as associated with organised crime.

Excluding the lottery, betting on horseracing is the dominant form of gambling in Britain³:

The near total monopoly...must relate profoundly to the mainsprings of Western culture in general, and English culture in particular. It is, of course, the only sport in which men and animals combine to make the contest particularly rich in symbolic connotations, more so than contests between men or between animals. Backing the horse or the jockey is less creative than backing the combination between the two. (Downes 1976: 130)

I shall argue that one of the 'symbolic connotations' of horseracing is its royal and aristocratic association. This chapter describes betting on horseracing as a source of images of social mobility and equality in contrast to the fixity of social relations in the racing industry. The experience of betting at the racecourse can be exhilarating, and the anticipation of the 'big win' was a motivation cited by the majority of punters to whom I spoke. However, this chapter will suggest that the reality of punting is that it will be moderately successful at very best and highly unsuccessful as a rule. The separation between the supply and demand sides of racing, between trainer, owner and jockey and punter, is complicated and will be described in detail. It is a class-based distinction, perpetuated by the fantasy of equality and its disguise of structural inequality⁴.

The laws governing betting were codified along with the rest of the rules of racing in the eighteenth century, and reflect a separation between those perceived as capable of betting without ill effect (the rich), and those who must be protected from themselves (the poor). The history of the relationship between betting and horseracing

²As stated by Oldman, the compulsive gambler is 'an elusive creature' (Oldman 1978: 349), defined by Dickerson as 'people (usually but not invariably men) who approach treatment or helping agencies with statement to the effect that they cannot control their urge to gamble, that they want to stop or reduce their gambling', and suggests that 1% of the adult male population of Britain fits this description (Dickerson 1984: 2). Brenner (1990) suggests that the perceived numerical representation of this class of person is strongly correlated to the moral atmosphere of particular eras of British history.

³It is very difficult to gather accurate data regarding the volume of gambling and its constitution in terms of the different betting media. Betting on racehorses has been illegal off-course for various periods of time, leaving no accurate records. Furthermore, betting shares with all forms of gambling a tendency to over-represent volume, since gross figures include the re-betting of winnings. The overall tendency, however is clear in the data available, although the effect of the National Lottery has yet to be accounted for (see Table 5.1).

⁴The association of the working class with gambling disguises what is a more complex picture, (see Table 5.2) just as the profile of the racehorse owner as rich and upper class is a generalisation, 'The image of gambling has been one very much of a male, working class pastime...Consumer surveys confirm this impression, though not without qualification. In the past social commentators and very often legislators did their best to limit working class gambling activity; liberalisation of the law in the 1960s reversed this. However, following this change the growth of gambling was by no means confined to working class participants. Rather, there was a broadening of social participation.' (Munting 1996: 177). However, the purpose of this chapter is not to attempt to establish the true class composition of those groups of people who bet, but to investigate the impact of these associations on the racecourse and in the betting shop.

reveals the source of many of its contemporary conventions. The behaviour of the professional and mug punters described in this chapter can be accounted for in terms of the two worlds of betting that have historically always existed, that of the rich and of the poor. It will be seen that professional gamblers disassociate themselves from the sensuous side of betting, emphasising calculation and self-control. In contrast, mug punters 'wear their hearts on their sleeves':

behind all forms of (working class) gambling, whether or not they need skill, is the simple thrill of taking a chance, in which the emphasis is less on the worry of whether one will win than on the prior 'fun' - win or lose - of 'aving a go'. (Hoggart 1957: 137)

The sensual pleasures (and pains) of betting are condemned by the professional gambler, who strives instead to maintain a 'stiff upper lip', and is 'the same in victory as defeat'. It will be suggested that many aspects of contemporary betting on horseracing can be explained by its inception as an aristocratic sport, rather than a betting medium.

The betting shop and the betting ring are the two main focuses of contemporary betting on horseracing, though telephone and internet betting are gaining in popularity. I shall describe the betting shop as concerned entirely with the demand side of racing, mug punting with only a vague illusion of reward in what is really a routinised act as much to do with getting out of the house as with betting itself. Going into the betting shop does not entail the suspension of identity claimed by those entering the racecourse.

The betting ring is far more potent, capable of creating a liminal zone in which identities are imminent, dependent upon the result of a race. The characters of the betting ring are described in detail in order to suggest that there is a momentary individual freedom on the racecourse, which is pleasurable if inconsequential outside the course. People relish this freedom whilst many are aware of its superficiality, which does not seem to detract from its temporary intensity. The ability of racing to confer status depends upon its noble associations, and the exclusivity of these associations. Racegoers participate in a masquerade, taking pleasure in the idea of being part of society without believing that anything has really changed. Betting is thus the veneer pasted over the fixed class structure of horseracing, the appearance of mobility making the structural inequality more palatable.

The current relationship between horseracing and betting

Racing is funded by both a levy raised on the betting turnover of bookmakers, and also the profits from its own betting enterprise, the Tote. The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB), established in 1961, distributes the Levy which is collected from

punters by bookmakers as part of General Betting Duty (GBD). GBD can be paid on the stake or on winnings, and consists of 6.5% which goes to the government and 1.75% which goes to the HBLB. Bookmakers round up the deduction to 9% on all bets. The HBLB states the following objective in its 1996 report:

The Board is charged with the duty of assessing and collecting the monetary contributions from bookmakers and the Horserace Totaliser Board, and with applying them for purposes conducive to any one or more of:

- the improvement of breeds of horses;
- the advancement or encouragement of veterinary science or veterinary education;
- the improvement of horseracing. (HBLB 1996: 3)

The major outlay identified by the Board in 1998 was £28,910,096, which represented 45.4% of total prize money. Other contributors were the racecourse executives (16.4%), sponsors (20.8%), and owners (16.6%) (Racing Post 24/3/99: 9). The punter thus occupies a central position in relation to the funding of racing, via a levy on all legal fixed price betting, or through betting with the Tote, a poolbetting system, the profits of which go to racing. Contemporary British horseracing is thus funded to a great extent by reductions from punters, a position which sits uncomfortably with those members of the society who continue to imagine racing through the power relations which informed its early history. This dissatisfaction with 'punter power' has often been expressed in terms of the sport : industry debate which is aired periodically in the racing newspapers and was a contentious issue during my fieldwork.

Whilst some owners argue that they should not be expected to continue to invest in a loss-making enterprise:

(David Abell) may regard racing as a 'hobby', but racing is the country's sixth largest employer and that means the economic return for the racing product has to support an army of dependants. (letter to The Racing Post 4/11/96: 14)

others invoked sporting examples and emphasised that, for example, owning a yacht could never be subsidised but is something one does for the pleasure it provides, rather than for a financial return:

Seriously, anyone who goes into racehorse ownership expecting or needing to make financial sense of it is either nuts or badly advised. Of course prize money levels need urgent attention, but surely most owners are in the game for sport and fun and any money that comes back is a bonus. (letter to The Racing Post 14/11/96:12)

In essence, the debate is whether wealthy individuals are still prepared to indulge in an expensive sport solely for pleasure, or whether the role of owner must be that of entrepreneur looking for a 'healthy return' on an investment.

The circulation of money in racing is such that although owners buy the horses who provide the medium upon which punters may bet, punters provide the largest proportion of the prize money which supposedly provides the incentive for owners to continue in racing, and supports those who own successful horses, giving rise to an

uneasy symbiosis. The solution most regularly invoked to address the lack of money in racing is that of an off-course Tote monopoly, as in France and Australia:

Australia, a society unhindered by obsolete mores and prejudices inbuilt over many centuries, has what countless experts have pointed out offers the solution to the modernisation of our sport. They have a system of bookmakers on track and only Tote off that guarantees the financial income, and the professionals at every level, to run an efficient sport which can compete with other forms of entertainment to its best possible advantage. (Underwood 1996: 4 italics added)

It is unthinkable that there would ever be an off-course Tote monopoly, because the traditions of bookmaking and racing professionals have developed separately in Britain.

The transition of racing from a sport to an industry, at least in its contemporary incarnation, is usually dated from the 1960s, influenced by the increased availability of air transport and the resulting internationalism. The transition is codified in 'The Report of the Duke of Norfolk's Committee on the Pattern of Racing', submitted in August 1965:

up to quite recently, the object of racing was a sport and the betterment of the thoroughbred. And many of the rules of racing today were framed to safeguard this animal through its racing career. Today the sport has turned into an industry, is looked upon almost entirely commercially and few of those who follow it think anything at all about the welfare of the horse. (quoted in Hill 1988: 185)

Significantly, the report predicted that without the protection of the English thoroughbred by the British government 'racing is liable to be debased to the level of roulette, and does not deserve to survive' (quoted in Hill 1988: 186). This is an extreme statement of the purists vision of racing devoid of its sporting component, as there is no 'sport' in roulette, however, as Hill concedes: 'Fortunately, most owners and breeders have mixed motives, and as long as that continues, racing will still be enjoyable' (Hill 1988: 196).

Traditionalist racing society prides itself on 'sport for sport's sake', explicitly comparing this higher pleasure with the base pursuit of profit through betting:

Betting isn't about sport, because only the result is important, not the means. Watch a chaser go round Aintree, all guts, bravery, courage. I want the horse to win because it deserves it. Punters only want the result and they want it to win so that they can collect. They miss what's beautiful and important about racing and only see what they can grab. They exploit racing. (Owner.)

The antagonistic relationship between the betting fraternity and members of the racing establishment such as owners and trainers has led to the construction of opposing identities in terms of those features each side feels constitute their most significant differences:

Punters aren't part of this game - they are only interested in what racing can do for them without any effort. Real racing folk invest in racing by investing in the breed, and I don't just mean money. I mean blood, sweat and tears. (Breeder.)

I think when you buy or breed a racehorse you have to leave your brain as a deposit. Racing wouldn't exist without betting. It's what it's for. They service our needs. (Punter.)

The historical relationship between bookmaking and horseracing

Betting is the manure to which the enormous crop of horse-racing and racehorse breeding in this and other countries is to a large extent due. (Black 1893: 349)

Many historical commentators accord Harry Ogden the distinction of 'father' of modern bookmaking (Chinn 1991: 40, Munting 1996: 89). Although betting has apparently accompanied horseracing since its inception, which is never dated precisely, bookmaking is a relatively recent form of betting which was enabled by the increased number of runners in races throughout the eighteenth century, from the matches (two horse races) of the preceding era to the sweepstakes (multiple runner races) found today. Bets struck on matches were generally between the owners of the horses and his friends or other interested parties. Spectators were not encouraged at such affairs, those on foot, in particular, were effectively excluded by moving the race elsewhere, further away from prying eyes. Matches were usually bet upon 'at evens', that is, as if the horses were of equal ability. Thus a gentleman could gain prestige by betting at evens with a horse he knew to be superior to his own.

The nature of horseracing changed fundamentally in the nineteenth century: At the beginning of the nineteenth century horse racing was basically a national sport carried out on a local level. Generally meetings were annual affairs intimately associated with local holidays...by the end of the century racing drew its spectators from far and wide, the carnival atmosphere had been dampened down, and the sport had become much more commercially oriented. (Vamplew 1988: 56)

There was a marked increase in the popularity of racing as a spectator sport, and in the attendance of race meetings, providing opportunities to raise gate money through the enclosure of the racecourse, first attempted at Sandown Park in April 1875 (Vamplew 1988: 57). The development of the railway further widened racing's audience, servicing demand for popular recreation stimulated by the 70% average real increase in wages between 1850 and 1900 (Vamplew 1976: 41). Although 'blacklegs' on Newmarket Heath would accept a bet from a gentleman on a particular horse in a race, throughout the eighteenth century there was no facility for all-comers to lay a bet on the horse of their choice.

With the expansion in spectator attendance, and the diversification of the gaming entrepreneurs into betting, an antagonistic association was born, which continues to inform the relationship between racing and bookmaking today.

Thus Newmarket and Epsom had ceased during the eighteenth century to be the exclusive preserves of the aristocracy and gentry, and had become also the hunting ground of optimists, crooks and upstarts who were in search of riches. (Blyth 1969: 39)

This time of upheaval, however, rather than breaking down the existing class based division of labour in racing merely served to reinforce the distinctions as racing society dug in its heels in response to the onslaught of 'crooks and upstarts'.

Although bookmakers had sharks, adventurers and crooks as their predecessors, their trade is actually a very specific form of gambling, quite different from wagering. 'Making a book' on a race involves offering a 'price' (odds) on all of the horses in the race to anyone who wishes to challenge your judgement. These odds express the bookmaker's opinion as to which horse is most likely to win, come second, and so on through the 'field'. These odds are displayed on course or in the betting shop, where 'punters' (those who bet) may 'take a price' (bet) on their 'fancy' (choice) if they feel that the horse has as great a chance of winning or better than that expressed by the book. Once punters begin to bet at these prices, the book becomes an instrument measuring the strength of support for each runner in the race.

The basic principles of bookmaking have thus endured since the eighteenth century. The relationship between bookmaking and British law, however, has been anything but constant. The form taken by horseracing effectively excluded anyone but racehorse owners from betting systematically until the eighteenth century. Before this time, legislation concentrated upon gaming in the form of cards or dice (Munting 1996: 10). The correspondence between the restriction of gaming and the interests of the ruling class has been documented by Brenner (1990), in order to support the thesis that behind the condemnation of gambling lurked a resistance to the idea that, 'chance, rather than divine will or talent, can have a significant effect on the allocation and the reallocation of property' (Brenner 1990: vii). Certainly, the idea of providence is more appealing to those who prosper, and least to those who struggle, whilst chance is an explanation well suited to failure.

Brenner discusses the legislation limiting 'fraudulent and excessive gambling', initiated by Charles II in 1664 and reinforced by Anne in 1710, as an example of an instrumental law justified on spurious moral grounds, its true purpose being to protect the rich in a time of extreme social upheaval. The doubling of the population and the growth of the middle class in the century preceding the civil war generated laws intended to 'maintain the status quo' (Brenner 1990: 55), in other words, to restrict the volume of property changing hands as a result of wagering.

Similarly, the title of Wray Vamplew's chapter on horse racing and the law; 'One for the Rich and One for the Poor' (1988), refers to the separation between those who had the facilities and resources to bet on credit and those who did not. The Bill of 1853, which banned bookmakers from operating in betting houses, exhibiting lists, or advertising a willingness to take bets, turned on a distinction between those bookmakers who were prepared to bet with all-comers, the bookies, and those betting between individuals in men's betting clubs, particularly Tattersall's (est. 1750).

The 1853 Gaming law 'made little difference to betting itself' (Munting 1996: 91), which flourished in the informal economy, in the era of the street bookie. A resurgence of the moral condemnation of gambling coincided with the Great Depression during which gambling was identified as the cause of alcoholism, poverty and moral regression. The National Anti-Gambling League (NAGL), and in particular campaigners such as B. Seebohm Rowntree, took up the banner from the Society for the Suppression of Vice (1802), the ground-breaking middle class association that set out to 'stop Sabbath-breaking licentious publications and to campaign against private theatricals, fairs, brothels, dram houses, gaming houses and illegal lotteries' (Munting 1996: 21).

Gambling came to be described as an illness or an addiction. This vocabulary, the modern version of which is found in the figure of the 'compulsive gambler' and the language of Gamblers Anonymous, casts the gambler as subject to exterior forces, rather than as an agent of purposive action. His 'illness' can be cured by a gradual return to responsible decision-making through a series of activities which constitute his 'cure'. The figure of the 'compulsive gambler' reified by the NAGL in the early twentieth century, and still in existence in contemporary psychoanalytic material is presented as a defective rather than a deviant individual, and by characterising gambling as a disease it is denied the status of a counter-ideology to the puritan work ethic, and reduced to an a-rational affliction (cf. Oldman 1978).

In 1906 the Street Betting Act was passed, banning bookies and their runners, who operated on street corners and on factory floors:

the hope that instead of reading racing news the working class would choose to read or listen to political treatise may sound unlikely. Yet labour leaders apparently acted upon it. (Brenner 1990: 76)

According to the Peppiatt Committee Report, this act was widely flouted, and police were either bribed or did not enforce the ban on betting. The committee reported in 1960 at which time credit and on course betting was legal, whilst off course betting was illegal, but flourishing. The class based, paternalistic betting law reflected a tendency initiated in the earliest interactions between racehorse owner and blackleg, described by Jockey Club historian Robert Black (Black 1893):

So long as it was between nobles it was a comparatively harmless pastime; but he felt that it was 'sordid' for an aristocrat to bet with a commoner. (Chinn 1991: 38)

The Betting and Gaming Act of 1960 finally legalised ready money betting shops. By 1963, 14,388 betting shops had been opened (Munting 1996: 98). The law regarding gambling remained paternalistic, however, with betting shops banned from having

toilets, comfortable seats, refreshments or television until 1984. Their sepulchral air did not, however, prove unpopular with those who wished to bet⁵.

The Betting Shop

Betting shops, despite being granted concessions, in 1986, to have comfortable seats and sell soft drinks, remain something of an enigma in the era of the shopping mall and the sterile pub. The betting shop is one of the last bastions of the smoker, for example. Not smoking is frowned upon, whilst coughing or waving arms to clear the air is not tolerated. One of my favourite bookies in Newmarket was adjacent to a pub, and regulars brought in their pint from next door to sup on the agreement that they return the glass. Dogs were also always welcome in the shop, with or without owners. However, despite my fondness for betting shops, and the smelly charm of an afternoon spent watching racing in the company of familiar faces, I cannot report that betting shops service the needs of lower class men to assert positive identities based on the successful interpretation of form and a financial investment in their own judgement:

Various studies have reported that, for working class males, the primary satisfaction from gambling is derived from the problem solving process involved. This provides opportunities for decision making which are decreasingly available in everyday life...Presumably this perspective could now be updated to include players in de-skilled middle class occupations as well as other social groups. (Fisher 1993: 452)

Perhaps my gender and age excluded me from observing this sort of betting, but in my experience, and according to those I asked, a visit to the betting shop was 'part of my routine', spent in virtual silence, with little interaction between customers, minute stakes and little involvement. The more I spoke to fellow betting shop habitués the more convinced I was that this was not 'Where the Action is' (Goffman 1969).

Goffman describes gambling as 'the prototype of action' (Goffman 1969: 138), where action is defined as:

activities that are consequential, problematic, and undertaken for what is felt to be their own sake...The individual releases himself to the passing moment, wagering his future stake on what transpires precariously in the seconds to come. At such moments a special affective state is likely to be aroused, emerging transformed into excitement. (Goffman 1969: 136-137)

For the majority of bets placed by the majority of people, this did not seem to be the case. For many punters, placing a bet seemed routinised, and devoid of intellectual

⁵The lack of comfort in betting shops reinforced the association of gambling with the working class, and recent legislation permitting their improvement has been cited as responsible for the increase in betting amongst professionals: 'Betting shops were deliberately required to be unattractive in order not to stimulate new demand or entice punters to make repeated bets; the atmosphere was more akin to a public bar than the saloon. There were no seats, and the only provisions were racing papers pinned to the walls and a race commentary via the telephone (provided by Extel). As a legal alternative to street betting it is no surprise that demand was largely from working-class men' (Munting 1997: 178).

involvement. Broad groups of people can be identified in relation to their betting behaviour in the shop. In the mornings, men and women come into the shop in order to lay a specific bet which they have decided upon at home. No time is spent gazing at the paper on the walls, and morning 'layers' tend to want to be in and out as quickly as possible. Men were often middle-aged or younger, and wore track suits, overalls or jeans, rather than suits. Men generally told me that they were either on their way to work or on a tea break. Their bets tended to be staked on a single horse.

Female customers were often middle-aged, or older, wearing dresses and overcoats and carrying shopping bags. Most told me that they were in the middle of shopping, and that the betting shop was one of the shops they called in on each morning. Quite often women placed the combination bets which had been suggested in the morning papers. For example, a permutation based on predicting the winners of all six races at a particular course. When I asked why they preferred to bet in this way I was told:

Well, its just a bit of fun isn't it. You get better odds on combination bets, you see, so even though I only bet 10p a line, I could still get a really good return. I suppose its habit really, because I do worry that if I don't do it then I might miss out.

The flip side of betting at long odds is obviously that the chances of the bet being successful are remote. The bets laid by women in the morning did not reflect any knowledge of racing or consideration of form, 'I wouldn't know one end of the thing from the other!', they were always described as 'just a habit', and seemed to have much more in common with premium bonds than hysterically cheering home a long shot winner at a packed racecourse on a hot day in June. It seemed to me that the female morning punters had sapped betting of its intellectual component, its personal responsibility and its excitement. Placing their bet appeared to be approached as just another household chore, a form of investment rather than a risk taking exercise. Accordingly, those few women who could recall ever having won any money told me that winnings were absorbed by the household budget, with no special purchases being made.⁶

Greyhound and horseracing begin in the afternoon, along with the numbers draws which are succeeding in drawing custom away from the racing. Once racing begins, the older men who appear to spend the entire day in the shop appear. The majority of afternoon regulars in each of the shops I visited regularly were old men, who had retired. Quite often they told me that they were widowers. These men were

⁶The behaviour of women punters in the shops I visited was similar to that of women in Otto Newman's study in the East-end of London (1968), 'The morning hours, from opening time at ten to midday, belong to the women...Stakes are modest...The majority of bets are of the various combination types...Comments connected with betting are minimal, (winnings) are pocketed without emotion or comment, rather in the manner of drawing Family Allowance from the Post Office' (Newman 1968: 25).

reticent about their betting. They looked at the papers on the walls, and may have had a daily paper of their own in addition. They frequently followed the advice of newspaper tipsters, but rather unsystematically. Deciding to place a bet was a casual undertaking, the name read from the screen or the paper, scrawled on a piece of paper and given with the pound stake to the cashier without comment. I had hoped for passionate discussions of the merits of the handicapping system, distance and ground, trainer's form and jockey's abilities, but in fact I had to be satisfied with: 'I'm not sure why, I just fancy it.' These men tended to bet on every race, a singularly unsuccessful strategy, since some races are far easier to predict than others. The strategy cemented my impression that for regulars, betting on horseracing had more to do with betting than with horseracing.

In between afternoon horseraces are greyhound races, which were instituted in their present form by the bookmakers, who owned the tracks and partly owned the broadcasting service (SIS) which transmitted the commentary. Bookmakers Afternoon Greyhound Services (BAGS) began in 1967, in order to provide a betting medium, and to compensate when bad weather affected horseracing. Greyhound racing is universally sneered at by those who value horseracing for its own sake:

I can't imagine anything worse. Watching skinny dogs go round and round a featureless circuit chasing a mechanical hare, wearing coloured jackets like glorified flies on a wall. Greyhound racing has nothing whatsoever in common with horseracing; it's a lottery for deadheads who want to recycle their dole money. (Trainer.)

Numbers betting, in various forms, is also available in betting shops, where there are live draws every afternoon. These draws offer better odds than the National Lottery, although with smaller jackpots. Numbers betting is incredibly popular, to the Horserace Betting Levy Board's chagrin. Speaking to regulars who placed bets on horseracing, greyhounds and numbers, it became clear that whilst there were those who focused on horseracing out of an affection for the horses themselves, there were also those who failed to see any significant difference between betting on horses, dogs or plastic balls 'It doesn't make any difference what you bet on does it? As long as something wins!'

For a few punters in the betting shop the pleasure of betting resides in the intellectual stimulation of making a selection in a race based on a knowledge of all of the intricacies of racing. The financial involvement is less significant to this punter than the satisfaction of being proved correct in his calculations, and perhaps to explain his train of thought to a few fellow bettors. Success is celebrated:

Not as a tribute to the individual punter's excellence, but as a common triumph over the massed forces of the outside, over the superior external powers, a victory of 'Us' over 'Them'. (Newman 1968: 24)

In Newmarket, 'They' can be identified more precisely, since it is in behaving as though one knows more than the massed ranks of the upper class racing professionals who dominate the town that one may gain temporary ascendancy over them.

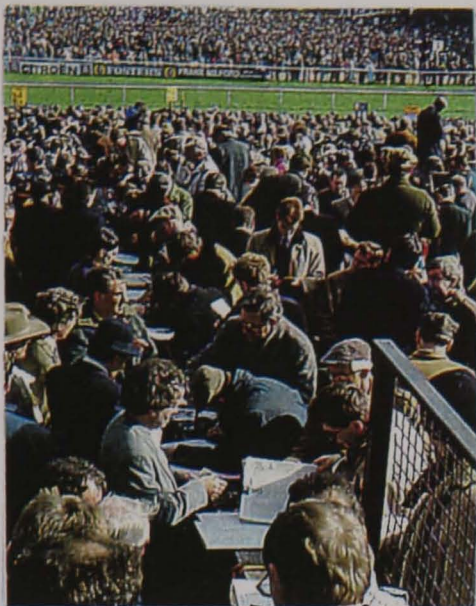
However, studies that cite intellectual motivations at the expense of more mundane explanations for betting behaviour also tend to focus on the experiences of winning punters, whose status is thereby improved. Characterising betting as an empowering experience neglects the explanations of those punters who bet 'so that I'm out of the house', 'Because I always have' and, more precisely, those punters who lose. For these punters, I would suggest that the attraction of the betting shop lies not in its provision of opportunities for 'action', but in its isolation from reality, 'I come here for a bit of peace and quiet, and if I want a bet I might look at the paper or whatever':

Looking for where the action is, one arrives at a romantic division of the world. On one side are the safe and silent places, the home, the well-regulated roles in business, industry and the professions; on the other are all those activities that generate expression, requiring the individual to lay himself on the line and place himself in jeopardy during a passing moment. (Goffman 1969: 204-5)

In contrast to Goffman's division of the world, it seemed that many punters in betting shops find their lives outside the shop sufficiently stressful to lead to their identification of the shop itself as a sort of a sanctuary. The betting shop is thus often a passively social environment, rather than a hotbed of risk-taking and personal enhancement.

The Betting Ring

Whilst fighting for air in a sea of people before the 2:05 at Yarmouth it occurred to me that the absence of the betting ring from anthropological literature was incredible. I was part of a crowd whose actions were determined by a row of men on upturned crates writing figures on a board bearing their ancestors' names, shouting slang which was relayed in incomprehensible sign language by a man in white gloves. The betting ring can be intimidating, it can be crowded, deserted, quiet (waiting for the result of an enquiry), or ear-drum burstingly noisy (when the favourite romps home in front). The ring is a male dominated space, where women are tolerated rather than welcomed, and there is no room for the very old or the very young. The dialect and body language of the bookies and their customers, epitomised by the institutionalised sign language of 'tic-tac', makes a visit to the betting ring a perplexing experience, but one which stimulates a desire to understand its conventions, and to perhaps become part of them.



5.1 Rails bookmakers at the Cheltenham Festival
(BHB 1993: 21)



5.2 In the betting ring
(BHB 1993: 21)

The Bookmaker

My favourite bookmaker is an East End boy made good. He is middle-aged, portly, thinning on top, wears Pringle jumpers and slip on shoes and a sheepskin coat when it is cold in the ring. He speaks quickly, and responds to questions before they are finished, replying with absolute confidence and a harsh wit. He has strong views about everything, 'I don't take bets from women and I don't do each way', 'That won't win, and anyone who says it will don't know what they're talkin' about!' He generally has either a wad of money in his hand or a batch of betting tickets, ready to distribute to punters who back with him because he is trusted and admired. He is loud and 'old fashioned' and admits himself to 'giving it the large one' occasionally, 'I s'pose I speak my mind, but you can take it or leave it can't ya!' He personifies the qualities a bookmaker appears to need in order to be successful, he is charismatic, confident, and outspoken.

Bookmakers display their 'prices' (the odds they are prepared to offer on a horse) on colourful boards which give their name, and the name of the family member from whom they have inherited the 'pitch' (the right to bet at that racecourse). The board also shows their home town, or town of origin, and may state the minimum stake accepted, or that the bookmaker accepts win only bets. Below the board, suspended by one of its handles, is the standard issue bookmakers' money satchel, which may also bear the owner's name and family details. This bag hangs temptingly open, stuffed with rolled up wads of notes. The bookmaker stands on a coloured crate which may also be personalised, and his clerk stands on the other side of the board. The equipment is referred to collectively as the bookie's 'joint'. Many bookmakers have two clerks, one to accept the bets, who stands to the left of the board, and one behind who calculates the liabilities and records each bet. The bookie himself hands out numbered tickets and adjusts the odds according to his own calculations or those of the clerk behind the board.

The betting market on course determines the 'starting price' (the price at which bets are settled), throughout the betting shops around the country. Whilst the weight of support for each horse on course is supposed to be reflected by its 'starting price', the major betting firms have a vested interest in attempting to make the price reflect off-course business also. This is where the tic-tac men come in:

The fact that a group of key personnel on the racecourse have secrets so dark that they adopt a secret language with which to share them is confirmed by the energetic gesticulations of the tic-tacs who help to make the racecourse scene so much more colourful. (White 1996: 139)

One of the functions of the tic-tac men, identified by their white gloves and windmilling arms, is to communicate wagers to the bookmakers in order to offset the

weight of 'office money' communicated to them via the 'blower' (telephone). This information travels from the clearing house of the bookmaker, who calculates that at the current starting price the shop liability would be unacceptably large, to the 'blower tic-tac man', via the 'blower agent':

The large bookmaking multiples, especially Ladbrokes, channel large sums taken in their licensed betting offices back to the course to bolster up what in recent years has often become a rather weak 'live' market. Since such practices can radically distort the course market, some professionals have been heard to complain that prices quoted against some runners do not reflect their real value. (White 1996: 140)

The bookmaker multiples deny that this practice is as extensive as the independent bookmakers and on-course professionals claim, however:

The signalling method employed by tic-tacs and the ways in which agents of large concerns channel covering money into the course market are naturally confidential and impossible for the uninitiated to decode. They are quite different from the much more public system that is used to relay market information and to transmit wagers from bookmakers in one enclosure on the racecourse to another. (White 1996: 141)

Wagers are communicated by the 'top men', tic-tacs who stand at the top of the grandstand, receiving messages from one enclosure, and transmitting them to another.

In constant communication with the tic-tacs are the rails bookmakers who deal in larger stakes than the ring bookmakers, and stand on the rail, between the Silver Ring and Tattersalls. Rails bookmakers are not allowed to display their prices on boards, and they stand at ground level, 'shouting the odds', to be approached by those wishing to bet in large stakes. The rails bookmakers are often representatives of the major bookmaking firms, and their personal image is far more corporate and less individual than that of the ring bookie. Rails bookmakers wear long raincoats, smart suits and hats; no flat caps or battered trilbies as seen in the ring. Their demeanour is cool and self-contained, to match their turnout. The typical rails bookie is charming, well-spoken, intelligent and beautifully dressed. His bearing seems intended to suggest an honourable and trustworthy individual, or as an elderly racegoer put it: 'I'd trust him with the inheritance.'⁷ The point of honour amongst the rails bookies is that they will accommodate a bet no matter how large, and wish you all the best with it, as the following story illustrates:

Hunter chaser Jigtime is fast becoming a serious earner for a mystery punter with a plastic bag stuffed full of notes...When Jigtime won at Ayr last month, the man had £12,000 to win £10,000 with Hills and (rails bookmaker) Ridley, smiling in the face of adversity, said yesterday, 'He also had £10,000 to win £3,330 with me when she won here previously. I don't know anything about him, but good luck to him!'...The middle-aged, bespectacled backer was soon queuing up for his money. His carrier bag with a 'Bargain Booze' label which had been tucked safely in Ridley's satchel, was returned topped up with the extra £10,000. It was then placed in a black and red holdall and with

⁷Confusingly, this bookie is widely believed to be involved in the recent race-fixing scandals. Of course, that things are not as they seem is typical on the racecourse, and that I should have been fooled by appearances reflected my naivety during early fieldwork.

a curt 'thank you very much' the punter walked away as calmly as if he had just visited the supermarket. (Racing Post 21/5/98: 4)⁸

This story also describes the model punter: 'the same in victory as in defeat'.

'Mugs' and Professionals

Amongst racegoers, there are groups of people concerned solely with the enjoyment of a 'day out' at the races, 'I'd rather have a gin and tonic than a bet!', whilst there are those who told me that, for them, the racecourse was their office: 'It's a professional thing, Rebecca. When I'm on the racecourse I'm working' (Professional Punter). Of course, the motivations for coming racing are not exhausted by business or pleasure, however, one of the most common forms of self-identification amongst racegoers was whether betting was their prime objective or merely a small part of an enjoyable day. Those who chose to bet 'just to have an interest in the race, you know, make it more exciting', and particularly women, often placed bets with the Tote, and explained this to me on the grounds that 'the ladies at the Tote are really helpful, they don't look down their noses at you like the bookies do'. The Tote has booths all around the course, often serviced by middle-aged women, who will explain bets and help inexperienced punters. Furthermore, punters queue for the Tote in an orderly fashion, whilst in the betting ring queuing is disorderly and women may find themselves pushed aside in the rush for a price.

The second major index capable of predicting whether a racegoer chooses to bet with the Tote or in the ring is that of experience. Women who are accustomed to the intensity of the ring are just as forceful in competing to take a price, that is to lay a bet quickly when a bookmaker momentarily advertises longer odds than his competitors. Inexperienced men also bet with the Tote, but generally with higher stakes than women, a feature of betting behaviour which is generally replicated in the ring. Men explained their higher stakes in the ring as a response to the 'minimum stake' requirement of the bookmakers, usually of £5. A bet of £2 is still known as a 'lady's bet', and will be avoided by the majority of men, who couldn't even contemplate betting in amounts less than the £5 they needed to stake in order to be 'taken on' by the bookmakers, 'I don't bet less than £5 because its not worth your while betting anything less'. Asked why women apparently bet in £2 stakes this punter replied that, 'Its just to give them a bit of fun isn't it?', implying that, in his

⁸Further contributing to the necessity to be suspicious of appearances on the racecourse, this individual is now in prison, having been convicted of defrauding his employer in order to raise the initial stake for his coup. What appeared to be a story of the punter's triumph over the bookmaker again turns out to be something more complicated.

opinion, men and women had a bet for different reasons. The overwhelming majority of racegoers who I asked had succumbed to the traditional distribution of stake money, but their interpretation of the significance of this contrast varied enormously, as one would expect. Some of the explanations of the larger stakes of men offered by women were as follows:

They think that they're the big man, swaggering into the ring and putting down twenty quid, don't they (laughs).

