Miriam Adelman · Jorge Knijnik *Editors*

Gender and Equestrian Sport

Riding Around the World

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Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction – Women, Men, and Horses: Looking at the Equestrian World Through a "Gender Lens"

Miriam Adelman and Jorge Knijnik

> *L' imaginaire et la mémoire des âges conjuguent la monte au masculin, associant pouvoir et force, prestige et sueur, vitesse et virilité. Oubliant un peu vite tout de même qu' Hippolyte était femme et reine des Amazones, d'hippos, le cheval et lúein, délier. Étymologie qui en dit long déjà sur leur complicité.*
>
> Sophie Nauleau

Perhaps almost as much a part of world literature as the romantic references to a man and his horse (the warrior, cowboy, or gaucho and his faithful mount) are the numerous narratives on women and horses, from age-old mythology to contemporary popular fiction. Such narratives are diverse in form and content, spanning centuries and cultures, and often employing contrasting metaphors or discursive strategies: some evoke women's daring, strength, and courage, while others repeat tropes of sensualization, mystification, and sexualization of "woman on horseback." Historical works also display wide variety, providing a broad and abundant source of evidence of the many ways in which over the centuries horses have been an integral part of culture, society, and everyday life for the women and men who have ridden them, employed them as beasts of burden, and loved them as companions in leisure and work. However, as the epigraph above notes, masculine connotations and experiences of riding have often made horsewomen appear as marginal. Current popular literature, on the other hand – certainly as expression of and response to the increasing feminization of the horse world from the mid-twentieth century onward – acts (whether

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intentionally or spontaneously) to redress such a historic discursive imbalance, so that, at least in English language narratives, girls' and women's relationships to horses take center stage, in works that range from fiction to journalism and self-help genres. Yet, all of these diverse sources of discursive production – those that make implicit or explicit reference to the historic partnership of "men and horses" or those that evoke women's presence – provide testimony of the gendered character of this sphere of historical, social, and cultural practice, an issue that has only very recently begun to generate a specific body of academic research devoted to its further analysis and exploration.

Sport itself has only rather recently come into the mainstream of social scientific production. In their important synthesis of a burgeoning area of research, published in the early 1990s, Jarvie and Maguire argue that "Analytically speaking there has been a sociological debate about sport and leisure for a quarter of a century, maybe longer" (1994: 1). They identify the 1960s as a turning point encouraging new forms of critical thought on sport and leisure as well as on other realms of social practice (1994: 3). With this change came the recognition of the profoundly gendered (and therefore, in this sense as well as others, political) nature of social life and social relations, including, of course, sport and leisure (Lorber 1994; Adelman 2010).

The development of a "gender lens" through which to look at society has greatly impacted the way we understand historical processes shaping bodies and culture, as well as the institutions that emerge as the modern world of sport. Thus, pioneer sport sociologist Eric Dunning has written extensively on sport and masculinity, initially from a perspective that extended the work he did with Norbert Elias on sport in relation to a "civilizing process" that tames men in particular ways, preparing them for a new set of more contained attitudes and behaviors in the *public sphere*. Identifying "sports and sports-related contexts as sites – whether socially approved or not – for the production and reproduction of masculine habituses, identities and behavior," Dunning also recognized the need to explore "the relations between femininity and masculinity… as they are expressed through sport" (Dunning 1999: 219). Continuing in this vein and at times moving in different directions are the contemporary gender scholars who have produced a considerable bibliography on sporting masculinities (Dunning and Maguire 1996; Messner and Connell 2007; Anderson 2005, 2008, 2009). Feminist sociologist Judith Lorber, in arguing that gender must be understood as a "social institution"[1] (1994: 1), has also been clear in pointing to the importance of sport and our study of it: "Sports illustrate the way bodies are gendered by social practices and how the female body is socially constructed to be inferior" (1994: 41).

[1]Lorber explains, "…I offer a new paradigm of gender -*gender as a social institution.* Its focus is the analysis of gender as a social structure that has its origins in the development of human culture, not in biology or procreation. Like any social institution, gender exhibits both universal features and chronological and cross-cultural variations that affect individual lives and social interaction in major ways. As is true of other institutions, gender's history can be traced, its structure examined, and its changing effects researched" (1994: 1).

Today, feminist sport studies constitute a vibrant transdisciplinary field that over the course of several decades has stimulated sophisticated theoretical reflections on gender, power, pleasure, and bodies and encouraged a wealth of empirical work on women's experiences in sporting milieu that they have often experienced as hostile or at least ambivalent. Feminist historical research on late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century women's struggles for access to and participation in sport at amateur and professional levels (Hargreaves 1994; Cahn 1994) has also been prolific and quite incisive in demonstrating how sport as masculine prerogative has frequently begotten a hotly contested terrain. Personal narratives (Krone and Richardson 1995; McEvoy and McEvoy 2001; Burke 1997; Smythe 1992) and social research have provided both portraits and discussion of the institutional and interpersonal conflicts surrounding women's participation in sporting institutions and cultures, and cultural studies perspectives have encouraged the study of representation of women and men as athletes or "sporting bodies," within mass media and other sources of discursive production.

It is also important to consider how recent shifts in focus – moving from pioneering gender studies literature which until the late 1980s generally advanced a social constructionist framework (the cultural and historical shaping of masculinities and femininities, men and women in works by theorists from Simone de Beauvoir (2010) to Susan Brownmiller (1986) and Susan Bordo (2004)) to contemporary deconstructionist perspectives (de Lauretis 1987; Butler 1990, 1993; Preciado 2007) – have impacted approaches to gender and sport. This has demanded greater reflection on cultural taken-for-granteds about *who* belongs in each (sex/gender) category and how binary conceptions have served as the dubious basis for social thought and practice.

Where sport sociology and sport history have, however infrequently, turned an eye to equestrian sport, the racing world seems to occupy a somewhat privileged position (see Hedenborg 2008, on this point). Perhaps this privilege can be explained by the fact that horse racing so visibly sprawls over a number of different terrains and theoretical (as well as empirical) interests: spectator sport, equestrian activities, and games and gambling, among them. Moreover, from distant history to its modern moment, horse racing has stirred considerable human passion, spanning not only historical time but a range of cultures. Renowned researcher Rebecca Cassidy speaks eloquently of an ontological character of racing, echoing theories of performance to argue that "Horse racing is ancient and modern in outlook, global and local in scope. Something of the drama of human experience is inscribed in every horse race. It is dangerous and to most people, visually arresting. Every race contains the potential to evoke elemental emotions and events: triumph, disappointment, disaster, tragedy, death" (Cassidy 2007: vii).

As a modern institution, the racing world and its incumbent activities have included people of diverse social positions and ranks, and has more recently become an intensely interconnected worldwide industry that employs a diverse, skilled, and often disempowered work force (Winters 2008; Cassidy 2007; Vamplew 2008). Studies of the turf and racing have shed light not only on "sportization processes" and the development of modern sporting and leisure institutions (Bueno 2006; Melo

2005; Adelman and Moraes 2008) but also on the paths through which sport becomes a spectacle meant for mass entertainment and consumption (the genesis of a "global sport media complex," in Maguire's (1999) terms). As Vamplew points out, "In many respects horseracing is a unique sport. It is highly professionalized with little room for the amateur. It has no grass roots and while many spectators at football and cricket games will have played those sports, few racegoers will have mounted a horse let alone ridden one in a race" (Vamplew, op.cit, viii-ix). Furthermore, racing's connection to gambling may also render it suspect, associating it with excess, impurity, organized crime (e.g., by offering a convenient channel for money laundering) – fact enough to bring it under public scrutiny in a not so uncommon mixture of repulsion and attraction. More recently, it has galvanized public campaigns against allegations of cruelty and generalized mistreatment of race horses, especially in relation to injury rates of horses in jumps racing.

Brazilian studies on the history of racing have emphasized how, as this modern "English" sport[2] made headway on foreign soil, the São Paulo Jockey Club soon became the bastion of powerful local male elites (Melo 2005; Bueno 2006; Adelman and Moraes 2008). Nonetheless, women and members of different social classes and racial–ethnic groups were always a significant part of the throngs who gathered at the race tracks from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, period in which, in Brazil as in many other parts of the world, going to the races was a thriving form of sociability and entertainment. Knijnik and Melo (2010) have shown how late nineteenth-century Brazilian cultural production – such as literature and theater – featured the race tracks as a central part of social life in the main Brazilian cities.

Interestingly, theses on the initially "homosocial" nature of modern culture (Sedgwick 1985; Kimmel 1996),[3] and of the sport and leisure cultures that are a part of them, are both upheld and uniquely challenged by studies of the equestrian world. Lagier's (2009) history of the relationship between women and horses evokes vivid and moving portrayals of how, through horses, women in diverse moments in history sought – and quite often gained – access to public sphere activities and recognition, even under circumstances in which the latter required taking up male attire and identity. Restrictive social and cultural norms were apparently never able to hold back all the women who actively desired and sought excitement and adventure (Lagier 2009; Hodgson 2002) or simply those who were not able or willing to sit on the sidelines in times of frontier challenge and economic hardship (Walls 2009;

[2] See Lemon's interesting discussion of just how English horse racing really was (Lemon 2008).

[3] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985) brilliantly introduces the notion of homosociality as modernity's common format for public sphere relations. Michael Kimmel has used the concept artfully in portraying, for the North American case, the historical unfolding of the notion of the self-made man and the social construction of masculinity through specific forms of homosocial interaction, among which sporting and outdoor activities took center stage. He argues, "Masculinity is largely a homosocial enactment. … Masculinity defined through homosocial interaction contains many parts, including the camaraderie, fellowship and intimacy often celebrated in male culture" (Kimmel 1996: 105).

Roach 1990). Sociocultural norms impacting women's riding also varied from one part of the world to another, as well as among different social classes. For example, while in the American West, women readily and customarily rode astride for work and transportation purposes, in Europe, where horses were similarly a fundamental part of the daily lives of the population, they were largely associated with an elite culture. Thus, wealthy or aristocratic women who were accomplished horsewomen were constrained by "lady's riding" (Lagier 2009). In a particularly telling fashion, European modernity was ushered in along with symbolic conflicts over whether or not women should ride sidesaddle – *à la amazone*, in French – or astride and over what type of feminine attire could be considered appropriate for this sort of "public appearance."

Studies focusing on the change in the position of the horse within twentieth-century Western society and culture – from work and military to sport and leisure uses – have also captured the deeply gendered dimensions of these changes (Régnier et al. 2012a, b; Hedenborg 2007). "Feminization" has been identified as a worldwide tendency, but with differing degrees of intensity, affect, and effect. Statistical evidence depicting the phenomenon in equitation is available for certain parts of the world such as France (where Lagier reports that, as of 2007, "78.8 % female, equitation is first on the list of women's sports in France and the only sport in which men and women are rivals in the same competitions, abiding by the same criteria") (Lagier 2009: 14, our translation), Sweden (where 84 % of all members of the Swedish Equestrian Federation are female, 65 % of whom are under 25) (Hedenborg 2007: 4), and the USA (where "female equestrians represent over 80 percent" of all those who are devoted to the field, a shift from a previously male-dominated sport that has taken place over the last 30 years or so) (Rice 2003). In her attempt to explain the shift from a masculine to feminine equestrian world in her country, Hedenborg (2007: 1) examines two hypotheses: the effects of the state's involvement in equestrian sport (could public policies have favored feminization?) and another based on the new opportunities for women that would be provided once "the army, farming, forestry and transportation – four settings in which horses were previously of great importance" (p. 1) were no longer dependent on them. She also draws attention to the changing symbolic order of the equestrian world in which a historic code has been unsettled – "a hundred years ago, a real man was a 'horseman' and masculinity was connected to horse riding" (p. 4). Plymoth (Chap. 9, this volume) has shown how, in the Swedish case, the feminization tendency not only appears overwhelming but has stirred up considerable concern within the equestrian sport milieu, leading to concerns about how to maintain men interested in equestrian activities.