I only need to put down a couple of pounds because I get all the entertainment I need from watching the men doing their Mafia act. As if they know anything about racing - my husband's a bank manager for God's sake!

He knows more about it than me, I just have a bet to make it a bit more exciting.

Men explained their larger stakes as follows:

Its the only way you can get a big return.

Otherwise the bookies would think that you were a wimp.

I'd rather bet less, but you feel a bit of a fool handing over £3.

All men know more about racing than all women, love, fact of life.

I'm luckier than my wife.

This variation should not detract from the existence of an ideology of masculinity based on successful risk-taking, and the possession of knowledge that makes this possible, which exists on the racecourse. Men avail themselves of this image for a variety of reasons, and with varying degrees of self-consciousness. Women see through this identity to various degrees and respond to it in ways which are a function of their off-course relationships with men. Individual explanations of the different stakes tendered by men and women clearly reflect more general ideas about gender, these ranged from women who saw through men to women who thought men more capable than women, and from men who laughed at their own foray into macho posturing to men who thought themselves inherently more capable than women.

Mugs

The experience of a day's racing is determined to a large extent by the company in which the day is spent. Amongst those racegoers who come primarily to bet on the racing it was difficult not to make the same distinction as is made in many betting manuals, between 'mugs' and 'professionals'. My experience of race meetings is that there are always groups of around eight to twelve men who spend a good deal of the day in the bar drinking and smoking. They place bets on all of the races, of amounts greater than £5, and they celebrate wins within the group with alcohol, and enjoy indulging in sexual banter:

swearing and sexual conversation bound the men together. As a topic on which most men could support a conversation and as a source of jokes, sexual talk and gesture were inexhaustible. (Marsden 1968: 75)

During one memorable meeting at the July Course, the twelve young men with whom I spent the day devised a song in my honour, 'Becca's a professor, I wish I

could undress her, tra la la la, tra la la la.' Singing, betting and drinking were only temporarily interrupted by altercations with other groups of men at the bar. Typically, a few words would be exchanged whilst jockeying for position. Perhaps an individual would be singled out as taking up a lot of room, or having especially sharp elbows. Whilst the groups would 'square up' for a moment or two, it was left to the 'diplomat' of each group to rush over and avert trouble, saying, 'Come on lads, no harm done, let's get a drink.'

Recent anthropological literature might describe these men as asserting a class-specific masculinity (Tolson 1977, Back 1994):

the language of masculinity contributes to a supportive, working class culture, capable of local resistances, and even subversion. (Tolson 1977: 63)

This argument finds support in my experience of the racecourse where the subversion practised by these groups of men takes the form of contradicting the judgement of those racing professionals who they identify as 'upper class'. The majority of the members of these groups would be described by my professional punter friends as 'mugs'. Describing non-professionals as 'mug' punters is driven by the professional gamblers self-image as the intellectual of the racecourse:

Every time I leave the racecourse at the end of a day's work, with a profit tucked into my zipped pocket, I offer a silent thank you to the mugs who make it possible - my fellow punters. Overall I regard the rest of the crowd with contempt, and use the term 'mug punter' as a collective noun in much the same dismissive way as I might say 'Arsenal supporters'. (Potts 1995: 16)

Whilst many mugs will choose to bet on favourites and second favourites, professional gamblers will often choose to oppose weak favourites with longer priced horses, since the strike rate needed to show a profit from longer priced horses is correspondingly lower than that needed to make a profit at evens or short odds: 'to me finding 10-1 winners at a rate of one in eight sounds much easier than finding even-money winners at a rate of two in three' (Potts 1995: 46).

'Mugs' were identified by their betting behaviour:

Mugs give in to the temptation to bet, even when they haven't thought the race through...Mugs bet for the thrill...They don't admit when they were wrong, they make excuses for themselves...Mugs go crazy when they win and they're suicidal when they lose. (Professional punter)

It was easy to dismiss my professional gambler friend's description of the mug as a fiction based upon the negation of behaviour becoming to a 'pro', but their predictions proved far more accurate than I had envisaged. An afternoon at the races for groups of twenty-something, single men consisted of a series of highs and lows, continuous drinking, a visit to the betting ring ('I wouldn't be seen dead betting with the Tote'), and a view of the race, usually on a monitor rather than in the flesh ('you can see more on the telly'). Watching a mug watch a race is a fascinating experience - confidence turns into uncertainty, into hope and finally into disappointment. Mugs with a horse in

contention in the closing stages of a race often ride a finish, eyes fixed on the screen, arms pumping backwards and forwards, accompanied of course, by the battle cry: 'Go on my son!' When the winner crosses the line the successful punter invariably punches the air in triumph, shouting 'Yessss!' or perhaps 'You Beauty!'

Mugs continually contradicted the opinions of trainers and commentators. These racegoers most closely resembled the gamblers described by Zola in one of the few modern empirical studies of gambling, conducted in a bar in a large New England city in the early 1960s. Zola describes how betting on horseracing in 'Hoff's' tavern gives the men an opportunity to assert a positive identity which is denied to them outside the confines of the bar and its shared conventions:

gambling is more than a mode of communication. It creates a bond between men - a bond which defines insiders and outsiders. (Zola 1967: 22)

However, on the racecourse, stratification extends to the betting community no less than the professional racing community, and what unites some groups of men who bet also serves to distinguish them from others. Mugs on course, and gamblers in Hoff's, unite against the bookmaker in ways that the professional would find unseemly. Professionals see bookmakers as colleagues, and acknowledge that they make their money, not from the bookmaker, but from the mug punters who bet without skill or reflection. Bookmakers and professionals share more than either has in common with the mug, but despite the apparent difference being based upon betting for pleasure or business, the mug does not see his betting as purely recreational. The mugs treat betting as a 'serious business', and act accordingly. Mugs sit in the bar smoking and drinking with an intensity which suggests that they are nervously awaiting results in which they have a large stake, as they presumably imagine a professional would. They do not drink for pleasure, but to express to the rest of the bar the extent of their financial involvement in the race. My experience of betting with professionals is that they come racing alone, they may have a pint with their lunch whilst they go over the bets they have prepared the previous evening, they watch the race from the stands or out in the country with binoculars, and they must see the horse in the paddock and down to the start before placing their bet. There is very little time for puffing, drinking and looking anxiously at television monitors, and this would certainly not be done in such a public place as the bar. The young men who dominate the public areas of the racecourse, often drinking and smoking are not the high rollers, and the image they project is anathema to the professional, who, I would suggest, they seek to emulate.

The mug's opposition to the bookmaker is complemented on the racecourse by a condemnation of jockeys and trainers, even to the extent that a race may be seen as 'fixed'. The mug's paradoxical belief that racing is fixed reflects his lack of

consistency which is the fault that most offends the professional punter: 'They say that racing is fixed. Well if you think that and still bet then you really are a mug' (Professional punter). Of course, corruption is just one part of the mug's ideology, which can accommodate glaring inconsistencies when employed in such an unsystematic fashion. Winning is thus explained in terms of knowledge and information, whilst losing is explained in terms of corruption, bad luck, or the misjudgement of the jockey or trainer. These explanations are often accompanied by an exasperated mug declaring that: 'I knew it would get beat, I said to you I fancied the winner didn't I?', because in the course of discussing the race almost all of the runners will be mentioned and so at least one mug will have the opportunity to claim 'the one that got away'.

The Professional

The professional gambler who gave me the best tips was a single, middle-aged, bespectacled, Renault driving, ex-computer trouble-shooter. Alan Potts is well known and highly respected, having written several popular betting manuals and contributed to a successful telephone tipping line. The time we spent together reinforced my impression that the professional gambler has assimilated many of the qualities admired by historians of this century in the 'sportsmen' of the eighteenth century racing aristocracy, specifically in his construction of an identity in opposition to the mug punter and in the desired response to winning and losing:

A 'good sport' will take a 'sporting chance' with his money and will demonstrate his sportsmanship by showing neither regret at losing nor elation at winning his wagers. A 'poor sport' usually refuses to gamble at all. Or if he does so, his response to the outcome is unseemly. (Herman 1967: 83)

Crockford soon discovered that his own temperament was well suited to gambling because he was bold without ever being rash, and systematic without being overcautious. (Blyth 1969: 51)

Alan takes pride in the fact that it is impossible to tell whether he has won or lost by his reaction to the finish of a race. The more he emphasised the absence of a reaction, telling me that he had to put on a show of excitement for a television crew who had followed him for a day, the more I wondered what could possibly be behind this condemnation of expressive reactions to results. This 'underplaying' belongs to the same family of conventions as the 'poker face', and the self-effacing acceptance of awards with understated humility. However, although a poker face may have an instrumental value in the course of a poker game, celebrating a win obviously cannot affect that result. Celebrations in Hoff's were restrained, either by the winner himself,

or by his peers: 'stop acting like a jerk' (Zola 1967: 23). Zola explains this temperance as follows:

In de-emphasising emotionality, monetary gain, and competition not only were several basic sources of hostility often emanating from gambling eliminated but, at the same time, attachment to the 'group at Hoff's' was thereby reaffirmed. (Zola 1967: 23)

However, the restraint showed by Alan served to differentiate him from the amateurs surrounding him on the course. Alan distinguished himself from social racegoers and mug punters by exhibiting control. He stripped gambling of all its thrills and excitement in order to control the process itself. By reacting consistently to results whether winning or losing, Alan diffuses the power of the bet to control the punter. As he told me: 'I am not betting for the thrill, I am betting to make money. Mugs enjoy the thrill of the bet more than they do winning. I only know about winning.' Alan thought that the punters from whom he made a living willingly submitted to the excitement of the gamble itself, and his activities were opposed to this sensuous pleasure. In this way, betting is work, and an instrumental pleasure, not an end in itself.

Alan's condemnation of the mug echoes ideas that informed upper class descriptions of lower class activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Because the world of the poor was immediate they could not remember effectively; because they could not do that, they could not develop a proper sense of causation...Furthermore, they argued that this confined sense of time influenced all aspects of working class behaviour: the urge for sensation, excitement, rapid change of interest together with quick loss of concentration, they even suggested that it showed itself in physical taste: liquids had to be very sweet or very sharp,; medicines strong and instant in effect. (McKibbin 1990: 175-76)

The following quote, taken from a source published in 1896, could equally have been taken from a contemporary professional gambler's description of a mug:

the self-taxation of the poor, the amount wasted by recklessness, ignorance, credulity and misplaced suspicion, by the lack of temperance, foresight and self-discipline would satisfy an oriental despot. (Loane, quoted in McKibbin 1990: 171)

By reproducing this discourse Alan aligns himself with the supply side of racing - the upper class society with whom the mug is in constant competition.

Conclusion

The racecourse is 'Where the action is' (Goffman 1969), whilst the same cannot be said of the betting shop. Betting on horseracing does not have the inherent ability to provide a medium for the enhancement of personal identities. However, the racecourse itself is a place capable of imbuing betting with significance as a result of its place in the imagination of racegoers, and the historical and contemporary relationship between racing and bookmaking. The characters of the racecourse, such as the tic-tac man, the bookie and the professional, not to mention the jockeys, trainers and horses,

make betting on course a suitably complex and dramatic endeavour through which people may choose to express their knowledge and risk-taking capacity. Mugs express this ability by behaving as they imagine a professional punter would. Professionals rarely display their risk-taking, preferring to sap gambling of its uncertainty with a show of confidence and indifference that strips betting of its uncertainty, and thus its ability to move.

Betting in the ring with the bookies is far more involved than betting with the Tote. One of the arguments for retaining on-course bookmakers rather than allowing a Tote monopoly is that the bookmakers add character to the course, and that a racecourse without bookies would lack the excitement that encourages people to go racing in the first place. The excitement generated by the encounter between punters and bookmakers on course is dependent upon the contact made between punter and bookie. The transaction is a *personal* matter of honour between the two, reinforced by the knowledge that gambling debts remain unrecoverable by the law⁹.

Placing a bet with an on-course bookmaker is a highly personalised, highly competitive interaction. It is therefore unsurprising that a major axis of competition within the racing world lies between punter and bookmaker, however:

Anyone who has read accounts of successful gambles (real or mythical), or has perused the enticing adverts of the tipping services will be familiar with the oft-used cliché that the participants have 'bashed the bookies' or 'left the layers gasping'. The clear impression given is that, when you back a winner, the payout comes straight from the bookmakers' pocket. Not to put too fine a point on it, this is a load of b*****ks!...winning punters do not take their profits from the bookies, but from losing punters. (Potts 1995: 15)

Despite the real competition on the racecourse being between punters, mugs view the bookie as their adversary. I have suggested that the bookie is in fact a scapegoat on two levels. The bookmaker deflects the uncomfortable truth that one mug's winnings are another mug's losses¹⁰. Secondly, bookmakers stand in for the upper class of racing whose capacity to predict the outcome of races on the grounds of breeding is contradicted by the very practice of betting.

The professional gambler is generally a lone figure at the racecourse, the absence of company being testimony to his acknowledged competitive relationship with other punters, and hence to the different set of motivations he holds for going

⁹This responsibility is not conveyed by the Tote to the same degree, due to the structure of the different forms of betting, and the representatives of each betting medium. The Tote employs middle-aged women whose involvement in the transaction is to take your money and hand you your ticket and hopefully your winnings. You are putting money into a pool which will be won by a number of faceless, anonymous 'others' if you lose. If you win, you take the money staked, again by people unknown to you. The personal involvement of the men and women operating the Tote is limited to their desire to be perceived as fulfilling their role according to their terms of employment.

¹⁰This unites the mugs at the course in a way that is consistent with an enjoyable and companionable day spent at the races. In this way, wins within the group can be celebrated by all of the group, as if it doesn't really matter who won since 'they' didn't take any of 'our' money, only that of the bookie.

racing. Professional gamblers would not associate their behaviour with that of the casual punter, on the contrary, they see the casual punter as anathema. Their symbiotic relationship is sustained via the bookmaker, and although professional gamblers are very clear about this, mugs vilify only the bookies whilst hailing the professional as 'one of us' (only successful). Professional gamblers are generally scathing about the people on whom they depend for their living, in language reminiscent of the upper class speaking of the lower class.

Betting off course in a betting shop is not part of a day out, and the atmosphere in which betting takes place could not be more different. For both men and women punters in the shops betting has become routinised, as a household chore for women and as an afternoon diversion for men. I have disputed the explanations of gambling that cite intellectual stimulation as a central motivation because they do not account for the overwhelmingly unsuccessful strategies adopted by punters. A bond does exist between betting shop punters, in their opposition to losing, but this opposition does not appear to extend to the bookmaker as it once did. The explanation for this lies in the domination of the 'Big Three' bookmakers in providing betting outlets. Punters are confronted with an employee of a publicly quoted multinational, rather than a weasel of a bookie against whom they may 'pit their wits'. This argument was suggested to me by the contrast in atmospheres between small independent bookmakers, where the bookmaker himself takes your bet, and the chain bookmakers, where the cashier may know your name, but has no personal involvement with your bet. Betting shops eliminate the tension between bookmakers and punters, as making a bet entails making a diffuse risk with an employee with whom the proverbial buck does not stop,

I must admit I'd rather bet with a proper bookie, because to be honest I've got so much in common with Dave (the manager), that I don't feel the same excitement as when I bet on course. (Betting shop punter.)

The betting shop has only a very short history, having come into existence in its present legal form in the 1960s. Whilst racehorses arrived on the racecourse before betting, they were preceded into the betting shop by gambling itself. This is evident in the betting behaviour of the two locations. Betting on course was described in relation to the overall experience of 'going racing':

Its part of it, isn't it? You have a drink, lay a bet, watch the race, cheer them home, then start again. Its great! (Middle aged male racegoer.)

Its a bit of fun! You pretend to know what you're doing, and if you win all the better! (Female racegoer.)

Betting on course is a part of going racing and betting behaviour involves adopting whichever demeanour appeals, from bank managers who become Mafia men, to the woman who told me: 'I feel like Lady Muck!' Entering the racecourse marks a

suspension of ordinary identities, and the potential for re-negotiating class differences, as described by a female racegoer:

When we get on the racecourse it's as if we all get on a cruise ship that doesn't go anywhere, but just floats about. Once you're on the ship you're the racing version of yourself, you can talk to anyone you like, because we're all being our racing selves!

However, if this woman chose to attempt to enter the weighing room, the unsaddling enclosure, the paddock or the owners and trainers bar, she might find that this apparent suspension of off-course distinctions is fragile to say the least.

The next chapter will consider the bloodstock auction. The gap that exists in racing, between breeding and ability, exploited by those who bet, is plugged at the sales, where pedigree translates directly into price.

Chapter Six: The Bloodstock Auction

Introduction

As people, horses make pretty good objects, however, as objects, horses make pretty good people. Whilst Kopytoff (1986) seeks to use the example of slavery as a historical moment in which the commodity candidacy of the human being was realised, I intend to illustrate that the category distinction he refers to, between persons and things, is also blurred by animals, in particular by racehorses, who are both bought and sold and also, at times, brought within the closest of human networks including those of kinship. The racehorse is assisted in his entry into the realm of people by being a singularly luxurious good, with a correspondingly social role:

I propose that we regard luxury goods not so much in contrast to necessities (a contrast filled with problems), but as goods whose principle use is *rhetorical* and *social*, goods that are simply *incarnated signs*. The necessity to which *they* respond is fundamentally political. (Appadurai 1986: 38)

In this chapter I draw upon my experience of the bloodstock trade in order to examine racehorses during the phase in their 'cultural biography' (Kopytoff 1986: 64) in which they most closely resemble a 'commodity'. Racehorses have 'cultural biographies' of some complexity, which grant brief moments of clarity, particularly at points of sale. The majority of racehorses follow an idealised path which begins before they are born, when they are potential things. At this stage, the racehorse exists as a human contrivance, on a piece of paper or a computer screen. The fixed point in the identity of the potential racehorse is the mare, or rather her representation as a chunk of thoroughbred pedigree. The stud manager or mare owner will contemplate various matings with stallions he feels will fuse complementary pedigrees. The conclusion to the path is less consistent, I know of racehorses completing their lives as polo ponies, hunters, eventers, or hacks. Of course, at all times, the possibility exists for the racehorse to embark upon a diversion which will result in maltreatment or death, most often at the point at which the racehorse seeks to make a leap from 'racehorse' to mere 'horse' status.

In between phases of potentiality and denouement, the racehorse experiences events which might be described as 'lifecycle rituals'. One of the most significant of these lifecycle rituals for determining the status of both the racehorse and the people who buy, sell and own racehorses, is the sales, in particular the annual Houghton Sale at Tattersalls where the elite yearlings of each generation are sold by auction. My fieldwork at the sales was conducted with bloodstock agents who became close friends, and reflects my own 'interpretive drift'. The more time I spent with experts, the more I became an expert myself. My perceptions changed, and 'salience was

redefined' (Luhmann 1989: 11). I embodied Luhmann's observation in relation to magicians that:

the very process of learning to be a magician elicits systematic changes in the way that the magician interprets events. Interpretation depends upon a complex set of assumptions, biases, conceptual frames, knowledge, heuristics and attributive tendencies - intellectual habits in paying attention, in organising what one notices, and in remembering it. (Luhmann 1989: 115)

Having acquired the necessary mental apparatus to move unnoticed in this world, the task of writing up, of turning my relationships with other people and with horses into an academic text, has become firstly a process of 'unlearning' and secondly of analysis.

The sales ring is the interface of the two main principles at work in racing society: risk and pedigree. It is in the sales ring that pedigree is expressed financially, and the risk of buying a young animal yet to achieve physical maturity is interpreted as an 'investment' according to its representation by a page in the sales catalogue detailing its breeding. The 1998 Houghton Sales saw the record breaking purchase of yearlings for 2.2 million guineas and 3 million guineas, and whilst their buyers sought to justify these purchases on the grounds of breeding it was agreed that it 'becomes impossible to explain yearlings valued at over one or two million' (Bloodstock agent). These two yearlings have been bought as potential stallions, in the hope that they might win a classic race and then go on to sire winners. Anthony Oppenheim, a bloodstock analyst, put the chances of this at 7-1; that he was prepared to put a figure to this chance is another illustration of the obfuscation of risk-taking as calculation.

In this chapter I consider the sales ring and its combination of risk-taking and pedigree. Pedigree, in this context, is the ideology employed to make sense of participation in the bloodstock market. The first section of this chapter briefly describes the passage of a yearling through the auction ring. This moment is the culmination of all of the efforts described in the next section of the chapter, which describes fieldwork spent preparing a yearling consignment for the 1997 October Sales. These experiences should communicate the importance of the appearance of knowledge. The scarcity of real knowledge in this arena is reflected in a description of the yearling inspection, the means by which yearlings are physically assessed by bloodstock agents. I then describe the bloodstock agent who negotiates this arena with impression management, confidence and personality. The final section of this chapter describes the sales ring as an example of a 'Market' in recognition of the use of this term by the bloodstock industry. In fact, I shall support the insights of Dilley (1992), by maintaining that the bloodstock auction is a cultural form which encapsulates the logic of racing society at the same time as announcing its independence therefrom and

perpetuating its image as a 'Market' governed by principles of a 'neutral neo-Classical economics' (cf. Miller 1995).

Tattersalls Auction Ring



6.1 Tattersalls auction ring
(BHB 1993: 19)

Tournaments of value are complex periodic events that are removed in some culturally well-defined way from the routines of economic life. Participation in them is likely to be both a privilege of those in power and an instrument of status contests between them. The currency of such tournaments is also likely to be set apart through well understood cultural diacritics. Finally, what is at issue in such tournaments is not just status, rank, fame or reputation of actors, but the disposition of the central tokens of value in the society in question. (Appadurai 1986: 21)

The audience, who filled every available space in the packed amphitheatre, fell silent as the 'talking' yearling of the 1995 Houghton Sale entered the ring. Dark bay, white markings, an out-and-out Sadler's Wells, and a colt¹. Tattersalls was packed, everyone straining to catch a glimpse of the players who they expected to be involved in the bidding which would follow the Irish auctioneer's introduction of the colt:

Well now...(leans on podium, gavel in hand), (long pause).

What have we here?...(long pause)

(Stands up straight, speaking slowly and with great purpose) Ladies and gentlemen, he needs no introduction, here we have lot number 104 from Cheveley Park. A Sadler's Wells colt out of that prolific racemare Exclusive Order, dam of no less than eight winners of twenty-four races. And what winners they are, ladies and gentlemen. This is

¹The significance of each of these factors will be explained in chapter nine, which discusses the sales catalogue in greater detail.

the full brother to none other than Sadler's Image and Dance a Dream, the half brother to Irish Order and Irish Wings. And doesn't he look the part? You really couldn't fault him, and just look at him walk. Ladies and gentlemen, what will you bid me for this unique opportunity? Who'll start me off? I'm not going to ask big money for him. Who'll give me a hundred thousand?

The timbre, intonation and grave pauses of the auctioneer's invocation produce an atmosphere of awe - a complete silence, pregnant with the overwhelming question: 'Who would dare to possess such a creature?' And suddenly, the silence is broken, the auctioneer has taken a bid, and another, and the duel commences. A whisper is raised in the crowd: 'Where is he?' Few have spotted either competitor. The price rises, toward the half million mark, where it sticks. The auctioneer entreats the underbidder to try another, 'I'd hate to see you lose him now, you've been with me all the way, try another, maybe one more will do it!' Movement in the crowd suggests that the vanquished opponent has beaten a retreat. Opportunist bidding raises the price from half a million to six hundred thousand, where the hammer falls. 'Thank you very much Mr Demi O'Byrne.' The audience erupts into gossip and speculation.

As I was looking for a yearling to follow at this time, I rejoiced inwardly at the thought of a six hundred thousand guinea, sale topping Sadler's Wells colt, who was already surpassing my expectations. Bought by the fascinating alliance of John Magnier, owner of Coolmore and Michael Tabor, quintessential East End shelf stacker made good through daring gambles, the yearling was put into training with Champion trainer Michael Stoute, and, best of all, named Entrepreneur, after Tabor².

Although Tattersalls sale ring at Park Paddocks, in the centre of Newmarket, generates vast quantities of readily gathered data, it also withholds information from those who are not to be included in the action. In order to gain access to this 'inside knowledge' I spent time working for a stud consigning yearlings, with bloodstock agents, with a stud manager, and with Tattersalls staff. This knowledge raised a number of issues related to the information economy and, specifically, secrecy. These data will be used in order to discuss secrecy in the bloodstock auction as a pervasive social phenomenon which includes the use of a specialised language. This discussion will be followed by a consideration of how this unequal distribution of information in the trade for racehorses constitutes a contribution to criticisms of the neo-classical theory of the 'Market'. The following section discusses the activities which precede

²From Whitechapel Road to the Epsom Downs may be no more than 20 miles as the crow flies, but for Eastender Michael Tabor, the route has been long, exciting and ultimately the stuff of fairy tales. Next Saturday, the quiet, slightly built Tabor, who made his name, and more than a little money with some well-executed racecourse coups, stands to achieve a rare feat: Already owner of a Kentucky Derby winner, he looks almost sure to lead in Entrepreneur as hero of the Vodafone Derby.' (Stafford 1997: S5) Tabor is one of the much publicised success stories of the gambling world. He is often named by those who wish to emphasise the egalitarian nature of the 'turf', such that a man who once worked in a supermarket could become a Derby owner. I think it is much more important to attempt to understand why, having become wealthy, he would choose to spend his money in this way.

the entry of the yearling into the ring. It describes the process by which I assumed the identity of 'insider', and its coincidence with a fundamental change in the status of the yearlings themselves.

The 1997 October Sales

It was 4:50 in the morning, on Tuesday October 15th. Outside it was raining. I was standing in a stable with a yearling who would later sell for 36,000 guineas. I felt the weight of the bridle in my hand and fought the rising feeling of panic in my stomach. The filly looked at me with mild interest and seemed docile enough. Once again, and not for the last time, I imagined that I was someone else, who was competent and experienced, walked confidently across the box, caught and bridled the filly and stood at the door of the box waiting for the call to 'pull out'. That was it. I was walking yearlings.

My opportunity to deal with yearlings came through playing polo, a source of contacts who consistently overestimated my ability and experience. The image of polo in racing society was of devil-may-care battle hardened tough nuts, who jumped onto a new pony whenever their own fell beneath them, baying for the blood of the opposite team. This is only partially true. I was told to arrive in Highflyers Paddock, Tattersalls at five a.m. on the first morning of the October Yearling Sale, and to wear blue cords and a green sweater. The stud I was working for had just consigned the highest priced filly at the Houghton Sale and is extremely prestigious.

'Walking yearlings' means partly just that. Yearlings must be 'walked' in order to build muscle and to burn off some of the energy which may otherwise explode whilst they are being inspected by a potential buyer. So, I found myself walking round and round an exercise ring with six other people, who I had never met, each of us leading a yearling, in the dark in more than one way. After forty-five minutes we swapped these yearlings for five more, and walked for another forty-five minutes as it gradually grew light. Following this, the stud staff left myself and another temporary handler to 'do over' the yearlings whilst they went to breakfast. The learning curve of this particular segment of fieldwork was steep, and relied entirely on improvisation within the framework of the conventions and routines I had internalised during my experience with horses. Any spontaneous assistance from the other grooms was rare, although given freely if requested. Professing ignorance of a particular aspect of yearling management made the other grooms uncomfortable, but not impatient or cross.

The main business of the sale began at first light. The yearlings were all highly polished, paraffin water had been used to draw dust out of their coats, and Vaseline to shine their noses and eyes. I had cleaned all of the bridles, the long leather lead-reins ('shanks') and polished the brass plates on the cheek straps which were engraved with the name of the stud. The stud groom had shown me how to 'stand up' a yearling, initially as a precaution 'in case we get really busy'. By the end of the sale I was responsible for showing and selling a filly in the ring, and had shown all of the other ten yearlings at various times. I changed my role in the operation by behaving sensibly, but also by exuding great confidence at all times. I realised that learning occurred not through exposition, but through observation and imitation. Confidence was the most valued personal quality, rather than any sort of 'willingness to learn' which merely revealed a lack of knowledge where the desired state was effortless competence. Learning not to learn too obviously enabled me to disguise my status as newcomer to a world of highly specialised knowledge.

The first interaction between potential buyers at the sales and the yearlings occurs in the yards which surround the sale ring. Although it is tempting to regard this as action on the periphery of the market, the first meeting between potential buyers and yearlings is often the most significant. The yearlings are brought to the yards several days early in order for buyers to have time to view them and evaluate them before they go into the ring. In other words, the relationship between the yearling and potential buyers is established before the lot enters the ring. The agent will decide to bid for the individual on the basis of inspections made during the time before it is due to be sold. The time spent by the yearling in the ring does not change who will bid for it, but merely establishes who amongst those who want the yearling are prepared to pay the most for it. Or so it seems.

The yearling inspection

The yearling inspection is both standardised and repetitive. I am fortunate in having both inspected and shown yearlings, and the two perspectives will both be discussed. As grooms responsible for showing yearlings, we waited for viewers in the 'tack box', half a stable between yearling boxes which contains benches and all the horses' equipment such as rugs, tack and grooming kit. As people crossed the yards we tried to identify them. Most were bloodstock agents, although a few owners choose their own yearlings. This was a light-hearted but competitive pursuit, the stud groom thought it was important for us to know to whom we were showing. As potential buyers approached they greeted the stud groom, and looked in their catalogue

to tell us which of the yearlings they were interested in viewing. We each hoped that the yearling we had chosen to show would be needed. Once we knew which yearlings were required two grooms dealt with each, one carrying a brush and tea towel, the other a clean bridle. Whilst one caught the yearling the other brushed straw from mane and tail, and ran the towel over the coat to remove any surface dust. My filly was very popular, and I showed her approximately thirty times a day.

The stud groom opened my stable door to let me out when my turn came, according to the order requested by the viewer. I walked towards the viewer with the filly on my right, trying to make sure that all of her movements were purposeful and balanced, by not asking her to complete any sudden manoeuvres. The viewer took a look at the filly as we approached, and the quizzical stare, the quintessential pose of the bloodstock agent was struck. My filly was small and always described as pretty, being a very solid bay, with large dark eyes. Quite often she prompted an acknowledgement such as, 'Hello filly'. The agent might then greet me, 'Good Morning'. I would reply appropriately and 'stand the filly up', with her left side in front of the agent, and her legs placed squarely with my body in front of her. The agent would stand approximately ten feet away and stare intently at her. He might approach her and place his hand on her withers in order to gauge her size, possibly run a hand down her front left leg, or place his fist under her chin in order to check the size of her airway, he might just be content to stare. He would then move to the front, approximately six feet away, and I would move to her left side, out of his way. He would continue to stare at her front legs, for between ten seconds and a minute, then might look at her from the rear, though not always. When at the front the agent might make a comment such as 'She's a bonny filly isn't she?' or ask a question such as 'Has she a good temper?' or 'Are you having a good sale?', 'Isn't it cold?', though many did not speak to me at all.

The first part of the inspection is ended by the agent saying, 'May I see her walk please'. I would reply, 'Certainly', and try to galvanise the filly into walk having just bullied her into standing still. A good walk is capable of transforming the impression of a yearling, and a 'good walker' will be forgiven a lot of technical faults. A good walker is described as 'athletic', 'free moving', 'powerful', 'racey'; a bad walker may simply be recorded in the catalogue as 'ordinary', 'disappointing', or 'stiff'. The inspection walk follows a predetermined route, which pivots around the agent. The yearling is walked away from the agent turned to the right, then walked back towards the agent, past him, turned right, back towards him, and halted with him in front, then 'stood up' again. The distances involved must be sufficient for the filly to get into her stride, and to really 'use herself', but not so far so that the agent cannot

see her or becomes impatient. Some of the yearlings had faults which benefited from being walked on a particular surface. Walking on the grass was generally more forgiving than on the gravel path. One colt was to be walked on the gravel because it sloped slightly in the direction which helped disguise his weaknesses. The end of the inspection is signalled by the agent saying 'thank you very much', he completes the notes in his catalogue and moves to the next yearling.

The yearling inspection is a form of connoisseurship:

attribution and authentication are not the whole of connoisseurship, which means to evaluate, and not merely classify. Having satisfactorily placed a work of art, the connoisseur may go on to assess its quality or intrinsic value. (Brown 1979: 11)

Throughout the inspection the concentration of the agent is intense, as reflected by his silence, and especially by his narrowed eyes. However, 'less is more' in these inspections. Although this may partly be due to the large number of yearlings to be viewed, I believe it is also part of the ideology which holds that spending too much time inspecting a yearling suggests uncertainty, or the absence of confidence, where the valued state is that of conviction on the grounds of comprehensive knowledge. This idea will be discussed more fully below.

The yearlings are experiencing a liminal phase in their cultural biography. They are about to embark on their careers as adult racehorses, having left their juvenile status behind on the stud farm. The process by which the yearlings leave one sphere and prepare to enter another involves frighteningly familiar techniques of separation. The yearlings are separated from their mothers at weaning, and put out in fields at the edge of the stud so that their mothers cannot hear them and vice versa. They are turned out in same sex groups and left 'roughed off' for the winter, during which time they receive minimal human contact and form close alliances with each other.

When it is time for yearlings to be prepared for the sales, they are brought in and confined, so that their diet and coats can be monitored. Excess hair is removed (rugs are fitted in order to deter the growth of a winter coat at all), their feet are trimmed and shod, they are fed on a controlled high protein diet, and they must learn to be groomed, to 'stand up', to be led, to wear a bridle and to 'walk'. At this point they do not have names, and are referred to as 'the Forzando filly', or 'the Zilzal', for example. In other words, they are referred to by their sire, who will have the most influence on their immediate future, at the sale. The yearlings are referred to in this way until they have been through the sales and found an owner who will name them. The yearlings are thus stripped of their identities as foals of a particular dam on weaning, and referred to as the yearling of a particular sire after weaning and during the sales. After the sales they become part of human society by being named by their owner.

The Bloodstock Agent



6.2 The intent stare of the bloodstock agent
(Pacemaker 10/96: 3)



6.3 Two valuable yearlings being 'stood up'
(Pacemaker 10/97: 20)

The events which precede the entry of yearlings into the ring are suggestive of the state of knowledge in the bloodstock trade. Most obviously, how closely does a fifty yard walk and three turns relate to a race on a racecourse over a year later? What are the bloodstock agents looking for so intently? Why do yearlings have to stand in a particular position in order to be assessed? To use a human analogy, inspecting a yearling in the conventional way is the equivalent to asking adolescents to file past in walk, then stand in a particular position whilst an 'expert' predicts which of them will win the marathon and which of them the hundred meters at the Olympics in two years time.

The inspection generates the impression that the bloodstock agents, being experts in their field, assess each yearling according to an objective measure. The property which approximates most closely to what this could theoretically be is 'conformation', referred to as 'configuration' by Gray (1984: 79). 'Conformation' refers to the structural qualities of the yearling, its skeletal and muscular construction. However, in my experience, assessments of conformation differ in at least three ways. Firstly, people's perception of a feature may differ, and secondly, their interpretation of that perception may differ. In other words, what is a fault to one agent may a) not be seen as such by another or b) not be thought of as a fault even when the feature is agreed upon. Thirdly, and perhaps most frequently, opinions differ as to which faults a yearling can 'get away with', i.e. faults which will be overcome, or grown out of before the yearling's career begins. These faults are particular to each stallion, hence a yearling by a particular stallion will be forgiven a certain fault whilst this same weakness may not be forgiven in the offspring of a different sire.

The perversity of the yearling inspection is only evident from an insider's point of view. Anyone observing who knows very little about racehorses could easily imagine that the agent is looking for something which can really be found, that is a yearling which will definitely make a fast racehorse in a year's time. Faced with the paucity of information which will help predict whether a yearling will prove talented, the agent has two options. Either he admits that this knowledge does not exist, and the fragility of the basis of his opinion, which remains just that, or he treats this knowledge as extremely *difficult to come by* but nevertheless discernible after a lot of squinting. Thus bloodstock agents enjoy the strange status of being experts on the unknowable.

The inspection is standardised and conducted by all agents within the same period of time, each professes to be looking for the same thing and all are granted access to each lot. Gray refers to the value based on an assessment of configuration as an 'instrumental value with objective meaning' (1984: 79). Gray's characterisation of

lamb auctions on the borders goes on to describe the confrontation of this objective value with 'limited world forms of cultural value with subjective meaning' (1984: 79), which may lead shepherds to reject economically viable bids on the basis that they do not reflect the shepherd's 'cultural evaluation' of his own lambs' value.

My thesis regarding the yearlings is that they do not and cannot have an objective value, nor is there any means of evaluation independent of cultural mores specific to the bloodstock market. The conventions which surround the buying and selling of bloodstock seek to disguise this fact. Thus, the bloodstock agent does not withhold information which would enable anyone to choose the best racehorse from a group of yearlings, *he conceals the fact that this is unknowable*. The bloodstock industry can be described as a secretive society on the basis that it restricts information about information, which, if known, 'offers, so to speak, the possibility of a second world, alongside the manifest world' (Wolff 1950: 330). In keeping knowledge secret, the bloodstock industry:

creates property, something that is possessed, and the existence of this special property distinguishes possessor from non-possessor and affects the attitudes of both towards the thing possessed. (Luhmann 1989: 251)

The question of whether bloodstock agents dupe their customers, or are themselves duped, remains.

The bloodstock market disguises the paucity of available information in a number of ways, most obviously through jargon, which must be mastered in order to identify the other disguises. The specialised language of the industry, itself a manifestation of secrecy, also achieves the more commonly observed function of excluding outsiders:

The use of jargon by a social group is one of the most potent means of inclusion and exclusion. It both expresses and encourages an esprit de corps, a form of bonding which is usually, though not universally, male. It is no accident that this form of language is so richly developed in total institutions, in which the inhabitants feel extremely distinct from the rest of the world. (Burke and Porter 1995: 14)

The specialist idiom of the bloodstock industry is both spoken and embodied. The spoken dialect is dominated by the names of horses in the form of pedigrees. To say that these horses are related is a truism, since all thoroughbreds are related, however distantly. Thus the dialect is dominated by horses and their specific relationships, by the names of races, by the dates of famous victories, and by the human element who guide the horses through these achievements; trainers, jockeys and breeders:

Has a brother with Michael Stoute, he says he'll run for him, I didn't like the colt by Kris, terrible backend, shocking wheels, and a dog on the track. Mind you, the family is definitely on the up since the Leger. (Bloodstock agent whilst looking at a yearling.)

Being able to converse effortlessly in this way confirms an agent as an expert, and thus differs from the Gypsy entrepreneurs studied by Michael Stewart, for whom the 'words' seem an end in themselves:

'After a particularly successful intervention one man told me 'I'm King!' (*Kraj sim*) as he reminded me for the fifth time how he had successfully completed the deal. He added that anyone can do the 'cincar' role 'if they have the words' (*te si les i vorba*). (Stewart 1992: 106)³

Fluency in racing dialect is the guarantor of knowledge in the racehorse auction. The favourite topic of the bloodstock industry is itself, the amount of gossip reflects the scale of this face-to-face community, which is often confined to a tiny geographical area at particular times during the annual cycle of sales, both in Britain and overseas. When I asked one agent about his views on the outside world he replied, 'Do you mean the sort of people who count ball-bearings in Bootle?'

Bloodstock agents also employ an embodied code which distinguishes them from outsiders. In particular, as mentioned previously, the bloodstock agent strikes an unmistakable stance when inspecting a yearling, legs slightly apart, catalogue hugged to the chest with fingers holding open relevant page, chin pushed back into the throat, and most importantly, eyes narrowed into a squint. The impression given is that the agent is studying and trying to take in a range of features which will tell him whether the yearling will be a winner.

The peculiar rationality of the bloodstock industry is thrown into relief by the stance of the bloodstock agent. Bloodstock agents behave as if they hold a blueprint which will identify winners. The idea that the good bloodstock agents possess a mental template which yearlings will emulate to greater or lesser degrees is founded in the ideology of the ability described as 'having an eye for a horse'. The brilliance of this ideology is that it is a talent, which often runs in families (as racing talents do), but which can never be taught or reduced to a list of necessary or sufficient physical or attitudinal features. Having an 'eye for a horse', or simply a 'good eye' is a trait particularly associated with the Irish, and is an entirely mystical notion, described in suitably nebulous terms. Whilst Irish agents described this ability as relating to the overall look of the yearling, its attitude and expression: 'Does it look like a winner, Rebecca, do you know what I mean?' English agents were sceptical of this ability, preferring to refer to a 'good judge', but described the yearlings 'presence' as amongst

³Stewart describes how, "Of all the Gypsies' trading activities, it was buying and selling horses that were most prototypically 'Gypsy work'" (1997: 142). The activities of the Rom in the horse markets of post-communist Hungary served to differentiate peasant from Rom, and promised the possibility of a triumph, 'If the Rom found a way to dominate the peasants in dealing with horses, they would have achieved a particularly rich symbolic victory over their adversaries' (ibid. 142). Stewart describes the inspection of the horses by potential buyers, beginning with the inspection of the teeth in order to establish its age, and progressing to its legs, 'her most important asset. Feeling the front ones by the side of the tendons, and both at the ankle and higher up the back legs, he checked for 'swellings, the telltale sign that the horse had been overused, possibly fatally' (ibid. 148). Though this inspection is more 'hands on' than that of the bloodstock agent, I still believe that, even when combined with the 'trial' of a horse in a cart, it would not offer much of a guarantee of soundness. I would suggest that expertise is again, partly a matter of appearance, and that this may have been disguised by the limits of Stewart's knowledge of horses.

its most important attribute, and advised me: 'Never buy without a hunch, Rebecca'. In other words, having a good 'eye' was described tautologously as being able to pick winners.

The bloodstock agent's emphasis upon visual skill again creates parallels with connoisseurship:

the visual arts are, I repeat, a compromise between what we see and what we know... knowing is now revelling in a victory, a 'knock-out' - a short one, let us hope, over seeing. (Berenson 1953: 14 & 25)

Berenson's preference for 'seeing' rather than relying upon history to contextualise a work of art is outside my own expertise, but the emphasis upon 'seeing' by bloodstock agents arouses my most cynical suspicions. 'Vision' is a mystically imbued sense, which implies the gift of prophecy to which bloodstock agents are, in effect, making a claim. Making the means by which a yearling appeals to a bloodstock agent a private matter, impossible to articulate, visible only to those with an 'eye' both sets this judgement outside criticism and also grants it magical authority:

(Berenson) did not wish to be a critic or to write about art historically. He wanted people to look for themselves, but look in the right direction, that is, look at authentic pictures. At the time, it must have seemed to him an idealistic procedure. But there was something dogmatic and authoritarian about the simple lists that was perilous. No argument, no explanation, just a name, pronounced with an almost magical finality. I must add that Mr Berenson's procedure before a picture added to the effect of magic. He would come very close to it and tap its surface and then listen attentively, as if expecting some almost inaudible voice to reply. Then, after a long pause, he would murmur a name. Of course he had tapped the surface to see if the picture were on panels or if the canvas had been relined, but I realise that, to the lay eye, the whole performance looked rather like a conjuring trick, and aroused the suspicion of more laborious scholars. (Clark 1974: 138)

Whilst Berenson's methods created suspicion amongst his more 'laborious' colleagues, any bloodstock agent who uses a more 'hands on', physiological or technical inspection technique is criticised as an impostor.

The bloodstock industry sustains its belief in the specialist knowledge of the bloodstock agent by treating evidence of their successes and failures in ways which reinforce their authority. The reasoning resembles that identified by Luhrmann in her consideration of magic amongst the middle class in contemporary England, 'People rationalise, rather than acting rationally, and strive for local consistency with a patchwork job of *post hoc* rationalisation' (1989: 273). The parallels between the way in which the bloodstock industry and contemporary magicians 'learn to see the evidence' (Luhrmann 1989: 122), are partly due to the similarities in structure between the two activities. Participating in the bloodstock industry can be seen as a gamble. I would like to suggest that a gamble has certain features in common with casting a spell. Although casting a spell involves a different notion of causality, in that the bloodstock industry does not seek to alter the future, but to predict it, the results of

both casting a spell and gambling on a yearling are interpreted in the same way by those who find sense in their activities.

The study of memory has produced complex, debated results, but nevertheless it seems clear that people remember selectively, that dramatic incidents are more memorable than others, and that the selective memory is often structured by a 'script' or pattern. Certainly people seem to remember information pertinent to their own activity. 'Everybody who is skilled at anything necessarily has a good memory for whatever information that activity demands' (Neisser 1982: 17). Magicians become skilled at magic. They learn to mark certain incidents as significant and memorable, and to do so in a manner that persuades them that when they have performed rituals, the rituals have worked, and thus that the practice, and the ideas behind it, are valid. (Luhmann 1989: 143)

When a spell coincides with an attributed outcome, it is treated as evidence of a successful rite. Where the effects of a spell are not apparent, this is not treated as disproof of magic, but rather an explanation is selected which accounts for the failure of the spell on that occasion. Similarly, when a bloodstock agent performs the ritual of the yearling inspection and buys what turns into a fast racehorse who wins an exciting and prestigious race at Ascot, the example will be remembered and used as proof of the agent's expertise, and of good practice generally. If the yearling should be a failure this is explained in terms of disappointment in the specific yearling rather than the agent's judgement. In other words, the agent was correct in his identification of potential, this particular yearling merely failed to live up to that promise. Buying a yearling who gets sold as a polo pony at four having never been on a racecourse is clearly far less memorable than buying the winner of the Derby.

Inside the ring

The uneven distribution of knowledge, and the bloodstock agents' expertise in the unknowable is carried into the auction ring where it combines with still more complex information, misinformation, secrecy and mystification. This section will treat the thoroughbred auction as an example of exchange exhibiting features capable of challenging the neo-classical model of the 'Market'. The Market model has been described and criticised in a number of recent collections (Miller 1995, Carrier 1997, Dilley 1992)⁴. My treatment of the racehorse auction addresses the general weakness identified by Stewart, and many other contributors:

⁴Carrier's collection describes the 'Market model', deeming it a 'fit topic for anthropological analysis' (Carrier 1997: 40). His introduction draws an analogy between a lingua franca and the Market model in order to suggest that the Market is 'a way of speaking' (ibid.: 40), 'To see the Market model as being like a language suggests that the empirical accuracy of the model is not the point, at least for explaining why it is so common. While a language may have a vocabulary that is rich in certain areas and impoverished in others, we would not normally assess it in terms of whether it is right or wrong, internally consistent or inconsistent. Rather, a language provides the tools by which its speakers communicate with each other about the world' (Carrier 1997: 35). Dilley calls for the 'politicisation of the market discourse' (1992: 3), and comes to the conclusion shared by most of his

Because neo-classical economics was often predicated on a separation of market (utility maximisation) from culture (unquantifiable and therefore noncommensurable values / morality) it has often seemed to anthropologists to be rooted in a mistaken view of the social process. (Stewart 1992: 110)

A first glance at the auction in full swing in Tattersalls, combined with informants' explanations, gave the impression that prices were being set by 'competition', and that the auction ring itself represented a sort of three dimensional manifestation of the intersection between a supply and demand curve on a graph in an economics textbook. I laboured under this illusion for days spent sitting in the audience, during a time which I now characterise as blissful ignorance. Once I had spent time walking yearlings myself, I discovered increasingly critical, and therefore productive, lines of inquiry.

I had attributed my inability to identify bidders to my inexperience and the bidders' subtlety. Until, that is, an informant pointed out the practice of 'ghost-bidding', wherein the auctioneer took an imaginary bid in order to initiate or prolong the bidding. This occurred where the vendor was a valued customer of the sales company, who would be embarrassed if his product failed to secure a bid, or a good price. Reserves placed on the yearling meant that unless it reached a certain price it would be retained, in which case the yearling may not be 'on the market' throughout the bidding.

Even where bids could be identified, they did not necessarily represent 'demand' for the horse. Bloodstock agents estimated that approximately half of the yearlings at the Houghton sales were supported in the bidding by either their vendor, an agent bidding on his behalf, or a representative of his sire. A high proportion of these were thought to have been 'bought in' that is bought by their existing owner, directly or indirectly. At the Houghton sales bidding by the vendor is permitted, but, if it is identified by the other half of a duel, bidding will cease. Thus extreme secrecy surrounds just who is bidding, and on behalf of whom. It is also possible to disguise ownership of a yearling as 'Property of a Gentleman', so that the vendor may bid without being easily associated with the yearling in question. Stewart's observation that it is ignorance which fuels exchange is helpful here:

The market process rests, among other things, on the existence of actor's ignorance: it is precisely the uneven distribution of knowledge (and as we shall see of trading skills) between traders and peasants which allows profits to be made: if peasants knew how to buy horses as cheaply as the Gypsies fewer would come to the market. (Stewart 1992: 99)

contributors, and those of Carrier's collection, that market behaviour is a mixture of both cultural assertion and rational calculation. Miller describes consumption as the 'vanguard of history', his suggestion is that the study of consumption will 'achieve the knowledge, the consciousness and the confidence required to attack and remove from the world the curse of economic certitudes' (Miller 1995: 54).

Myths abound regarding coups made by agents in which they disguise their ownership of a yearling and persuade their client that it must be bought at any price. Agents have also been accused of arranging to bid against each other in order to swell their 5% fee, splitting the profits. Agents compete for naive newcomers in order to buy them expensive yearlings, believing that no-one has, strictly speaking, been swindled under these circumstances. Activity of this kind is not universally condemned, in the way that having an office outside Newmarket is. The bloodstock trade has a self-perception as thriving on the risk-taking, or even sharp practice of the 'entrepreneurs', the bloodstock agents, who play the game with a poker face, but who, more importantly, do so successfully, that is, profitably, and without being found out. They are winners, and racing loves winners.

The stallion manager also indulges in bidding without wanting to possess the lot in question. He 'bids up' his charges' offspring because where they would like to have knowledge of unknowable things, the bloodstock industry has, instead, statistics. The bloodstock industry is obsessed by statistics, in particular, figures regarding the median and average price fetched by a stallion's offspring. These figures are of extreme importance because they determine the stallion's covering fee for the next breeding season, which may reach sums of, for example, £45,000 (Nashwan in 1997). A stallion may cover between twenty and three hundred mares a year, which gives some indication of the financial significance of his fee. In keeping with the ideology of complete knowledge upheld by the bloodstock agent, statistics are treated as having an unproblematic relationship with reality. The result of this is that there are at least two markets in existence in the auction ring.

Not everyone bidding at the auction wishes to buy a horse to own and race. The most obvious exception is the agent, who has already been discussed. However, the most extreme exception is the 'pinhooker', who occupies a niche in the market between foals and yearlings. The pinhooker buys foals at the December Sale and sells them as yearlings the following year. He inhabits the commercial market for racehorses as a store of value, taking a gamble that he can sell the yearling for more than the cost of the foal and its upkeep.

Foal buyers are a breed apart, the vast majority of them personally unaffected by the pathetic level of prize money on offer in Britain. The last thing they want to do is own a racehorse...Nothing can curb the optimism of the foal-buyers. In the years of direst crisis, such as 1974 and 1992, they cut their expenditure, but not to invest is not an option. In years of mere disaster, such as 1996, they get stuck in and leave the worrying to the faint-hearted. (Morris 1996: 15)

Amongst the pinhookers, those who buy foals from first season sires take the greatest risk. The driving force of the market in foals is that the real risk for the pinhooker is that he will have nothing to sell the next year, he buys in order to guarantee a 'slice of

the action'. The strength of the 1996 market for foals, however, found out the limits of even the hardest buyers:

By Thursday night the doughtiest of the mainland speculators, Hamish Alexander, had made his decision. The man who pinhooked Generous and who, even in the seemingly maddest scenarios, had never lacked the conviction to back his judgement over the choicest foals, declared: 'They can have it this year. I'm not going to play at these prices.' It remains to be seen whether Alexander would keep to that resolve, but meanwhile others have reluctantly been forced to reach the same conclusion. And they might just have been wiser than those who could not resist getting involved, who lowered their sights and bought the equivalent of a lottery ticket bearing only five numbers. (Morris 1996: 15)

Foals are always a greater risk than yearlings, whether they are to be pinhooked or kept to race. There is a higher chance of a foal injuring himself in the time which must pass before he is able to race, and his physical appearance is only loosely related to the fully grown horse he will become two years later⁵.

The relationship between pedigree and ability

I first met Tony Morris, bloodstock correspondent to the *Racing Post*, at a meeting of the London Racing Club, where I asked him about the significance of pedigree in breeding racehorses, and tapped a rich and inexhaustible vein of invective:

A lot of people try to be scientific about it, there's a lot less science in it than there should be. The choice of a sire depends on whether you are breeding to sell or to race for yourself. Resorting to computers is frankly sad. They (bloodstock agencies who sell computerised pedigree research) are producing data which they are selling to a gullible public for a lot of money. Twelve and six generations are a complete waste of time, I don't go along with it at all, there is no influence after three generations, I may trace five generations just to know, but I don't draw much from it. A foal is 50% its sire and 50% its dam.

Tony also maintains that 'you may as well buy a lottery ticket as try to breed a classic winner', that all the top stallions have faults and that you don't want an intelligent horse, as 'he'll know that he gets fed even if he comes plum last'. My favourite of Tony's opinions, that 'the perfect horse is undoubtedly useless', confirms that the partial ideologies of breeding racehorses can comfortably accommodate even extreme paradoxes. Tony Morris is an exemplar of why anthropologists should not ascribe consistency of belief to the people with whom they converse during fieldwork. He combines his role as the bloodstock correspondent to *The Racing Post* with a scepticism of the importance of pedigree and a highly critical stance on most modern stallions, who he condemns as lacking in conformation. He introduced me to most of the 'distorting' practices of the bloodstock auction, and yet he analyses stallion figures at face value.

⁵According to the Goldring Audit of racing in 1997, of the five thousand racehorses born each year, only one thousand live long enough to race. This is another mechanism whereby the most expensive stallions have their value reinforced, since the most expensive yearlings are less likely to be the victims of accidents.

Tony Morris has written a book about the stallions of the present era (Morris 1990), which criticises almost all of them on the basis of conformation. 'Ahonoora's did not have the best fore-legs as yearlings, but they tended to harden into them as horsemen say', 'Danzig was not unlucky, he was simply unsound'. His interpretation of the findings of his research are confined to a disillusionment with the modern thoroughbred. My interpretation of this book from outside the influence of 'interpretive drift' is that if all modern stallions have faults in their conformation, but are stallions because they have been the fastest horses of their generation, conformation does not determine ability. The book does not mean the same thing to Tony as it does to me.

The conclusion I draw from his research, that conformation does not correlate with racing ability has potential repercussions which are successfully diffused by the widespread agreement in the industry that 'the thoroughbred is not as strong as it once was'. In other words, Tony's book is cited as evidence of a lost golden age. Discovering that all stallions have agreed-upon faults suggests to me that the yearling inspection is ruling out horses on the basis of an erroneous criterion, of 'correctness' which has only a weak correspondence with ability. Tony's conclusion that the 'very top racehorses never ever get a horse as good as themselves', is similarly not pursued to its conclusion which would be that selecting stallions on the basis of performance is misguided.

In magic, that elaborate set of hypotheses is rarely present, let alone subjected to scientific test. There is a more or less coherent body of ideas...but different magicians develop it differently, talk about it in different ways, and pay more or less attention to it. Sometimes they play with the ideas, elaborating or arguing about them, but more commonly they ignore the subject of magical theory unless it is deliberately introduced. But as they learn more about magic and as their sense of satisfaction increases, the very features which make it illuminating prevent them from seeing its weaknesses. (Luhmann 1989: 117)

In the case of the bloodstock industry, the features which insulate the market from fundamental criticisms are the statistics which exhibit their own consistency. Thus, stallions who have the highest aggregate winnings from their offspring have the highest median yearling price, and consequently the highest covering fee.

The bloodstock industry describes itself in terms borrowed from neo-classical economics, and speaks of the 'distortions' of the market caused by 'bidding up' and the relative 'strength' or 'weakness' of various 'levels' of 'demand'. If it was not for this, I would have had to treat my initial impressions of the auction as aberrations, and attempted to analyse the racehorse auction as a form of exchange in its own right. I chose to highlight the features which are contradictory to the Market model because the industry itself presents the auction in these terms. It does so, I would argue, for the same reasons as aggregate economists establish their model of the consumer:

First they establish an unquestionable moral foundation which implies that all economic mechanisms that supply goods to people are positive since people consist of unmet needs which goods require. Second they imply that consumption is not influenced by factors such as advertising or emulation, or even other consumption choices, which might distort this process of rational self-interest. Third, they imply that no further inquiry is necessary into the actual practices of consumption since economics need only be concerned with aggregate demand. (Miller 1995: 13)

The Market model provides a description of the bloodstock auction that appears to contain its own explanation, rules and validity. It thereby makes any questions as to its true nature misplaced, the product of a misunderstanding.

Conclusion

Since I first sat in on a sale in 1996, Entrepreneur has completed all of the classic phases a racehorse may experience, from being born to a famous sire and dam on a prestigious stud, to being a 600,000 guineas sale topper. From being trained by the Champion trainer to winning the Guineas, a Classic. Entrepreneur fell short of winning the Derby despite being an 'absolute certainty' according to the press. He was retired soon after this disappointment, and has now taken up stud duties for Coolmore. Demi O'Byrne, his purchaser, is quoted on his stallion advertisement as saying: 'Entrepreneur struck me from the moment I saw him at the Houghton Sale, he looked all speed - like a horse who would go like smoke'. I hope that I have illuminated some of the assumptions behind this statement in the preceding analysis.

The significant feature of the bloodstock market, which creates many of the features described in this chapter, is the purchase of racehorses as yearlings, before their ability is established (before it is even established whether they will live long enough to race). Buying yearlings rather than older horses of known ability creates the uncertainty which can be a source of reward where a cheap yearling turns out to be a star, or disappointment when a sales topper is a dud.

In the absence of any knowledge of a horse's future ability or any means of accurately assessing its potential, the ideology of pedigree and the opinion of the bloodstock agent fill the breach. That the predictive capacity of both pedigree and the bloodstock agent are highly approximate is disguised by the appearance of expertise. A selective memory which recalls winners with greater ease than losers and a series of explanations of failure insulate the bloodstock agent from criticism.

The auction ring is presented as a 'market' by the bloodstock industry, in terms that analyse the statistics produced by a sale, and not the attitudes that produce those statistics. Knowledge of the means by which prices are established, including 'bidding up' and 'buying in', do not prevent bloodstock analysts from taking stallion

statistics at face value, thereby perpetuating these mechanisms. It is for this reason that stallion statistics have become self-fulfilling, in turn shoring up the ideology of pedigree and creating the phenomenon whereby stallion choice is governed by 'fashion'. All stallions are 'well-bred' according to the fashion of the day. If a stallion's owners are sufficiently wealthy they will 'bid up' the price of his offspring, thus making the stallion seem successful. The stallion will attract more mares and enjoy a numerical advantage. The more expensive offspring will be sent to expensive trainers and given the best food, environment and medical attention, become successful and make their sire more successful, and so on. The stallion's breeding is regarded as superior, despite this being a financially led process.

This chapter began by suggesting that racehorses are capable of blurring the distinction between persons and things, one of a series of binary oppositions embedded in many discussions of economic anthropology since Mauss' *The Gift* (1954), summarised by Thomas (1991: 15) as: 'Commodities: gifts; alienable: inalienable; independence: dependence; quantity (price): quality (rank); objects: subjects'⁶. This chapter discussed what appeared to be the 'commodity phase' of the racehorse's 'cultural biography'. It was discovered that the value of yearlings cannot be established independently from the ideology of pedigree.

The next chapter discusses the mechanism by which pedigree is translated into ability. It concentrates upon the 'lads', male and female, who embark upon apprenticeships in racing.

⁶This linked series of oppositions has been deconstructed by a number of anthropologists, particularly in economic anthropology, in the previously mentioned volumes (Carrier 1997, Dilley 1992, Miller 1995). Related oppositions, such as that between body and mind have been deconstructed by anthropologists working on the acquisition of knowledge as embodied practice, discussed in the next chapter (Csordas 1994, Lave and Wenger 1991, Lave 1990, Synott 1993 and others). The other opposition of immediate interest is that between nature and culture, perhaps the focus of the most anthropological attention of all (Strathern 1992b, Descola and Palsson 1996, Latour 1993, Ingold 1988), and the subject of the last three chapters of this study.

Chapter Seven: Making Racing Bodies

Introduction

In the preceding chapter I discussed the ideology of pedigree in relation to yearling sales. In this chapter I suggest that this ideology is enabled by the idea that the central skills in horseracing are not learnt but inherited. I consider the mechanisms through which lads learn the behaviour appropriate to their role in the racing hierarchy. In doing so, I draw upon discussions of embodied learning in order to explain the apprentice's assimilation of kinetic techniques¹. Contextualizing the kinetic skills of riding racehorses are the attitudes and dispositions which constitute the successful practice of the lad. It will be seen that lads must learn to recognise and be silent amongst their superiors, whilst realising that amongst peers it is the raucous or rowdy lad who is valued. The transmission of hierarchies of seniority and rank and the process through which the apprentice learns his or her place in the racing world will be considered.

This chapter begins with a description of the life of lads in Newmarket, and offers explanations for their involvement in a low-paid and dangerous industry which do not depend on the lack of ambition with which they are commonly characterised². The lads' lives will be made sense of in terms of their embodiment of the logic of racing, through which they become 'entrepreneurs in risky bodily performance', a description applied to boxers by Wacquant (1995a: 20). I accept the contention of Csordas, that:

The kind of body to which we have become accustomed in scholarly and popular thought alike is typically assumed to be a fixed, material entity, subject to the empirical rules of biological science, existing prior to the mutability and flux of cultural change and diversity and characterised by unchangeable inner necessities. The new body that has

¹As Descola and Palsson indicate, 'a shift in perspective with respect to the nature-culture dualism has been taking place in ethnographic studies of enskilment and expertise' (1996: 6). This shift has roots in the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Bourdieu (1977), amongst others, who criticised the separation of the cerebral and the physical. Recent anthropological studies of apprenticeship and learning (Lave and Wenger 1991, Featherstone and Turner 1991, Jackson 1983, Akinnaso 1992, Jenkins 1994, Lock 1993, Csordas 1994), have taken up the contention of Merleau-Ponty, that, "Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that', but of 'I can'" (1962: 48). The Cartesian echo of this statement extends the history of this debate still further. The conceptualisation of learning as implicating the whole person in a context of practice is presently enjoying a period of ascendancy over theories which assert the separation of mind and body, of mental structures and material objects or of passive language-like learning and learning as active participation.

²The lads are described in these terms by the upper class of racing society, who may go on to comment that many are 'bred to it'. Even where an explicit reference to the lad's pedigree is not made, members of racing's upper class may refer to their own breeding in order to explain why lads are 'not suited' to becoming trainers. Lads themselves also invoke the ideology of pedigree to explain racing talents, but, as this chapter will describe, they also offer alternative explanations for their career choices.

begun to be identified can no longer be considered as a brute fact of nature. (Csordas 1994:1)³

This chapter thus seeks to describe the culture of the lads in Newmarket as it is grounded in the human body.

Having described the bodily craft of racehorse riding I shall consider the mechanism by which this craft is transmitted. Horsemanship is not explicitly taught in Newmarket. Instead, it is imagined as a latent inherited property which can be realised through performance. It will be seen that the bodily craft of racehorse riding shares with a variety of experiences qualities which its practitioners are unwilling, or unable, to articulate:

When I asked people how it felt to be in a trance, they couldn't, or wouldn't answer. They told me that the only way I could know was to experience it. (Laderman 1994: 193)

My own initiation into racehorse riding marked a transition in my own ability to imagine the lads' experiences, and also a change in their perception of me. My own initiation will thus be considered as an example of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger 1991). This discussion is based upon fieldwork spent on a small training yard in Newmarket over eight months, during which time I graduated from shovelling muck to riding in trials.

During my fieldwork, lads reproduced the story of their lives in racing according to their perception of me. Before I was accepted by them they told me of their poverty and their ill-treatment, and of the absence of alternatives to a hard life they wanted to leave. I would suggest that these explanations serve to protect the lad. By reproducing the dominant ideology; that the lad is 'the lowest of the low', they cannot provoke conflict with those more powerful than themselves. Valuing a lifestyle that is condemned by the higher classes is thus a risk which was only taken once the lads trusted me not to adopt an upper class attitude towards them.

Once I was able to ride alongside them, to take 'my own' horse racing and to fall asleep with them in the horsebox on the way home from the races, a more complicated story emerged:

the poor sang one tune when they were in the presence of the rich and another tune when they were among the poor. The rich too spoke in one way to the poor and another amongst themselves. These were the grossest distinctions; many finer distinctions were discernible depending on the exact composition of the group talking and, of course, the issue in question. (Scott 1990: ix)

This chapter also discusses the contrast between the 'public' and 'hidden' transcripts (Scott 1990: x) of the lad. The 'hidden' transcripts of the lads are their positive

³The collection edited by Csordas (1994) begins by tracing the history of the study of the body in anthropology, and advocates a far more radical approach than previous studies which assumed an 'analytic body', and concentrated mainly on the analysis of 'perceptions', 'practices', 'parts', 'processes', and 'meanings', of this untheorised entity (ibid. 4).

explanations of their choice to remain in racing. These explanations find parallels in those given to Wacquant by amateur boxers.

Lads do engage in practices described by anthropology as 'resistance' (Scott 1985, Comaroff 1985). They complain, drag their feet, cut corners, and ride badly. However, although to some lads these practices may constitute a form of protest, I would like to suggest that, amongst others, resistance is practised because the dominant ideology demands it. Lads publicly devalue their tired accommodation, lifestyle, skills and contribution and conceal any more positive explanations to remain in racing. They register their resistance to their degrading lifestyle (as perceived by the dominant ideology) in front of the upper class, whilst constructing an alternative ideology amongst themselves⁴.

Being a lad in Newmarket: Sex, drugs and mucking out

Newmarket High Street accommodates twelve pubs and four night-clubs. Drinking in a pub in Newmarket during the weekend was a sweaty, loud, airless and sometimes intimidating experience. The most striking feature of the nightlife in Newmarket was the sheer number of people drinking every evening of the week. The average height and weight of the pub crowd was, predictably, considerably less than I had experienced previously. After a while, it became obvious that people were not merely shorter and lighter, they were also weathered in specific ways which I came to understand after working myself. Individuals who, at a glance, seemed like fourteen-year-old boys of around four foot two, and six stone, gradually metamorphosed into little old men with gnarled hands, leathery weather-beaten faces and bandy legs at a second look. Some faces were impossible to age, being apparently teenage, but attached to a sinuous body and huge rough hands. Dress was uniformly casual, jeans and brightly coloured shirts for men at the weekend, micro-skirts and tops for women. Jeans and t-shirts were worn by everyone during the week. The drinking community was dominated by women and men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. Lads drank in large mixed sex groups, and particular stables were often associated with particular pubs.

On my first foray into Newmarket nightlife I tried to be explicit about my role as an anthropologist, which proved a less than productive approach since Newmarket

⁴This is not to suggest that lads are not, in fact, structurally disadvantaged, simply because they take pleasure in riding racehorses. Neither ideology offers a complete characterisation of any lad's perception of his or her position. I am suggesting that there are many explanations offered by lads as to their choice of lifestyle, and that they do not all concentrate upon the lack of an alternative, as the dominant ideology would have us believe. Explanations are context dependent, and it was only when I began to ride racehorses myself that I was offered these alternatives.

had been under siege by the Evening Standard for several weeks, culminating in the publication of an article about heroin addiction entitled 'Small town poisoned by inner-city plague' (Adamson 1996). The article highlighted the sixty registered heroin addicts, and estimated one hundred further unregistered users in Newmarket's population of twelve thousand adults. Alcohol and tobacco dominate recreational drug use in Newmarket. There seemed more smoking and drinking in Newmarket than in any other society of which I have ever been a part. Alcohol has a role in all of the significant relationships in Newmarket; lads drink with each other, trainers drink with owners, successful punters drink their winnings with losers and racegoers slurp gin and tonics and champagne. Asked why Tony McCoy was presently the best jockey in the country, for example, Chester Barnes, a trainer's assistant, replied that: 'He doesn't drink and he's very dedicated', the order of that explanation being significant.