France, another country that stands out both in terms of its longstanding equestrian tradition and current State and popular interest in its maintenance, has been a fertile climate for studies on equestrian industry and practice. Patrice Régnier has sketched the French passage of equestrianism from military and elite to popular sport and leisure practice, a democratizing process that comes to fruition in the latter part of the twentieth century. It culminates in 1987 with the fusion of several equestrian sporting organizations into one FFE – the French Equestrian Federation.

He alludes to "surprising" dynamics and results: "…eighty percent of all riders who are amateurs are women. Furthermore, the way the practice is apprehended seems to be gendered, insofar as professionals argue that 'women love horses while men love riding.' Impediments to women reaching the highest levels, although on the decline, still exist, reversing the tendency regarding its practice: almost 80 % of all competitors are men" (Régnier et al. 2012a: 6, our translation). Vérène Chevalier studies employment patterns among French equestrian professionals and provides data on the rise of women as instructors, also noting potential difficulties and imbalances: relatively parity in numbers but some indication of constraints experienced by older women, coupled with an indication that feminizing tendencies are on the rise[4] (Chevalier 2003: 266).

In other parts of the world, such as Latin America, systematic data on equestrian practice may be largely unavailable, yet feminization is widely recognized, particularly – as in the Brazilian case – in show jumping (where women seem to experience difficulty in reaching the top, similar to the what Régnier mentions regarding France, and Chap. 10 by Coulter, this volume, has noted in Canada) pleasure riding, endurance, and barrel racing. Over the course of the last decade, girls and young women have made important inroads into previously all-masculine rodeo competition (Quiroz 2009; Chap. 5 by Adelman and Becker, this volume). At the same time, some areas of 'feminized' equestrian competition, such as dressage (Game 2001), have seen a growing number of men participating in them. This phenomenon may reflect the fact that, as Dashper (2012) argues, this arena of the equestrian world is more inclusive of any type of masculinity, providing gay or "effeminate" men the possibility to participate and take place in high-level competition without discrimination (Dashper 2012).

Furthermore, in the modern world in which knowledge and expertise have been constructed as gendered, scientific and sporting fields have most often labeled authority, know how, technology, and technique as masculine. Birke and Brandt (2009) use Paechter's study of the New Horsemanship Movement to illustrate just how persistent – and how easily reproduced in institutional and daily life of the equestrian world – is the tendency to attribute expert status to males. Similarly gendered processes may make their way almost surreptitiously, as we gender horses themselves. Male and female horses are thus often represented, in popular discourse, in such a way as to fit into our own mental and cultural framework – so often highly gendered in the most conventional of ways, similar to ways of representing male and female human beings and their relation to horses. Thus, current

[4] "There are around 4,000 equestrian establishments that are open to the public within which can be found around 6,000 instructors holding a BEES diploma. There is a general balance between men and women (52.7–47.3 % respectively) yet a disparity emerges according to age: among those under 30, they are 62 % female whereas among those over 50, only 20 %. It seems that what we have here is an effect of age (the constraints of family life that weigh on women…) and one of generation (the youngest instructors come from a population of amateurs who are increasingly and overwhelmingly female, 74 % of diplomas awarded in 2001 in contrast to the 53 % awarded in 1975)" (Chevalier 2003: 266).

discussions on the relation of animals to humans (which may include not only love and care but also exploitation and violence) have also begun to address these forms of framing behavior and practice, bringing new perspectives and much creativity to an arena of practice that had long been left to the workings of less critical modes of thought or simply approached on the basis of "taken-for-granted" assumptions.

Horses, Humans, and Riding in a Gendered World: Our Contribution

As we have attempted to argue above, a wide variety of gender issues in equestrian life and sport are, slowly but surely, gaining the focus of academic research. In fact, a growing corpus of recent sociological and anthropological literature on gendered interactions and representations has been fueled by the widespread recognition of a particular *potential* for greater equality within equestrian sport: as the only sport which at the highest professional levels, including international Olympic competition, men and women ride together on the same teams or against each other, as "equals," notwithstanding a rather generalized sort of a glass ceiling noted above (men still prevail at highest levels of competitive show jumping in most parts of the world). As Thompson (Chap. 8, this volume) would ask, why then is such egalitarian potential – in which the horse may be "a great liberator, at least by degrees" – apparently so hard to achieve?

In one way or another, all contributors to this volume address the above issue and, in doing so, raise a number of other related questions. Under what cultural and social conditions does "feminization" or increased women's participation in horse sports take place? And what does feminization itself actually mean? It cannot be explained away merely by presuming it is a (natural, spontaneous) "consequence" of the horse's diminishing military and work function. Rather, it is a challenge to be examined from different angles, by looking carefully at both structural change and women's efforts to carve and preserve a space within equestrian activities and practices: historically (Chap. 2 by Hedenborg and White, this volume) and at present (Chap. 4 by Butler, Chap. 10 by Coulter, Chap. 7 by Gilbert and Gillett, Chap. 3 by Dashper, Chap. 5 by Adelman and Becker, this volume) and considering not only the evolution of *institutions* but also *agency,* that is, examining why and how particular people – individuals or groups, females and males of different ages, class origins, and cultural backgrounds – invest so much passion and energy in the horse world.

Another focus of this volume is on the need for an international approach. There is much to be learned through comparative study. For example, although women's major presence in amateur equestrianism and in some cases competitive horse sports appears to be a general and wide-reaching phenomenon, gender processes are carried out at distinct paces and are marked by cultural particularities in different parts of the world: Northern and Southern Europe, Australia, North America, Latin America, and so forth. Moreover, studies carried out within different cultural contexts show that equestrian genres may vary considerably in terms of the type of

people (gender, age, class, race/ethnicity, etc.) and type or breeds of horses that participate in them, as well as with regard to the symbolic meanings attached to them. Thompson's work (Chap. 8, this volume) examines the gendered meanings constructed in Spanish bullfighting and how, although even today mounted bullfighters are mostly male, *rejoneo* itself is semiotically feminized, in contrast to footed fighting. Although Thompson's ethnographic work was carried out largely among male *rejoneadores* and their fans, she draws on a wider body of literature that looks at women rodeo equestrians and bullfighters (Feiner 2003; Pink 1997), offering testimonies – and to a lesser extent, analyses based on social science perspectives of what happens when women become involved in such apparently quintessentially masculine arts/sports, often defying not only social stigma but formal legal dispositions.

The issue of the cultural ramifications of such courageous acts of trespass and whether or to what extent they lead to "subversive re-signification" of tradition are issues to be dealt with. If in Sweden and other Nordic countries, riding is associated more across the board with women and femininity (Chap. 9 by Plymoth, this volume), in the United States, Spain and Brazil, traditional/local ("Western," *doma vaquera* and *montaria*, respectively) and classical/European ("English riding," *doma clásica* and *hipismo clássico*, respectively) styles of riding have distinct historical origins which continue to color their contemporary associations. These styles of riding – which are also connected to breeds of horses requiring different kinds of upkeep and differential investments – acquire distinct social connotations in terms of gender and social class. Thus, while in Brazil popular rodeo sports may be practiced by working and middle class men and women (see Chap. 5 by Adelman and Becker, this volume) – in fact, participants living in rural and peri-urban environments may keep their horses at relatively low cost, in their own backyards – the elite world of show jumping and dressage are, in the context of this country known for its economic polarization, restrictive not only in terms of class but also race (Chap. 11 by Knijnik, this volume), making complex intersectional analysis necessary. Gilbert and Gillett's (Chap. 7, this volume) careful and well-thought out study of how women become involved in the specific equestrian terrain of polo uses Bourdieusian theory to discuss the kinds of capital needed and/or developed by women and men who play it.

Men and women may be at *work* or *at play* – or some combination of the two – in the equestrian world. Equestrian life includes sport and hobby, work, and *leisure*, and this in turn gives rise to job and labor market – as well as status and lifestyle – issues, and conflicts. Studies by Hedenborg (2008) and Griefs (2008) on gender and work in equestrian sectors in Sweden and Brazilian literature on jockeys as both athletes and wage workers who most often have often come from working class families (Adelman and Moraes 2008; Bueno 2006; Chap. 11 by Knijnik, this volume) are extended by work in this volume, such as Butler's chapter focusing on the British race track. Thus, the race track may provide an opportunity for social mobility and – under the best of circumstances, for the most fortunate and talented, perhaps – fame. Butler (Chap. 4, this volume) eloquently evokes the lives and hard, daily work – the "drudgery" (Chap. 2 by Hedenborg and Hedenborg-White, this

volume) – of grooms and "stable lads," many of whom, today, may in fact be women (see also Cassady 2007; Winters 2008). This work on racing, together with other contributions to the volume, raises the issue of how and why, in these contexts, the gender of workers matters. Kendra Coulter (Chap. 10, this volume) reminds us that most grand prix jumpers, at least in the Canadian context, are also professionals and business people. This, she demonstrates, has important gendered dimensions: her own research indicates that among the different types of labor that are part of advancing a career and a professional life is a "social labor" that comes easier to men, whose very masculinity provides a kind of (highly useful) social capital that is required to successfully attract sponsors, clients, and equestrian business opportunities. On a more subjective side, Coulter also notes that positive self-perception, self-efficacy, and confidence – important elements of the emotional labor the career demands – come easier to male equestrians than to females.

Sociologists and anthropologists have long recognized that even social structures and institutions – from "cultural traditions" or labor markets, which so often appear to be firmly sedimented and hardly movable constructions – are in fact made of (or sustained) in and through social interaction. It is here where subjective identifications unfold and cultural norms are (re)negotiated. As many of the chapters in this book illustrate, gender performances are an important component of such interactions, wedded to other aspects of sociability and daily life in the equestrian world. Furthermore, in times of change such as our own in which gender anxieties abound (Lynn Segal 1999), much energy seems to be channeled into "boundary work" – attempts, perhaps, to maintain "old certainties" in a world of flux and shifting notions about what it means to be a man or a woman or what repertoire of attitudes and actions a human person designated as male or female can incorporate and still "remain intelligible." Birke and Brandt (2009) have pointed out that while horsey communities ("communities of practice") may easily accommodate girls and women who are not inclined to perform femininity in conventional ways – around the barn in fact, involvement with horses may to some extent preclude such a possibility! – tensions around gender-appropriate presentation of the self may later appear around the show ring or competition circuit where the use of (appropriately) gender-marked attire or accessories are expected. Normalizing discourses and practices and agents' attempts to avoid stigma may be powerful forces in such daily interaction, as suggested by Butler's discussion of efforts required to "become one of the lads," Adelman and Becker's examination of Brazilian traditionalist movement concerns over what may become of cherished notions of normative femininity and Plymoth's study of anxieties over men's "loss of place" in Swedish equestrianism.

Furthermore, as many volumes of contemporary scholarship have poignantly argued, social life is profoundly discursive, and many of its key dimensions and struggles unfold today as symbolic struggles in which meanings are produced, reproduced, and challenged. Oral traditions, popular literature, and modern medias work to disseminate these meanings and in doing so, play an extremely important role in forging subjectivities: people's singular, felt and thought relationships to themselves and the world around them. Thus, for example, the Gaucho as South American folk

hero (de le Comte 2000), a brave and solitary fellow who roams the pampa and is often said to prefer the company of his horse to that of any other living being (other men, however "homosocially important," and women – who perhaps only get in the way!) has fired women's imaginations and desires as well, and when reappearing in the form of Brazilian female historical figure and folk heroine Anita Garibaldi, does so all the more (Sant'Ana 1993). Today, particular groups of young Brazilian women, particularly from the southernmost states of the nation, associate themselves with a "traditionalist movement" and its rodeo culture, re-appropriating its cultural symbols, re-signifying them, and, in doing so, renegotiating cultural norms of feminine behavior (Chap. 5 by Adelman and Becker, this volume).