Lads begin work at any time between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m. For large portions of the year travel to and from work is thus in the dark. The majority of lads live in hostels in the stable grounds, and so fall out of bed and go straight to work. Tied accommodation of various sorts provided a common explanation of the choice to remain in racing; few lads wished to face the double challenge of finding a new job as well as new accommodation for themselves and their families, 'it isn't so bad for single lads, they just get a room somewhere, but I've got two kids and it's not that simple, so I'm stuck'.

Between three and five horses are mucked out and ridden in three or four 'lots' that 'pull out' at hourly intervals. Once the horses are 'let down' and their beds 'set fair', the lads go home, at around 11:00 a.m. A small meal is usually eaten, soup or a sandwich, crisps or chocolate, before taking a nap. 'Evening stables' are between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. After this, the lads are free to go to the pub, usually eating a kebab, burger, or portion of chips on the way home at closing time. Cheap food is available in the Clock Tower Cafe and the pubs that stay open during the day, advertising daily specials such as 'minestroney soup and roll' or 'mints and vegetables in a Yorkshire pudding' (sic)⁵.

When I asked Patricia, the wife of the trainer for whom I worked, about the Newmarket lads she told me that Sophie, their lass, was 'not really a Newmarket lass', implying that being a lass and working in Newmarket are not sufficient conditions of the role. When asked to describe lads, trainers, bloodstock agents and fellow lads all focused upon a lifestyle which revolved around alcohol, drugs, betting, sex and laziness. This stereotype dominates all other images of lads, who, like

⁵When a lad takes his horse racing he may leave early and thus miss morning stables. He may have to stay overnight or return late the same day depending on the distance travelled to the racecourse and the time of the race.

Sophie, can be loyal, hard-working, in a settled relationship with children, and all of the other things that almost everyone else can be. The image of the lad is dominated by the drunken lout because this is the most visible in Newmarket.

The popular explanation given for the association of lads in Newmarket with drugs is that the work that they do is 'drudgery', badly paid, without prospects and without prestige. Lads themselves bemoaned the fact that racing was 'in their blood', that they tried to leave but could not stay away. The upper class of racing society told me that the majority of the lads 'don't know any better'. These explanations are clearly partial, in that they fail to explain the motivation behind remaining a lad. The profession can only be made sense of by listening to those who have made the decision to ride, and by appreciating the considerable 'pay off' of a life spent in the background, playing second fiddle to a horse.

'A skewed and malicious passion' (Wacquant 1995a: 45)

The ring affords boxers a rare opportunity--the only one that many of them may ever enjoy--to shape to a degree their own destiny and accede to a socially recognized form of existence. This is why, in spite of all the pain, the suffering and the ruthless exploitation it entails, of which fighters are painfully cognizant, boxing can infuse their lives with a sense of value, excitement, and accomplishment. (Wacquant 1995a: 17)

Like the boxers who spoke with Wacquant, lads bemoan the low pay of their profession, the absence of promotional opportunities, the long hours and poor conditions, saying, 'It's a mugs game.' They often repeated that they would not like their children to go into 'the game', hoping that they might go into a more profitable and prestigious career⁶. However, racing shares with boxing a variety of rewards which were explicitly identified to me by lads during conversations in which they felt either privileged or nostalgic enough to pity those who work in factories or service industries who 'don't know a trade' and therefore 'can't take pride in doing a job that only a few people understand'. In these conversations lads emphasised their independence, individuality, expertise, the good fortune of having had a lucrative horse or bet, and the fringe benefits which all of them seemed to have received at some point in one form or another.

Lads engage in a profession which grants a certain amount of independence, described by Wacquant in relation to boxers as 'control over the labour process'

⁶This was a popular topic of conversation, and the concern with which lads observed their children imitating behaviour of their parents reflected the influence of the ideology of pedigree on their thoughts about their future. "I saw Sean sitting astride the back of the couch, and he was riding properly, you know, flicking a pretend whip around and riding a finish, like, shouting, 'Come on, my son!' Well I dragged him off and walloped him, but I've got worries, you know maybe he could be good, 'cos his granddad was, but I'd much rather he tried at school than end up messing about with horses where there's no money".

(Wacquant 1995a: 18). Individual responsibility for the horses in his care lies firstly with the lad, and only ultimately with his boss, the trainer. This control is most strikingly evident on the Heath, where the lads ride the horses and are unequivocally responsible for them. Whilst a boxer is responsible for himself, lads are responsible for themselves and their equine dependants. The lads' reaction to this responsibility is an example of the nonchalance which is so strongly cultivated in all of the tasks of the day, whether it be riding a hundred thousand guinea racehorse or drinking eight pints then driving home. Nonchalance is the desired state in Newmarket, whilst being seen to make an effort is discouraged. Amongst trainers and jockeys I would suggest that this arises from the desire to foster the impression that ability comes 'naturally' and therefore effortlessly. Amongst lads 'natural' ability was also admired as proof of hereditary talent, however, making little effort also insulated the lads from the criticism that the menial role in which they found themselves reflected the limits of their potential. The role of the lad commands extremely low status in Newmarket, and one way of detracting from this association is to fulfil this role with minimal effort thereby implying that a lad could achieve a great deal more, given the opportunity.

When I first arrived in Newmarket I expected lines of well-groomed horses and riders in perfect unison, trotting neatly along the gallops. My first sight of riders on the Heath could not have been more different. Lads were swinging their reins, slipping their feet out of the stirrups, pulling back to be next to their pals, pushing on to join friends at the front to share a cigarette, passing a can of Coke along the line, casually slapping the horses' necks with their whips, and generally enjoying the banter of the gallops. The air of extreme nonchalance assumed by the lads resembles that adopted by fairground assistants who wander past spinning machinery with yawning disinterest. By taking control of the horse on the Heath I would suggest that the lad exercises an element of control over the owner of that horse, thus momentarily reversing the relationship between the two in which the lad is apparently so structurally disadvantaged. All stable lads can tell you how much their horse was bought for at the sales and how much it has won in its career. It was never lost on me that although someone else owned the horse that I was riding, and had paid a great deal of money for that privilege, I assumed sole control of the animal on the gallops.

This control is the result of the mastery of techniques which are unique to the racing industry. The lads' presence on the Heath, in front of small audiences of journalists, owners, trainers and tourists is an expression of this mastery, executed with the nonchalance of someone who obviously carries their learning lightly. Riding racehorses is conducted according to its own detailed set of rules which cannot be extrapolated from the technology alone, so must be learnt. For example, having

saddled my horse for the first time, my trainer altered the order of my sheets under the saddle, tied my reins in a knot and brushed a couple of stray pieces of straw from his tail. He then left me wondering how on earth I would ever get on the horse. I heard Patricia shout from the next stable, 'You can climb in the manger with Homer'. Though I had no idea what to expect, rather than betray this ignorance I clambered into the manger and in a bizarre moment of complicity, Homer shimmied sideways towards me until I could jump from the manger onto his back. Homer and I were clearly collaborating in defining each other through our accumulated physical techniques.

As with boxing, the 'kinetic techniques' (Wacquant 1995a: 20) of riding racehorses offer opportunities for satisfaction through good practice. Having a 'good run' up the gallop involves being able to control the horse in order to fulfil the instructions given by the trainer, which may be to 'jump off at half speed, go up to join the lead horse at the turn, after two furlongs upsides let Mick come through behind you and kick on.' I anticipated that the nature of the riding experience itself would form part of the lads' justification for continuing to ride. Although lads did describe the thrill of being on a good horse, this was often valued instrumentally, as part of a cycle of permanent potentiality. The inherent pleasure of the experience which dominated my own attraction to riding racehorses, was, for professional lads, also an expression of the potential rewards of the industry itself. The lads' motivation to stay in racing was described to me as essentially the same motivation as that of the owner or gambler. The chance of 'doing' a good horse, perhaps a Derby winner, motivated lads to continue for season after season, 'I'm finished, there's no money in this business unless you're rich or you've got a good horse.' Of the three horses a lad cares for, once the ability of the oldest is established, the lad is given a two-year-old whose ability is yet to be established: 'I've got a nice looking Prince Sabo I'm quite excited about, she's got a bit of speed alright'. It is significant that the ultimate accolade given to a two-year-old is that 'he could be anything'. The cycle in which lads are given untried two-year-olds at the beginning of each season (in the midst of winter when the job is at its least appealing) offers an incentive to continue couched in the idiom of risk that appeals most to those who are already fluent in the practice of horseracing.

This cycle of hope and disappointment was not described to me as based on optimism, but on a horror of giving up and in doing so missing out on a 'good horse'. Looking after a 'good horse' brings financial rewards, since its lad is given a disproportionate share of the stable's proportion of winnings. In addition, the association tends to generate respect for the individual on the grounds that he is a good lad, who (more significantly) 'got lucky'. I was told that Red Rum's lad made a living

out of being just that, enjoying hospitality wherever he went amongst racing society, implying that his luck was seen as being contagious in the same way as that of a lucky charm. He was described as a 'human rabbit's foot'.

This section was inspired by a conversation with a party of middle school teachers in Newmarket, whose opinions of the racing community were a useful foil to my own immersion and assumption that everyone would want to be riding racehorses. My teacher friends found it shocking that lads should be paid less than two hundred pounds a week to do such dangerous and hard work. They saw the lads as buying into a class ideology which was outdated by calling their trainers 'guv'nor' or 'sir', and told me that Newmarket was a town of two extremes; lads who had no ambition to be anything else, and trainers or professionals who looked down on the lads and avoided them as much as possible.

I have suggested that this characterisation of the lads in Newmarket is partial at best. Lads are motivated by the chance of success that each new horse represents. Furthermore, they take pleasure, as do boxers, in being 'small entrepreneurs in risky bodily performance' (Wacquant 1995a: 20), revelling in the logic of an industry which is based on imperfect information and thus the successful negotiation of risk. At the same time, they recognise their exploitation and bemoan their hardships. They protest that 'racing is in your blood', and that it was 'impossible to walk away from the game, no matter how bad it gets'. Those who made the break would 'soon be back, because they don't know anything else', hence the parallel with the 'skewed and malicious passion' of boxing, in which fighters become 'casualties of their desire for virile brinkmanship' (Wacquant 1995a: 45):

That's one thin' about a fighter, he never retires. He quit, but he never retires. I don't know what I could do that could give me that kind of thrill. Man, fightin', man! It's har! It's har' to describe it. On'y a fighter would know what I'm talkin' about. (Informant quoted by Wacquant 1995b: 89)

The body as the subject of human social experience: a comparison between racing and boxing

Persons do not simply experience their bodies as external objects of their possession or even as intermediary environment which surrounds their being. Persons experience themselves simultaneously in and as their bodies. (Lyon and Barbalet 1994: 54)

The dominant images of both horseracing and boxing are generated by ex-professionals and journalists. This has the effect of privileging the glamorous and public side of the industry at the expense of the day-to-day drudgery which makes such display possible. It is the individual personalities of any particular racing era who receive the attention of those who record racing's history, hence the shelves of the Racing Collection in Newmarket Town Library are dominated by biographies of

the heroes of racing (both human and equine). Similarly, training or riding methods are rarely presented independently of the trainer or jockey with whom they have been associated, in complete contrast to gambling 'systems', the second most numerous category of volumes in the racing library. Gambling methods do not demand the close association with a successful individual that is necessary for a racehorse training or riding manual to succeed, because gambling ability is not inherited and embodied to the extent that a talent for training or riding is thought to be.

Outside the commentary that is directed towards an audience within the sport itself, horseracing has a further set of popular stereotypes. Horseracing is a popular subject for romanticisation through novels and, particularly, crime thrillers. Ex-jockeys turned novelists such as John Francome and Dick Francis churn out thrillers, consistently drawing on themes whose association with racing has never been more explicitly asserted than at present. These themes are class, intrigue, skulduggery, murder, sex and money. Journalists from outside the specialised world of race-writing focus upon the same issues, alternating between treating racing as a hotbed of scandal, and ridiculing it as 'harmless fun for the toffs', both of which involve marvelling, open mouthed, at the sheer quantity of money involved. These images of racing neglect the more mundane social logic in which racing is embedded, that of the training yard.

Whilst Wacquant sought out the amateur fighters of the training gym, my fieldwork was spent amongst lads, whose structural position relative to professional jockeys is similar to that between amateur and professional fighters. Making sense of this world was dependent upon total immersion because being a lad in Newmarket does not affect merely how the working day is spent, it is a role which affects the whole person, their physique, temporality, and perception of themselves and of others. In other words it can be seen as a particular habitus, where habitus is understood as the internalisation of tastes appropriate to a particular class, expressed through the medium of the body seen as so much physical capital:

Taste is *embodied* being inscribed onto the body and made apparent in body size, volume, demeanour, ways of eating and drinking, walking, sitting, speaking, making gestures etc. (Featherstone 1987: 123)

Both racing and boxing are skilled bodily crafts which provide a structure for experience in which linguistic explanations for action are excluded by the immediacy of physical involvement. By riding and boxing, myself and Wacquant engaged in 'edgework' (Lyng 1990: 863)⁷ that drove out the requirements of rational choice or

⁷Lyng's concept of edge-work differs from Goffman's 'action' in its concern with control, 'Edgeworkers do not place much value on a pure gamble...what they seek is a chance to exercise skill in negotiating a challenge rather than turn their fate over to the roll of a dice' (Lyng 1990: 863), and thus fits better with the lad's experiences as I have described them.

normative theories of action, thus demanding an explanation in terms of a logic of practice, where practice is perceived as 'inescapably spatial and temporal' (Jenkins 1994: 438)⁸. Both boxing and riding provide examples of skills in which, 'successful practice normally excludes knowledge of its own logic' (Bourdieu 1977: 19):

The explanation agents may provide of their own practice, thanks to a quasi theoretical reflection on their practice, conceals, even from their own eyes, the true nature of their own practical mastery, i.e. that it is learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*), a mode of practical knowledge not comprising knowledge of its own principles' (Bourdieu 1977: 19)

Describing my initiation into riding racehorses is thus a reconstruction of the lad's point of view, which no lad would ever attempt. It seeks to convey the insights I gained when under pressure to fulfil my role in the yard whilst recognising that I had an academic agenda which made my position different from that of my racing colleagues⁹.

Learning the hard way

The individual learner is not gaining a discrete body of abstract knowledge which (s)he will then transport and reapply in later contexts. Instead (s)he acquires the skill to perform by actually engaging in the process, under the attenuated conditions of legitimate peripheral participation. (Lave and Wenger 1991: 14)

The thought that riding racehorses was a quintessential example of legitimate peripheral participation did not occur to me until some time after my first gallop. My thoughts during this experience had revolved around death, repentance and the will to live. I had only met Bill, racehorse trainer, on one occasion before he rang to ask me whether I could cover for his stable lass, Sophie, whilst she went on holiday for ten days. The stud work I had done earlier in the year had involved dealing with mares, yearlings and foals, but not with 'horses in training', a category of bloodstock which drove fear into the hearts of all stud workers. Horses in training were characterised as overfed, unpredictable creatures. Those who chose to deal with them were deranged, whilst those who agreed to ride such creatures clearly had a death wish. In retrospect, by accepting this challenge I tacitly assumed that there was some such mechanism as legitimate peripheral participation, whereby: 'if learning is about increased access to

⁸Jenkins considers the buying and selling of cattle in south-west France. He considers the inspection of cattle, the haggling which took place between the professional dealers and the peasants, and the role of the intermediary in closing the deal (Jenkins 1994). His ethnography shares with that of Stewart (1997) and myself a concern with knowledge which is not articulated. However, his consideration of the practical knowledge necessary to negotiate the market does not extend to the status of this knowledge, which he assumes the insiders are able to possess, whilst I argue that the practices of the bloodstock agent serve to conceal the fact that much of the knowledge he *appears* to embody is actually unknowable.

⁹As Bloch states, 'If the anthropologist is attempting to give an account of chunked and non-sequential knowledge in a linguistic medium (writing), and she has no alternative, she must be aware that in so doing she is not reproducing the organisation of the knowledge of the people she studies but is transmuting it into an entirely different logical form' (Bloch 1991: 193).

performance, then the way to maximise learning is to perform, not to talk about it.' (Lave and Wenger 1991: 22). I severely underestimated the extent to which my own body was implicated in this process, only when I began to accumulate scars did I fully appreciate that: 'human experience is grounded in bodily movement within a social and material environment' (Jackson 1983: 331).

Working days followed a routine, and I was expected to do all the chores in the yard from day one, although Bill managed to resist asking me to ride until the second day. Patricia and I would begin the day at six a.m., by putting four of the horses on the 'walker', a huge rotating cage separated into four sections, turned electrically, like a vast horizontal hamster wheel. This warmed up the horse's muscles, and took the edge off their morning exuberance, whilst Bill prepared the feed. Patricia and I would then muck out the boxes belonging to the horses on the walker, before changing the next four onto the walker and doing their boxes. Mick, who rode the fillies, arrived at 7:30, whilst Bill and Patricia would 'pull out' with the 'first lot' shortly afterwards, leaving me to finish the boxes. Following my recruitment to riding I would take my first ride out with Mick, and give him a lead around the sand ring. Bill, Patricia and I would then have breakfast of coffee and toast whilst Mick took out another filly. Bill, Patricia and I would then take out the final three horses around the sand. When each horse returned to the yard it was washed down with hot soapy water, particularly on its face, feet, legs, and 'undercarriage'. Each horse was then led into the paddock for a 'bite' or 'pick' of grass, whilst drying. The horses were then brought back into their boxes, given a thorough brush, their feet picked out and oiled, their manes and tails 'dandied', and their sheets or day rugs put on, which is referred to as 'dressing'. The horses who are not in work were also either put on the walker or out into the paddock for twenty minutes to 'stretch their legs', and were also brushed or 'dressed over'.

This work was done by 11:00. After each morning I felt as if I had been run over by a tractor. Although mucking out was made slightly more difficult by having to keep up with superhuman Patricia, it was really the riding which exhausted me, and was quite unlike any other riding I had ever done. Although I have ridden since I was young, and have done most things from polo to show jumping, I hadn't ever ridden a thoroughbred in training. When he asked whether I would like to ride out Bill simply said that if I was capable of riding a polo pony that had once been a racehorse then I was perfectly capable of riding a non-ex-racehorse. Patricia tutted at Bill and took me to one side to say that I should only ride if I wanted to. Bill is very convincing. I rode the least valuable horse in the yard first, referred to by Bill as 'The Bastard'. Bill, Mick and I rode off onto the Heath and for the first time I shortened my stirrups (jerks) and rode (as I thought) like Lester Piggott. I quickly let them down again when I

realised that if I kept them short I would be exhausted by the time we got to the gallop we were going to use.

Bill had decided that we would do a twelve furlong (mile and a half) straight gallop on the turf inside the racecourse, called 'Back of the racecourse'. In retrospect, this was one of several examples of Bill's tendency towards baptism by fire. Horses are keener on grass than all-weather tracks, and on straight tracks than circuits. Typically, Bill had set me the stiffest task to begin with on the grounds that, 'if you could handle that then I knew that you could handle anything'. On the way to the gallop I had felt an unparalleled sense of elation to be riding across the Heath smiling and nodding to all the other lads. Quite a few things began to make sense, particularly why it is possible for trainers to pay scant wages for such hard work. I felt a part of Newmarket in a new and exciting way, and yet I felt totally invisible, as if I had finally blended in completely with part of the way of life I was seeking to understand. Unfortunately, these feelings were soon overtaken by more pressing concerns of self-preservation.

Mick had told me to 'give The Bastard a yank in the gob as you jump off', to 'let him know who's boss', as if he was in any doubt. This horse has a reputation for setting his jaw and running away, although his saving grace is that he knows where to stop at the end of the gallops. I put my life in his hands and set off, giving his mouth a quick saw, as if that made the slightest difference. He took off and I had a sensation of flying. Bill had said that I would see a big mound at the end of the run and would thus know when to stop. All I could see was a vast expanse of grass with tiny markers either side of the strip we were supposed to gallop up apparently marking the way to infinity. We were going faster than I have ever been on a horse before (about 35 mph), the wind was catching my breath and making my eyes water so that I could hardly see, possibly a blessing. My legs were exhausted with supporting my own weight and setting against my horse's jaw. My arms were pulling desperately. My thoughts at the time were surprisingly clear, and almost removed. I established that this was by far the most frightening thing that I had ever done, also that it was the most physically demanding thing that I had ever done, also that I didn't ever want to do it again and must not be allowed to on any account, I also pondered when the end would come, imagining that every molehill we flashed past was the huge mound that Bill had described. The mound was actually the side of a reservoir, and we ground to a stop once we reached it, as predicted.

By the time Mick and Bill caught up I had managed to sit up and to restrict my breathing to a mere gasp rather than the roar it had been initially. Bill casually enquired as to how I had found it, and out of my mouth came words like 'terrific' and

'incredible'. Bill looked so delighted that I overlooked my strange response, only realising on the walk back that for all of its horror my first trip up the gallops had been not just terrifying, but also one of the most brilliant experiences of my life. The primary satisfaction came from surviving, but this was mixed with the excitement generated by the experience itself, by the sensation of speed, the proximity of disaster, the loss of control. Before we had reached the yard these feelings had coalesced into a desperate ambition to be able to be good at something so testing. This ambition survived two deaths on the gallops in the time that I rode, and only faded slightly as my return to Edinburgh approached, when I began to be more careful on the grounds that it would be typical to hurt myself just when I had almost 'got away with it'. Being 'more careful' spells disaster in a regime in which confidence, and the communication of that confidence to the horse, is paramount. My belief in a spiteful fate, and in luck perceived as a limited good (which must not be 'pushed') was a reflection of my total immersion in the social logic of racing. My loss of confidence arose from an awareness that I would soon remove myself from this context, thus acknowledging the existence of an alternative.

Learning to be a lass through Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP)

Entry: becoming an apprentice

The idea that 'the way to maximise learning is to perform, not to talk about it' (Lave and Wenger 1991: 22) is central to the philosophy of the training yard. Apprentices learn by LPP because the upper class of racing society believes that horsemanship 'is bred, not taught'. This explains the trainers' suspicion of lads who were 'taught' at the British Racing School, relative to those who served apprenticeships, the 'old-fashioned way'. The penetration of the ideology of pedigree into the ranks of lads is also of importance. When I asked lads how their skills were learnt a common response was, 'You don't learn it, it should come naturally'. This sort of response is epitomised in the conversation below:

RC: How did you learn to ride?

Informant: I just sort of did it.

RC: Did anyone help you?

Informant: No, no-one can, because you just do it or you don't.

RC: So who can do it and who can't?

Informant: It has to be in your blood.

Many lads told me of their racing ancestors in the same way as members of 'real Newmarket families' might. However, the attitude of lads to their own 'pedigrees' is ambivalent.

Whilst members of 'real Newmarket families' spoke of 'blood' as the hereditary medium of talent, lads also offered an alternative explanation whereby talent could be assimilated by the individual from the environment. Lads maintained that racing was 'in the blood' without the same commitment to this blood being inherited from ancestors. I was told that racing could 'get into your blood', that 'it sort of seeps into you', and that 'it gets under your skin'. This belief appears to contradict the notion of personhood held by members of 'real Newmarket families', in that it offers an alternative explanation for racing talent, which does not invoke pedigree. The person in this case is perceived as permeable whilst the upper class individual may seem closed, their destiny determined by birth. Amongst lads, the fixity of the upper class imperative whereby talent must be explained by an appeal to pedigree is replaced, at times, by explanations which imply a far more flexibly constituted person, perhaps suggestive of a more flexible class system, one of the 'hidden scripts' of the lad.

Racing 'blood' whether inherited at birth or having entered the blood 'like an infection', was sometimes a source of pride for lads, but was also, at times, a curse. Many lads spoke of their hopes of a non-racing future for their children, and complained that it was difficult to stay away from racing if it was in your blood. That racing was 'in the blood' was the explanation offered by lads for the absence of tuition in the industry. However, I would like to suggest that there are structural factors that promote the absence of tuition which are obscured by this explanation.

The amount of explicit guidance I was given throughout my time on the yard was pitiful, so how did I learn? In contrast to the world of the boxing gym which is restricted to men only, racing is a society closed to all but those who acquire membership through an already established connection, and learning is dependent upon gaining access in the first place. My presence on the yard was undoubtedly dependent upon my previous experiences with horses. However, this knowledge was necessary without being sufficient to grant entry. Being invited onto the yard depended upon my ability to communicate my ease with horses to those within the industry, who may be called 'gatekeepers'. In Newmarket, gatekeepers can be found in pubs on Sundays, and I came across a glut of them in my 'local', which was the meeting place for 'The Sunday Club'. In stumbling across this exclusively male society and enduring its indiscretions, I built up a number of contacts who would bend over backwards in order to accommodate my inquiries. The club consisted of trainers, bloodstock agents, a racing commentator, a racing journalist and two locals.

I was honorarily invested into the club on the grounds that I passed muster in a discussion of pedigree, and understood the concept of spread betting in relation to cricket. Maintaining my relationship with these men depended on my ability to seem at

ease with the matters with which they concerned themselves on a Sunday; alcohol, horses, races, sex, sport and gambling. My status throughout my time in Newmarket depended, not only upon my successful performance of competence with racehorses, but also on my communication of this ability within the context of the pub.

My ability to 'talk the talk' definitely predated my ability to 'perform'. In order to achieve a position whereby I was offered opportunities which demanded performance rather than the appearance thereof it was necessary to engage in this impression management. Entry into the racing industry is usually restricted by a vicious cycle. One cannot enter into racing society without the appropriate level of relevant knowledge, whilst the only place to learn what is required is from within the society itself:

a major contradiction lies between LPP as a means of achieving continuity over generations for the community of practice and the displacement inherent in that same process as full participants are replaced (directly or indirectly) by new-comers-become-old-timers. (Lave and Wenger 1991: 121)

This contradiction is usually resolved by the inheritance of roles through generations of families, expertise then corresponds with age. My first-hand knowledge of other equestrian sports and of horses in general, combined with my research into pedigrees and breeding may have been enough to break this cycle, but my trump card was being 'a local', with a cottage known to all the gatekeepers. Thus, when Bill was stuck for help whilst his lass was on holiday, he complained of the shortage of good workers in Newmarket whilst on the treadmill at the gym. A member of the Sunday Club looked up from the rowing machine and mentioned that he had just met a local polo groom who was keen to do some work on a yard. Bingo!

Apprenticeship

The 'apprentice' is a structural position in the racing industry which has changed enormously over the last century. An apprenticeship in the nineteenth century referred to the period of time spent working for a trainer who had been placed in *loco parentis* by means of a contract with the parents of malnourished boys found by scouts in Scotland and Ireland. These boys arrived in Newmarket station within living memory, sporting labels indicating the name of the trainer to whom they were to be delivered. They lived in dire poverty in dormitories and worked long hours under the threat of violence. They were regarded with contempt by their 'guv'nors', 'Boys are the very devil, the bugbear of a trainer, needing to be watched all the time' (Atty Pearse quoted in Fitz-George Parker 1968: 52). 'Apprentice' really means trainee jockey, however, most of the 'boys' were either not good enough, or grew too big to ever be jockeys and so became stable lads.

At the present time, apprentices sign a contract with their trainer, who is still referred to as the 'guv'nor'. The trainer may give the apprentice rides in order to give him experience, and to benefit from the weight allowances given to apprentices over their professional colleagues. If an apprentice is given an outside ride, the trainer is paid the fee and gives the apprentice twenty per cent as 'pocket money'. The apprentices are still referred to as 'boys'. Thus in a race restricted to apprentices I was told 'this horse wants a boy on it, because it doesn't like to be told what to do by a jockey'. Apprentices are signed as teenagers and must weigh around eight stone in order to be taken on. For these reasons alone, a formal apprenticeship was not an option that was open to me. Apprentices often enter a yard through an existing relation, however, the British Racing School takes teenagers on the basis of the recommendation of their career's advisor, usually with the proviso that they are lightweight. This difference in entry requirements is the first of many contrasts between a 'proper' apprenticeship and a nine week course at the School.

My apprenticeship was into the role of racing lass, which calls for the same skills as the formal apprentice without the emphasis on race-riding, and applies to the vast majority of lads in Newmarket. The tasks of a racing lass are summed up by the phrase 'doing your two'. However, the staff shortage at Bill's meant that this became 'doing your three, four or five'. 'Doing' a horse means that you are responsible for mucking it out, exercising it, keeping it groomed, and noticing any injuries or sickness. 'Doing' is thus a typically understated description of the tasks involved. The trainer is responsible for feeding the horse, and for deciding what exercise it will do each day and the races into which it will be entered.

Learning the ropes in a training yard includes experiences which seem to be common to many examples of apprenticeship. Firstly, as amongst Yucatec midwives, learning takes place without any obvious corresponding practice of teaching (Lave and Wenger 1991: 84). Secondly, the structural constraints of the division of labour determine the tasks undertaken by the apprentices, which are usually dirty or repetitive, as amongst apprentice meat cutters in America (Lave and Wenger 1991: 76). Thirdly, as amongst Vai tailors, peripheral tasks are undertaken before the central techniques are attempted (Lave and Wenger 1991: 72). In the case of a racing apprenticeship, however, the defining features of the experience are determined by three factors; firstly, that a racehorse is a 'single-user tool', secondly that the unsuccessful practice of racehorse riding can result in serious injuries and even death, and thirdly that successful practice relies upon the embodiment of techniques which respond to stimuli without the intervening rationalising processes demanded by knowledge which is stored and transmitted as so much verbal information. This

apprenticeship is thus characterised by a structural self-reliance which detracts from traditional notions of teaching, by edge-work (Lyng 1990), and by action undertaken:

without the intervention of discursive consciousness and reflexive explication, that is, by excluding the contemplative and detemporalizing posture of the theoretical gaze. (Wacquant 1992: 236)

Just as the experiences of apprentice quartermasters in the American Navy (Lave and Wenger 1991: 73) were influenced by the design of instruments which did not facilitate joint operation, riding a racehorse is a one-person only task. It is therefore inevitable that the first gallop is made alone. Fellow lads all confirmed that the first experience of riding racehorses was untutored:

He just threw me into the plate and off I went. You just get on with it don't you? They don't make pillion saddles you know. I didn't expect it to be as hard, I was shocked I suppose.

However, the absence of any instruction preceding this gallop is not determined by the racehorse, but by the 'old-timers' relation to this knowledge. As a jockey said to a television producer recently when asked to explain what it feels like to ride a horse: 'It's very difficult to explain to a normal person'. I asked both Bill and Mick for tips, and they withheld any practical advice, humming and hawing and saying that 'it's a technique that you just have to learn for yourself, you'll see. It's impossible to explain, you just have to do it'. Bill's words as I shot off up the gallop were, 'Don't worry about anything, just enjoy yourself and get the feel of it'.

Once I had made my first run, advice was more forthcoming, partly because I began to ask the right questions, and partly because the advice could be presented as criticism of my own technique which did not depend upon any articulation of their own embodied practice. Lads were not happy to give abstract descriptions of riding racehorses, nor to generalise about the experience. Their reluctance supports Bloch's contention that:

The process of putting knowledge into words must require such a transformation in the nature of knowledge that the words will then have only a distant relationship to the knowledge referred to. (Bloch 1991: 192)

They were more comfortable discussing particular horses, with the shared experience of racehorse riding as the unexplored, taken for granted context. These conversations would always take the form of, 'You know when they take hold of the bit and twist their jaw like that?...Well...'. The tips and advice I received were sought out because from the first day I rode out I wasn't given a single unsolicited instruction. That the knowledge is difficult to articulate is not, however, the only explanation as to why this articulation is only very rarely even attempted.

My intention is not to suggest that the technique of riding a racehorse cannot be articulated, because to a large extent it can. The absence of teaching as such can be explained by two factors; first, discussing riding a racehorse is easier when both parties have even the most minimal shared experience, secondly, the status of the

apprentice does not promote the easy sharing of knowledge. As the latest recruit to the yard, the apprentice is a threat to those above him to the extent that if he should prove talented he may make it at the expense of an 'old-timer'. Thus, I was told that the apprentice must be 'thrown in at the deep end' to 'pay his dues like the rest of us'. The other experience common to many of the new recruits to whom I spoke was that, in keeping with their entry into a new and closed world, they were stripped of any status which would have contradicted their new structural position as 'lowest of the low'. They were given nick-names, which were generally not flattering, and teased about their awkwardness. I was teased about my elephantine physique, and my big feet, other lads told me of being teased about spots and bad hair cuts. The body is the major source of nicknames because successful racing practice involves control of the human and equine body. Where a body is 'out of control' it is a source of mockery.

There is thus a sense in which apprentices learn despite the efforts of those who one might expect to teach them. They learn by accumulating experiences which are stored physically, but rarely articulated, and by the time they have acquired them, there is no incentive for them to pass them onto the newcomer to whom they have now become an 'old-timer'. Although it is difficult to describe how it feels to ride a horse, it is not impossible. This knowledge remains unarticulated because of the structural position of the apprentice, and is justified by an appeal to the dominant ideology of pedigree, whereby ability is thought of as hereditary.

The racing industry associates learning with literacy and implicitly accepts the Euro-American concept of teaching as:

a unitary phenomenon based on the dual assumption that the school specializes in the transmission of literate knowledge and that literary education is coterminous with formal education. (Akinaso 1992: 68)¹⁰

Having described riding as an embodied practice that is learnt but not taught, and schools as sources of literate knowledge it is easy to see how trainers see the British Racing School as a contradiction. However, the techniques employed by the school resolve this contradiction by both articulating and thereby de-mystifying the knowledge denied to apprentices on the yard, and by providing courses in practical learning.

The British Racing School is not universally respected by the trainers in Newmarket, some of whom dispute that the trade can be taught 'at a desk', thus encapsulating their perception of teaching as literate and riding as physical, the one irreducible to the other. In fact, there is very little sitting at desks at the school and plenty of practical instruction. The school takes groups of young people who are

¹⁰Akinaso makes two points, firstly that, 'literacy is not a precondition for the existence of schooling' (1992: 100), and secondly, that 'egalitarianism exists where a society lacks individuals with authority who control access to ritualised knowledge' (ibid. 101).

under nineteen-years-old, weigh less than nine stone, and are physically fit. There are no other formal entry requirements, and the interview procedure rewards motivation and 'the right attitude'. By encouraging the 'right attitude', the BRS is teaching lads how to occupy their particular niche in the class system of racing. An array of behaviour is taught, including how to address the trainer, owner and steward. Deferential body language and a standardised appearance are also explicitly rewarded.

Courses last nine weeks, after which the apprentice lad is guaranteed work with a yard. Some of the recruits have not sat on a horse before they arrive at the school. The course begins with three weeks spent in an indoor arena. Those who have ridden before ride thoroughbreds whilst there are a few ponies for those without any previous experience. After riding twice a day for three weeks, the apprentices graduate to the sand ring, which they canter around. After doing this twice a day for three weeks they go onto the straight grass gallop for the last three weeks.



7.1 Trainees travelling up the gallops at the British Racing School (BHB 1995: 29)



7.2 Apprentices on the equisizer at the British Racing School (Jockey Club 1996: 17)

The apprentices at the School have to 'do' their own horses, so they must muck out and groom two horses whilst doing their share of chores such as sweeping and raking. Almost all of the lessons are 'practicals', taught in the stable or on the gallops. The elementary stages are taught more easily in the indoor arena, which provides a far safer environment for the riders than Newmarket Heath. Safer still is the Equisisor, a robotic horse which simulates the movements of a galloping horse. Once safe in these controlled environments where instructors can control the horse whilst the apprentice concentrates on developing a basic technique which is secure and balanced, the apprentices venture out. In order to overcome the problem of the horse being a single-user tool, the apprentices wear radio headsets, through which their instructors provide a constant stream of instruction. My visit to the school happily coincided with the first outing for a group of twelve, and watching their progress on a day that was extremely wet and windy was terrifying. One of the instructors noted my stunned expression and acknowledged that: 'It's something you never quite get used to'.

On the first trip outside the indoor arena for three weeks, the horses were understandably fresh. The young people riding them were excited and scared to be outside for the first time. The idea of the exercise was for one pair at a time to trot and then canter once around the inside of the enclosed sand ring. Whilst one or two pairs achieved this, the others got gradually faster and faster, until they were cornering like motorbikes, with their rider's feet almost scraping the floor. The pitiful cries of 'Whoa, steady boy, whoa' were whipped away by the wind as the horses shamelessly took advantage of their frozen, terrified passengers. Some people fell off, some horses simply failed to stop and did eleven circuits before their riders fell off with exhaustion, some were stopped by instructors waving their arms in their path, some took the instructors on, galloping past them. My favourite personal tragedy was the horse who got down and rolled in the mud whilst waiting for his turn to canter, covering his rider in mud in the process, he then took off around the circuit and whipped round when an instructor tried to get in his way, depositing his rider in the mud for a second time.

Although the scene was carnage, no-one was hurt, and all the riders seemed quite happy. The experience raises questions as to whether cantering for the first time is made easier by instruction or not. I would have felt better had someone been speaking calmly to me during my own lightning progress up the gallop, but would I have been any more effective? I spent the entire day with the instructors, and took full advantage of their expertise, asking them for help with my own riding. They had lots

of helpful suggestions, some articulated and some both articulated and demonstrated. They had theories of horse psychology, such as what made a horse pull, they advocated soft hands and a gentle voice, they held strong views on stirrup length and produced highly developed arguments on centres of balance. They had an entire vocabulary which had been lacking in my own apprenticeship, and they defended the practice of teaching what is usually only learnt.

The next time I rode out I used all of the techniques the instructors at the school taught, both verbally and through practical demonstration. This was the best ride of my life. I was in control for a change, and I could explain why, according to my newly acquired theory. The problem is that on every occasion after that I tried to use my techniques and they failed, whilst my old 'don't know why I do it, but it feels as though it looks a bit like Mick does when he rides' also worked on some occasions and not others. I think that the problem lies in the presence of the other body in this experience, the racehorse. Not only do racehorses have characters, they also have moods. Their behaviour is unpredictable, and this accentuates the difficulties of teaching how to ride them by means other than experience.

Riding racehorses is an example of edgework:

People confronting a life-and-death situation often must respond immediately to save themselves; they must act instinctively rather than rely on the reflective process involved in everyday problem solving. One simply does not have time to review mentally what one knows about such situations, nor is such socially acquired knowledge even useful since true edgework involves completely novel circumstances. (Lyng 1990: 878)

Even when I rode the same horse out every day, on the same route, the experience was never routinised. However, whilst each riding experience was unprecedented, the more riding I did the greater my confidence, because the more likely it was that I had a group of similar experiences to refer to before I decided how to react. Where there was no time to reflect, my body would automatically perform the action which had proved most successful in the past:

Once in the ring it is the trained body that learns and understands, sorts and stores information, finds the correct answer in its repertory of preprogrammed actions and reactions. (Wacquant 1992: 248)

In the absence of any prior experience my body would guess at whatever action aided self-preservation, guesswork made this the least successful category of actions. Lads concur that experience is a saviour, 'You'll get used to it', 'The more you do it the better you'll get'.

Conclusion

This chapter described the life of the lads in Newmarket in order to suggest explanations for their choice of occupation other than a lack of alternatives or ambition.

The role of racing lad provides involvement in a glamorous industry and responsibility for extremely valuable racehorses. Lads devalued those occupations which required few qualifications, such as factory work. The racing lad enjoyed an occupation in which specialist knowledge could be accumulated, in contrast to those jobs which they imagined required no particular skills.

Riding racehorses is an example of a skilled bodily practice in which theoretical contemplation is driven out by the immediacy of danger. The presence of two bodies of two different species further complicates the possibility of theorising the activity. Because riding a racehorse is almost always an unprecedented experience, the body is called upon to respond appropriately when there is no time for contemplation, just as a boxer must defend his body when his conscious facilities are compromised. However, these techniques are not entirely insulated from at least partial articulation, despite many of the learning experiences of novices such as myself being conducted as if they were. I would like to suggest that this articulation is not attempted by racing society for structural and political reasons:

any complex system of work and learning has roots in and interdependencies across its history, technology, developing work activity, careers and the relations between newcomers and old-timers and among co-workers and practitioners. (Lave and Wenger 1991: 61)

The British Racing School provides examples of techniques whereby many of the difficulties of teaching can be overcome including simulators, indoor schools, quieter horses, radio headsets, enclosed sand rings, expert supervision and practical lessons. Apprentices are not taught because they are a threat to their superiors who are the present guardians of knowledge, and were not taught by their superiors. The structural disadvantage of the new-comer to racing is justified in terms of the ideology of pedigree which eliminates any need for teaching by imagining knowledge as hereditary, a potential waiting to be realised through performance. I have argued that the reproduction of the hierarchy within racing may constitute an alternative explanation to the absence of overt tuition, outside the ideology of pedigree:

Communities of practice have histories and developmental cycles and reproduce themselves in such a way that the transformation of new-comers into old-timers becomes unremarkably integral to the practise. (Lave and Wenger 1991: 122)

To be accepted by his 'mates', a man must be able to recognise a network of group definitions: hierarchies of age (from apprentices to 'old-hands'), of communities of origin (from immigrants to locals from various districts), and sometimes of 'gangs' or 'squads'. (Tolson 1977: 47)

Lads do not lack ambition, nor can working in the industry be explained solely on the basis that they cannot do anything else. Tied accommodation discourages lads from seeking alternative employment and thereby uprooting their families. Furthermore, old-timers are retained by means of their insertion into the annual cycles of the industry which provide hope when disappointment threatens to overwhelm. An

untried two-year-old was described to me as 'a free betting slip for the Derby' by one lad, explicitly establishing the link between gambling on a race and gambling on a life as a lad:

What am I going to earn in a factory or a shop? I'd know at the beginning of the week and that would be forever. In racing you never know, you might get lucky!

Lads embody specialised knowledge in a glamorous, money saturated industry, a position in which many thrive. The next chapter seeks to characterise relations between horses and humans in Newmarket.

Chapter Eight: Human-horse Relations in Newmarket

Introduction

In this chapter I shall concentrate upon the relationship between racehorses and humans that obtains in contemporary Newmarket. This relationship takes the form of an intersubjectivity whereby gains or losses in status of the racehorse accrue to those with whom it is associated. This relationship is relevant to all aspects of racing, as it facilitates the cross-over of ideas of pedigree from horses to humans. Although I shall draw specifically upon fieldwork conducted on a stud during the spring of 1997, the analysis in this chapter is informed by all of my fieldwork. The first section describes the personalisation of racehorses as it occurs on the thoroughbred stud. In this environment, racehorses are granted traits more commonly attributed to humans. This personalisation is significant because it is carried over into their relationships with humans, such that the discourse of personalities in Newmarket includes both humans and animals.

Horse-human relations in Newmarket will be placed within the broader context of the anthropological literature concerned with the relationship between humans and animals. Contextualising this chapter is Clutton-Brock's contention that: 'a domestic animal is a cultural artefact of human society' (1994: 28), and its enquiry is centred around asking what the racehorse reveals about the human society by which it is defined. Löfgren contends that:

'thinking with animals' in the cultural complexities of Western societies needs to be related to the historical processes of class formation and conflict, cultural hegemony and resistance, as well as to a discussion of the material experiences behind the production, reproduction, and change of such cognitive systems over time. (Löfgren 1985: 186)

This reinforces the importance of the highly specific history of the English thoroughbred.

Lévi-Strauss separated racehorses from human society, saying that they: do not form part of human society either as subjects or objects...they are products of human industry and they are born and live as isolated individuals juxtaposed in stud farms devised for their own sake...They constitute the desocialised condition of existence of a private society. (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 122)¹

In fact, my fieldwork suggested that racehorses are both subjects and objects in particular contexts, they are not solely the product of human industry, though the

¹Lévi-Strauss analyses the logic of the naming of birds, dogs, cattle and racehorses in France, using the two notions of metaphor and metonym (1966). According to his analysis, birds are metaphorical humans, who create societies resembling our own, and are, accordingly, given human names. Dogs are low status metonymical human beings, whilst cattle are metonymical human beings, being a part of human society but as objects rather than as persons. Racehorses, according to Lévi-Strauss, are asocial and separate from human society, and are therefore metaphorical 'inhuman' beings (ibid. 122). This chapter suggests an alternative interpretation of the place of racehorses within the human society of Newmarket.

breeding industry might like to imagine this to be the case, and they are certainly not entirely de-socialised. In the context of the stud, for example, the horses are 'family', and managing their interaction is about managing the quirks of family members who can be both loyal and recalcitrant.

Lévi-Strauss identified racehorse names as a reflection of their anti-social status, whilst this chapter will use the work of Tambiah (1969), to suggest that the naming of racehorses reflects their dual status as subjects and objects to different configurations within their environment. Many racehorse's names are derivative of their breeding, being combinations of their sire and dam's names such as 'out of Gulf Bird by Majority Blue - Blue Persian', or the comic 'out of Bachelor Pad by Pleasuring - Bobbitt'. The registered name reflects the individual's place in the General Stud Book, where horses are at their most objectified, as conduits, temporarily embodying one of the possible combinations in the overall flow of 'noble blood'. However, these names are almost always complemented by a stable name, which is often human, as when Hawaiian Dot becomes 'Wyatt', or inspired by some personal quirk, such as the smelly foal nicknamed 'Kipper'.

Formal names are complemented by highly personalised names which draw the horse strongly into its human environment, if not when it is racing so much as when it is cared for in the stables before and after racing. Racehorses are thus both personalised and objectified according to the perspective from which they are described, and the context in which they find themselves. In keeping with this dual identity, horse's personalities are said to change when at the races, where they become excitable and unpredictable, or more specifically: 'He's terrible when he goes racing, he just won't listen to me...even though he's good as gold at home'. The implied existence of communication between horse and human and the introduction of images of domesticity through the identification of the training stable as a mutual 'home' are an example of the general tendency towards the personalisation of horses in Newmarket. At the races, however, when he is likely to be evaluated according to the written record of his breeding and form, the horse is presented as denying his communion with his handler².

In the context of the stud, locus of the physical reproduction of the English thoroughbred, it is particularly interesting to examine ideas pertinent to gender and procreation. Virility will be identified as the supreme male value attributed to the

²Neither attitude dominates either context entirely, thus it would be inaccurate to identify a split between 'home' and 'work'. At the racecourse, lads will seek to communicate with horses, and the death of a horse on the track is, for its lad, one of the worst things imaginable, being compared to, 'losing a family member'. At home, horses may be treated as objects when, for example, they are being weighed, or having their blood analysed by vets, who do not know their names or their characters.

stallion (and by implication to the stallion man), whilst the association of femininity with nurturing will be revealed by an examination of the treatment of the 'foster' mare. The following chapter will suggest that ideas of heredity implicit in the activities and opinions of the stud worker are systematised in the ideology of pedigree that informs ideas of relatedness in both humans and horses in Newmarket. This ideology, which draws upon notions of 'blood' in order to explain heredity will be examined in more detail in the following chapter, in relation to the work of Delaney (1986), Bouquet (1993) and Strathern (1992b). The two chapters should combine to suggest that the selective breeding of horses can only be made sense of in terms of the pedigrees of humans in Newmarket.

Human-animal relations

Without wishing to sound sexist, the only point I would like to add to the debate concerns gender. Colts tend to be bigger and stronger than fillies and even with a 5lb allowance, Cape Verdi might not appreciate being on the receiving end of the competitive aggression of a big field of colts. Perhaps she has the speed and temperament to rise above it and win. Perhaps not - and she might suffer badly from the experience. (Kennedy 1998: 8)

This letter from the Racing Post epitomises the tendency to apply human categories, properties and emotions to horses. It refers to the decision made by Sheikh Mohammed to run the filly, Cape Verdi, in the Derby, a race usually contested by colts, the Oaks being the equivalent Blue Ribbon event for fillies. The final foreboding sentence of the letter prompts the reader to imagine just what fate might befall Cape Verdi at the hands of the colts. The writer explicitly blurs the distinction between humans and horses in saying that he does not wish to sound sexist, which does not make sense unless one imagines that it is possible to talk about gender issues in relation to horses, expressing opinions which may in turn be construed as 'sexist' rather than merely 'about horses'. The letter illustrates that in attributing human properties to horses we reveal our perceptions of the nature of those properties, and by implication, of what it means to be human.

Horses constitute a 'privileged species' (Thomas 1983: 100) in the English imagination, and have most commonly been associated with nobility, disdain for authority, loyalty, and freedom. The physical treatment of horses has not always reflected this privileged status, and neglect and cruelty were still rife in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:

One morning in 1581 Sir Thomas Wroth counted 2,100 horses travelling between Shoreditch and Enfield; but another observer added that within the next seven years 2,000 of them would be dead in some ditch through overwork. (Thomas 1983 101)

Attitudes appear to have changed during the eighteenth century, when Thomas notes the

increased sensitivity of eighteenth century passers-by to the cruel treatment of horses in the street or the mounting volume of protest against the traditional practices of docking the animal's tail or cropping its ears or tying up its head to make it look more imposing. (Thomas 1983:190)

The intellectual conditions which resulted in the formation of, for example, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1824, are thought by Thomas to have resulted primarily from increased industrialisation and the consequent separation of animals from the means of production. I would suggest, however, that the continual murmur of disapproval prompted by the mistreatment of horses arises from their permanently ambiguous relation to production. Horses were undoubtedly beasts of burden of critical importance, however, they have also always been creatures capable of offering opportunities for excitement which are essentially lacking in, say, a cow. The horse offers a means of travelling through space at speeds only approached by the car, and the association with freedom exploited by car advertisers applies equally well to the horse, an idea shared by the Rom studied by Stewart:

As Zeleno put it to me: 'You can't ride cows. Horses go like this (and he made a graceful gesture with his hand); they make one's good mood (voja); they know how to move. You can't bridle up a cow. Nor can you sing about cows. It's only in Hungarian songs that you find them singing about cows!' (Stewart 1997: 143)

The horse is a particularly rewarding animal to attempt to control due to its feckless nature. He will always retain sufficient independence to make a worthwhile adversary in a struggle of wills. Horses, unlike dogs, will do something a hundred times and on the hundred and first occasion behave as if the situation is totally unprecedented, usually employing their favoured response to novelty, of running away. The horse's nervous energy has usually been interpreted as 'spirit', his dimwittedness as bravery, for example, in the writing of Laura Thompson who attributes to Lamtarra, winner of the 1996 Derby, a 'Quest for Greatness'. The seriousness with which Thompson describes Lamtarra 'toying' with the horses he beats is an example of the anthropomorphism which dominates this genre:

If a horse could stand for its owner, this was partly because horses were seen as the closest of all animals to their human masters. Sitting one evening with an old man on the meadow outside his house we watched another man's horse find its way back to its yard from grazing and then enter its stable. Old Mosulo chuckled and pointed out to me that it went home 'like a person' (sarekh manus). Comments about the intelligence and good sense of horses were so common that I gave up noting them. (Stewart 1997: 144)

I was repeatedly told that the horses in Newmarket were morally superior to the human population: 'Newmarket's alright - its just the people I can't stand!'

The anthropomorphism of a society such as Newmarket contradicts the category distinction continually identified by theorists as central to the modern perception of the relationship between humans and animals:

the notion that animals are radically other, on the far side of an unbridgeable chasm constructed by their lack of either reason or a soul, has been a constant feature of Western theology and philosophy. It has completely overshadowed the most readily

available alternative, which would define human beings as one animal kind among many others. (Ritvo 1991: 68)

(The Enlightenment View was) an antiseptic attempt to protect the human race from pollution by cutting its links with the rest of nature. (Midgeley 1994: 191)

I would suggest that the generalisation that 'modern' or 'Western' societies make a category distinction between humans and animals obscures a far more complex relationship. Much anthropological literature contrasts the oppositional view of 'modern' 'western' society with the 'continuum' view of less developed societies.

What we distinguish as humanity and nature merge, for them, into a single field of relationships. (Ingold 1994: 18)

The total apprehension of men and animals as sentient beings, in which identification consists, both governs and precedes the consciousness of oppositions between, firstly, logical properties conceived as integral parts of the human field, and then, within the field itself, between 'human' and 'non-human'. (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 101-2)

I would like to suggest that the limitations of this framework of analysis lie in its identification of two (predictably) *opposing* views that merely rediscover a further oppositional relationship between 'us' and 'them'. This process has been identified by Latour (1993) as 'The Great Divide', the asymmetry which precludes comparison of 'primitive' with 'modern' societies. In blurring these distinctions, my fieldwork obviously supports Latour's contention that 'We have never been modern' (1993). In Newmarket, animals are sometimes used to 'stand for' humans, whilst they are sometimes distanced from humans as a subordinate species in a hierarchical relationship with man. As Tambiah observed of a village in Thailand, the relationship between humans and animals in a society cannot be generalised:

I submit that the villagers' relation to the animal world shows a similar complexity which expresses neither a sense of affinity with animals alone nor a clear-cut distinction and separation from them, but rather a co-existence of both attitudes in varying intensities which create a perpetual tension. (Tambiah 1969: 455)

Tambiah urges that when considering the attitude a society exhibits towards animals, it is necessary to ask 'why the animals chosen are so appropriate in that context to objectify human sentiments and ideas' (1969: 457). The homology between animal categories and social organisation identified by Lévi-Strauss (1966), Leach (1963) and Douglas (1957) suggests that those animals that occupy the interstices of these systems are those which are 'good to think' (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 89). Leach identifies the horse as just such a 'marginal case', identifying the English taboo on eating horse-meat as reflecting the horse's status as, 'sacred and supernatural creatures surrounded by feelings that are ambiguously those of awe and horror' (Leach 1963: 32). This interpretation neglects both vertical and synchronic considerations. The horse is noble, and possesses a suitably aristocratic history, which unfolds symbiotically with its class association:

The importance of horses as symbols of social class persisted up to the increased popularity of the automobile and in a somewhat reduced fashion, up to the present. (Howe 1981: 290)

In Newmarket, where 'everything is horse', the role of the racehorse in both idealising and envisaging alternatives to the pertaining social logic of racing society is predictably central:

animals are good to think with, but the way in which they are used (and thought of) varies both with people's familiarity with them and also with the availability of other possible human models, other ethnic groups, classes and social categories, either for emulation as ideals or for derogation as others. (Tapper 1988: 51)³

The next section of this chapter considers how animals are personalised on the thoroughbred stud. Whether one believes that a horse can be loyal or brave, is secondary to the observation that, in Newmarket, horses are both, and also naughty, funny, wicked and spiteful.

On becoming a studhand

I spent the spring of 1997 working as a studhand at a stud in Cheveley. There are approximately sixty studs in the Newmarket area and Cheveley, four miles from the centre of Newmarket, is really a collection of studs with an incidental village at the centre. The rhythms of this village are entirely dictated by the stud work in which most of the residents are involved, and many of the houses are tied to particular studs. Traffic is mainly horseboxes or bicycles, and a visit to the shop at lunch time means joining a steady stream of booted and anoraked studhands buying papers and cheese rolls. The stud on which I conducted fieldwork was founded in 1926, and comprises 200 acres. It has an illustrious reputation. It no longer stands any stallions, being a boarding stud for mares and their foals, a large proportion of whom are permanent residents.

My opportunity to experience stud work stemmed from my relationship with polo players at the Cambridge and Newmarket Club. Polo ponies belonging to the daughter of a stud manager needed exercising whilst she was away at school, I wanted to work on a stud, and so a deal was struck. Working on a stud has in itself been described to me as contributing to the maintenance of the 'great family', that is the breed of the English racehorse, and it soon became clear that, as in every family, some the mares on the stud were loved elderly aunts whilst others were black sheep.

The members of staff at the stud were, in order of seniority, Hugh, manager; Brian, stud groom; Norman, second man; Rachel, stud hand; John, stud hand; Tony, gardener. Two secretaries handled administration in the office, liaising mainly with Brian. The day began at 7:30, when all the outdoor staff met in the top yard. Idle chat on the way to the 'foaling yard' generally included a discussion of what I had eaten for

³Tapper's ideas evoke Tambiah's observation in response to the work of Lévi-Strauss (1966), that, 'Cultures and social systems are, after all, not only thought, but also lived' (Tambiah 1969: 457).

supper the previous evening, since my vegetarian diet was a constant source of fascination. The morning rounds began in the foaling yard with the 'heavies', the name given to the mares who were about to foal. We looked at their 'bag' to see whether they had begun to 'wax' on their teats, which would suggest that foaling was imminent. Mares very rarely foal during the day and we would invariably put all these mares out into their paddock for the day.

After we had put the 'heavies' in their paddock, we all squeezed into the tiny 'Rascal' van with all four dogs and drove the short distance down to the main yard. John fetched the 'teaser' from his box. If I once knew the 'teaser's name, it must have been mentioned so rarely that I have now forgotten it. My sympathy for the 'teaser' lasted until he bit my elbow whereupon he became as invisible to me as he was to the rest of the staff. He was as much a machine as I have known a horse to become, and was treated no differently to a lawnmower, the other piece of equipment with which I became most familiar during this time.

I was corrected for referring to the 'teaser' as a stallion. Although he is 'entire', he was not referred to as a stallion as he does not 'cover' mares on a regular basis, or rather covering is not his primary function. His primary function is to establish whether the mares are 'in season', i.e. whether they are receptive to mating, which indicates that they are ready to be sent away to be covered. The teaser was put in a box with a 'trying board' between him and the mare who was led into the next box. The mares were fetched individually, and Hugh and Brian watched their reaction as Rachel, Norman and myself led them through. The mares kicked the boards if they were either not in season or in foal. If they were in season their reaction would vary from merely tolerating the 'teaser' to throwing themselves against the board, squatting and peeing and 'winking' at him with their vagina. Most of the reactions required some interpretation by Brian and Hugh, who were familiar with the mares and with the signs they showed at particular times of their cycle. Mares who misbehaved at the board were firmly reprimanded with a tug on their rope, or on the bit of a Chifney, a handling bit which gives more control to the handler. They were admonished with the words, 'Come on, old mare'.

Once the mares had been 'teased' the horses in the main yard were put out into their paddocks. When leading a mare and foal the foal is held on the right and must be pushed through doorways and gates in front of the mare so that she does not trample it. Foals are held with two fingers under their chin on the headcollars ('hats') that they have worn since their first or second day. Because foals are unpredictable and strong it is advisable to have a person walking behind pushing the foal along in case it chooses to 'go into reverse'. Norman and Rachel generally teamed up in this way,

whilst I helped and was helped by everyone. When Norman followed Rachel with a foal John and Brian wondered aloud whether he was following the foal or Rachel. Brian handled the foals gently, but firmly, he spoke to them all the time, and laughed at them when they were naughty. Norman was more forceful, and sometimes shouted at them or disciplined them. Brian's explanation for this was that Norman had 'lost his bottle'.

All of the staff used terms such as 'Mummy' when returning a foal to a mare, and Brian called all of the foals 'Foaly' or by their nicknames. Nicknames were applied to most of the horses, and were mainly a reference to their real name (e.g. 'Bun' for Current Raiser, or 'Strikey' for Strike A Light), for foals a reference to their sire (e.g. 'Little Lion' by Lion Cavern or 'Barry', by Baratheia), or a reference to their personality or appearance (e.g. 'Kipper', who was smelly, or 'Chopper' who always tried to bite, or 'Donkey' who looked like a donkey when he was a foal). In other words, the individuality of the horses was highlighted through their nickname, and considerable time was spent discussing the right choice of name according to the 'personality' of each horse.

Once the main yard had been put out we took the van to the lower yearling yards to put out the colts and fillies, in what was the most terrifying part of the day. The only predictable yearling behaviour was that they were all 'gobby', that is they continually tried to bite your arms, legs and face. Otherwise they were totally unpredictable and incredibly strong. We would leave the stables in co-ordinated waves, because if a yearling felt that it was being left behind it would pull away to give chase to its companions. Sometimes they would just 'have their backs up' particularly when it was windy which I really dreaded. Once we got inside the field we all turned and faced the yearling with our back against the hedge for protection, and the person who had shut the gate behind us shouted 'O.K.' We would all let go at the same time, in the hope that none of us would be trampled or dragged off. The yearlings who came into the field first would often get impatient whilst waiting and rear up on their back legs over our heads, trying to get their leg over the line to get away. Brian laughed, Norman shouted and yanked on the line and I put my hands over my head and let go, although the knowledge that these animals were to be sold for hundreds of thousands of pounds in six months time gave me an exceptionally strong grip at times.

Once the yearlings had been turned out I breathed a sigh of relief and we returned to the main yard where Hugh and Brian discussed any arrangements for mares to go away for 'servicing' during the day or for mares or mares and foals arriving to board. Brian and I then went up to the foaling yard whilst John went down to the yearling yard, Rachel and Norman remained in the main yard. Brian and I

mucked out the boxes every other day and 'picked up' the droppings on the intervening days. Finally, we swept the yard and put their feed in their mangers. Brian's extreme anthropomorphism manifested itself in his obsession with the horses being treated 'as you would like to be treated yourself' and in his opinion that if I wouldn't eat or drink from a trough myself then it needed cleaning. When the boxes were ready we shut top and bottom doors. At 10 a.m. we had 'breakfast'. Everyone else went to their respective houses whilst I sat in the 'rest room', to read back copies of sales catalogues, which documented the sales of the yearlings born on the stud in previous years.

From 10.30 until 12.45 I helped in the main yard and, if there was time, began mowing, strimming or sweeping. The main yard contained thirty boxes, all of which were mucked out and 'set' i.e. refilled with straw. I usually got the job of cleaning mangers and water drinkers, whilst Norman and Rachel mucked out onto the muck trailer and Tony followed, 'setting fair', that is, laying a bed of straw. I was also allowed to sweep the road and to rake the grass in the main yard to remove stray pieces of straw. The stud is rigorously maintained. All of the lawns have their own particular pattern of straight lines and geometrical shapes mown into them, and straw is not allowed to build up or fly about around the buildings or on the grass. An obsession with orderliness, attention to detail and precision informed almost all of the activities of the studhands. I would suggest that this obsession arises from the same impulse which motivates the mapping and manipulation of thoroughbred pedigrees, the impulse to control the environment, and to predict the outcome of 'natural' processes such as reproduction. The stud farm is an environment in which nature is defined by 'nature-like' features such as lawns and flowerbeds, which caricature rather than reproduce any notion of nature as independent of human control. In this environment, horses live inside, grass is grown in straight lines and the muck associated with horses is hidden.



8.1 Stud landscape, Cheveley
(Author's Photograph 1997)

Lunch was taken at 12.45 until 2.00, during which everyone again disappeared into their own houses. After lunch there was occasionally a mare to take to be covered, but otherwise the afternoon was spent mowing, strimming or sweeping in order to maintain the immaculate state of the stud grounds. I became well known for my ability to mow in a straight line which was ill-advised, since there were a lot of parallel lines to mow. John and Tony both helped me with my mowing, giving me tips regarding overlap and the importance of frequent emptying of the clippings trap. Tony also made me promise not to put my hand in the mower to unblock it, but rather to always use a stick. Norman saw me using a stick and said that I was being silly, and to demonstrate stuck his hand inside the mower and said 'See, it won't hurt you'. I thought that I might die of boredom, failing to realise that Norman and Tony devised strong opinions about things in order to alleviate the tedium of the day.

On two occasions I was allowed to take out a mare, which was a real privilege. On the first occasion, Brian had noticed that I gave my apple core to a particular mare, named Habitancy, each day after lunch. He said that I had obviously 'taken' to her, and allowed me to take her for covering by Sadler's Hall. The idea that I had formed a relationship with the mare as an individual fell easily within Brian's interpretation of dealing with horses. He thought that she would be happier to go to the stallion with me because she had obviously 'taken to me' too. When I asked Brian about particular horses he was initially bashful saying that he had no preferences except for those animals which were easy to deal with, stayed free from injury and illness and went for a good price at the end of it. After a while, however, Brian admitted that he had favourites amongst the older mares, because they had been 'together' for quite some time, and he had got to know all their 'little ways'.

Brian particularly liked a quirky mare named Pato, and delighted in her unpredictable nature. Brian explained that he enjoyed the knowledge that he could deal safely with Pato having invested a great deal of time in his relationship with her. He told me that 'the more individual they are the better I take to them, but don't tell my wife!' I pondered what this could possibly mean, other than that Brian either thought that his relationships with mares constituted an infidelity to his wife, or that I shouldn't tell her as she might imagine that he would prefer her to be 'difficult'. In either case the crossover between ideas about horses and people is significant, and Brian often described his relationship with 'his' mares according to the template of marriage.

Taking Habitancy to be covered by Sadler's Hall was a huge responsibility, not only because she was a valuable mare but also because I felt that I was acting as a catalyst in the vast chain of thoroughbred pedigree. The lorry arrived, and it was a short journey down the road to Cheveley Park Stud. We waited in the box for ages and Habitancy became rather agitated, trying to see out and calling to other horses. She took no notice of me apart from the odd distracted bite of my arm. It was easy to imagine some truth in the box driver's claim that 'the old mare knows where she is'. Eventually, the 'stallion men' let me out of the box where I was standing holding her, and took her from me. To my surprise, they ushered me in to watch which is standard practice to ensure that the covering is witnessed. This witnessing is not the final guarantor of paternity, however, since it still enables substitute horses ('ringers') to be used. In addition, stud managers must provide a sample of blood from each foal, which is tested by Weatherbys in order to establish parentage absolutely.

Three men were in the covering barn. One held the mare using a twitch (tourniquet) on her nose, one put felt boots on her back feet, took a swab from her vagina and bandaged her tail. Another man held Sadler's Hall, the stallion, on a shank

(a long chain and leather rein). The man holding the mare commented that 'he's very quiet' whereupon the stallion started screeching and we all laughed. The spare man then said 'Come on then, Donkey Dick', and the stallion mounted the mare, who stood quietly. The spare man held a 'belly bar' between the stallion's stomach and the mare's back. The covering was over within a minute. The boots were then undone and Habitancy flicked them off and was handed back to me. She seemed alert and excited. We climbed back into the lorry, came home, and I led her to her paddock. As I walked along the yard, Habitancy coughed and a jet of fluid came flying out of her vagina into the path of Hugh who had been following us. He shouted at Habitancy: 'Keep your legs shut you stupid bitch, that cost seven and a half grand!'

I also took Bun to 'visit' Salse at Side Hill Stud. When I told the box driver that Salse had been very quiet he laughed and said that anyone would be on 'four jumps a day'. The implication was that Salse had low fertility and was having 'empty' mares returned to him to be re-covered. Low fertility in stallions is dreaded by their managers, but particularly by the 'stallion men' who are the grooms who have sole charge of a stallion. Their very nomenclature suggests the fusing of human and animal, such that a stallion man conjures up images of a centaur, rather than a small grumpy man in a brown coat. These men wear long coats with their stallion's name on their back. They are often the only person who has any contact with that stallion, and develop extremely strong bonds with their charges. These men are the most extreme example of the individuality and personalisation of horses in Newmarket since they come to be identified with, or even to personify, their horse.