This latter issue brings us back to the important question of the changing and plural ways in which femininity and masculinity are understood within equestrian worlds. Numerous readings of discourse and reality are possible, such as the long-standing identification of "tomboys" and otherwise unconventional girls with horses (McEwen 1997) or the somewhat contrasting notion that women, inherently nurturing and caring, are thus "feminizing the horse world," as we have discussed above. In fact, there is no dearth of literature to encourage popular belief in some particular type of mythical or spiritual connection between women and horses, and in their contemporary variety, such narratives may be couched in the therapeutic language of the self-help industry. Popular author Mary D. Midkiff is exemplary in this regard. Her best-selling book *She Flies without Wings: How Horses Touch a Woman's Soul* (2001) elaborates on the alleged "natural affinity" between women and horses. She has in fact become a successful equestrian entrepreneur who travels not only around the USA but also internationally, giving "Women and Horses" workshops.[5] Yet, many women writers known in literary circles for their contribution to genres such as fiction, poetry, and short stories have also written on the horses in their lives (and those of other women) (Dreisbach 2010; Wirth 2009; Nauleau 2007), some, even quite extensively, like American Academy of Arts and Letters Jane Smiley (2001, 2005). Horsey fiction written for girls (Smiley 2011a, b) is also a staple in the juvenile fiction department, demonstrating again the strength of popular assumptions about girls' particular "love of horses." Ellen Singleton's excellent analysis (Chap. 6, this volume) of changes in the narratives of juvenile fiction, from vintage equine-adventure to modern day pony books, renders a picture of how the girl–horse relationship has itself been discursively domesticated. Although she identifies forms of patriarchal surveillance and anxiety over the preservation of normative femininity in both contexts, there are also telling contrasts: "In contemporary stories, female characters must cope with challenges that often

[5] In Brazil, where after extensive search we have been able to locate only one book by a Brazilian author on women and horses (Sant'Ana 1993), Midkiff's book is well known in horsey circles where a Portuguese language version of her book is cherished by female equestrians who have no easy access to this or other types of elaborate narrative on women and horses. Midkiff brought her workshop to numerous equestrian venues in Brazil in 2010, using the slogan "*Mulher e cavalo: uma parceria que dá certo*" [Woman and horse: a partnership that works!].

seem more social than physical – principally relations with parents, friends and boyfriends" and that physical challenges, while they may still present themselves, are of a much tamer and mundane nature than the frontier-type dangers of their vintage counterparts. It is now "the horse, rather than the female rider" who becomes "the main focus of physicality." Interestingly, Plymoth's aforementioned contribution to this volume may provide a discursive contrast, as she examines how boys and men are represented in Swedish equestrian federation literature and reports, with its emerging concern for an "endangered masculinity." Women's prevalence is perceived as having had a negative impact on the status of the sport, the ability to taint its image. Women's very presence is signified as domestication, as throwing a shadow over the sport's meaning as physically challenging (the affirmation of "real masculinity") thus threatening its value and worth. Perhaps this is the (paradoxical) flip side to the creation of women's sporting cultures, oft welcomed as a source of women's empowerment – men leaving them, or a created need, as Plymoth suggests, to re-masculinize them!

As the preceding paragraphs have made clear, this edited volume brings together studies from the various disciplines of the social sciences and humanities (anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, history, and literary theory) that enable us to better understand this field as part of a world in flux, with a specific focus on gender issues – as they intersect with questions of class (Thompson, Butler, Hedenborg and Hedenborg White), race/ethnicity (Coulter, Knijnik, Gilbert and Gillett), sexuality and heteronormativity (Dashper), and culture (Adelman and Becker, Singleton, Plymoth) – in diverse fields of equestrian sport. Individual chapters look at high-level international dressage and jumping, polo, and the turf to the rodeo world of the Americas and popular forms of equestrian sport and culture that are an often invisibilized part of history and social life. As a relatively new field, yet one which has in recent years experienced tremendous growth and begun to consolidate as a specific corpus of research – and perhaps, we dare to say, an emerging "epistemic community" – we believe this project to be both important and timely.

We welcome you, our readers, to explore these issues, contradictions, and challenges in the pages that follow. Specific contributions to the volume, all of which have been mentioned in the preceding pages, focus on a variety of cultural contexts and how, within them, equestrian activities and communities contribute to historical and current constructions of embodied "femininities" and "masculinities." While these processes reflect, on the one hand, a world that has been moving, as Katherine Dashper (Chap. 3, this volume) puts it, "beyond the binaries," they also continue to be enmeshed in their persistent, contradictory legacy. Furthermore, although we have attempted to bring together studies from different parts of the globe, we are aware that there is much more to be done to bring a broad range of histories and communities into focus. Individual chapters are followed here with an epilogue, for if we have attained our goal in organizing this first international collection of pieces on gender relations in different areas of equestrian practice, we have done so in the hopes that we inspire others to pick up from here and that we have suceeded in mapping new paths or areas for further examination of riders and riding around the world.

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Chapter 2
From Glamour to Drudgery – Changing Gender Patterns in the Equine Sector: A Comparative Study of Sweden and Great Britain in the Twentieth Century

Susanna Hedenborg and Manon Hedenborg White

Introduction

Although the 1956 Summer Olympic Games were mostly held in Melbourne, the equestrian events took place in Stockholm. Swedish press covered the games, reporting on everything from gold medalist to horse grooming. Special attention was given the fact that women partook in the games both as riders (since 1952, women had been allowed to compete in the dressage event, and in 1956, they were allowed to ride in the show-jumping event for the first time) and stable workers. The British team attracted much notice, partly since Pat Smythe – the first woman to compete in an Olympic show-jumping event – was among its members, and partly because the riders were assisted by female grooms (Hedenborg 2009a).

The Swedish press devoted a high number of articles to female grooms and riders during the Olympic Games. This indicates that it was unusual for women in Sweden to ride and handle horses, or at least that such a concept seemed novel to the Swedish journalists. This is not unexpected as equestrian sports in Europe had long been strongly associated with men and masculinity. Men used horses for agriculture, forestry, the transport sector and the army, and being a 'horse man' was considered a staple of masculinity. Today, however, the equine sector is more often associated with women and femininity.[1] How and when did the gender patterns

[1]Maybe even more so in Sweden than in Britain. In Sweden, the majority of members in the National Equestrian Federation are women (even at an elite level); a majority in horse racing are women, whereas in harness racing, a majority are men. However, when it comes to stable work, a majority in harness racing are women.

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change? Is it possible that British and Swedish gender patterns began to diverge in the 1950s, and if so, could this divergence explain the focus of the articles in Swedish press?

This chapter will present and analyse the gender division of labour in equestrian sports in Britain and Sweden during the twentieth century, centring on stable work and the diverging ideas about who should handle horses and how this work was coded with regard to gender. Although one might ask whether an analysis of stable work belongs in a book about sports, it is imperative to remember that the work performed in the stables is a condition for equestrian sports. Furthermore, stable work often includes riding and serves as a form of socialisation into equestrianism. In order to analyse gender patterns in equestrianism, one must therefore study stable work and how it relates to both sport and labour market issues.

This chapter begins with a section about theoretical framework. This section is followed by some background information about the equine sectors of Sweden and Britain, respectively, and a section with a comparative perspective that explores contextual similarities and differences as well as the limitations of the source material. To enable an analysis of the gender division of labour, the empirical part of the chapter will start with a quantitative mapping out of supply and demand of grooms in general, which is then discussed in terms of gender. This section is preceded by a survey of how stable work was perceived and the status attributed to it. The final part of the chapter consists of an analysis of how stable work is constructed in relation to gender, followed by a concluding discussion.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of gender can be applied to sports as well as tasks performed within the labour market. In this chapter, the expression gender will be used to denote social gender, signifying that what is perceived as masculine or feminine in a certain context is socially and culturally, rather than biologically, determined. That which is regarded as masculine or feminine is neither fixed nor essential, and thus it can vary from one context to the next (Scott 1999; Wikander and Manns 2001; Greiff 2004; Lorentzen and Ekenstam 2006).

There are many examples of professions that were once associated with men and masculinity that are now linked to women and femininity. The process during which the gender division of labour changes and a profession goes from being viewed as typically masculine to being perceived as feminine is referred to as feminisation. It is important to recognise that the process of changing gender codes is connected to power structures in society. In order to understand gender coding in stable work, it is also necessary to explore gender coding in equestrian sports. Attitudes and ideas about men and women in sports are constructed both in and outside of the arena. Men and women usually compete separately and are often portrayed differently by the media. Also, gender patterns in sport are affected by power relations, as noted by Jennifer Hargreaves (1994).

Power can be defined in a variety of ways. An empirical definition based on sociologist Barrington Moore Jr. (1978; Wikander 1988) will be used when analysing the findings in this chapter. Moore has argued that it is possible to pinpoint power relations in a society by studying the allocation of resources and services. A person with power controls other people's time, is paid a higher wage and has high access to societal resources, while a person in a subordinate position has a low-status job, is paid less and has limited access to societal resources. Usually, a high-status job requires a higher level of education from those who perform it. The opposite is mostly true of low-status jobs, which are often monotonous, physically strenuous and dirty.

The question of why some accept low-status jobs has relevance for the explanation of power structures. Barrington Moore Jr. suggests the term 'social contract' as a way of explaining this situation. The basis of a social contract is very seldom questioned, and people in subordinate positions agree to the social contract because it comes with certain benefits. Often, subordination is rewarded with some level of material security, and a complete breach of the contract may result in unacceptable loss. Nonetheless, the social contract is occasionally breached. According to Barrington Moore Jr., this happens when a society's resources grow or diminish drastically. The social contract may be radically altered when there suddenly is much more, or less, to distribute. However, a renegotiation of the contract also requires a shift in ideas, based on a view of the contract as unjust.

The contract on which Moore bases his analysis governs the relationships between different social classes in a society. In research on women and gender, the expression 'gender contract' has often been used to describe power relations between the sexes. Both Swedish and North American researchers have used this term (Pateman 1988; Åström and Hirdman 1992; Svanström 2000; Hirdman 2001). Wikander, for example, has discussed how the gender contract faced heavy criticism during the decades around 1900 when women's economic rights became topic for discussion because of the inauguration of a ban against women's night work (Wikander 2006; Karlsson 2001a, b).

It is not only within the realm of labour market relations that the gender contract can come to be questioned and changed. According to Hargreaves, sports can create new opportunities and meanings for women and pave the ground for changing gender constructions and gender patterns (Hargreaves 1994). This chapter will analyse the gender contract in stable work, exploring whether this contract has been questioned and changed and if so, how.

Background: The Equine Sector in Sweden and Britain

Today equestrian sport is one of the major sports in both Great Britain (GB) and Sweden. According to the British Horse Society (BHS), 43 % of British households (11 million) have a household member with some form of interest in equestrianism

(including racing). About 7 % of the population, or 4.3 million people, have ridden during the last 12 months. The importance of the sector is further highlighted by the fact that it is the largest sports-related employer in the United Kingdom. Put together, racing and riding employ 70,000 direct full-time workers with indirect employment adding another 220,000–270,000 people. The number of horses amounts to 17 per 1,000 people ('Equestrian Statistics' 2011). Sweden has more horses still – about 33 per 1,000 inhabitants. In terms of economic importance, the equestrian sector is equal to dairy or beef production (for more information on the development of the equestrian sector, see Hedenborg 2011).

As of yet, equestrian sport has not received a great deal of attention from sports historians, despite the importance of the sector today. To a large extent, previous research within the field has focused on horse racing (Huggins 2000, 2003; Vamplew 1976, 1988, 2003; Kay and Vamplew 2003; Kay 2004; Greiff 2006, 2007a, b; Greiff and Hedenborg 2007a, b; Hedenborg 2008; Case 1991; Fox 2002; Cassidy 2002; Moore-Colyer and Simpson 2004; Miller 2002, 2006). It has, however, been noted in research on stable work in the twentieth century that grooms seem to endure poor working conditions. The explanations for this have included the identification grooms feel towards their working environment and The Turf (Moore-Colyer and Simpson 2004) as well as the autonomy and power over the horse they enjoy, which also comes with a certain power over the owner through their close contact with the horse, and it has been reasoned that these factors may outweigh some disadvantages of the job (Cassidy 2002). Grooms also attain a certain status through the 'Paddock Ritual' (when horses are shown off in the paddock before the race) (Case 1991). In a previous study, Hedenborg has presented another explanation, arguing that the organisation of labour in the equine sector is very similar to the organisation of labour within the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century guilds (Hedenborg 2008).

In previous research on horse racing, the division of labour in the equine sector has mostly been analysed in terms of social class rather than gender relations. Yet, some conclusions may be drawn. Even up until the late twentieth century, men have always dominated British horse racing, to the extent that women have been hindered from becoming, for example, jockeys and trainers (Vamplew and Kay 2005). More women are involved in the sport today, especially among grooms (Cassidy 2002). Similar patterns can be found in Sweden (Greiff 2006, 2007a, b; Greiff and Hedenborg 2007a, b; Hedenborg 2007, 2008, 2009a, b, 2011), although there are differences between harness racing and the gallops. In the latter, women have been somewhat more important as both trainers and jockeys (Hedenborg 2008).

One explanation for why an increasing number of women have entered the equine sector has centred on a changing gender code that sets care as a crucial aspect of working with horses. This explanation is disputable, however, as care seems to have been regarded as a central aspect of working with horses even before women entered the sector. Furthermore, this work is connected to other characteristics including strength, toughness and filth, which do not particularly conform to what has traditionally been seen as feminine work (Hedenborg 2009b).

Framework: A Comparative Perspective and the Source Material

For many reasons, a comparison of gender patters in Sweden and Britain is complicated. Firstly, the historical contexts of the countries differ. Sweden has had (and still has) a smaller population than Britain and was very much a rural country up until the 1930s. Britain has had (and still has) a much larger population and went through the industrialisation phase earlier than Sweden. Due to these differences, it is likely that the two societies differ both in their number of horses and in the importance of their respective horse sectors for the population's financial support. It is also significant that Sweden at the beginning of the twentieth century only had a small group of people who could be categorised as belonging to the upper or middle class, while Britain for a long period of time had had a large aristocracy as well as a bourgeoisie. The size of the middle and upper classes is relevant to the equine sector as the horse has always been an expensive animal. When studying equestrianism in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, one must bear in mind that very few people used the horse for riding, as horses were mainly used as draught animals. Riding was a privilege of the army and upper class, and because of the strong connection between the military and horse riding, it is possible that Britain's and Sweden's different positions in WW1 and WW2 – Britain participating and Sweden neutral – could have affected equestrian sports within the two countries differently.

With those differences in mind, it is still interesting to compare equestrianism in the two countries as both were known as very proficient in the area. During the nineteenth century, British horse racing and cross-country riding were seen as models for other countries' equestrian development (Chenevix Trench 1970). Sweden was also considered to be a country in which the study of horses, 'hippology', held a high standard. Thus, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) turned to Sweden when equestrian sports were to be included and regulated in the Olympic Games (Hedenborg 2009a).

Another problem with comparative historical studies in general is that it is not always possible to use sources that provide the exact same information. In this study, several different sources will be used in order to reveal gender patterns in the two countries. The main source for the analysis of the situation in Britain is the magazine *Horse & Hound*. *Horse & Hound* is the oldest equestrian magazine in the United Kingdom and has been published weekly since 1884. The magazine has printed editorials on equestrianism and general news, equestrian news, advice on horse care, job adverts, letters to the editor and articles on equestrian sports. *Horse & Hound* has always featured many articles about hunting, and it is in connection to hunting that the magazine also publishes articles on dogs. For the purpose of this chapter, adverts for job vacancies and wanted positions and letters to the editor were studied in issues from all years of the Olympic Games between 1912 and 1972 to enable an analysis of changing gender patterns within stable work. Adverts published in the first issue of every quarter and letters to the editor in each issue of the magazine have been studied.

Horse & Hound covers a wide range of topics, and in order to answer questions about gender patterns in stable work in Sweden, several sources have been studied: *Lantarbetaren* (the Agricultural Workers' Magazine), *Trav- och galoppronden* (the Racing Post), some of the daily papers and source material from the Agricultural Workers' Trade Union.[2] *Lantarbetaren* was a weekly magazine that was published for the first time in 1920. At the beginning of the century, it did not devote particularly many articles about the grooms' situation, but such articles increased in number over time.[3] *Trav- och galoppronden* was also a weekly magazine, published for the first time in 1932. The magazine centred on racing, and racing results for both harness racing and the gallops were analysed and published there. However, *Trav- och galoppronden* also printed some articles on the grooms' situation.

Finally, source material from the Swedish Agricultural Workers' Trade Union will be used, as this was the trade union that organised the grooms. Information on stable work can be found in agreements and letters between employers and employees in the equine sector. However, even though there is some source material from the trade union, this material is very limited, which is probably explained by the fact the grooms were (and are) seldom organised (Hedenborg 2008; Moore-Colyer and Simpson 2004).

Women Wanting to Work as Grooms

Before the Olympic Games had started in Stockholm, the daily papers had drawn attention to the novelty of the British team's female grooms, one of whom was interviewed in one of these papers (*Dagens Nyheter* 6 June 1956). The journalist wanted to highlight the fact that these women performed a man's job. The grooms, most often presented as 'girls' and 'lasses', were described as hardworking, and their work was depicted as physically strenuous and sometimes dirty – characteristics not usually associated with women's work. In addition, there were photographs of the grooms in their working clothes, dressed just like many of the male grooms in pale brown, well-creased trousers, greyish-brown blazers with small checks and blue shirts and black ties with white patterns. One of them was quoted and presented in the following manner:

> 'I treat it just like the other horses', says groom Shirley Burr, a very pretty lady who wears her black hair in plaits. 'I have looked after horses for five years and will continue to do so for the rest of my life. Of course I ride. Nearly all English women do.' (*Dagens Nyheter*, 6 June 1956)

[2]There is a similar magazine in Sweden called *Hästen* (The Horse). This magazine has been published since 1920 and has been studied from 1920 up to the 1970s in order to compare the Swedish case with the British when it came to stable work. However, very little is said in this magazine on grooming. Furthermore, it has not been possible to analyse adverts on "position vacant or wanted" or letters to the editor as these are too few.

[3]The fact that the number of articles increased over time is not easy to explain. It may have to do with how stable work was seen within the trade union. It is pointed out in the early articles that people in general probably did not realise that grooms were organised within the trade union.

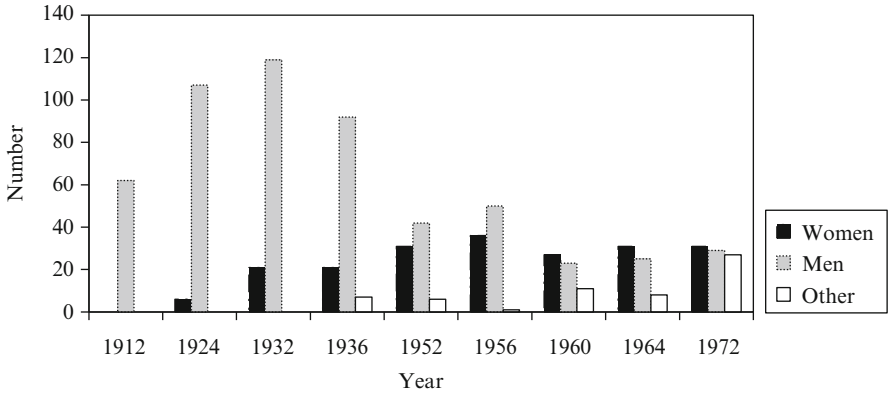

Diagram 2.1 Number of 'position-wanted' adverts according to sex 1912–1972 in *Horse & Hound*. Cross sections (Source: First issue in every quarter of *Horse & Hound* 1912, 1924, 1932, 1936, 1952, 1956, 1960, 1964, 1972. Comment: The category 'other' represents adverts in which men and women apply for jobs together as well as adverts in which the sex of the person seeking employment is not specified)

In this quote, Shirley Burr stresses that she did the work that was expected of her and that she, like many other English women, was qualified for it. She seems to suggest that female grooms were nothing out of the ordinary in Britain. Was this true?

As there are no groom statistics for either Britain or Sweden, it is impossible to know whether Burr presented an accurate picture and how this situation compares to that of Sweden. It is therefore necessary to work with source material that can provide insight into the gender division of labour in order to answer who took care of horses, whether they were men or women, and if and how this changed over time. Thus, the chapter will now turn to a study of the adverts for vacant positions and jobs wanted. A general survey of the supply and demand of grooms will be presented first in order to demonstrate the attractiveness of the sector, after which gender patterns will be pointed out.

Previous research has noted that the labour force very much abandoned the horse racing yards of Newmarket between 1964 and 1975 (Moore-Colyer and Simpson 2004). However, there seems to have been a general decline even before that. A first conclusion that can be drawn from the study of the job adverts is that up until 1932, the job-wanted adverts in *Horse & Hound* increased, from 62 in 1912 to 140 (Diagram 2.1). The number of people seeking employment was at its highest in 1932. This is unsurprising as the 1930s was a decade of mass unemployment and economic depression in Britain, just as in the rest of the world. Already in 1936 the 'job-wanted' adverts had decreased to 120, and from 1952 and onwards, the yearly number stayed below 100.

A second conclusion that can be drawn from Diagram 2.1 is that an increasing number of women sought positions as grooms. In 1912, only men applied for stable

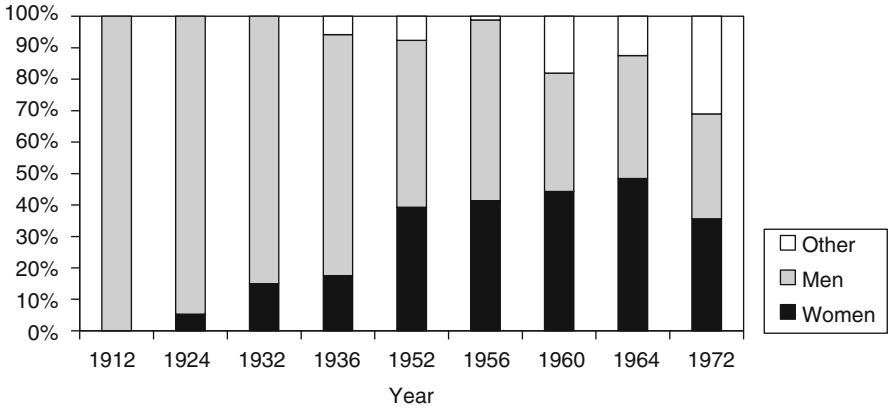

Diagram 2.2 Percentage of 'position-wanted' adverts according to sex 1912–1972 in *Horse & Hound*. Cross sections (Source: See Diagram 2.1. Comment: See Diagram 2.1)

work positions in *Horse & Hound*. One of them, Mr T. Sopp, expressed his preferences as follows:

> T Sopp is open for re-engagement as Kennel-Man, single or Kennel-Hunts-man, to Harriers. For references please apply to Mr Arr, Kennels Petworth, Sussex.

Mr Sopp was not alone. Like him, other men sought positions as huntsmen, whipper-ins or kennel men. No women advertised for positions that year, which may indicate that women were not expected to take care of horses at that time. From 1924 up until 1956, however, there were an increasing number of female applicants. In 1924, they were few, only 6 out 113. In 1932, the year with the highest number of applicants in total, there were still not many women, 21 out of 140 applicants to be exact. Still, the increase in female applicants continued up until 1956 when they amounted to 36 out of 87. The adverts came from women that covered all levels of prior experience. There being representatives from both ends of the scale may be interpreted to imply a situation where women were trying to break into a new sector, while there were also women who already took care of horses. Here are two examples:

> Educated girl, nearly 16 seeks work in any type stable, slight riding experience; preferably live in, Miss I Temple, 36 Hillview gardens, Kingsbury, London NW9 (*Horse & Hound* 7 January 1956)
>
> Educated girl, experienced rider, seeks residential post either travelling or riding jumpers/show horses. Available February (South preferred) Box 616. (*Horse & Hound* 7 January 1956)

From 1960 and onwards, the female applicants were in majority (see Diagram 2.2), even though their numbers had decreased somewhat. During the remaining years of the study, the number of female applicants remained around 30 per year. That female applicants increased in relation to the total number of applicants is clearly demonstrated in Diagram 2.2, in which the 'position-wanted'

adverts are displayed as shares of the total number of adverts per year. The percentage of female applicants increased from 5 % in 1924 to 48 % in 1960. At that time, male applicants amounted to 39 % of the 'position-wanted' adverts. During the next decade, the relative amount of women's adverts decreased to 35 %. Yet, despite the decrease in the percentage of women's adverts, fewer women did not apply for grooming jobs. The decrease was due to an increase in the number of adverts in which the sex of the applicant was not specified or the adverts was posted by a couple seeking a position together. Such adverts are represented in the category 'other'.