Heated discussions of fertility rates in the pub are an integral part of the season, and criticism of a stallion in front of his man may lead to the exchange of blows, as one man said to me: 'You can criticise my wife, but leave the horse out of it'. Implicit in the criticism of the horse is criticism of 'his' man, thus casting aspersions on the horse's sexual prowess also brands his man impotent. In a society in which potency is supremely valued by men, a lack of virility is amongst the worst insult available. The stallion may also provide a substitute for the man's virility, where this is lacking. The stallion man who encourages his charge during coverings with cries of 'Do it for Daddy!' is perhaps the most respected stallion man in Newmarket, his outburst is explained on the grounds that, 'Well, of course, Jim has no kids of his own'. Identification with their stallions is competitive amongst these men, whose pastimes include measuring their horse's testicles, symbol of potency, in order to brag about their size in the pub. Basking in the glory of the stallion, the apex of the thoroughbred pedigree, these men become 'studs' by association.

After mowing patterns for most of the afternoon, preparations would begin for the vet's afternoon visit. The teasing box housed a set of horse stocks, which held mares still during their internal examination. I generally got the job of holding the tail out of the way. On my first day the vet 'stitched' two mares whilst I held the tail. Mares who have had several foals tend to have a dropped uterus which can suck in air and cause infection. In order to stop air getting in the vet injects a local anaesthetic, makes a slit either side of the vagina and stitches it together. This was a test for me, and made me cringe. Norman laughed at my expression and said that he hoped I liked my steak rare.

The vet used ultrasound in order to detect pregnancies and on my last day he found a set of twins, and used the head of the scanner to burst one of the fertilised eggs, explaining that twins would usually be aborted rather than going full term. I teased the vet about his choice, and suggested that he might have just popped a champion. He failed to find much humour in this thought, and creased his brow in annoyance. He explained that he had chosen the most 'symmetrical, well shaped, healthy looking egg', thus guaranteeing that he had left the 'fittest' to survive. I quickly smothered my laughter with a cough when I realised that he was being entirely serious.

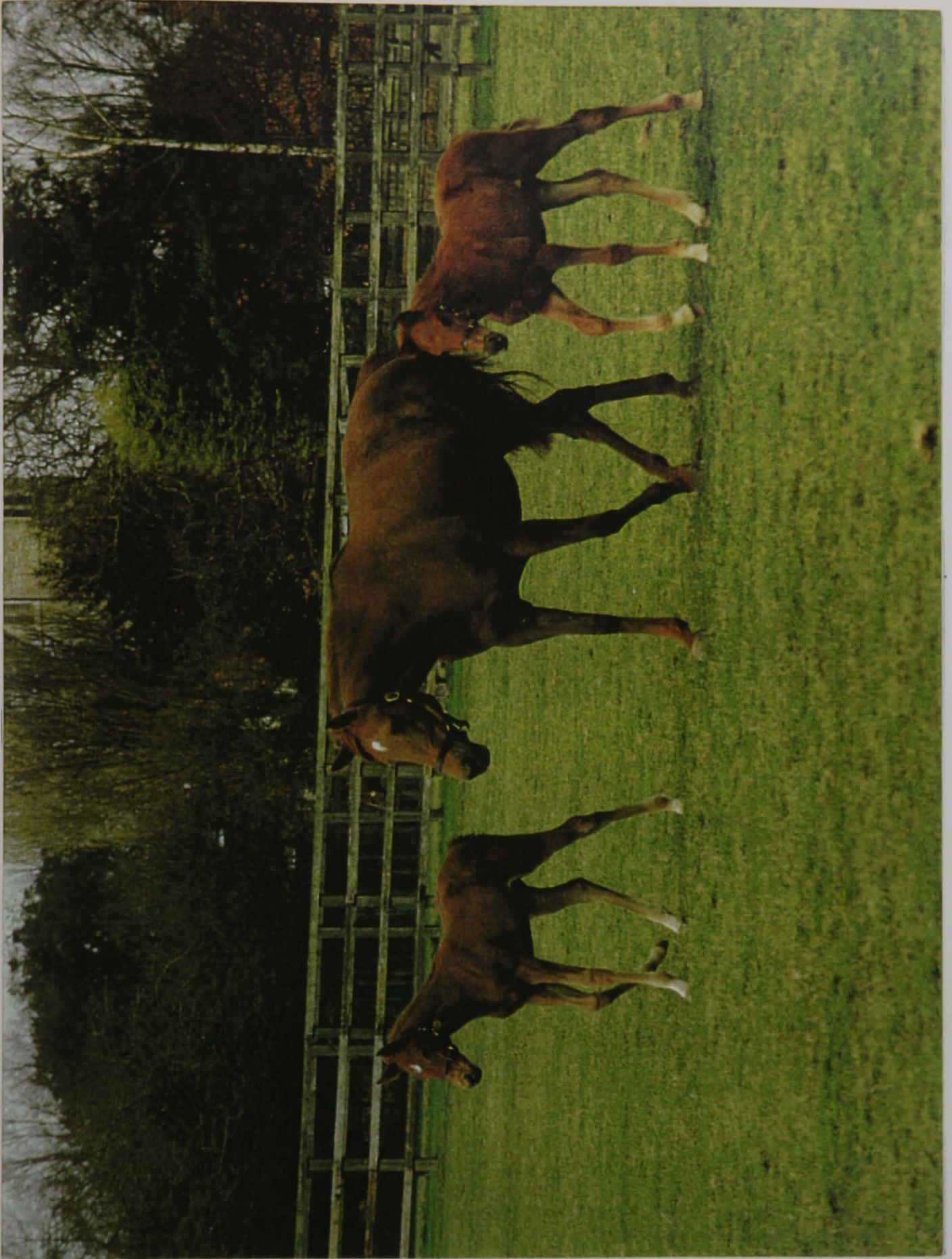
Where a mare is slow to cycle, she is given hormones in order to bring her into season, whilst infections which may prevent fertilisation are flushed out with saline drenches. The vet thought that under 'natural' conditions the thoroughbred would be an alternate year breeder, and told me that the selective breeding programme based upon the desire for speed had resulted in a variety of genital deformities, and weaknesses in foals. The vet came every day and saw between three and ten mares. The work was routine, except for a case of joint ill and an x-ray of a yearling's leg, during which he was doped. Once the vet had finished we brought in the rest of the mares and foals. The day finished at 4:30, when I had to exercise polo ponies in return for the privilege of having spent another day sweeping, mowing and holding tails. The rest of the staff refused to have anything to do with the ponies and laughed at me for my involvement with the 'second class citizens' (their expression). Polo ponies are a 'type' rather than a breed, and are granted no respect at all by the racing community.

The experience of working at the stud was characterised by long periods of boredom interspersed with brief moments of excitement and almost profundity. The language used on the stud was fascinating, but soon taken for granted. A mare is 'empty' before she is 'covered' or 'jumped' by a sire. She may then 'take' and become a 'heavy' with a 'bag' and in time have her foal, becoming a 'mum' in the

process. Her foal must learn to wear a 'hat' (headcollar) on its second day. If this is her first foal she is a 'maiden', whilst others may be at the end of their breeding careers and so join the 'barreners'. The jargon betrays essential features of the stud. The mare is 'empty', not because of any ignorance of the reproductive organs of the horse, but because of the ideology of procreation which obtains throughout the industry, which will be discussed in the next chapter, in relation to the sales catalogue. The consistent personalisation of ties between humans and particular horses blurred the category distinction made between humans and horses on the stud. The use of categories usually restricted to humans, such as 'maiden', 'mummy', 'baby', 'hat', etc. reflects the propensity of those who work on studs to imagine their lives through horses and horses' lives through their own. One episode at the stud exemplified this propensity.

During my stay at the stud a foal was rejected by her dam, and so became an 'orphan'. Hugh had hired two 'foster mares', and had had no success with either of them. The trade in 'foster mares' is grim, particularly if they come from a particular Irishman who allegedly buys ponies from gypsy sites, kills their foal and hires out the mare for £1000 a time. He then has the mare covered by the teaser at the stud that has hired the mare 'as a favour' and begins again. We had one of these ponies on the stud, and people perpetually referred to her as 'him'. When I asked about this Brian responded that he referred to 'it' as 'he' or 'it' because it lacked any maternal instincts and added in an incredulous tone: 'It tried to kill the foal!' The pony was of an entirely different physical type to the rest of the mares, being a heavy cart horse sort, which may have contributed to her nebulous status. Apparently she had been tied to a wall for three days with a sack over her head and her legs bound up so that the foal could drink without being kicked.

Whilst this mare was treated as of indeterminate gender, the spontaneous adoption of the foal by another mare enabled her to achieve 'superfemininity'. 'Strike a Light', a mare with her own foal, had the box next to the orphan and we noticed that she called to her when she was taken out to be fed, and when she returned. We gingerly introduced the three and 'Strikey' accepted the foal, ostensibly treating her in the same way as she treated her own foal. The three were an object of amusement for the stud, and were collectively referred to as 'the odd couple'. The foal was called 'Herbetina', a feminised version of Herbert, an affectionate term for naughty foals, who had redeeming features. Everyone was very fond of Strikey, she was regarded as a model mare, because her maternal instincts were strong and indiscriminate. The foal was liked as it was cheeky enough to drink from her, as well as being fed by us.



8.2 'The odd couple': mare with her own foal and her adopted foal (Author's Photograph 1997)

The stud is the locus of the physical reproduction of horses who have places in pedigrees known to the bloodstock industry. Activities on the stud thus reflect the ideas of procreation and gender built into the pedigree method of relating racehorses. On the stud, horses are personalised and individualised, granted human traits and drawn into relationships which operate according to the template of human interactions, thus encouraging metonymic thinking in which horses can be made to 'stand for' humans and vice versa.

Conclusion

The previous section concentrated upon those contexts in which horses are personalised or individualised in seemingly human terms. I shall now introduce a context in which the power of the analogy between human and horse depends on a separation of the two such that the English thoroughbred racehorse is cast as 'man's noblest creation'. The sameness of humans and horses asserted by many of their day-to-day interactions in Newmarket is complemented by a hierarchical relationship between them in which man is the god-like master of all he surveys. In this role, breeders of thoroughbred racehorses have appropriated the power of 'God' or 'Nature' and selectively bred to their own design. Racehorses in this context are the object of their all powerful human creators. Where the protracted genealogy of 'man' has been lost, the thoroughbred's is intact, its aristocratic properties recorded and thus maintained, even concentrated:

blood succession becomes a means of stemming the tide of time - replication is emphasised and change is accommodated - the dead king is replaced by a live king whose blood succession ensures that no radical alteration has taken place. Each produces 'after his kind'. In kingship the aspect of *restoration* is intensified, and succession becomes not a means of change but a way of standing still. (Beer 1983: 32)

It is no coincidence that one of the champion racehorses of 1997 was called 'King of Kings'.

The defining feature of the English thoroughbred is that all its present day stock can be traced to three male progenitors imported to England in the eighteenth century. The genesis of the breed is recorded in the General Stud Book, which has recorded births and deaths amongst the thoroughbred population since 1791, forty-six years before the registration of human births and deaths became a legal requirement in Great Britain (Morris 1997: 10). Since that time, the breed has operated a closed book breeding programme, to the extent that 'over 80% of the population's gene pool derives from thirty-one known ancestors from this early period' (Mahon 1980: 22). The boundaries of the breed are fiercely policed by, for example, the obligatory blood testing of every foal in order to guarantee paternity and maternity. There are no other

criteria by which a horse can qualify as a thoroughbred and any thoughts that a thoroughbred may 'become' such by means other than birth are nonsensical. The pedigree of the English thoroughbred is thus absolutely fixed.⁴

The pedigree theory which informs ideas of relatedness between thoroughbred racehorses contains an implicit notion of man as controlling nature, an impulse made visible in the maintenance of the stud. However, the co-existing attitude which denies any boundary between humans and horses facilitates the projection of this means of ordering the world from horses onto humans. This projection could equally be described in reverse, from the English aristocracy of the eighteenth century onto their racehorses. Both directions are fundamentally constitutive of the intersubjectivity observed within racing society. This intersubjectivity is symptomatic of the:

tendency of human thought to project upon the natural world (and particularly the animal kingdom) categories and values derived from human society and then to serve them back as a critique or reinforcement of the human order, justifying some particular political order or social arrangement on the grounds that it is somehow more 'natural' than any alternative. (Thomas 1983: 6).

The persuasiveness of this technique depends upon the separation of nature and culture, such that cultural mores may be justified by an appeal to their natural analogues. The multiple meanings of 'nature' in thoroughbred breeding are thus evident. 'Nature' can be both man made (the thoroughbred), and also the culturally immune standard by which artifice should be judged. It can therefore be both dominated or treated as an ultimate authority. Humans and horses can thus be both the same and different, according to human purposes.

The following chapter will discuss the ideology of pedigree in more detail. It will pursue the idea that the relationship between horses and humans in Newmarket facilitates an extended dialogue in which opinions about humans are expressed as opinions about horses.

⁴The one exception to this rule of which I am aware is that of the 'vehicle', the name given to a horse that is the sixth cross away from a non-thoroughbred. A thoroughbred crossed with a vehicle will qualify as a thoroughbred, despite the fact that the vehicle does not! I could only find one example of such a horse, called Clantime, who was a popular sprinter in the 1980s.

Chapter Nine: Pedigree

Introduction

This chapter seeks to complement the analysis of those anthropologists who have identified 'pedigree thinking' as the culturally specific foundation beneath the genealogical method:

pedigree thinking was so important to English middle-class intellectuals that it was absorbed into the processes of making knowledge about other peoples. (Bouquet 1993: 219)¹

The notion of pedigree is explicitly employed in Newmarket, and its consequences embraced where they have been overlooked by much anthropology:

In the eighteenth century, however, new arts of stockbreeding led to records being kept of the pedigrees of racehorses and prize cattle. These thus came to be called pedigreed horse, pedigreed cattle as against the common sort whose pedigrees no-one knew. Thus the word pedigree acquired overtones of superiority which the word genealogy had never had. I, however, use it here not in that way but simply as a synonym for genealogy, and I do so because it is shorter and begins with 'p'. (Wagner 1975: 1)

The genealogical method makes it possible to investigate abstract problems on a purely concrete basis. (Rivers 1968: 107)

I will consider the ideas which inform the ideology of pedigree in the racing industry, specifically, ideas of procreation, heredity and gender, all of which implicate a particular conception of 'nature' and its relation to humanity. I shall suggest that, in Newmarket, pedigrees are thought to map 'naturally' immutable groups of people who embody their class by virtue of birth. These are the 'facts of life' in Newmarket.

The 'dualisms' of sex/gender, nature/culture, which Haraway urges us to renegotiate, are central to notions of pedigree in Newmarket. Whilst Haraway's argument in *Primate Visions* is a panoramic vision of primatology in conversation with different academic disciplines and popular discourses, the context of horseracing is a far more limited example of the same process whereby, animals 'have modelled a vast array of human problems and hopes' (Haraway 1989: 2).

The tendency to project traits valued by human society onto the horse can even be observed in contemporary anthropology. Atwood Lawrence (1985) emphasises the 'sensitivity' of the horse, and its capacity for 'fine tuned communication', in what can be seen as a response to the conventional distinction between animals and humans on the grounds of the possession of a language:

¹Bouquet pursues David Schneider's contention that genealogical reckoning constitutes a 'European folk-model' (1968, 1984), by identifying the origin of this model in the habitus of early anthropologists, and specifically in 'English ideas about animality, personhood and distinction' (Bouquet 1993: 187). She uses the stories of Beatrix Potter in order to discuss "'thinking with animals' in a specifically English fashion" (ibid. 193), identifying discourses that I would also like to attribute to contemporary Newmarket.

Associated with the equine capacity for providing traction and transport have always been the horse's extreme sensitivity and an unusual capacity for fine tuned communication with people. (Atwood Lawrence 1985: 197)

This reaction is a tacit acceptance of the animal/human dualism because it seeks to establish a factor that unites both sides, rather than identifying its historical and cultural specificity and thereby diffusing its claims: I would suggest that Atwood Lawrence is indulging in thinking made possible by the freedom of the horse from the roles which curtail the ability of most other domestic animals to represent humans. Racehorses are not agricultural workers, servants or food sources, and are thus a striking example of Appadurai's identification of luxury goods as 'incarnated signs' the function of which is entirely political (Appadurai 1986: 38).

Characterising racehorses as incarnated signs supports the contention that the motivation to control their husbandry was more ideological than practical:

Discourse about animals in eighteenth and nineteenth century England also expressed many human concerns linked only tenuously to the natural world. Such associations represent a widespread rhetorical practice, which the Victorians exploited with special vigour...The very categories into which animals were divided often signalled important distinctions and oppositions. (Ritvo 1987: 3-4)

In this chapter I shall consider the nature of these distinctions and oppositions, and the impulses to which they are a response.

I shall begin by examining the relationship between 'blood', the substance of heredity in Newmarket, and the environment. Put simply, the ideology of pedigree asserts the supremacy of 'nature' rather than 'nurture', and the theoretical underpinnings of this position are to be found in biometrical genetics and neo-Darwinism. The literary form taken by thoroughbred pedigrees will then be considered in the form of the sales catalogue. The use of the sales catalogue reflects not only my own literary bias, but that of racing society. Records and archives are cherished in Newmarket, and the sales catalogue is a gorgeously detailed description of the contemporary English thoroughbred, cast in specialist language and structured according to conventions specific to racing society. The sales catalogue has been compared explicitly to a 'romantic novel' by some of my informants, and by others as 'the script to a soap opera'. I shall suggest that the conventions surrounding the recording of pedigree in the sales catalogue reflect ideas about procreation similar to those described as 'monogeneticism' by Delaney (1986). I pursue the idea that:

Our model of the natural differences in the roles of men and women in sexual reproduction lies at the core of our studies of the cultural organisation of gender, at the same time that it constitutes the core of the genealogical grid that has defined kinship for us. (Yanagisako 1985: 1)

The ideology of pedigree is particularly strongly endorsed by those individuals who consider themselves to be members of 'real Newmarket families'. This ideology hinges on the idea that the defining features of both animals and humans are hereditary:

Pedigree analysis may have been erroneous in animal breeding, and the beliefs about transmittable qualities may not have been corroborated by the results of such crosses. Pedigree was, nonetheless, firmly entrenched in other beliefs about the transmission of exceptional human qualities from noble ancestors. (Bouquet 1993: 190-191)

Although it has become conventional to see pedigree as having connotations of 'nobility', I will argue that in contemporary Newmarket what is inherited can be identified more precisely. The most valued features in this secret and enclosed society are determined in relation to success in its most sacred arena, the racecourse. Horses' pedigrees are consequently researched on the basis that their 'ability', i.e. their speed and stamina, is determined by hereditary principles. In the case of humans, it is the *specialist embodied knowledge* appropriate to each particular role of trainer, jockey, bloodstock agent, or lad, that is inherited. Success within these roles is entirely determined by 'talent', a natural quality which cannot be taught, and so must be bred.

It is for this reason that the acceptable means by which a jockey 'learns' his trade is through apprenticeship, rather than attending the British Racing School which produces 'rubbish'. Similarly, training licences are inherited by trainer's children with far less difficulty than a new licence is obtained by an outsider. Almost every biographical piece concerning jockeys, trainers or bloodstock agents, mentions parentage and asserts the inevitability of a career in racing for someone of 'racing stock'. The genealogies of the major racing families in Newmarket are only slightly less well known than those of the equine 'families' who they train.

In the final section of this chapter I consider the reactions of members of racing society to Artificial Insemination (AI) amongst the thoroughbred population. The possibilities of equine new reproductive technologies provoke heated reactions amongst members of racing society not simply because they undermine kinship reckoning, but because in doing so they threaten the basis of the town and the industry: class. Ideas discussed in relation to pedigree can thus also be made sense of in terms of class:

The idea of being or not being an Elmton person is certainly illuminated by what can be known of village conditions and the particular conditions under which the classification is applied. But in the end it is also to be understood in relation to other ideas, which far from being embedded in this very local context are the property of our society as a whole. (Strathern 1981: 17)

The relationship between 'blood' and the environment in the racing industry

The ideology of pedigree maintains that ability is hereditary. The main locus of ideas pertaining to the influence of breeding relative to that of the environment is in the status of the trainer, because the racehorse's inherited ability is mediated by the trainer

with whom it is placed. The status of the trainer thus reflects the extent to which environment and training regime are thought to influence ability. I found that in Newmarket, the consensus was that a trainer cannot instil talent in a horse, but he may inhibit its expression. Thus the horse possesses a finite amount of talent by virtue of its breeding, the trainer can only aid or hinder the extent to which the horse fulfils this potential. Even the most brilliant trainer is not seen as creating talent, rather he may be paid the ultimate accolade available within the ideology of pedigree that contextualises the racing industry: 'He hasn't ruined too many'.

The pedigree theory of the racing industry is employed in a piecemeal fashion, with little effort made to maintain consistency, or to pursue the contradictions to which it unfailingly gives rise. For example, in discussing the 'story of Anabaa', a precocious sprinter, and winner of the Darley July Cup at Newmarket in 1996, Peter Willett, a 'Bloodstock expert', writing in *Horse and Hound*, stated that: 'The specialist speed of Balbonella and the speed which Anabaa has inherited could not have been anticipated from her pedigree' (Willett 1996: 27). Despite this, Willett goes on to suggest that the mare may well stay a mile on the basis that her great grand dam, great grand sire, and great great grand dam were stayers². There are obviously as many interpretations of racehorses and pedigrees as there are bloodstock experts. Furthermore, if a sufficient number of generations are included in the analysis of an individual then the 'origin' of any trait can be identified.

The pedigree theory offers a form of explanation insulated from criticism, because it does not impose limits on the number of generations through which an influence may be transmitted. Where a trait must be explained by the influence of a distant ancestor, the notion of 'prepotency' can be employed, such that the ancestor in question was capable of 'stamping' his stock to a disproportionate degree to more recent relatives. It is therefore virtually impossible to establish a contradiction to the ideology of pedigree. Where experts really struggle to explain the presence of a sprinter in a family of stayers, for example, the individual is cast as 'the exception that proves the rule'. 'Individuals' such as 'Soba', the incredibly fast filly who came from an undistinguished family and bred undistinguished offspring was described as a 'freak' by my informants.

The resilience of pedigree thinking in the racing industry cannot be explained on the basis of the results it achieves:

The only certainty of pedigrees is that they will confound you. No animal species is better documented than the Thoroughbred, yet, after two centuries of controlled racing and breeding, the laws of reproduction decree that luck will always be a major factor. (Rae 1990: 40)

²Stayers' are those horses capable of running long distances, of further than a mile and a half, and up to four miles. They are opposed to 'sprinters' whose optimum distance is less than a mile and a half.

The pedigree thinking that informs the breeding of thoroughbred racehorses relies upon a biometrical theory of genetics which states that the proportion of genes in the overall genome of an offspring will be half of each parent, quarter of each grandparent and so on:

It is law of genetics that the foal will inherit 50% of its genes from the sire and 50% from the dam, and no amount of agonising over the covering will change that. (Rae 1990: 4)

This is an identical idea to that which Wolfram identified behind anthropological notions of consanguinity:

Parental 'bloods' were supposed to mix in the progeny so that the heredity of a child was a solution, or an alloy of equal parts of the parental heredities. The heredity of a person was thought to be an alloy in which the heredity of each of its four grandparents were represented by one quarter, of each of eight great grandparents by one eighth etc. (Dobzhansky 1955 quoted by Wolfram 1987: 13)

Both of these theories depend upon the notion of preformation, or *emboitement*, which maintains that genes are insulated from environmental influences. These theories reflect the influence of the one gene - one trait model of Mendelian genetics rediscovered at the beginning of the twentieth century. As one racehorse breeder admits: 'Mendelism and Mendel haunt horsemen, like Banquo's ghost to Macbeth, to the point of utter senselessness' (Varola 1974: 2).

The conventions by which thoroughbred pedigrees are interpreted reflect the biometric theory of genetics and also confirm the significance of 'blood' as the substance of heredity. Relatedness between thoroughbreds is expressed both in terms of human family terms and also in terms of blood. Thus foals by the same dam and sire will be full sisters. Foals by the same dam but different sires will be half sisters.

Foals by the same sire are not identified as half siblings:

By Same Sire: by the same sire and out of different dams. While technically they share as much blood relation as half-siblings, stallions produce far too many foals each year to consider the same, and to refer to them as half-siblings is *patently incorrect*. (Morse 1996: 1 itals. added)

Aside from relations modelled on human families, foals may also be, for example, 'own sisters in blood' by virtue of their dam's having been full sisters, as illustrated below.

185 A CHESNUT FILLY (first foal) Foaled April 5th, 1996	(WITH VAT)	Storm Bird (CAN)	Northern Dancer
	Bluebird (USA)	Ivory Dawn (USA)	South Ocean (CAN)
	Scammony (IRE) (1991)	Persian Bold	Sir Ivor
		Polyester Girl	Dusky Evening (USA)
			Bold Lad (IRE)
			Relkarunner
			Ridan (USA)
			Garrucha

Own sister in blood to **LAKE CONISTON (IRE)**.
E.B.F. nominated.

1st Dam

SCAMMONY (IRE), ran once at 3 years; Own sister to **Persian Polly**.

2nd Dam

POLYESTER GIRL, won 1 race at 4 years and £1370 and placed 7 times;
dam of **three winners** from 8 runners and 9 foals of racing age including-

Persian Polly (f. by Persian Bold), won 1 race and £2769, placed third in Park Stakes, Leopardstown, **Gr.3**; dam of winners.

LAKE CONISTON (IRE) (c. by Bluebird (USA)), Top rated 3yr old sprinter in France in 1994, won July Cup, Newmarket, **Gr.1**, Diadem Stakes, Ascot, **Gr.3**, Duke of York Stakes, York, **Gr.3**, Prix de Meautry, Deauville, **Gr.3**, Abernant Stakes, Newmarket, **L.** and Hackwood Stakes, Newbury, **L.**; sire.

Treble Eight, won 3 races at home and abroad and £12,983, placed twice including third in G. Mercedes Benz-Bayerisches Zuchtrennen, Munich, **Gr.1**.

9.1 Extract from catalogue entry for Lot 185, 1997 Houghton Sales

Foals may also be, for example, 'Three parts brothers in blood', as Molesnes and the bay colt below.

136 A BAY COLT (USA) Foaled January 24th, 1996	(WITH VAT)	Hoist The Flag (USA)	Tom Rolfe
	Alleged (USA)	Princess Pout (USA)	Wavy Navy
	Parliament House (USA) (1988)	General Assembly (USA)	Prince John
		Welsh Garden	Determined Lady
			Secretariat (USA)
			Exclusive Dancer (USA)
			Welsh Saint
			Garden of Eden

Three-parts brother in blood to **MOLESNES (USA)**.
Imported from U.S.A.
E.B.F./B.C. nominated.

1st Dam

PARLIAMENT HOUSE (USA), won 1 race in U.S.A.;

from 2 foals of racing age, dam of-

Exocet (USA) (1994 f. by Deposit Ticket (USA)), in training.

Sofia Aurora (USA) (1995 f. by Chief Honcho (USA)), in training.

2nd Dam

WELSH GARDEN, Champion 2-y-o filly in Ireland in 1975, won 5 races at 2 years and £4270 including Waterford Glass Nursery Handicap, Gowran Park, **L.** and placed once, from only 7 starts;

dam of **twelve winners** from 13 runners and 14 foals of racing age including-

CELTIC HEIR (USA) (c. by Czaravich (USA)), won 4 races at home and in Australia including Horris Hill Stakes, Newbury, **Gr.3**, placed second in T S Carlyon Cup, Caulfield, **Gr.2** and fourth in The Elders Mile, Caulfield, **Gr.1**.

MOLESNES (USA) (f. by Alleged (USA)), 6 races in France including Prix du Cadran, Longchamp, **Gr.1**, Prix Vicomtesse Vigier, Longchamp, **Gr.2** and Prix Kergorlay, Deauville, **Gr.2**, second in Prix de Barbeville, Saint-Cloud, **Gr.3**.

SUBJECTIVE (USA) (f. by Secretariat (USA)), won 5 races at home and in U.S.A. including Budweiser Suffolk Downs Breeders Cup Hcp, Suffolk Downs and Iris Stakes, Garden State, placed 13 times including second in Lady Baltimore Handicap, Laurel, **L.** and Wistful Handicap, Pimlico; dam of winners.

Celtic Assembly (USA) (f. by Secretariat (USA)), won 1 race and £8194, placed second in Lupe Stakes, Goodwood, **L.**; dam of winners.

9.2 Extract from catalogue entry for Lot 136, 1997 Houghton Sales

Many other calculations can be made according to which all sorts of fractional relationships in blood can be claimed. The limit to these tends to be in the third generation, after which, the catalogue records such innocuous claims as 'bred on similar lines to ...', in order to claim a famous relative. The substance of heredity can thus be separated from the individuals who serve as its vehicles.

Many breeding manuals appear to suggest that the role of the breeder is to breed selectively until a 'fast' gene is isolated and made homozygous to the English thoroughbred. Whilst I was in Newmarket, the work of Professor 'Twink' Allen (revealingly described by some as 'Professor of Racing', but actually Professor of Equine Reproduction at Cambridge) was the subject of a great deal of discussion. I was continually told that he had identified the 'speed' gene, which facilitated a more efficient breakdown of lactic acid in the muscles of the racehorse.

Recent work within biology on the relationship between genes and the environment undermines the separation that pedigree thinking depends upon:

genes are no more constant and essence-like than the traits they are supposed to determine. On the one hand, particular environments - sociocultural milieu - which influence development are passed on to subsequent generations. In the case of racehorses, it will be a regime of training and upkeep. On the other hand, environmental regimes influence the physiology of the organism, and these organismic influences leave physiological traces that may also be passed on, as hormonal / nutritional status, maternal effects, and sometimes, as alterations in the genes themselves. (Ho pers comm.)

This 'epigenetic' approach, evident in this communication, has arisen in opposition to the neo-Darwinian mechanistic view, which constitutes a merger of Darwin's theory of natural selection with Mendelian genetics:

When Mendelian genetics was rediscovered at the turn of the present century, and Weismann identified the material basis of heredity as the 'germplasm' in germ cells which became separate from the rest of the animal's body in the course of early development, it seemed to offer a perfect explanation of how Mendelian genes could be passed on unchanged from one generation to the next. Darwinism was promptly reinterpreted according to the gene theory in the 'neo-Darwinian synthesis' from the 1930s up to the 1950s and 1960s. This coincided with an extremely productive and exciting period in the history of biology as the gene theory itself continued to inspire a series of discoveries that culminated in the DNA double helix and the genetic code. (Ho 1996: 3)

Neo-Darwinism inspired the infamous 'selfish gene' theory, and was extended to animal and human societies in sociobiology, a central preoccupation of which was to explain the 'paradox' of altruistic behaviour. These theories all belie their origin in Darwinism, itself a product of Victorian England, wherein notions of popular zoology apparently conditioned:

all other discourse about animals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its wide audience ranged from learned biologists - Darwin's footnotes, for example, frequently mingled citations to learned journals with references to much homelier sources - to young children and the idly curious. Promulgating a coherent and hierarchical interpretation of the animal kingdom, this literature provided its readers with a shared set of assumptions, values and associations that simultaneously confirmed human ascendancy and supported the existing social order. (Ritvo 1987: 41-2)

The contention of Ingold, that: 'Contrary to normal assumptions, the borderline between humans and animals is anything but obvious, clear and immutable' (Ingold 1988: xii), is particularly well illustrated in racing in that the pedigree theory is also persistently applied to its human contingent:

Fergal Lynch, the nineteen year old apprentice from Londonderry...has all the right credentials to, as they say, 'make it'. A member of a keen racing family, his two brothers race-rode and one of them, Cathal, now has a growing string under his care in Atlantic City. (Audax in *The Sporting Life* 1996: 31)

My father was a trainer, and his father before him. My grandfather was a real stayer, a real dour man, all heart and enough about him to bring up a family. My dad was a different sort of brave, but he still had it in him, and so have I. I can spot a good horse a mile off and you won't beat me in a close finish. (Trainer)

The anthropomorphic relationship which obtains between humans and horses in Newmarket, as described in the preceding chapter, determines that those properties admired in well-bred humans are attributed to well-bred horses. 'Blood was important; there was a social hierarchy among animals no less than men, the one reinforcing the other' (Thomas 1983: 60), despite Thomas's reference to the period 1500-1800, I would argue that this is still the case in racing. The means of reckoning relatedness in Newmarket is a stark example of Bouquet's contention that: 'pedigree associations (however vague or misplaced) seem to have hung on with remarkable tenacity' (1993: 218).

Representing pedigrees

375- BBA

THURSDAY 2ND OCTOBER 1997

YEARLING, from Cheveley Park Stud

Will stand at Park Paddocks, Highflyer Paddock F, Box 73

349	(WITH VAT)	Northern Dancer	Nearctic
A BAY COLT	Sadler's Wells	Fairy Bridge	Natalma
Foaled	(USA)	(USA)	Bold Reason (USA)
April 16th, 1996	Exclusive Order	Exclusive Native	Special (USA)
	(USA)	(USA)	Raise A Native
	(1979)	Bonavista	Exclusive
			Dead Ahead
			Ribotina (ITY)

Own brother to **ENTREPRENEUR (GB)**, **SADLER'S IMAGE (IRE)**
and **DANCE A DREAM (GB)**.
E.B.F./B.C. nominated.