The picture provided by Shirley Burr, the woman who worked as groom at the 1956 Olympics, seems to be in accordance with a general development in stable work in Britain. It is obvious that an increasing number (and percentage) of women sought positions as grooms. There were women who were experienced in grooming and others that were not. Either way, it is interesting to note that the quantitative survey of the 'position-wanted' adverts indicates that women were interested in taking care of horses. There seems to be a breaking point in the period between 1936 and 1956, and from 1960 onwards, it seems that more women than men sought these positions. It is clear that British women had challenged the gender contract that connected horsemanship exclusively to men and masculinity.

Unfortunately the Swedish source material does not lend itself to conclusions about whether women wanted to take care of horses at this time. It is, however, possible that the British and Swedish developments diverge and that the British involvement in WW1 and WW2 partly explains this. During wartime, women had performed tasks that had previously been done by men, thus being able to prove their capability. Previous research has indicated that when the wars were over, women were reluctant to return to the old gender contracts (Wikander 1999; Rylander 2002). In addition, Britain had lost men in the wars, and in 1933, England and Wales had 8.7 % more women than men. The loss of young men from the elite was seen as extra problematic, illustrated by how these men came to be called the 'lost generation' (McDevitt 2004).

It is possible that the loss of young men from the elite affected equestrian sports as many of these men were likely to have been horse riders. Equestrianism had long been the pastime of the aristocracy, and it is possible that the 'lost generation' caused a gender imbalance, and that this gender imbalance paved the ground for a new gender construction of horsemanship. Naturally, men from the high society would not have applied for stable work, but the idea of who was qualified to take care of horses may have been altered, and as there was a general lack of young men after the war, women may have been given new opportunities.

A study of the supply side, however, is not sufficient basis for a discussion about the gender division of labour. Though it is clear that women wanted to take care of horses, one can only establish a real change in the perception of who was supposed to perform stable work if both the supply and demand changed in favour of women. Therefore, this chapter will now turn to a survey of the demand of grooms as expressed in positions vacant adverts.

Employers Seeking Female Grooms?

In Diagram 2.3, it is demonstrated that the number of 'position-vacant' adverts increased from 14 in 1912 to 327 in 1956 and 334 in 1972. As in the case of the 'position-wanted' adverts, a study of the 'position-vacant' adverts indicates that women were becoming increasingly important to the equine sector. Diagram 2.3 illustrates that a growing number of employers asked for women as grooms. In 1924, 2 out of 52 adverts were directed to women. This number increased until 1956 when 146 out of 327 adverts were aimed towards women. After 1956, the number decreased, and in 1972, these adverts amounted to 130 out of 334.

The numbers of adverts aimed at men decreased simultaneously, implying that there was actually an increase in the portion of 'position-vacant' adverts that were aimed towards women or others. This is clearly demonstrated in Diagram 2.4, in which it is shown that the percentage of adverts aimed towards women increased from 0 % in 1912 to 45 % in 1956, while the percentage of adverts directed to men decreased from 100 to 42 % between the same years.

Another observation that can be made regarding the study of the 'position-vacant' adverts is that adverts belonging to the category 'other' were even more prevalent here than among the 'position-wanted' adverts. The following excerpt shows a typical example of an adverts where the employer sought married couples:

> Trustworthy married couple with good references, for country post. Experienced groom, good feeder, clipper and trimmer. Good plain cook/general for small easily run house. Aga Cooker etc. Live out in excellent nearby cottage, 5 rooms, bath all main services. Good wages and conditions. Farm produce, etc., for really suitable applicants. Box 2423. (*Horse & Hound* 4 October 1952)

It is quite plausible that this employer sought a couple that was suited for the gender-coded complementarity of the labour tasks expected of men and women. Traditionally, and in general, men and women working in agriculture had different,

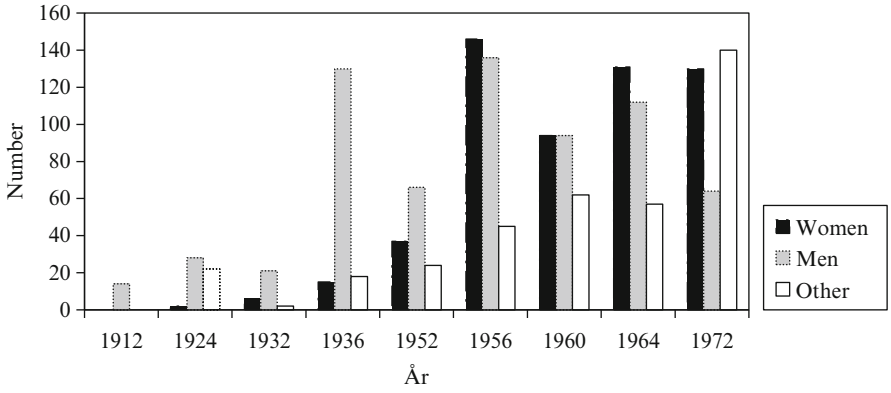

Diagram 2.3 Number of 'position-vacant' adverts according to sex 1912–1972 in *Horse & Hound*. Cross sections (Source: See Diagram 2.1. Comment: See Diagram 2.1)

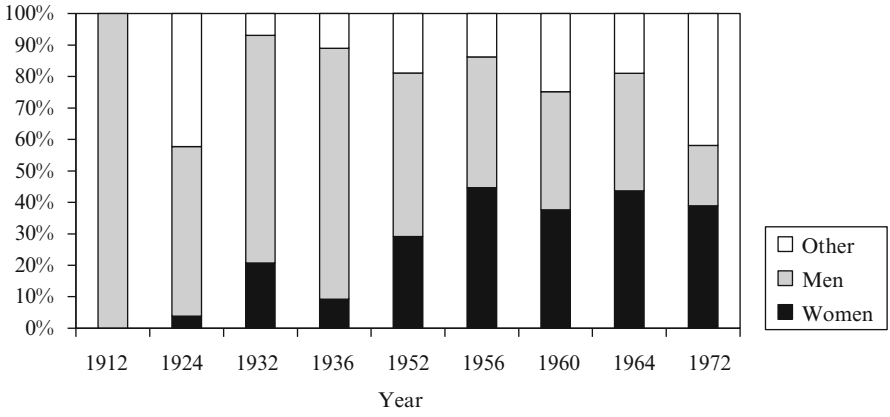

Diagram 2.4 Percentage of 'position-vacant' adverts according to sex 1912–1972 in *Horse & Hound*. Cross sections (Source: See Diagram 2.1. Comment: See Diagram 2.1)

gender-coded occupations. Men were in charge of horse care and tasks located further away from the farm, while women took care of cows, poultry and household duties. It is also worth noting that this advert provides the information that the house had an 'AGA cooker' and was 'easily run'. A possible interpretation of this will be presented below. However, the demand for gender complementarity can only be connected to adverts seeking couples as the other adverts were gender neutral.

The fact that the number of 'other' adverts was higher among the positions vacant than in the positions wanted adverts could imply that the employers were not completely convinced of women's suitability for stable work, though it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions here. Still, previous research indicates that this may be the case. According to Moore-Colyer and Simpson (2004), who studied the bloodstock industry 1945–1975, the male-dominated management did not regard women as sufficiently strong and tough enough to work in a racing yard. In addition, Victorian prudery hindered them from working with breeding.

Over time, a new kind of advert became more common in this category. The sample from 1960 demonstrates a new requirement, illustrated in the 'position-vacant' section, namely, that the groom should be BHS educated (*Horse & Hound* 8 October 1960). BHS stands for the British Horse Society, and the request for a BHS-educated groom implied that the employers wanted someone who had passed equestrian courses and was certified by the British Horse Society. The following excerpt from 1972 shows an advert that even specified the level of education expected from a prospective employee:

> Cheerful BHSAI required. Also keen student, train BSHAI, or Horsemaster's certificate. Indoor school, BHS and ABRS approved. Wage while training. Opportunity to compete – Moorfield riding school. (*Horse & Hound* 7 January 1972)

Obviously, sheer experience was no longer seen as sufficient to qualify a person for horse care; an education was now required. At first glance, this change could be interpreted to indicate that there were so many applicants for the vacant positions

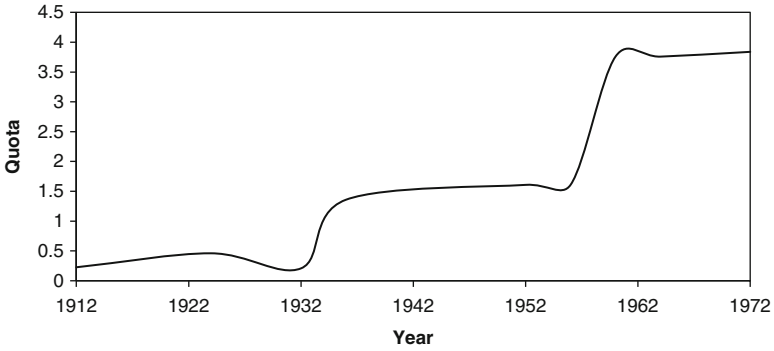

Diagram 2.5 Quota between position-vacant and position-wanted adverts, 1912–1972 in *Horse & Hound*. Cross sections (Source: See Diagram 2.1. Comment: See Diagram 2.1)

that the employers needed special criteria to be able to distinguish between them. This, however, was not the case. There was clearly a decrease in the number of job-seekers in relation to the number of employers advertising for grooms. A more plausible explanation is that the education had been introduced in order to raise the status of stable work. Other indicators point to the fact that the occupation's status had decreased over time. The discrepancy between the people looking for a job and the number of interested employers can be expressed as a quota between positions vacant and wanted (Diagram 2.5). The quota more than doubled in the 1950s, increasing from 1.6 in 1952 to 3.8 in 1960.

The increasing quota can be interpreted as an indication of a decrease in the popularity of stable work.

A similar development with an increasing demand for labour, significantly higher than the supply of prospective employees, can also be seen in Sweden. This development is indicated by the increasing number of adverts for positions vacant in *Lantarbetaren* and *Trav- och galoppronden*, although the available data is not enough to be used as a source for a diagram mapping the Swedish situation. The deficit of grooms was also discussed in the source material from the Trade Union for Agricultural Workers (Hedenborg 2008). That the demand was higher than the supply in Sweden is also illustrated by the fact that grooms were suddenly expected to care for more horses than before. There are also indications that the increasing demand for labour forced the horse industry to use new technology (an example being the 'horse walker') (Hedenborg 2008).

An Occupation with Decreasing Status

In the letters to the editor published in *Horse & Hound*, several readers attested to the difficulty of finding grooms. In 1936, the pseudonym 'Underdog' responded to an earlier letter, in which a horse owner had complained about the decreasing supply of grooms. 'Underdog' protested that there were in fact many grooms, but that working conditions for those employed in the stables were very poor. Wages were poor and the

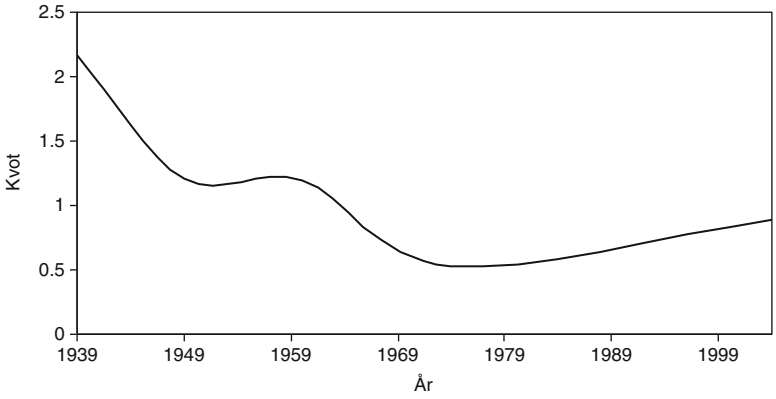

Diagram 2.6 Quota between grooms' wages and comparative farm workers' wages in 1939, 1949, 1960, 1974 and 2004 (Source: Hedenborg 2008. Comment: A calculated average of the highest and lowest wage for men is used as a base for the quota)

grooms' hard word was generally unacknowledged, according to 'Underdog' (*Horse & Hound* 12 December 1936). The same issue featured a letter from another pseudonym, 'Groom's wife', who also argued that the number of grooms was not the problem, but rather the high number of incompetent grooms who had a detrimental effect on the wages for grooms in general. For this reason, 'Groom's wife' insisted on better working conditions for the competent grooms (*Horse & Hound* 12 December 1936).