1st Dam

EXCLUSIVE ORDER (USA), won 4 races at 2 and 3 years in France, 755,000 fr. including Prix Maurice de Gheest, Deauville, **Gr.2**, Prix de la Porte Maillot, Longchamp, **Gr.3** and Prix du Calvados, Deauville, **Gr.3**, placed second in Prix de la Grotte, Longchamp, **Gr.3** and Prix de Seine-et-Oise, M'-Laffitte, **Gr.3** and fourth in Prix de la Salamandre, Longchamp, **Gr.1** and Prix Jacques le Marois, Deauville, **Gr.1**; dam of **eight winners** from 9 runners and 10 foals of racing age-
ENTREPRENEUR (GB) (1994 c. by Sadler's Wells (USA)), won 3 races at 2 and 3 years, 1997 and £189,827 including Pertemps 2000 Guineas, Newmarket, **Gr.1** and placed fourth in Vodafone Derby Stakes, Epsom, **Gr.1**.
IRISH ORDER (USA) (1986 f. by Irish River (FR)), won 2 races at 2 years in France, 275,750 fr. including Prix de L'Obelisque, Longchamp, **L.**, placed once viz second in Prix de la Grotte, Longchamp, **Gr.3**; dam of 2 winners viz-
IRISH WINGS (IRE) (c. by In The Wings), 3 races including Golden Gate Handicap, Golden Gate, **Gr.3** and Prix du Lion-d'Angers, M'-Laffitte, **L.**, placed second in Inglewood Handicap, Hollywood Park, **Gr.3**.
Cour de France (FR) (f. by Sadler's Wells (USA)), 1 race in France and 128,000 fr., placed second in Prix La Camargo, Saint-Cloud, **L.**.
SADLER'S IMAGE (IRE) (1991 c. by Sadler's Wells (USA)), won 4 races at 3 years and £49,794 including Chester Stakes, Chester, **L.**, Racing Post Godolphin Stakes, Newmarket, **L.** and placed second in Quantel Aston Park Stakes, Newbury, **L.** and third in Dalham Chester Vase, Chester, **Gr.3**.
DANCE A DREAM (GB) (1992 f. by Sadler's Wells (USA)), 4th top rated 3yr old filly in England in 1995, won 2 races at 2 and 3 years and £92,294 including Cheshire Oaks, Chester, **L.**, placed second in Vodafone Oaks, Epsom, **Gr.1** and third in Heath Court Hotel Fred Archer Stakes, Newmarket, **L.**.
Maitre A Bord (USA) (1985 c. by Riverman (USA)), won 3 races in France, placed third in Prix de Boulogne, Longchamp, **L.** and Prix Sir Gallahad, Saint-Cloud, **L.**.
Mizaaya (GB) (1989 c. by Riverman (USA)), won 3 races at 3 years and £51,602, placed 6 times including second in Leicestershire Stakes, Leicester, **L.**.
Dancing Surpass (IRE) (1990 c. by Dancing Brave (USA)), won 5 races at 3 and 4 years in Japan, £364,804, second in Meguro Kinen, Tokyo, Jpn-**Gr.2**, Sankei Osaka Hai, Kyoto, Jpn-**Gr.2**, Takamatsunomiya Hai, Chukyo, Jpn-**Gr.2**, Centaur Stakes, Chukyo, Jpn-**Gr.2**.
EXCLUSIVE VIRTUE (USA) (1988 f. by Shadeed (USA)), 1 race at 2 years, £10,617.
Exclusive (GB) (1995 f. by Polar Falcon (USA)), retained in training.

2nd Dam

Bonavista, won 3 races in U.S.A., second in Scarlet Carnation Stakes, Thistledown; dam of **nine winners** from 13 runners and 16 foals of racing age including-
ATHENIA (USA) (f. by Mr Prospector (USA)), won 3 races at home and in U.S.A. including Illini Princess Stakes, Hawthorne **R.**; dam of winners.
ATHENIA GREEN, won San Francisco Handicap, Bay Meadows, **Gr.3**.
Kiandra (USA), unraced; dam of **STRAIGHTAWAY (USA)**, won Florence S., **L.**
Teddy's Courage (USA) (c. by Exclusive Native (USA)), won 6 races in U.S.A., placed second in Hawthorne Gold Cup Handicap, Hawthorne, **Gr.2**; sire.
Historically (USA) (c. by Raise A Native), won 6 races in U.S.A. and \$121,214 placed fourth in Arlington Washington Futurity, Arlington Park, **Gr.1**; sire.
CAT LUCK (USA), won 1 race in U.S.A.; dam of winners.
RESTLESS CAT (USA), winner in U.S.A.; dam of **FORTUNATE MOMENT (USA)**, won American Derby, Arlington Park, **Gr.1**; sire in U.S.A.

9.3 Extract from Sales Catalogue, 1997 Houghton Sales
(see Table 9.1)

This catalogue entry serves as an alternative reality to the yearling it represents during the sales. The impact of the literary form taken by pedigree is a feature highlighted by Bouquet: 'the emphasis on the written (and graphic) record (acts) as the guarantee alongside biology of control over procreation' (1993: 187). In this section I shall introduce the theory of procreation and heredity which lies behind the pedigree ideology specific to racehorses and show that these theories inform their genealogical representation.

Bouquet has identified the 'visual imperative' of the family tree:

The diagram, as a scientific reproduction of pedigree, resonates with other trees accomplishing similar feats. Such graphic representations travel with much greater facility than textual exegesis across the bounds of different language communities. The circulation of genealogical diagrams among European scientists such as Darwin, Haeckel, Schleicher and Dubois certainly bears this out. (Bouquet 1996: 61-62)

Whilst Bouquet concentrates upon scientific and Biblical precedents to the genealogical method, I would like to add thoroughbred pedigrees to the repertoire of graphic forms which reveal complex ideas about procreation, and therefore kinship, gender and class.

The Sales Catalogue

The structure of the catalogue page determines the quantity and nature of information offered to the buyer by the vendor. The catalogues are so repetitive that envisaging alternatives and thinking about what they would mean becomes virtually impossible. When asked about the format of the catalogue, bloodstock agents were of the opinion that they shared this format because 'that's the way it is'. My subsequent suggestion that the format was a convention was dismissed, and the explanation restressed: 'it *isn't* just the way its done, it's the way it *is*.'

The catalogue page devotes a disproportionate amount of space to the dam (female) line, also referred to as the bottom line, or tail line. This was explained to me on the grounds that the dam line is the weakness which must be shored up by being associated with successful relatives, as if to reassure potential buyers that the mare will not detract too much from the ability of the stallion in his offspring. Although a large proportion of racemares go on to have careers at stud, very few colts go on to have careers as stallions having retired from racing. Thus, whilst a stallion's quality is made evident by his very presence at stud, mares are at stud by default, simply on the grounds that they are female and too old or slow to race. Selection of racehorses is thus sharply skewed, stallions are intensively selected on the basis of their pedigree and racecourse performances, whilst mares are almost always 'given a chance'. The

characterisation of the racehorse as the quintessentially selectively bred domestic animal is thus only partially true, because it is only male racehorses who are 'selected'.

Thoroughbred pedigrees are 'read' from left to right. They also possess a shorthand whereby they may be summarised by either their 'top' or 'bottom' line. The top line charts the sire and sires of sires, the bottom line the dam and dams of dams. The top line is said to represent the 'strength' of the pedigree, the bottom line the 'weakness'. Of course, it is possible to have a weak top line or a strong bottom line, but these are relative to the overall top : bottom bias. The most common shorthand for summarising a pedigree is that of mentioning the sire and the dam's sire. Thus, for example, Zafonic, who is by Gone West, out of Zaizafon, who is by The Minstrel, will be described as: 'Zafonic (Gone West, The Minstrel)'. Everyday discussions of yearlings similarly refer to, for example, 'a Sadler's Wells colt out of a Danzig mare'.

I would like to suggest that the proportion of the catalogue assigned to the dam line and the idea that the dam line is the 'weakness' in a pedigree is a result of ideas regarding racehorse fertility and procreation. The relevant image of procreation is that the stallion will bring a substantial but finite amount of talent to the mating. If most of this talent must be used up in trying to bring the mare up to the standard of the stallion, then very little will be left to pass onto the foal itself. The mare is thus 'empty' before being covered. The mare always represents a deficit, relative to the stallion, who is complete.

This image can be extended to apply to the entire catalogue which becomes a map representing the annual distribution of blood embodied by the yearling crop. 'Blood' is thus presented as a limited substance, distributed according to an equation which balances the amount of talent brought by the stallion against that used up by the mare in their production of a foal. In this way, there are no real additions to the English Thoroughbred, just novel combinations of blood, relative to each successive generation.

The image of the thoroughbred racehorse perpetuated by its breeders supports the contention of Yanagisako and Delaney that origin stories are 'a prime locus for a society's notion of itself' (1995: 2). Thomas's characterisation of the three founding stallions of the English thoroughbred as 'a kind of equine Adam, Noah or William the Conqueror' (Thomas 1983: 59) fails to mention the most significant feature of the story: the omission of its female protagonists. The mares who functioned as a catalyst in order that the breed might be established are rarely, if ever, mentioned. The patriarchal stallion myth, expressed in the dogma of prepotency and sire dominance is supported by the only *visible* ancestors of the racehorse being male, and can be deduced from the structure of the catalogue page.

Since only the male ancestors of this species are visible, the original blood is gendered, and thus diluted when combined with female blood in order to create a foal: the existence of three initial progenitors, and their continuation by not more than one progenitor each and three progenitors in all, far from being a matter of course which every student of the Thoroughbred has always taken for granted as one of the curiosities of history, is instead a dramatic punctuation of the essence of the Thoroughbred as an elite animal destined to be influenced at every stage by an amazingly small number of individuals. (Varola 1974: 7)

The representation of male and female racehorses in the catalogue and their different trajectories at stud can thus be explained. The inherent weakness of the dam line is protested against by the presence of illustrious relations in the catalogue, and the small number of stallions at stud serve as highly concentrated sources of the limited quantity of 'noble blood'.

Assessment of the thoroughbred at each of the most significant stages of its career - at the sales, on the track, and at stud, reflects the disproportionate influence with which the stallion is credited. Breeders and pundits discussing a yearling will predict its ability in relation to its sire: 'Like all Sadler's Wells, he'll appreciate getting his toe in' (horses by Sadler's Wells are thought to run faster on softer ground), 'He's by Ela Mana Mou, so he should get the trip' (Ela Mana Mou is thought to be 'an influence for stamina'), 'He's just got geed up in the paddock, like a lot of Diesis do', (Diesis is thought to pass on a nervous disposition). At first glance, racing society could almost be mistaken for a society in which maternity was denied or went unnoticed.

The skewed structure of thoroughbred selection reveals a form of the monogeneticism identified by Delaney in relation to Turkey:

The theory of procreation can be stated very simply. The male is said to plant the seed and the woman is said to be like a field. (Delaney 1986: 496)³

Thoroughbred breeders are able to combine monogeneticism and biometric genetics because though the foal is said to be '50% its sire and 50% its dam' the contribution made by each is complementary but different in kind. The stallion is thus seen as contributing those traits that are most valued by racing society, those qualities that affect racing ability. The dam may be credited with contributing an uneven temper or particular quirk, which does not usually enhance racing ability. The stallion is often credited with having contributed mystical qualities of 'presence', 'courage' or 'heart'. The mares contributions are generally either temperamental or mundane.

I was often told that good racemares rarely made good broodmares. On the stud, for example, Tony the studhand told me the story of a famous racemare who was 'no good' at stud: 'She was a right bitch, she wasn't having any of it. She thought

³Delaney claims that monogeneticism informs ideas of relatedness throughout the Judaeo-Christian world, however, I would like to restrict my own application of her theory to the highly specialised context of racing society in Newmarket.

that she was a stallion. I s'pose that's why she was so good. She was used to beating colts and she didn't want to be a mother'. The good racemare is an anomaly because she excels in a male dominated sphere. Tony attributed her difficulty at stud to her own gender confusion. As the previous chapter established, femininity on the stud correlates with ideas of fertility, mothering and nurturing.

In Newmarket, as elsewhere, 'paternity is not the semantic equivalent of maternity' (Delaney 1986:495), because the sire's contribution is qualitatively superior to that of the mare. Perhaps the most explicit statement of the nature of the sire's contribution is to be found in the work of Frederick Tesio⁴, who speaks of the stallion's 'spark', remarkably similar imagery to that of Turkish villagers:

Seed and soil, seemingly such innocent images, condense powerful meanings, although they appear to go together naturally, they are categorically different, hierarchically valued and differentially valued. With seed, men provide the creative spark of life, the essential identity of a child; while women, like soil, contribute the nurturant material that sustains it. (Delaney 1991: 8)

Phenotypic fetishism

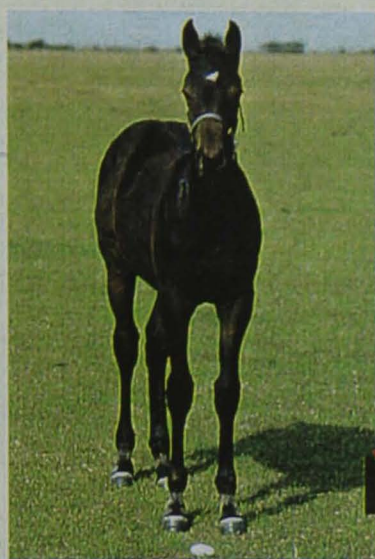


9.4a Advertisement for Emperor Jones, from *The Racing Post*

⁴Tesio was an authority referred to by several informants in Newmarket. His theories were many, and had consistent themes, for example, 'the mare is like a sack which gives back what has been put into it' (1958: 10), 'The female is by nature weaker. The purpose of her existence is the state of pregnancy. As soon as she becomes pregnant the nervous - almost neurotic - symptoms of virginity disappear' (1958: 10), and, 'the hereditary influence of the male is superior both in quantity and in quality to the hereditary influence of the female' (1958: 10).

Outstanding first crop of foals by

Emperor
Jones



a



b



c



9.4b Advertisement for Emperor Jones from *The Racing Post*, advertising his foals' resemblance to him, and to each other, as evidence of his prepotency

Hocks are the main joint on a horse's back legs, sort of knees in reverse. Looking at hocks illustrates that the yearling's catalogue entry determines more than its price, it also determines the faults it can be forgiven, and those which it cannot, summed up in the phrase that, 'there are hocks and there are hocks'. When examining a yearling by the stallion 'Kris', for example, I noted its weak hocks in my catalogue. My detection of this fault should give some indication of its severity. I also looked at the Sadler's Wells full brother to Entrepreneur, and couldn't fault him. When I discussed the days work with a team of agents, I mentioned the Kris colt and they became enthusiastic. The phrase 'Krisish hocks' was bandied about. I asked about the significance of this and was told that Kris also had bad hocks, and if the yearling had his hocks it was likely that he had Kris's good features too, such as his courage and overall soundness. When I mentioned the Sadler's Wells colt I was met with the unanimous cry of 'weak hocks!', end of discussion.

It is desirable that a yearling should resemble its sire because this is taken as evidence that the yearling has also inherited its sire's racing ability. As in the example used, this ideology extends to the faults of the stallions, which are excused and even valued in their progeny. The reproduction of traits, however apparently trivial, is seized upon as evidence of the sire's influence, for example, Chris Thompson of Cheveley Park Stud was very excited about the full brother to Entrepreneur on the grounds that he had more white on his face, and so resembled Sadler's Wells, his sire, even more closely than his full brother, the winner of the 1997 Guineas.

This fetish for phenotypic resemblance does not extend beyond the offspring of a particular sire. Thus, a racehorse would never be identified as a 'dead ringer for Batshoof' for example, unless it is by that sire. It is not the appearance of the yearling that is being praised, as illustrated by the ideology applying to faults and irrelevancies. The resemblance is desirable because it is treated as evidence of the sharing of something far more significant: ability, but equally importantly it is evidence of heredity itself. The mating has been a success because the stallion has successfully overcome the mare's weaknesses with enough quality to spare, this excess quality has been inherited by the foal, as made explicit by this breeder:

the qualities of both stallion and mare should be complementary to one another and the aim should be to choose a stallion who will counteract any shortcomings in his mate.
(Napier 1975: 17)

The asymmetry of this relationship is thus made obvious: the stallion is capable of exerting a positive influence on his offspring, whilst the most one must hope of the mare is that she does not detract too greatly from the expression of the stallion's quality.

Pedigree determines price

'All a pedigree tells you is how much a yearling is going to cost' (Bloodstock agent). In making this statement, Tote Cherry Downs fractures the ideology which governs his trade, at the same time as acknowledging its power. The significance of the statement is its implicit denial of the guiding axiom of the bloodstock industry, that pedigree determines ability. If pedigree only determines price, then it cannot also determine ability. However, Tote Cherry Downs predicts that the bloodstock market, constituted by himself and his colleagues, will value the yearling according to its pedigree.

Tote Cherry Down's statement thus has two separate implications, firstly that the price of a yearling is determined by its pedigree and secondly that its ability is not. This poses the question: What are bloodstock agents paying for? The answer lies partly in the structure of the market for yearlings, who are sold before their ability is established, when all that is really known about them is their breeding. However, these are obviously not the reasons which would be given by the majority of members of the bloodstock industry, who would contradict Tote Cherry Downs and maintain that pedigree is the single most significant determinant of ability in a yearling. Explaining this conviction depends partly on understanding the self-perpetuating mechanisms which govern the prices of yearlings and partly on understanding the compulsion of ideas about 'blood' and heredity.

The means by which yearling prices are established are circular and therefore difficult to describe. However, I shall only explain them briefly since I only want to treat them as the epiphenomenon of the ideology of pedigree which is my concern. Ability on the racecourse is the only criterion of success for mature racehorses, thus when a horse wins a big race agents will begin to buy offspring of its sire. The sire's manager may then put up the nomination fee, i.e. the cost of the mating. The stallion will then attract better quality mares, and the yearlings will be more expensive at the sales. The yearlings will go to better trainers than their less fashionable contemporaries, and may be successes or failures. Shoring up this cycle is the tendency of expensive stallions to cover large numbers of mares, up to three hundred a year, whilst less fashionable sires may not 'fill their book' of fifty mares, an element of the 'numbers game' thus enters into the equation whereby a fashionable stallion has a greater number of chances of success.

The effect of these cycles is that a few stallions dominate their era, because they enjoy support at the expense of their competitors, the more successful they are the more they are supported and so on. The dominance of particular stallions is

interpreted by the bloodstock industry as evidence of 'prepotency', the belief that certain stallions are able to 'stamp' their offspring who then bear a strong resemblance to their sire. It is a continually restated horse racing 'fact' that a very small number of stallions dominate their era before an heir is made apparent a couple of generations later. The few horses who do seem to have had a greater than expected influence over their adjacent generations are termed 'prepotent' by pedigree enthusiasts. The notion of prepotency can be found in British Breeding manuals until the 1930s:

The belief is still widespread that the good judge of livestock can recognise the prepotent animal from its phenotype. The assumed indicators are masculinity in the male and femininity in the female. (Winters 1939: 143)

This observation is flanked by two plates, of a particularly fat stallion, and a mare with her mane and tail in plaits and ribbons. Breeders told me that in order for a stallion to be successful at stud he 'must look masculine'. Of course, masculinity was not reducible to a list of necessary and sufficient conditions, and often depended upon entirely subjective notions such as 'presence', or 'arrogance', impossible to verify or falsify. As well as giving rise to the expression of images of masculinity and femininity, the ideology of the 'potentate', referring to the monarch's potential 'kingliness' or nobility can be detected in the notion of prepotency:

The heightened power to shape progeny was called 'prepotency'. It was, of course, essentially comparative. That is, it offered a way to discriminate among breeds as well as between pedigreed and nonpedigreed animals. It could therefore, be used as a measure or conformation of breed quality, especially since it could be tested in practice. The workings of prepotency seemed often simply to confirm the value of unsullied descent - to exemplify the rule by which 'the most in-bred parent generally influences the offspring to the greatest extent. (Ritvo 1997: 115)

The notion of prepotency clearly complements the bloodstock industry's ideology of heredity.

From Eighteenth Century Irish Ostlers to the cloning of Cigar

During fieldwork, my Irish surname continually provoked my reinvention as a descendent of Irish ostlers of around the eighteenth century. My own ignorance of this heritage was taken as evidence of the intensity and antiquity of my ancestors' involvement with horses, 'it must go back a long way to have remained dormant for so long and yet to come out so strongly in you' I was told. This was the only possible explanation for my 'passion' for horses. Similarly, when Bill asked me the nature of my father's involvement with horses, I knew that my honest response would not be accepted. I told him that my father detested horses, being of the opinion that one end bites, the other kicks and in between is uncomfortable. Sure enough, this met with further inquiries: surely he had some involvement, however minor? After I had denied this several times, Bill compromised and asked me a hypothetical question: 'What sort

of horses would your father be involved with *if* he had an interest in horses?' He sat back looking smug and I was forced to imagine the unlikely image of my father in jodhpurs. I plumped for show jumping rather than racing out of malice, and Bill seemed satisfied. I was not at all surprised by Bill's periodical comments regarding 'my father - the show jumper', although I was slightly thrown when he asked me whether my father was interested in a 'super jumping mare', before I remembered the context of such an inquiry.

The pedigree theory that informs ideas of relatedness amongst horses applies equally to those about humans:

The notion of reckoning descent through either the male line or the female line, as a criterion for group membership, is an outgrowth of the basic notion of selective breeding. This is quite explicit with animals but camouflaged as 'descent reckoning' when applied by anthropologists to human groups. (Bouquet 1993: 192)

There is no such camouflaging in Newmarket, where people move seamlessly from talking about horses to humans, and from breeding to kinship.

Artificial Insemination

Opposition from within the racing industry towards artificial insemination (AI) is a constantly rumbling undercurrent. AI is currently banned by the rules of the International Stud Book, which state that:

A horse is not qualified to be entered for start in any race unless it and its sire and dam are each the produce of a *natural* service or covering, and unless a *natural* gestation took place in, and the delivery was from, the body of the mare in which the horse was conceived. (Ruff's Guide 1996: 124 italics added)

These rules address the same problems raised by Alltown residents (Edwards 1993), and resolve them by decree. The majority of people to whom I spoke were against AI, either on the grounds that it was 'unnatural' or that it would prompt the diminution of the thoroughbred gene pool; although a few thought that acceptance of AI was long overdue.

The most sustained opposition to AI that I experienced came from Mrs Macks, a thoroughbred breeder of indeterminate age, who rode in races until the age of 73. Mrs Macks was extremely clear about her views, believing that a connection between the mare and stallion was a physiological necessity for a healthy foal:

The semen used for pigs in Holland has become diseased and the farms in this country are using bulls again for a 'top up'. My mares in season will try to get to the teaser because they know where he is, even though we put the foal in the box first! How is a mare's instinct to be covered going to be satisfied? By Dr. Allen and some semen in a false vagina? The best winners I have ever bred have been by sires whose legs really pump away like pistons during copulation - I'm sure that some transfer of energy is

capable of improving the chances of getting a good energetic foal. What will fulfil that criteria in AI? I'm very worried about it.⁵

Similarly, a stud groom on a tour of the Equine Fertility Unit, which is currently championing the cause of AI, responded angrily to questioning:

The mare needs to feel the weight of the stallion on her back, and for the energy of the covering to go into her. Using a test tube won't produce the same effects and you can't fool these old mares. They know what's natural.⁶

Bob McCreery, chairman of a group commissioned by the Thoroughbred Breeders Association to investigate the potential impact of AI remains bemused:

I have never known why AI provokes such controversy. To people who know about breeding and animal husbandry it is not so shocking...It would be a great change and that is upsetting to some people. (Hislop 1997: 17)

It seems that McCreery does not realise how shocking AI is to those who believe that horses fall in love, or how ineffective it seems to those who believe that the 'heat' and 'weight' of intercourse is necessary for conception to occur. Opposition to AI is intense because of the centrality of the idea of procreation to all other aspects of imagining connections between horses, as it is amongst people, 'everything that surrounds the act(s) of procreation bears on how people represent the meaning of being related to one another' (Edwards 1993: 16).

A related objection to AI lies in the belief that it would prompt the depletion of the gene pool:

Hamish Anderson, Weatherby's stud book director, is overseeing a research exercise charting a selection of good, bad and plain ugly pedigrees back through twenty-five generations to examine just how much inbreeding there is without AI...Anderson said: 'One of the concerns is what AI might do to the gene pool. Going back twenty-five generations takes us right back to square one, the days of the Byerley Turk, by which time there are about 66 million ancestors to a single mating' With proper, and costly, research under its belt, Weatherby's should be able to predict what would happen, if, as is feared, no more than ten per cent of the stallion population survives the unnatural selection imposed by AI. (Smurthwaite 1997a: 17)

By referring to the 'unnatural selection of AI' this journalist appears to imply that the selective breeding of the racehorse is actually 'natural'. Selective breeding, which used to be the opposite of natural selection has now become 'natural selection' relative to that which would be facilitated by AI. I would suggest that this response to AI is based on a fear of blood being out of control.

⁵Mrs Mack also told me the story of the conception of a Derby winner which was the result of the two horses 'falling in love', 'It was when the horses were walked everywhere before the horsebox, and the stallion was being led along the road, and passed a mare on her way to something else, I mean, she wasn't even going to this horse. And they looked at each other and that was it. They overcame their handlers and made love on the Cambridge Road'.

⁶These ideas, and Mrs Mack's anecdote, are found in the work of Tesio, as referred to earlier in the chapter. Mrs Mack's story refers to Tesio's brilliant racemare Signorinetta, bred on the Cambridge Road, and her full sister Star of Naples, the product of a planned mating, who proved untalented, 'in the case of Signorinetta, it is not unlikely that the issue was affected by the circumstances of the unplanned encounter between her parents. The arrows of an equine cupid roused the sexual urge to a maximum of tension which endowed the resulting individual with exceptional energy...this result is never achieved with artificial insemination because the parents are cheated of their pleasurable spasm with its violent nervous release' (Tesio 1958: 93).

The theory of pedigree rests upon the ability of breeders to maintain the 'purity' of the breed by witnessing coverings and blood typing foals. The depletion of the gene pool constitutes a loss of blood, offending those who see themselves as custodians of noble blood, responsible for determining its distribution. This loss is often imagined through stories in which blood crosses international boundaries and is thereby lost to a malign foreign influence:

In 1978, many breeders were thought to be in dread of AI because of the overriding fear that it would be wildly abused. According to the Duke (of Devonshire), 'fanciful stories' arose about vials of frozen semen being shipped around the world at will, making for priceless bargaining chips allowing an elite band of stallions to cover hundreds of mares at the expense of others. The impact on the gene pool would be unimaginable. If only the stories were true. (Smurthwaite 1997b: 7)

The blood of the stallions no longer in demand would be lost, and could not be regained. These are stories about loss and also loss of control, in which blood would no longer be mapped or limited, and so, being unrecorded, would lose its capacity to explain ability. AI also prompts a confrontation with the limits of desirable inbreeding, prompting the use of imagery associated with incest, thus sperm becomes 'diseased', 'hybrid vigour' is lost, and monsters result, as the stud groom told me: 'You start messing about with nature and you get Frankenstein don't you'.

The loss of blood is also the theme of the 'stallion drain', another major concern of the bloodstock industry. The terms in which it is described again reflect the threat that export constitutes to the national identity of English blood by resonating with xenophobia, as in this extract from an article in *The Guardian*:

It is hard to see in these Japanese incursions much more than mere acquisitiveness, a desire to possess comparable with the desire to buy great works of art, many of which now languish unseen in the Tokyo bank vaults. At the Houghton Sales in Newmarket last week, I have rarely seen people look more bored than the phalanx of Japanese who sat around the auction ring dressed in perfect English county clothes but carrying cameras rather than binoculars. Like the art works, the horses that go to Japan are disappearing into a black hole...we see no more than the occasional foal by Generous who returns to run in Britain, bringing with him a wealth of memories and a terrible sense of loss. (Thompson 1996: 6)

Put more starkly, I was told: 'What on earth would the Japanese do with an English thoroughbred? They may dress as Englishmen but they don't have horses in their blood'. It seems that, as in the eighteenth century when the blood of a thoroughbred reflected positively on that of his aristocratic owner, it is necessary to be of the right blood oneself in order to be favoured by, rather than mocked for, this association.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the 'facts of life' in Newmarket, believing them to be central to how people imagine both humans and horses are related. What is 'natural' in Newmarket has been identified as the inheritance of ability through parental

blood. The asymmetry of the male and female contributions to their offspring is evident in the literary form taken by the pedigree, in the price of yearlings and in their assessment by phenotypic resemblance to their sire.

AI is 'unnatural' because it frees 'blood' from procreation and in doing so threatens old certainties. Furthermore, it raises the possibility that blood may be lost, which is frightening because this is 'noble' blood which has been honed to perfection by two centuries of human endeavour. By natural means, of course. The export of stallions similarly suggests a loss of blood, because who knows what will happen once it leaves these shores? The export is resisted because the blood of the English thoroughbred belongs to the English. The pedigrees of the founding stallions of the breed express this point clearly, by running *forwards* to the English thoroughbred, rather than backwards to the Barb, Turk or Arabian.

Some of the certainties threatened by AI were brought into even sharper relief by the suggestion that Cigar, the American wonder horse, was to be cloned. The story began with his infertility, which was reported in jocular tone, referring to him as a 'Jaffa' (seedless). In some ways, people seemed almost happy that the horse had failed, since he had gone to stand for the Coolmore organisation, which is perceived as having a monopoly over all the best thoroughbred blood:

Cigar, but no smoke signals.

Human fertility experts have volunteered to help out...and phials of Cigar's semen are being examined all over the world. In addition, many of Cigar's fans, who have presumably suffered the same problems, have written with suggestions, including acupuncture and massage. If nothing works, there is talk Cigar could move down the road to the Kentucky Horse Park to join another favourite American horse, John Henry - a gelding! (Smurthwaite 1997c: 5)

Sterility seemed quite amusing in what was, after all, an American horse owned by Coolmore. However, the enhanced reproductive possibilities of cloning, were not greeted with the same response:

The Jockey Club poured scorn on the idea. World-wide rules prevented such breeding a spokesman said. 'Quite a few barriers would have to come down before cloning became a reality. Its highly unlikely.'...Hamish Anderson...said: 'In the meat and livestock business uniformity might be an advantage, but in racing variation is vital.' (Varley 1997: 18)

When I pointed out to a breeder that even in a race of clones there would be a first, second, and so on, his response was to boom 'EXACTLY!!' Cloned racehorses would create races exactly the same as those involving racehorses born 'naturally'. In doing so, they would undermine the theory of pedigree whereby breeding determines ability. In a sense, all thoroughbred blood would be lost, since it would be static, no longer travelling through generations according to a route mapped out by breeders, an image implicit in the nightmarish *Guardian* headline: 'Sterile wonder-horse may run on for ever as former owner pursues race of clones' (Varley 1997: 18).

This chapter has sought to support the claim by Strathern that, 'ideas about kinship offered a theory, if you like, about the relationship of human society to the natural world' (1992b: 5). In the case of racing society, what is natural is that one should 'breed the best to the best to get the best', that horses are 'in the blood', that ability is transmitted as a 'spark' during copulation, that abilities must therefore be explained by breeding, and that blood can be lost through improper management or the interference of impostors or technology. These ideas support an image of human society as constituted by groups of people associated with each other through ties of substance and hereditarily inclined to excel in a particular role. It is thus impossible to think about 'nature' without also thinking about class. Ideas of 'nature' do not exist in a vacuum. Pedigree polices the borders of 'nature' in Newmarket and in doing so supports the critical organising principle of the industry: class. These ideas may go some way to answering the question asked by Nathan Myhrvold, senior technology officer at Microsoft, in their on-line magazine Slate, 'What is so special about natural reproduction anyway?' (quoted by Langton 1998: 2).

Chapter Ten: Conclusions

Introduction

In these conclusions I ask what sort of place is Newmarket, and what sort of people claim allegiance to its windswept Heath and horse-dominated way of life? I begin with a summary of the chapters, and the themes by which they are structured. They answer my own desire to 'make strange' the sometimes taken for granted and homogenised notion of 'British culture':

Much has been written recently of the dangers to anthropologists of essentialising visions of non-western societies. Less has been written recently of the dangers to people in the West of their essential visions of themselves. (Carrier 1990: 206)

However, though some aspects of racing society may be utterly 'foreign' to outsiders, there is much which finds resonance amongst a wider British audience. The ideas encompassed by the idea of: 'like father, like son', for example, the inheritance of sporting talent and the explanation of traits as 'in the blood', are common to many other contexts outside racing. The difference seems to me that within the racing industry these ideas are worked out more fully, albeit in the guise of another species.

The summary reflects the techniques made available to me by the increased critical awareness of contemporary anthropologists to the 'familiar Western schema' of mutually reinforcing binarisms. I was thus able to envisage the blurring of category distinctions such as between mind and body (chapter seven), person and object (chapter six), animal and human (chapter eight), and, crucially, nature and culture (chapter nine). The propensity of racing society to dissolve these category distinctions encouraged me to study it as a 'nature-culture' (Latour 1993). This, in turn, perhaps depended upon my own blurring of the boundary between participant and observer, and in this I benefited from both my own passion for horses and also the generous welcome of Newmarket's inhabitants (human and equine).

The second section of this chapter returns to the people of Newmarket, and their ideas of 'class'. The third section of this chapter seeks to acknowledge my debt to a group of anthropologists who may not automatically consider themselves to be part of the intellectual landscape of horseracing. It will contextualise my attempt to describe racing society in Newmarket within important debates in contemporary anthropology. These debates will be characterised as concerned with ideas of 'nature' and the 'natural'.

This thesis engaged with recent debates in anthropology which often acknowledge a common origin in the work of David Schneider (1968, 1984). Schneider's critique of the study of kinship suggested that the 'facts of life' as

described by biology, were not always and everywhere the basis of kinship. He argued that the basis of kinship in sexual reproduction was a reflection of 'European folk models' (Schneider 1984) and did not therefore offer a sound basis for comparative analysis. Schneider's solution to this impasse was to abandon kinship whilst later theorists have since suggested that critical treatment of 'the facts of nature' may enable a new and improved form of kinship theory to prosper. Schneider's original criticisms have been greatly extended by the contributions of Bouquet (1993), Carsten (in press), Franklin (1997), Strathern (1992b) and Yanagisako and Delaney (1995) amongst others.

Franklin (1997) and Strathern (1992b), particularly, have extended the process initiated by Schneider by undermining the claims of the 'facts of nature', using refraction through new reproductive technologies in order to illuminate their contingency:

In terms of kinship theory, then, the 'genealogical grid' once assumed to be a fixed point of reference, authenticating both a set of 'biological facts' and the power of science to produce accurate knowledge of them, can no longer be assumed even on its own terms. Not only is it now visible as an historic artefact of 'folk European' models of relatedness, but it has been rendered artefactual within biological science. The advent of transgenic organisms, trans-species hybrids, patented immortal cell lines and genetically modified strains of plants, bacteria and livestock augers a major departure from the Darwinian genealogical grid. (Franklin 1997: 212)

My thesis is intended to be a complementary case study, offering an example of a contemporary society in which pedigree thinking governs ideas of relatedness and humans and animals are not always explicitly separated.