This focus on overall living conditions is explained by the fact that grooms normally were provided with a cottage, and sometimes even with coal or firewood, in addition to their wage (Moore-Colyer and Simpson 2004). This may be why the advert from 1952 (quoted above) provides information on the cottage's equipment and the easy manageability of the house. While the source material does not lend itself to any definitive conclusions about whether the actual state of the grooms' living conditions had improved or worsened, the complaints about the low wages continued over the next coming decades. Still, previous research has shown that the grooms' wages remained above the minimum agricultural workers' wage, at least for those working in racing stables (Moore-Colyer and Simpson 2004).

This was not the case in Sweden, where the working conditions and low wages were also topic for discussion. A comparison between the wages paid to grooms and other agricultural workers shows, however, that the relative wages for Swedish grooms decreased between 1939 and 2004, which makes it obvious that their situation actually worsened. Diagram 2.6 demonstrates that a groom earned more than twice as much as the average agricultural worker in 1939. Already in 1949, however, the groom only earned 1.2 times as much. The quota continued to decrease, and in 1974, a groom only earned half as much as an agricultural worker.

The decreasing wages seem to go hand in hand with a loss of status, as illustrated by articles in *Lantarbetaren*. An article from the 1930s paints an enviable picture of working at the racing track. Henning Strand, chairman of the trade union department at the racing track, commented that the work featured early mornings, and that

it was unusual in the sense that grooms were required to maintain a low weight. Still, the reporter coated work at the racing track in a romantic shimmer, writing that riders were 'courted' by 'beautiful ladies' and that bravery was a necessity as grooming was extremely demanding. Horse care was described as different from all other agricultural work, and the report concluded that most of *Lantarbetaren*'s readers were probably unaware that these men were organised by the same trade union (*Lantarbetaren* 1939: 22, 1).

A similar description can be found in a paper from the 1940s. Again, the chairman of this department of the trade union is interviewed, and the work is still depicted as enviable (*Lantarbetaren* 1946: 23, 14). However, a different picture is painted a decade later in the middle of a dispute about working hours between grooms and employers. One article states that a groom was not released from work until he had finished his tasks – regardless of how many hours this took. This article seems to imply that employers and grooms had to overcome their differences, emphasising that everybody in a stable worked for the same goal, and that the well-being of the horse ought to be everyone's main interest. Grooming was still described as interesting and exciting, and craftsmanship was stressed as essential to the work (*Lantarbetaren* 1955: 22, 12–13 and 19). Still, this article shows a change in the perception of grooming. Even though craftsmanship was said to be of central importance, the work was no longer described as enviable. This attitude seems to have spread over time.

In the 1960s, *Lantarbetaren* published a number of articles commenting on the great turnover of grooms. Some stated low wages as the reason for this development. Furthermore, there were complaints that many young people worked in the stables voluntarily and for free, alongside the employed grooms (*Lantarbetaren* 1965: October, 4–5). The great turnover, and the fact that young people were prepared to work for free in the stables, did not promote increased wages or working conditions. Throughout the rest of the century, grooming was increasingly described as a thankless and poorly paid profession. Employers were accused of using black labour, and there were many who worked without proper insurance.

Together with the study of wage development within the sector, the study of opinions about stable work seems to endorse the findings of the previous survey of the number of people looking for work as grooms: the status of stable work seems to have decreased in both Sweden and Britain. Obviously, the ideas that people had about stable work were challenged and changed. The same goes for the working conditions. In addition, these changes seem to have provoked a destabilising of the gender borders and a dispute about the gender contract.

Women Replace Men

The fact that an increasing number of women worked with horses was commented upon in *Horse & Hound*'s letters to the editor around the mid-twentieth century. In 1952, a Miss Hilary Hetty opened a debate by claiming that women were better than men at taking care of horses. Her statement was contested in 'Men vs. women', and

in this letter, the writer underlined that Miss Hetty was welcome to watch the competitions in Badminton, or the Grand National, obviously meaning that this would prove to her that men were better riders than women. The letter presented an analysis of the situation, according to which there were plenty of men who were willing to take care of horses if only women had not taken their jobs. The writer also complained about the low wages, with which it was impossible to provide for a family (*Horse & Hound* 25 October 1952). This was not an unusual line of reasoning when it came to women's participation in the labour market. In the interwar period, women were accused of stealing men's jobs. Men were seen as the providers of the family and therefore in greater need of work (Neunsinger 2001; Wegerman 2004: 189–211; Greiff 1992), and similar arguments were heard in the 1950s (Hirdman 1998). Miss Hetty responded in the next issue of the magazine, agreeing that men were looking elsewhere for jobs and commenting on a previous article in *Horse & Hound* that supported this. However, she rejected the idea that men were better with horses and asked whether the other writer had noticed that a majority of the winners in competitions for young people were women (*Horse & Hound* 1 November 1952).

Miss Hetty's letter provoked many answers. The pseudonym 'Racing lad' wrote that men's increasing reluctance to work in the stables could not be explained by women having taken over their jobs. He admitted that the female grooms were doing a good job, and that they were respected because they did not criticise others. He did, however, point out that female grooms were usually assisted by male colleagues, implying that a male employee could never be completely replaced by a woman (*Horse & Hound* 8 November 1952). 'Girl groom' wrote about her own experiences working in one of the biggest racing stables and agreed with 'Racing lad' that she had always been assisted by the lads. The argument that men needed higher wages was not only heard from men. Among others, 'Girl groom' underlined that men were paid too little. Women could hold out the wages but should not be paid more, due to their lack of experience (*Horse & Hound* 13 December 1952). That both women and men felt that men were the providers and therefore in need of higher wages can be seen in other areas of the labour market too.

The complaints about the male grooms' working conditions continued in the 1950s. In the letter 'Bloodstock and Stud Grooms', the bad conditions and the low wages were once again used to account for the lack of decent male grooms. According to the writer, the standard agreement was 8–10 lb a week and lodging in a cottage, with electricity and milk as possible bonuses. However, grooming meant hard work 7 days a week. During the summer, a working day could be as long as 18 h. Despite their low wages, grooms were supposed to take care of very expensive animals (*Horse & Hound* 7 January 1956). A few months later, the signature 'Grooms for bloodstock' replied, stating that men's reluctance to work in the stables had more to do with the working hours than the wage (*Horse & Hound* 21 April 1956).

The social contract in stable work in Sweden was challenged in the 1930s, although foreign labourers rather than gender were the source of conflict. Sweden, like Britain, had a high unemployment rate during this decade, and Swedish men complained that foreign labour threatened to steal their work. An issue raised in this discussion was the ability to ride the racehorses, as some trainers argued that Swedish

riders were too heavy. Both jockeys and trainers rejected this argument, some instead claiming that a more convincing case against Swedish riders was that foreign jockeys were already trained professionals, whereas the training of young Swedish men required a certain financial investment from the trainers (Hedenborg 2008).

In October 1930, the Swedish grooms tried to prevent trainers from employing foreign labour by sending a letter to Socialstyrelsen (the National Board of Health and Welfare), to which all applications for using foreign labour were addressed. The board referred the letter to the Swedish Jockey Club. The Jockey Club responded that it was impossible to run a racing stable if the usage of foreign labour was illegalised. Many trainers hired foreign jockeys because of their low weight, and it was important for the trainers to be able to use jockeys in stable work as well. The Board followed the recommendations of the Jockey Club and did not grant the trade union's request to ban the use of foreign jockeys (Hedenborg 2008).

Some years later, the Agricultural Workers' Trade Union wanted to force employers to use only Swedish workers as grooms. The conflict generated a strike in 1936. During the strike, the employers were reported to have used foreign labourers in the stables. Foreign jockeys had been seen saddling their horses, and one had even been observed using a rake. The trade union demanded their deportation as the agreement on foreign labour in the stables had been breached, but the employers and the foreign workers complained that they had not broken the rules. The man raking had only done so to keep himself warm, and the men saddling their own horses had done so for security reasons (Hedenborg 2008). In an article in *Trav- och galoppronden*, which supported the employers, a writer claimed that the strike was counter-effective for the Swedish workers. Trainers had to use foreign labour in the stables as the Swedish grooms were out on strike. It was also stated that the conflict ought to have been resolved in private, so as not to deprive the audience of watching the races.

The pressure from the Swedish work force in the stables seems to have lessened during the 1950s. The trade union agreement was altered in 1957 making it easier for trainers to employ foreign jockeys. Still, it was not until the 1960s that these jockeys could be used in the stables as grooms. When stable work opened up for foreign labourers, it seems that it opened up for women as well. Women were allowed to participate in races in the 1940s as amateurs, and in the 1940s and 1950s, it was discussed whether they might take care of the horses as well. However, these disputes were not as articulated as the ones concerning foreign labour (Hedenborg 2008).

In Britain, the 1960s marked the voicing of a new perspective on the grooms' wages and conditions. These were still topic for discussion but were now almost justified in the debate. Joy Annear wrote in a letter to the editor that grooming is hard work and has to be done by a horse lover. The work is poorly paid because it is not profitable to keep horses. She argues that low wages may even be preferable, as excessive wages might attract labourers away from the industry to the point that people who lacked the necessary love for horses might seek work in the stables, solely because of the high wages (*Horse & Hound* 23 January 1960). In the same issue, a JM Montgomery writes that grooming is so unique that it defies comparison

with any other kind of agricultural work and argues that this accounts for the poor wages (*Horse & Hound* 23 January 1960). In other words, the social contract in stable work was based around a love of horses.

In 1964, the discussions about working conditions seem to take a new turn. Complaints from parents of girl grooms about their daughters' working conditions spark a debate in the letters to the editor. In 'Stable work for girls', the writer encourages parents not to worry about their groom daughters, it being completely possible to make a living out of such work. The writer uses herself as an example and states that she was somewhat older when she began doing stable work, deciding to work as a groom when she could not afford to keep her own horses. She stresses the importance of keeping an eye on the grooms' living conditions and the maintenance of the stable. However, she concludes by accusing the horse owners of being ignorant about the hard work involved in grooming and claims this as the reason for the low wages (*Horse & Hound* 13 June). Another writer, calling herself a realist, says that stable work is tough, and that this was something that the girls and their parents alike had to come to terms with. A groom has long days at work, especially when there is travel involved. The woman emphasised that stable work was not as glamorous as many girls liked to imagine. She too finished by saying that grooms ought to receive adequate financial reward for their labour (*Horse & Hound* 22 August 1964). In another letter, Trevor Kempton countered by writing that grooming was more than a job as it meant assuming full responsibility for the horse (even in relation to the owner), and that a groom should not be motivated by money. Finally, he finished by stating that too many grooms requested high wages despite lacking the requisite experience (*Horse & Hound* 5 September).

However, the self-proclaimed realist was not alone in her opinion. Peter Snailes wrote that he was convinced that many more young people would be willing to groom with higher wages and better working conditions. Since horses are expensive animals, Peter Snailes argued that horse owners by definition are wealthy and should therefore be able to pay reasonable wages. In his opinion, horse owners asked too much, expecting grooms to ride like Pat Smythe and have 50 years of experience (*Horse & Hound* 12 September). 'A Groom's eye' claimed that female stable work was one of the most controversial subjects. There were plenty of letters from mothers of overworked daughters as well as from frustrated employers. However, not much was heard from the girls themselves, which is why this writer wanted to make a statement. Pointing out that the wage she had received as a groom far exceeded what she was now paid as a secretary, 'A Groom's eye' also observed that wages must be in proportion to the groom's experience and that the people who complained the most were likely to be inexperienced girls working for short periods of times at second-rate riding schools. Due to the difficulty of the work, a groom needed training. Also, the writer wished to emphasise that many stables were poorly maintained, and that such stables have trouble attracting workers. In addition, girls faced extra problems as they were supposed to do household chores on top of their grooming, something that was not expected of the lads. She also wrote about how feelings for the horse can complicate the job (*Horse & Hound* 17 October).