Summary

Chapter two introduced Newmarket, describing its landscape and daily routines. I went on to describe the language used by those involved in the racing industry, suggesting that it fulfilled two purposes: firstly the exclusion of outsiders, and secondly the creation of the appearance of knowledge where that knowledge is scarce or even absent. I went on to discuss the embodiment of taste in 'the right body for the job' (Bourdieu 1984: 191), and the additional markers of dress which embellish these bodies.

Chapter three argued that connections in Newmarket are seen as intrinsically desirable. When tracing connections, the upper class of racing society defers to the ideology of pedigree such that racing ability is bred and not taught. This ideology is fixed in a way that the 'facts of life' are not. Biological connections are subordinate to pedigree, such that success in the racing world must be accounted for by pedigree. In many cases, this requires little imagination since racing is actually dominated by people

who are, in fact, related. However, even when this is not the case, racing people do not despair, but rather imagine the necessary connections, often horizontally, occasionally vertically as in my own case, facilitated by my Irish ancestry.

The upper class of racing society recasts connections so that they may be understood in terms of pedigree, connections which cannot be accommodated by this ideology are not readily understood, and often relegated to freakish exceptions with no relevance to the ideology itself. As well as being presented by its members as highly inter-related, this class is inter-related, because pedigree is a self-fulfilling ideology that is resilient to challenges from outside. To accept the son of a trainer as a trainer requires no imagination at all, to accept the husband of a girl whose father once trained in Hungary as a trainer can be done, but to accept the son of a shoe salesman and housewife as a trainer may prove too difficult. In order for the individual to succeed he must create sufficient horizontal ties, which will then be used to explain his success in retrospect. Where he fails his lack of connections will be cited as his downfall. This route into racing is perilous to say the least.

Chapter four discussed the racecourse, the public side of racing and the site of much of the most ostentatious risk taking. The imagined fluidity of social structure made explicit by the adage that 'all men are equal on the turf and under it' was contrasted with the plea of the female racegoer who told me that she felt like 'Lady Muck', 'Don't spoil the dream will you?' The real distribution of power in racing was made evident by racecourse segregation, sumptuary distinctions and, particularly, by behaviour within the paddock, and its relation to behaviour outside.

Gamblers are the most theoretically upwardly mobile members of racing society, however, chapter five suggested that referring to betting as 'a flutter' neatly captures its inconsequential role in most punters' lives. Despite the claims of anthropologists that gambling could achieve positive ends, including intellectual gratification, and those of psychologists who labelled it a 'disease', the nature of gambling was shown to be determined by its point of insertion into a particular individual's social world. The aristocrat of gamblers, the professional punter, for example, was seen to ideologically strip gambling of its uncertainty and thereby diffuse its power to move. The relationship between bookies and punters and the suppliers of racing, trainers, owners and jockeys, was found to be antagonistic. Bookies and punters have no contact or association with the horses themselves and therefore do not enter into the control of nature. Instead, they make money by exploiting the failure of trainers, owners and jockeys to determine the outcome of races. In other words, they exploit the uncertainty left by the incomplete control of

nature, and in doing so anger the portion of racing society committed to its management.

Chapter six described the financial articulation of the pedigree ideology at the yearling auction. Terms used by classical economics and the bloodstock industry itself were found to be inadequate to describe a market in which certainty and risk are disguised as each other. Yearlings (which are always a risk) are presented as an investment, whilst breeding (which does not determine ability) is presented as the index of value. Bloodstock agents carefully manage their appearance in order to suggest that they are in possession of the gift to recognise talent, 'an eye for a horse', and buy many more bad horses than good. Pedigree is enumerated financially so that the price a yearling will reach can be predicted on the grounds of its pedigree, and a page of the sales catalogue recording its pedigree comes to stand for the horse itself.

Chapter seven discussed the bodies in racing, particularly that of the lad, in order to suggest that embodied knowledge is the mechanism by which breeding translates into racing ability. 'Learning the ropes' in racing thus becomes a process of discovery, rather than absorption. In order to support this argument, my own initiation into riding was described as an example of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Lave and Wenger 1991). Members of all classes of racing society insisted that ability cannot be achieved by absorbing a series of written or spoken instructions, but must be bred. Measures such as those taken at the British Racing School, designed to make learning easier, were condemned by both trainers and lads. In Newmarket, knowledge is that which is exhibited by the racing body, made talented by virtue of good breeding.

Chapter eight showed that in Newmarket, there are two dominant, context specific conceptualisations of the relationship between horses and humans. In the first of these, horses and humans are not separated in the manner implicit in ideas of 'modern' society. In fact, horses are granted personalities, can enter into relationships with humans and between themselves, and provoke frustration in their attendants when behaving in what is regarded as an irresponsible manner. Discussions of relationships, morality, rights and duties involve indiscriminate references to both animals and humans. This relationship between humans and horses dominates when the horse is in its domestic environment, being cared for by those who attend to its day-to-day welfare. Alternatively, on the racetrack, to those betting, at the sales, at stud, and to those who do not 'know' the horse in the way that its attendants profess to, the racehorse is conceptualised as 'man's noblest creation'. This second conceptualisation depends upon an image of nature improved by man's cunning. It

grants nature sufficient independence to make its control by man a praiseworthy endeavour.

Chapter nine was a preliminary investigation into the idea of nature assumed by the ideology of pedigree, illuminated through the ideas of reproduction implicit in the sales catalogue and in reactions to new equine reproductive technologies. It thus uncovered the 'natural facts' behind pedigree, and the two sorts of nature identified in Newmarket as independent of human control and perfect, or the subject of human control to be improved. The resistance to Artificial Insemination (AI) was explained on the basis of the loss of blood, a finite substance which contains the nobility of the thoroughbred, and in accordance with Newmarket's tendency for analogic thought, that of thoroughbred breeders. AI increases the amount of control over equine reproduction but in doing so unnerves breeders because in demystifying breeding it implies that it can be organised by anyone, not just those who are bred with the intuition for the job. AI thus makes things too clear, it reveals the role of the breeder as contingent, and in doing so undermines the ideology of pedigree itself. In this case, the ideology of pedigree is that which justifies the class based structure of the industry.

It is the two (strictly speaking) contradictory meanings of 'nature' that make it such a powerful organising metaphor in Newmarket. Although I was told repeatedly that, 'in Newmarket everything is horse', I would suggest that everything is also nature (the horse is of course super-natural). However, this arrangement is currently under threat from new equine reproductive technologies, hence the forcefulness with which these ideas were communicated. The following section will re-introduce class in Newmarket, thus laying the foundations for an examination of the ideas of nature at work within racing society, where the class structure is seen as the result of 'natural' processes.

Class in Newmarket

As one might expect of a place in which the class structure is so strikingly out of step with the majority of the rest of the surrounding communities, Newmarket is a place which quickly lulls one into its daily rhythms and routines. The proximity of Cambridge (thirty minutes away), always struck me as amazing, and even formed a local explanation of the character of Newmarket itself:

it's being so close to Cambridge that has preserved Newmarket. No-one notices Newmarket and we go on as before, whilst Cambridge is always changing, from too much attention. We don't generally get busybodies like you.

The conventions of Newmarket seem contrived to make one take the status quo for granted. For example, having been racing as owner, trainer's assistant, and lass, each

experience seemed definitive at the time. As the guest of an owner I was invited to lunch and we spent the entire afternoon at the races, drinking, eating, betting, watching the races and relaxing. Whilst assisting the trainer we arrived in time for 'our' race, saddled the horse, instructed the jockey, watched the race and came home, all in a state of nervousness and anxiety.

Going racing as a lass is different again. Arriving at the track three hours before the race, I had often ridden three horses and mucked out six boxes before leaving. Almost every lad and lass with whom I travelled could sleep in virtually any position and for any period of time. I learnt quickly and could sleep leaning against even the most pungent of old lads, ignoring cigar smoke and other fumes. An hour and three quarters before the race the horse is prepared, and an hour later the horse leaves the racecourse stables and enters the paddock. The horse returns to the stables after the race and is washed down, given a drink and allowed to recover before travelling home again. Despite having come racing as a friend of both owner and trainer and enjoyed days at the races and elsewhere with both, when I came racing as the lass, I did not interact with them in the same way. I spent the majority of the time asleep in the horsebox, only participating in the race meeting to the extent that my 'lead up' demanded. When I did come into contact with owner and trainer in the saddling box before the race I was treated differently, and asked, 'How is he?', (of the horse), rather than 'How are you?'

The ability of racing society to naturalise such differences in status and respect was considerable, although there were informants who contradicted this ideology:

I operate in the more common sphere where more or less people judge you on your own merits. I'm an educated woman and mostly I'm treated accordingly. But because I won't adhere to the fixed class infrastructure I'm not accepted because I won't tug my forelock. (Stud groom's wife.)

As chapter seven revealed, the work of the studhand is monotonous and physically demanding, and is mainly directed towards maintaining the appearance of the stud. A typical day as a studhand was spent mowing, strimming, sweeping, raking and scrubbing. Although sit-on mowers and petrol powered trimmers have undoubtedly improved the lot of the studhand, the work is still arduous and boring. The stud landscape obviously reflects more than the desire of the breeding industry to impose its will upon nature, it is also dependent upon a particular class structure:

Studhands are born into it and don't know how to do anything else. A lot of people get trapped, they couldn't stick a factory job and so they stay with the horses, although I've had people go into transport and things. Half the problem with stud work is that it takes advantage of people because you live on the stud. You are 'lucky enough' to have tied accommodation! And especially if you've got a family, which all of us have, you don't want to lose it. (Stud groom.)

Whilst on the stud I listened to many complaints from the studhands, particularly regarding the shortage of labour and poor working conditions. When I asked why

they stayed on, many studhands gave the same reason; their accommodation. In particular, it became obvious that tied accommodation had been turned into the family home by most of the hand's wives and children. These houses were decorated with ornaments, photographs, extensions, new carpets, furniture and curtains. Gardens were packed with kennels, rabbit hutches, paddling pools and bicycles. The idea of leaving thus represented a considerable wrench to the hands and their families. It was noticeable, by contrast, that younger hands without families moved between studs quite freely. This suggested to me that the structural restrictions of tied accommodation hampered the movement of hands. In addition, studhands valued work with thoroughbreds above work with other horses, and work with horses above all other forms of manual labour which they perceived as alternatives to their work on the stud. The idea that studhands are 'born into it' fits ideas of heredity in Newmarket, and also detracts from the fact that although the stud groom is a manager, and may therefore consider himself to be more mobile, he also lives in a tied house.

Chapter seven rejected the idea that lads were stuck in their jobs as a result of their 'breeding', or ignorance of any other way of life, and lack of skills. A large number of lads also occupied tied accommodation, and shared with the studhands a reluctance to move on despite poor pay or conditions. Lads are devalued by inhabitants of Newmarket who are outsiders to racing, as well as by their superiors within racing. Outsiders described the lads to me in detail but had rarely had any direct experience of them. They were typically thought of as unskilled, uneducated and ill-mannered. Both outsiders and racing people associated education and learning with literacy and the class room, reproducing the separation between mind and body criticised by much contemporary anthropology. The considerable embodied skills of many of the lads were not valued. However, it was not just the physical labour of the lads which condemned them to low status in Newmarket, but also their place in the racing hierarchy and the outsider's perception of this hierarchy. Outsiders saw racing as 'feudal', and blamed the lads themselves for the perpetuation of this system on the grounds of their inability to mobilise industrial action.

Although I saw many lads abused by their 'guv'nor', I also witnessed plenty of subversion. Though some younger lads seemed in awe of their trainers, and to have internalised the lessons of the British Racing School ("you will not speak unless spoken to by a trainer, and keep replies to 'yes sir' or 'no sir'") amongst the older, more experienced lads, respect went no deeper than a job requirement:

To be honest Rebecca, you just heard me thissing and thatting to him, 'yes sir' and that, and it doesn't bother me. It's the way it is, but I know the way it is. I know my job, and I could tell him more about that filly on one trip up the sand than he could ever tell me.

I encountered many lads who did not conform to the popular image according to which they are lazy, unambitious and trapped. In particular, lads who rode work described the experience as one of considerable personal empowerment:

I walk into breakfast and pick up the (Racing) Post, and likely as not, I know more about the days runners than the boss. I know Bob's ridden this or that, Sam's had a sit on one filly or another. Something might be pinging, something else might be over the top. It's the work riders who know what's going on in Newmarket.

Even among the less accomplished, the possibility of looking after a 'good horse' kept lads in the business.

There are positive explanations for remaining a lad, as described in chapter seven, it is not just a default position occupied by the unskilled, as their image within Newmarket suggests. The strength of this image is such that lads often underplay the rewards of the job, as if to indicate that they are not foolish enough to attempt to justify involvement in such a dead end occupation. Where this is the case, lads will tell you of their skills and achievements within racing along with their plan to 'get out'. Typically, the attitude the lad's expressed towards their work was determined by the questions I asked. When I showed admiration by asking about a technical detail of their work they responded with pride. When I asked them about early mornings and low wages they distanced themselves from the job by demeaning its tasks and communicating their desire to leave the industry. To this extent it seems that though the lads reproduce the negative image the rest of Newmarket thrusts upon them, they also maintain alternatives which are easily prompted by more positive enquiry.

It becomes clear that although 'breeding' is used by all classes of racing society in order to explain talent or ability in both humans and horses, alternative explanations are also apparent. These explanations take two forms; they may be structural, as in the case of tied housing, or the age of apprenticeship which prevents higher education. They may also take the form of positive motivations to remain in racing as offered by lads and studhands themselves, these included a pride taken in dealing with valuable livestock, the possibility of dealing with a 'good horse', and the intrinsic pleasure of becoming skilled in a demanding embodied practice.

The upper class of racing employed the ideology of pedigree as a circular mechanism capable of protecting their position at the top of racing's class structure. The ideology of pedigree was shown to contain both a descriptive element whereby ability was accounted for by tracing connections, and also a cultural imperative whereby ability *must* be accounted for by breeding. Any notion of 'biology' as a sphere somehow outside society is, in this way, subordinated to that which is 'natural' in Newmarket: that breeding creates separate social spaces, communication or mobility between which is restricted.

Denaturalising Newmarket, denaturalising class?

The implications of both Yanagisako's and Delaney's arguments in the mid-1980s concerning the operation of biological models is thus spelled out in the mid-1990s as a major project of denaturalisation. Their main aim in assembling the contents of *Naturalising Power* is to draw attention to the 'ways in which differentials of power come already embedded in culture' through which 'power appears natural, inevitable, even god-given' (1995: 1). This project is thus one of defamiliarisation, whereby familiar legitimations of both specific phenomena such as reproduction, and the analytical domaining of such phenomena, for example, as 'natural' or 'biological' can be challenged. (Franklin 1997: 68)

It seems that I witnessed this process in Newmarket, as racing society underwent processes of 'literalisation' and 'displacement' (Strathern 1992b: 4-5) brought about by the increased pressure to open the General Stud Book to progeny produced through AI and more explicitly by the possibility of cloning racehorses.

Racing society is a productive locus of study for these concerns because it has a strong self-image; despite internal variations, members of racing society were all keen to identify more closely with each other than with anyone outside their society. As stated in chapter one, a sense of 'peripherality' and suspicion of 'outsiders' was part of this self-image. Thus generalisations across racing society do not require the caveats forced upon those who take 'English kinship' as their frame of reference. Furthermore, racing society has an origin story explicitly endorsed by all its ranks, which I would suggest can be linked to the 'natural facts' of reproduction implicit in Newmarket's form of monogeneticism.

Though I would be sceptical of the relevance of monogeneticism to the entire Judaeo-Christian world (as claimed by Delaney 1986), in racing at least, 'the stallion is king'. The stallion is the central focus of the entire bloodstock industry. In myriad ways, stallions are credited with a disproportionate influence over the breed of English thoroughbred, from its inception in the seventeenth century to the present day. This influence is, moreover, different in kind from that of the thoroughbred mare. The three male Arab progenitors of the thoroughbred are still thought to exert an influence over the breed, whilst the mares who must have served as vehicles for this inheritance are forgotten.

The 'natural facts' of reproduction, as described in chapter eight, cast the mare as 'empty', waiting to be 'covered' by the 'entire' 'sire'. The mare is capable of passing on those qualities perceived as typically feminine by racing society, defects and a hot temper, whilst the stallion provides the essential spark of life. The mare can only detract from the stallion's unquestioned quality, the most valued foal resembles its sire, thus reflecting its disproportionate inheritance of his desirable attributes of speed, stamina and heart. The price of a yearling will be determined by its sire and its resemblance of that sire.

In Newmarket, these are not just the natural facts about racehorses. Facilitated by the capacity for analogic thought and the ability of racehorses to become signs and thus 'stand for' other things (chapter seven), these natural facts govern ideas of human relatedness also. The 'rub' is that even where informant's ideas regarding human reproduction were based upon sophisticated knowledge of genetic contribution that contradicted monogeneticism, they still used this model to explain the life path of an adult individual. The 'facts of life' according to the modern medical profession were known but did not permeate racing society to the extent that ideas about heredity governed by male dominated pedigree did. I would suggest that this is because monogeneticism makes sense of a division of labour which could be described as 'class-based'.

Nature is no single concept and I have not tried to treat it as one; it has always meant many things, and in changing constellation. In modern parlance, it covered at least five different areas. (Strathern 1992b: 172)

Newmarket racing society is both arch monist and arch dualist. Racehorses are treated as family members, granted complex 'person'alities and pedigrees explain both equine and human lived trajectories. However, thoroughbred racehorses are also 'man's noblest creation', the object of the 'science' of selective breeding, nature controlled. Thoroughbred breeders depend upon dualism in order to claim the prestige associated with the manipulation of a sphere conceived in opposition to society, and therefore ostensibly outside human control. It depends upon monism in order to allow cultures of relatedness most fully worked out amongst an equine population to function as a guiding axiom of human society. Crucially, racing society depends on the ability to elide the two meanings of nature (as both all powerful and also dominated) in racehorse breeding in order to blur the outcome as both man-made and beyond man's control. In addition, eliding the two meanings provides a means of creating a boundary between racing society and the rest of society, in that only racing society has the pedigree necessary to control this part of nature.

In Newmarket, 'nature' (for the moment), retains its status as the 'grounding' (Strathern 1992b) of all meaningful articulations of the relationship between that which is fixed and that which is variable. In addition, selective breeding, the status quo, is also 'natural' in relation to the alternatives of AI and cloning, in the sense of being a threatened present regarded nostalgically. Why should this be? Despite the motivation for selective breeding being the control of nature, I would suggest that AI offers too much control, relieving nature of its potency and thus making its control less attractive:

What is in crisis here is the symbolic order, the conceptualisation of the relation between nature and culture such that one can talk about one through the other. Nature as a ground for meaning of cultural practices can no longer be taken for granted if Nature itself is regarded as having to be protected and promoted. (Strathern 1992b: 177)

In addition, AI is a literalisation. The casualties of AI are numerous and include the separation of sex from reproduction and the consequent displacement and exposure of the pedigree theory of heredity outside its supporting 'natural facts'. Pedigree without monogeneticism is a weakened justification for nepotism, just as the British Racing School is seen as a threat to the 'proper' apprenticeship which discovered rather than created talent.

AI is a mechanism for unpacking the 'natural facts' of equine reproduction, and is thus a potential enemy of the ideology of pedigree. This being the case, cloning is anathema to racing society. The relationship between AI and cloning was described to me as similar to that between 'the speed of light and warp factor ten'. I was told that what AI had loosened cloning would 'blow away'. AI has loosened the connection between sex and reproduction and thus pedigree and society. Cloning would eradicate pedigree because individuals would no longer be unique according to this criteria. Factors other than breeding would determine an individual's characteristics. To racing society this would be a world in which that which was thought to defer individuality was held constant, only for individuality to find an alternative source. Cloning is the 'control' experiment for the operation of pedigree and is therefore a threat to the basic governing principle of racing society.

We are still After Nature; still act with nature in mind. But, I have suggested that the concept that grounded our views of individual consciousness and symbolic activity on the one hand and a relational view of human enterprise on the other has been transformed. And because it is ground that is transformed, an equally devastating effect is of triviality...nature seems turned into a mere artefact of consumer choice. (Strathern 1992b: 197)

This process is not without precedents in Newmarket, because where pedigree is at risk from technology, risk has been threatened by money, the other catalyst capable of achieving this 'flattening' effect in the racing industry. The English Thoroughbred is a finite resource and in the recent past big 'players' have sought to take advantage of this by buying a considerable proportion of the annual yearling crop. The royal families of Dubai and Saudi Arabia have bought a vast number of racehorses over the past twenty years. Sheikh Mohammed has been the most successful owner over the last ten years, and the rest of the league table is dominated by a number of his relatives along with members of other Middle Eastern royal families. Initial reaction to what has been referred to as the 'Arab invasion' was predictably hostile (the irony of what Sheikh Mohammed described as 'a reclaiming of Arab blood' was lost on English racing society). However, racing now depends upon Middle Eastern money to such a degree that any hint of a reduction in this investment is met with panic. Before this investment 'trickled down' so that almost everyone in the business was affected by it, Middle Eastern buyers were regarded as 'perverting' the sport, by

buying so many horses that they could hardly lose. I was told that it was not 'in the spirit of the game' to 'hedge your bets' to such an extent. By buying a large enough proportion of each generation of yearlings the Dubai royal family ensured that they had an extremely high chance of buying at least a few talented racehorses.

Constraining uncertainty to this degree undermines all of the major roles in racing. The bloodstock agent is employed on the grounds that he is capable of identifying those yearlings who will make good racehorses. The stud manager is employed on the basis that he can predict which stallion will 'get' a good foal from a particular mare. Each does so on the grounds of their Newmarket connections and their resultant inherent abilities. Buying all of the available yearlings in order to guarantee winners subverts this process by squeezing the risk out of success. Following initial hostility, resentment and resistance, the racing industry has now softened its response, describing the endeavour as, 'Making a science out of an art' (*Sporting Life* 10/1/98:13), but criticism is still to be found amongst those who believe that racing should be about risk. Small trainers and owners, for example, told me that taking the risk out of racing by owning vast numbers of horses also takes away the dream of buying a cheap but talented horse. As in the case of AI and cloning, too much control spoils racing, by upsetting the balance between fixed and variable factors.

Newmarket as a 'nature-culture'

If we understand modernity in terms of the official Constitution that has to make a total distinction between humans and nonhumans on the one hand and between purification and mediation on the other, then no anthropology of the modern world is possible. But if we link together in one single picture the work of purification and the work of mediation that gives it meaning, we discover, retrospectively, that we have never been truly modern. (Latour 1993: 91)

Studying racing society as a 'nature' (1993: 91) as well as a 'culture', breaks down the separation between nature and society which Latour refers to as the Internal Great Divide (1993: 99) thus making it possible to examine racehorses and racing people as hybrids. This possibility was demanded in order to produce a rendering of racing society which would be familiar to its members. It also facilitates the comparative study which has been made illegitimate by the 'one nature' model of science assimilated by anthropology:

To become symmetrical, anthropology needs a complete overhaul and intellectual retooling so that it can get around both Divides at once by believing neither in the radical distinction between humans and non-humans at home, nor in the total overlap of knowledge and society elsewhere. (Latour 1993: 101)

Newmarket is something of a conundrum in this respect. It appears to blur the Internal Great Divide at times, by including humans and animals in a single system governed

by their breeding. Equally, Newmarket often stresses the separation of nature and society in order to claim the prestige associated with control of the former by the latter, epitomised by the English thoroughbred racehorse as 'man's noblest creation'. I would, however, argue that this distinction is grounded upon the unity of nature (society and nature). It is grounded in this unity because in order to assert the suitability of a member of racing society to a racing occupation one resorts to the ideology of pedigree, which depends for its force upon the personality of horses and the animality of humans. The two are thus sufficiently similar in kind that they may be governed by the same organising principle. I have suggested that it is this grounding function that is threatened by AI and cloning.

Newmarket is a particular example of the process described by Strathern in relation to English kinship more generally (1992b). It is also a society that succumbs to a relatively symmetrical anthropology, such that it should become evident that:

Cultures - different or universal - do not exist, any more than Nature does. There are only natures-cultures, and these offer the only possible basis for comparison. As soon as we take practices of mediation as well as practices of purification into account, we discover that the moderns do not separate humans from non-humans any more than the 'others' totally superimpose signs and things. (Latour 1993: 104)

I have come to study Newmarket as a nature-culture because it was forced upon me by my informants, who took this hybridity for granted. My consideration of the nature-culture of racing society in Newmarket is an attempt to respond to the motivations of *Primate Visions* on a far more limited scale:

an invitation...to remap the borderlands between nature and culture. I want the readers to find an 'elsewhere' from which to envision a different and less hostile order of relationships among people, animals, technologies, and land...I also want to set new terms for the traffic between what we have come to know historically as nature and culture. (Haraway 1989: 15)

Of course, recasting these ideas depends upon an awareness of their present trajectories of meaning, of which my thesis is a single example. Whilst I hope that this work benefits from the same critical awareness as Haraway in relation to issues of 'nature', 'science', 'animals' and 'humans', I hope that it also manages to project an image of class as an inseparable part of these concerns in Newmarket. It is polemical in that it takes seriously the idea of a symmetrical anthropology, concurring that the nature-culture dichotomy:

is not just another category belonging to the intellectual tool-kit of the social sciences; it is the key foundation of modernist epistemology. Going beyond dualism opens up an entirely different intellectual landscape, one in which states and substances are replaced by processes and relations; the main question is not any more how to objectify closed systems, but how to account for the very diversity of the processes of objectification. (Descola and Palsson 1996: 12)

Meanings of 'nature' in Newmarket are imbued with class, and 'processes of objectification' involve categorising people and animals according to ideas whereby some are innately superior to others by virtue of their breeding.

Appendices

1.1 The annual cycle of horseracing in relation to fieldwork

Date:	Significant dates and events:	Fieldwork locations and tasks:
October 1996	Main bloodstock sales at Tattersalls, Park Paddocks, Newmarket.	Observe sales. living in cottage in Westley Waterless, village just outside Newmarket.
November		
December		
January 1997		Begin work at a stud in Cheveley. Mucking out, handling mares and foals, taking mares to stallions.
February	14th: Breeding season begins.	
March	20th: Flat racing season begins.	
April		Begin work at a training stable. Riding out, mucking out, taking horses racing.
May	3rd & 4th, The 2,000 & 1,000 Guineas.	
June	6th & 7th: The Oaks & The Derby.	Lead up first winner.
July	14th: Breeding season finishes.	Move to hayloft on stud. Work on stud and at training stables.
August	Winter jumping season begins.	Go racing with professional punter.
September	13th: The St. Leger.	
October	Sales begin.	Working at Tattersalls. preparing and showing yearlings. Take a filly through the ring for 36,000 guineas.
November	Sales continue. 8th: Flat season ends.	
December		
January 1998	Sales continue.	Return to Edinburgh.

1.2 The lifecycle of the English thoroughbred racehorse

Age:

- 0 Foals born on stud, all share nominal birthday of January 1st.
If deformed: destroyed.
If healthy: weaned and prepared for sales, 'dam' reimpregnated.
- 1 Unnamed yearlings sold at auction, put into training.
'Backed' (accustomed to bridle and saddle) and 'broken' (ridden).
- 2 If 'sharp' (mature): begin racing.
If 'backward' (immature): 'given more time' or disposed of.
- 3 Best of generation will compete for Classic races.
Talented colts will remain entire, less talented colts will be gelded in the hope that this will improve their performance.
Fillies showing little or no ability will either be put in foal, and so become mares, or will be sold out of racing.
- 4 Most talented colts may either continue to compete for valuable races for older horses, or may go to stud, and so become stallions.
Less talented fillies, colts and geldings may be kept in training if 'holding their form', or, if physically sound, may be retrained to race over obstacles.
- 5 upwards Older geldings continue to race on the flat until they 'lose their form', whereupon they are sold out of racing or otherwise disposed of.
Older geldings racing over obstacles continue to do so until they 'lose their form', are injured, or retired. Robust racehorses may run until they are fifteen.
Mares will continue to race until they 'lose their form', are injured, or retired. The majority will then be 'tried' at stud.
Stallions may continue to 'cover' until death, so long as they are fertile and in demand. Some have lived up to thirty years.
Brood mares will be bred from each year until they no longer conceive, whereupon they become 'barreners', and are disposed of, usually in their teens.

5.1 Participation in gambling markets in the UK 1974-89 (as %)
(Munting 1996: 233)

Survey data: A: 1974 base = 928; A': 1984 base = 984; B: 1989 base = 1,382

	Sample		All gambling		Betting		Pools		Bingo		AWP		Lotteries	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A'	B	A'	B
All:	100	100	50	70	13	14	36	36	15	17	22	16	55	30
Male		48	57	52	66	68	68	62	31	35	65	63	47	49
Female		52	43	48	32	32	31	38	69	65	35	36	53	52
Age:														
15-19		11	7	11	8	12	4	4	18	19	20	30	11	10
20-24		9	9	10	15	12	7	7	18	19	14	20	7	10
25-34		17	20	17	20	21	21	16	19	11	20	21	20	21
35-44		16	18	18	18	19	19	20	14	18	15	15	16	20
45-54		14	21	14	12	12	22	18	23	13	13	5	14	15
55-64		14	14	15	12	11	11	17	10	20	6	3	17	13
Social group:														
AB		14	11	17	7	14	9	9	5	3	13	12	17	17
C1		23	23	21	21	20	24	21	18	16	21	21	23	24
C2		30	36	33	29	34	37	34	36	35	40	37	33	32
D		19	24	20	33	18	22	22	29	20	19	20	18	17
E		15	7	14	8	16	6	14	12	26	9	8	10	10

Source:

Mintel, *Leisure Intelligence*, 3: 6, Gambling, *passim* (London, Mintel, 1990).

Notes:

Data are based on surveys in 1974 and 1989, for AWP and lotteries 1984 and 1989; betting is that with bookmakers and tote; pools is football pools; AWP is amusement with prize machines; lotteries include raffles, tombola etc.; casino gaming and gaming machines are not included as they were partaken by a small range of social groups.

5.2 Distribution of gambling expenditure in Britain, 1946-65 and 1969-91 (£m at current prices)
(Munting 1996: 234)

A: 1945-65

Year	Total	Pools	Horse-racing	Greyhounds ^a	Other ^b	Premium Bonds	Fixed odds football	Bingo	Casinos
1946	1,000.0	75.0	450	450	25	—	—	—	—
1950	650.0	52.0	425	160	13	—	—	—	—
1955	550.0	74.0	350	120	6	—	—	—	—
1959	674.4	97.6	365	124	7	8.8	45	—	—
1965	915.0	100.0	610	125	10	20.0	15	35	—

B: 1969-91

Year	Total ^c	Pools ^d	General Betting ^e	Lotteries ^f	Bingo	Casino ^g gaming
1969/70	1,290.8	110.8	1,180	—	—	—
1975/6	3,107.2	241.6	2,079	—	309.6	477
1980/1	5,445.9	395.9	3,551	78.0	491.0	930
1985/6	6,912.4	553.5	4,205	21.9	517.0	1,615
1990/1	9,419.6	766.1	6,029	27.5	661.0	1,936

Sources:

Churches Council on Gambling, *Annual reports* (1948-67); Gaming Board of Great Britain, *Annual reports*; Annual returns of H.M. Customs and Excise.

Notes:

A: Based on estimates by Churches' Council on Gambling. B: From gambling tax returns to H.M. Customs and Excise. The two sets of data are not directly comparable.

^a Extrapolated from recorded bets with totalisators.

^b Includes small lotteries and raffles.

^c Excludes any estimates for Premium Bonds or gaming machines.

^d Includes fixed odds betting with pools promoters.

^e All bets with bookmakers and totalisators. From 1989 on-course bets are excluded.

^f Gross ticket rates to lotteries licensed by the Gaming Board.

^g Drop in casinos; excludes gaming machines.

9.1 Key to the various catalogue typefaces (1997 Houghton Sales Catalogue: 23)

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GUIDE TO CATALOGUING DETAILS

Racing Careers

Purchasers should be aware that details of racing careers of Lots are not intended to be comprehensive and purchasers should therefore make their own enquiries concerning the full racing career of any particular Lot. Additionally, in view of the time elapsing between preparing the catalogue and the date of sale there may well be further racing performances not recorded in the catalogue or announced from the rostrum.

Black type races

Horses included in this catalogue are printed in one of the six styles below.

HAMMER – winner of a European Pattern Race, a Foreign Graded Stakes Race, a Listed Race or a Major American Stakes Race.*

Hammer – a placed horse in the above races. N.B. Fourth places included for Pattern Races and Foreign Graded Stakes Races only up to 1988. (In 1989 fourth places included for Group 1 Races only).

HAMMER – a winner of a race (either flat or N.H.).

Hammer – a non-winner.

Hammer – a winner of a National Hunt Pattern race.

Hammer – a placed horse in a National Hunt Pattern race.

The group rating (Gr. 1, 2, 3) or a Listed Race indicator (L) or a Restricted Race indicator (R) appear in bold type for all such races run since the commencement of the Pattern Race Scheme in 1971.

N.B. It should be noted that from time to time Group and Listed Races are reclassified.

* For each year Races listed in the International Cataloguing Standards Booklet for that year are included. In addition all named U.S. Stakes Races of \$25,000 or more (\$25,000 to 1984; \$15,000 1985–1988; \$20,000 1989) are included, as agreed between Tattersalls and Goffs.

Copies of the International Cataloguing Standards booklet are available in the Sales Office.

Racing Records

For the Lot being offered or for the dam of a Yearling or Foal, any race which they have won or in which they have been placed may be mentioned. For all other animals shown in the pedigree, only eligible black-type races, as explained above, may be mentioned.

Breeding Records

A full breeding record is given for each mare catalogued.

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