In Sweden, it was not until the 1970s and onwards that it is clear that an increasing number of girls had started to work as grooms. However, there are no signs of the gender contract being questioned or debated when it came to the grooms. Instead it was their working conditions that were topic for discussion. However, the articles on grooming shift focus. In the 1970s, articles go from talking about working conditions in general to girls becoming victims of sexual harassment in the stables (Hedenborg 2008).

Concluding Discussion

This chapter started out by posing questions about changes in the gender patterns of stable work in Sweden and Britain, and whether the respective patterns for the two countries diverge. Articles in the daily papers about the Olympics – namely, the Equestrian Games – seemed to suggest differences. Journalists repeatedly pointed out that there were both female riders and grooms working for the British team and did not seem to think that such a gender pattern existed. Whether this was the case is difficult to know for sure.

Traditionally, stable work and the horse were associated with men and masculinity. However, this study seems to suggest that the gender division of labour was changing in the 1950s – at least in Britain, where it is evident that an increasing number of women sought employment as grooms, and that employers thought them suitable for these positions. The Swedish source material from the 1950s shows no indication of an increased demand or supply of female grooms. It seems likely that the change occurred later in Sweden, perhaps as late as the 1970s. Today, the equine sector is in both countries linked to women and femininity. A plausible explanation for the variances is that Sweden remained a rural country longer than Britain. It is also possible that Britain's losses in WW1 and WW2 prompted the change. The time differences might be connected to the development of the equine sector in relation to Britain's and Sweden's different positions in WW1 and WW2.

Still, there were not only differences between the respective developments in Britain and Sweden. An important similarity between the countries was that the demand for grooms outgrew the supply over time. This development may indicate deterioration in the popularity of the horse groom profession. Another sign of this was that the decrease in the relative wage for stable work. Previous research has attempted to explain why grooms seem to have endured the poor working conditions (Moore-Colyer and Simpson 2004; Cassidy 2002; Case 1991; Hedenborg 2008). In this chapter, it is suggested that grooms did not simply comply with these conditions but actually questioned them actively. This questioning opened up for a renegotiation of the gender contract.

Previous research has demonstrated that a gender contract can be challenged when a society's resources grow or diminish drastically. In addition, a renegotiation of the contract requires a shift in ideas, based on the notion that the contract is unjust. During the twentieth century, Britain and Sweden both underwent significant changes

of this kind as the labour market grew along with the expansion of the industrial and service sectors. These developments may have enabled a questioning of the social contract of stable work. Stable work as such did not change during the twentieth century. Instead, this change in status can be explained by overall changes in the labour market. Over time, the industry and service sector could offer better conditions than the agricultural sector. Stable work which at the beginning of the century was considered a high-status agricultural occupation did not fare so well in comparison to other professions towards the later part of the century.

This change, in which society's resources came to be distributed in a new way, enabled a challenging of the gender contract. The questioning of the gender contract opened the door for women who could now begin to work in a sector that until then had been reserved for men. As has been argued by Hargreaves, it is possible that the destabilisation of the gender order actually produced new opportunities for women (Hargreaves 1994). Whether these new opportunities came hand in hand with a new view of the meaning of stable work is more difficult to establish on the basis of this study. Previous research has pointed out that as an increasing number of women came to be stable workers, 'caring' seems to have become a more crucial component in the construction of what is important in stable work. However, the construction seems more complex (Hedenborg 2009b), and the source material used for this chapter suggests that the questioning of the gender contract in this case is more connected to questions about wages, who was expected to provide for a family and working conditions.

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Chapter 3
Beyond the Binary: Gender Integration in British Equestrian Sport

Katherine L. Dashper

Introduction

> Men and women are inherently different: evolution has dictated this.
>
> Horse & Hound Magazine (2009)

Sport is a site in which gender difference and hierarchy are seemingly confirmed and reproduced. The majority of modern sports are organized around a binary gender division, regardless of the level of skill or physical input, and this reinforces commonsense belief in the "naturalness" of such binary classifications (Anderson 2008). This is illustrated by the above quote, taken from Britain's foremost equestrian magazine. The assumption that sex is a "natural" and self-evident binary is widespread, and so sex segregation in sport appears to be the inevitable consequence of these categorical differences (McDonagh and Pappano 2008). As sport is highly valued within Western society, and particularly within male social groups, the devaluing of women and some men that results from this hierarchical, binary segregation can have negative consequences far beyond sport: sport appears to demonstrate that men are more physically capable, more interesting, and more worthy of attention and reward than are women (Messner 2002).

Equestrian sport is different. As the only Olympic-level sport not organized around binary sex segregation at any level or in any form of official competition, equestrian sport offers a unique opportunity to explore the consequences of doing away with such segregation. The issues surrounding sex segregation and the hierarchies and exclusions this leads to have interested sport sociologists for years (e.g., Kane 1995; Wackwitz 2003). One of the rationales for continuing with this blanket segregation is to "protect" women from stronger male athletes and to ensure that women can still compete in elite level sport and are not closed out by more

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athletically competent male peers (Tucker 2010). Equestrian sport indicates that this may not always be the case, as both men and women continue to perform well at all levels of equestrianism. However, as discussed further throughout this chapter, simply removing sex segregation will not automatically transform the gender hierarchy in sport which has persisted for over 100 years. Nonetheless, equestrian sport does illustrate that such blanket segregation is not always necessary or desirable and so adds to calls to reassess the categories and criteria around which modern sport is organized and controlled (Savulescu et al. 2004; Jonsson 2010).

The chapter begins by discussing briefly the debates surrounding sex segregation and gender hierarchy within sport, to provide some background for the subsequent discussion of sex integration in equestrian sport. The theoretical framework that guides this chapter is introduced next, focusing on some of the insights that can be taken from queer approaches to questioning gender categories and hierarchies. The specific context of equestrian sport, especially within Britain, is briefly introduced before moving on to present data from a 3-year study into professional equestrian sport in the UK. This study illustrates both the productive potential and the limitations inherent in abandoning sex segregation in sport for challenging and ultimately transforming the hierarchy and exclusions such segregation entails.

Sport as a Sex-Segregated Institution

The origins of modern sport are often traced back to the boys' public schools in nineteenth-century England where sport was used as a tool to instill positive masculine characteristics of leadership, teamwork, and dedication into unruly young boys (Chandler 1996). This, however, was sport for boys, and subsequently for men, and for girls provision of sport, exercise, and physical recreation was extremely limited and frequently nonexistent for all but the wealthy (Hargreaves 1994). Sport thus developed as a sex-segregated institution, one which was primarily for the male population. Sport was believed to prepare boys and men for their future roles as leaders of industry and empire or for hard manual work, depending on class location (Mangan 2000). Any physical recreation that was offered to girls and young women was intended to prepare them for their future roles as wives and mothers (Avery 2007). These sex-typed roles were believed to be based in nature and to be the "natural" and inevitable outcome of gender difference. Consequently, segregating sport along these same lines appeared to be equally natural and self-evident.

The segregation of sport along binary sex lines is thus a long-established and deeply entrenched sporting practice. Such binary segregation is potentially damaging and limiting for many groups and individuals within sport. The binary categories of gender imply not only two different sex categories (male and female) but also that these subject positions are hierarchically organized, with the male valued over and above the female (Schippers 2007). Women are thus disadvantaged by such a hierarchical binary framework. The effects of this can be seen clearly within sport, where male sports and athletes are considered more interesting, more entertaining,

more capable, and more worthy of praise and reward than are female sports and athletes (Messner 2002). This differential status has material effects for female athletes, who tend to be paid significantly less in their athletic careers than their male counterparts.

As well as being a financial disadvantage, the hierarchical nature of binary sex categories within sport can cause other problems for female athletes. Commonsense understanding of male and female as complementary and opposite imposes restrictions on appearance so that this differentness remains visible to others (Schippers 2002). Sport requires all athletes to develop their musculature, but such physiques are incompatible with normative understandings of femininity, which tend to emphasize muscle tone over muscle mass and slender builds over the bulk that inevitably accompanies intensive athletic training (Maguire and Mansfield 1998). Female athletes are thus placed in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, in order to excel at their chosen sport, they must train their bodies and develop their musculature; yet on the other hand, to become "too muscled" is considered unfeminine and risks social disapproval and ostracism (Stevenson 2004). While there are some suggestions that strong, muscular female athletes may be expanding the realm of socially acceptable female morphologies (Butler 1998), the risks of social exclusion and financial hardship as a result of lack of sponsorship and media support remain high. Many female athletes respond to this paradox by highlighting their femininity through their clothes, hairstyles, makeup and other forms of self-presentation, or by making their heterosexual relationships, and possibly their children, well known in the media (Griffin 1998). In such ways, the uneasy relationship between strong, powerful female bodies, and the social status as "woman" begins to be resolved (Brookes 2002). Female athletes, especially those who are bulky and well muscled as a result of their sporting involvement, sit on the boundaries of the recognizably female and so may adopt such obviously feminine appearances in order to remain intelligible subjects within the binary framework of gender.

Male athletes may also suffer as a result of binary sex classifications within sport. Sport emphasizes the extremes of human bodies, and whereas female athletes may seek to minimize their muscle bulk and mass so as to remain recognizably female, male athletes are frequently encouraged to develop their physiques excessively (Maguire and Mansfield 1998). The most socially valued sports are men's team contact sports – what Messner (2002) has described as the "center" of modern sport. Team contact sports, including soccer, American football, rugby, and basketball, as well as many individual sports such as boxing, bodybuilding, and wrestling, encourage male athletes to develop their bodies according to ideal masculine athletic morphologies. Many male athletes turn to steroids and other drugs to achieve such bodies, and the physical and psychological effects of performance-enhancing drugs are well documented (Bonetti et al. 2008). The increased regularity and sensitivity of drug testing within sport may work to limit the use of drugs in such ways, particularly at elite level sport, but the necessity to develop strength and speed – the attributes most valued in modern sport and emphasized most clearly within male sport – encourages male athletes to become alienated from their bodies and develop an instrumental attitude towards their own physicality (Messner 1990). There is a growing body of

evidence that suggests that the tolls of high-level sport on male athletes – physical, emotional, psychological, and relational – are extremely high and last long after the end of an athletic career (Messner 1992; Malcolm and Sheard 2002; Pike and Maguire 2003). The binary framework of gender within sport encourages an emphasis on the extremes of men's bodies and a heightening of masculinity in terms of aggression, detachment, and refusal of pain and fear (Hughes and Coakley 1991), through exaggerating the differences between the male and the female, and so may be a contributing factor to the costs of sport for male athletes.

Theoretical Framework

Gender binarism is thus a long-standing, deeply entrenched feature of modern sport, and one that can result in injurious outcomes for many groups and individuals. Debate surrounding the usefulness and workability of such categories has plagued sport since gender verification tests were introduced in the late 1960s, but sport organizing bodies and institutions remain committed to maintaining this framework, even in the face of challenges to its integrity (Wackwitz 2003; Cavanagh and Sykes 2006). While some commentators argue that binary sex segregation is in the interests of all people within sport, especially women, the recent case of South African athlete Caster Semenya reveals how such categories are narrow and restrictive and may result in the exclusion of some individuals from sport due to their inability to be classified within one of the two mutually exclusive and exhaustive sex categories of a binary system. Consequently, this chapter is guided by queer approaches that seek to disrupt these binary classifications and expose them as socially constructed rather than self-identical.

"Queer" and "queer theory" are contested terms and may be used in different ways by different people and for different purposes (Caudwell 2006). Such debates are beyond the scope of this chapter but point to a key issue at the heart of queer approaches, namely, that all claims to identity and categorization are unstable and fluid (Warner 1993). The segregation of sport along binary sex lines is predicated on the assumption that sex can be categorized as a binary (as either male or female and as nothing else) and that this "natural" sex corresponds with an internal gendered essence or identity, which itself is understood to be stable, coherent, and unchanging. Queer approaches look to challenge these assumptions, questioning both whether (gender) identity can ever be understood as coherent and stable and whether the assumed congruence between biological sex, gender identity as a man or woman, and outward physical appearance and behavior (especially in terms of [hetero]sexual relationships) neatly align (Butler 1999).

The adoption of a queer approach in the remainder of this chapter seeks to question the coherence and relevance of a binary sex framework as a means of classifying athletic bodies and organizing sport and also looks "to trace the moments where the binary system of gender is disrupted and challenged, where the coherence of the

categories are put into question, and where the very social life of gender turns out to be malleable and transformable" (Butler 2004: 216).

Gender Integration Within Equestrian Sport

Equestrian sport is extremely unusual within competitive sport as it is not organized around any form of sex segregation at any level of competition: men and women compete against each other on equal terms at all times. Equestrianism includes many different activities, but for the purposes of this chapter, the term "equestrian sport" is taken to refer exclusively to the three Olympic disciplines of dressage, show jumping, and eventing. Within all three of these equestrian disciplines, men and women compete against each other and this is a practice that goes back over 60 years. Although equestrian sport developed from military origins and was thus dominated by men (i.e., military officers) in the early days of its development at the turn of the twentieth century, as soon as restrictions relaxed to include civilian competitors, men and women competed against each other (Williams 1968).

Women were first permitted to compete in Olympic dressage in 1952, in Olympic show jumping in 1956, and in Olympic eventing in 1964, and from their first inclusion, men and women competed against each other (Bryant 2008). This makes equestrian sport highly unusual within modern sport which, as discussed above, remains firmly committed to sex segregation, regardless of the level of physical strength, speed, or skill entailed. The reasons why men and women compete against each other within equestrian sport are unclear, but may be linked to centuries of riding together on the hunting field, particularly in Britain (Griffin 2007). Whatever the reasons, equestrian sport represents a challenge to the dominant form of categorizing and organizing individuals within sport and may provide a challenge to the hegemony of gender binarism as a framework for competitive sport.

Equestrian sport is practiced internationally, and men and women compete against each other in all official equestrian competitions on an international basis. This chapter is focused specifically on equestrian sport in Britain, a country which has a long history of equestrianism. Within Britain, the Olympic equestrian disciplines are organized by separate administrative bodies, all of which come under the jurisdiction of the British Equestrian Federation (BEF). Membership figures for these bodies illustrate that women numerically dominate equestrian sport in Britain, but that men perform disproportionally well at the very top levels. Within British Showjumping, roughly 18 % of their 17,000 members are male, but 17 of the top 20 ranked show jumpers in the UK are male (K. Newman, membership secretary, personal communication, 9 September 2009; British Showjumping 2011). Within British Dressage, only 8 % of the 13,470 members are male, but 40 % of the Big Tour top ten ranked riders are male (M. Garland, membership officer, personal communication, 9 September 2009; British Dressage 2011). Within British Eventing, approximately 16 % of the 12,940 members are male, yet 50 % of the top 20 ranked

eventers in the UK are male (C. Sayer, development officer, personal communication, 29 September 2009; British Eventing 2011).

It is thus evident that within the top levels of equestrian sport in Britain, male riders are performing disproportionally well, but they are not completely excluding women from elite success and competition. Despite the lack of formal sex segregation within equestrian sport and despite neither men nor women having a physiological advantage within this sport, men are still outperforming women at the elite level, and this suggests that other factors have an important effect on participation and success within this sport. At the same time, these figures illustrate that gender integration will not automatically exclude women from elite competition and thus suggest that this may be a viable alternative to blanket segregation in some circumstances.

Methods

The remainder of this chapter draws on empirical data from a 3-year study into professional equestrian sport in Britain. The research formed the basis for a PhD and consisted of interviews with professional riders in each of the three Olympic disciplines of show jumping, dressage, and eventing and participant observation within the social world of competitive equestrian sport.

The study consisted of 33 interviews with riders, conducted over the course of 18 months in 2007–2008. The sample consisted of 22 women and 11 men. There were 11 dressage riders, 7 show jumpers, 8 event riders, and 8 riders who compete in more than one discipline. The ages of participants ranged from 18 to 60, with a mean age of 35. Eight participants had children and two had stepchildren. All participants were white, indicative of the very narrow racial profile of horse riders in Britain. Participants were gained through existing contacts in the equestrian social world and subsequently through a snowball technique.

In addition to these focused interviews, the author conducted 3 years of "observant participation" (Wacquant 2004) within the subculture of competitive equestrian sport in 2007–2009. I have been involved in equestrian sport for nearly 20 years, so had easy access to this social world and already understood many of its unique practices, customs, and language (Crosset and Beal 1997). My ability to "talk horse" and perform many routine horse activities, such as putting on head collars and changing rugs, was extremely important in gaining acceptance within this social world (Cassidy 2002). A sense of shared identity may be particularly important for gaining access to rurally based social worlds and trust from research participants who may otherwise be suspicious and uneasy around unknown researchers (Pilgeram 2007).

The following sections present extracts from interview transcripts and field notes from this research project to illustrate both the limitations and the productive possibilities of not organizing a sport around binary sex segregation for the experiences and opportunities of male and female individuals within equestrian sport.

"It's Your Way of Life"

In a 2006 survey, time was identified as the biggest limiting factor in people's engagement with and enjoyment of equestrian sport (BETA 2006). All sports can be time consuming, especially when practiced at professional level, and training regimes, diet, and competition schedules come to structure daily life. Time appears to have an added significance within equestrian sport, however, and the rhythms of life within equestrianism are very much dictated by the changing seasons, feeding patterns for the horses, and hours of daylight available for outside training and work. In such ways, time use in equestrianism has more in common with notions of "traditional time," tied to the seasons and the weather, than "modern time," the abstract time of the clock and capitalist societies (Bryson 2007). Time may thus take on different meanings within equestrianism than in many other sports and professions.

Rachel has been working with horses for over 20 years, and she explains how this comes to structure and dominate life. "I think that's the thing, it's the time, when you do horses, when you do them professionally or competitively, it's your way of life, it's not like just having a job and doing your job and coming home and that's it, 'cos everything has to revolve around the horses, everything. You can't just go away 'cos you've got to get someone to look after them, someone you trust, because you've got a lot of money tied up in them, once you start getting good horses, you know, you can't afford to just leave them with somebody that isn't quite on the ball, that's the thing, so it's a worry when you're away."

For Rachel and many others within equestrian sport, the pressures and demands of horse care, training, competition, and land maintenance become the dominant logic of life, and everything else has to fit in around that. For many professional riders, home and work merge, as they live and work on the same site, with their horses and training facilities located at the same venue as their family homes. This brings many advantages as it is possible to check on the horses late at night, feed early in the morning, and be on hand in case of a veterinary emergency. Yet living and working in the same place leads to a merging of work, home, and leisure and difficulties separating out time for family and friends away from the pressures of work tied to the horses. Many people in all sorts of professions are finding it increasingly difficult to separate "work" from "leisure," as the intensification of work increases and impinges on home life with the advent of increasingly efficient and mobile technologies (Lewis 2003; Sheller and Urr 2003). The so-called leisure time is becoming increasingly squeezed for most working adults (Beck and Arnold 2009), and this is exacerbated when work and home are inseparable, as they are for many riders.

This can be very rewarding, when a strong bond develops with a specific horse, but it can also lead to some difficult choices and compromises. Rachel reflects on her life with horses. "Some aspects have been good. Other aspects, well (laughs), I'm still single, haven't got a family, made it difficult really. Because over the years I'd be with people, supposed to go out to dinner, and if you're running your own

yard, the horse would be ill, or people off sick, or something would break down and you'd cancel. Hours are long, so you miss a lot, times you can't go out, or if you're travelling you can be up at 3 in the morning, not coming home until after 11, it doesn't do a lot for social and family life, it can make it very, very difficult." The exhaustive time demands of equestrian sport can be all consuming, leaving little time for life outside of the horses.

When children are brought into the picture, things become even more complex and difficult to juggle. Tricia talks of the struggle she faces in trying to balance a career as a competitive rider, another business, children, and a husband. "It's all about organization," she begins, before launching into a description of her carefully time-tabled daily routine. She explains how, although her husband, Mark, does not share her interest in riding, he supports her interest "100 percent." Mark doesn't help with the day-to-day running of the yard neither does he seem to help relieve the pressures on his wife associated with childcare and domestic duties, as she says he is frequently at work on an evening or out with friends. But she is keen to stress that Mark "loves the life" that his wife's very successful involvement in equestrian sport entails.

"He *loves* show jumping, he just loves the life, he plans which shows we'll go to, and he loves choosing the horses and watching them jump. One of our horses, Ruby, is jumping in Scotland next week actually, John [their stable jockey] is riding her, I'd love to go and watch but I feel too guilty dragging the kids in the car all that way for one day, and then all the way back, so it looks like Mark will go off on his own and watch Ruby jump, I'll probably have to miss it." She laughs, but not with humor, as she clearly feels aggrieved that, having put in all the ground work with Ruby at home, she won't get to see her jump, whereas Mark will. But for Tricia, the kids come first.

Many of the men in this study also reported feeling as if their time was squeezed and that they were unable to give their best to the different areas of their lives: sport and family. However, unlike Tricia, most of the men had full support from their female partners. Paul and Donna provide an example of this. Both had been successful professional riders but with the birth of their children it was Donna who took a step back from competition to be able to spend more time on childcare. As a result, her profile within the sport reduced and she took on the majority of both childcare and horse care activities. This has freed Paul up to pursue success within the sport, although he also feels he has made "sacrifices" for his children. "My father was a show jumper, you see," he explains. "And he was very successful. But we never saw him. As kids growing up we hardly knew our dad 'cos he was always away with the horses, and when he came home he was too tired or busy to do much with us. So I promised myself I wouldn't be like that, I'd be a dad to my kids, even if that has meant sacrificing success at the top. I'm still not here enough, mind, but it's hard to find a balance."

While Paul reveals that normative masculinity is also wrought with contradictions that place men under increasing pressure to navigate both a successful public career and a role as a present, active father, it is Donna's career that has been most affected by the birth of their children. Butler (1993) argues that to qualify as a "one,"

a viable human subject, we must constantly cite gender norms, through bodily practices, behavior, and language. Approximation of gender norms is not a fully conscious act, but becomes naturalized and mundane through constant repetition. Paul negotiates a path through masculine gender norms that allows him to feel he is fulfilling his duties as both sportsman and father, and Donna steps back from professional sport to fulfill her role as mother. The continued repetition of such normative gendered roles and behavior naturalizes the split between male (public, competitive, active) and female (home, caring, relational). This split thus seems like "the obvious thing to do," as Paul puts it, and so acts as a constraining force on women's sporting achievement. Within equestrian sport, riders continue to improve into their late 30s and beyond, and so prime child-bearing and child-rearing years usually coincide with peak competition years. If it is seen as more "natural" for women to step back from competition during these phases of life, this may be an important factor in men's disproportionate success in elite equestrian sport, despite the lack of sex segregation and barriers to entry for women.

Making Compromises

The narratives of Tricia, Donna, and Paul, presented above, illustrate how normative ideals of masculinity and femininity can position men and women differently within equestrian sport, when women are still expected to take on the majority of caregiving responsibilities in relation to children, leaving them less freedom to engage in the travel away from home that must accompany success in competitive sport (Gustafson 2006). Many of the women in the study talked of the compromises they had made with their male partners, who they described as "jealous" of the time and commitment that equestrian sport entails.

Sarah lectures in equine studies at a university and competes in dressage, although not as often as she would like to. The nature of her job allows her more flexibility around her time schedules than many people can enjoy, and she uses this to make sure she does most of her horse-related activities in the week, when her partner is working away. Talking of Nick, her non-horsey partner's attitude to her horses, she says, "I think he's a bit jealous of them sometimes, to be honest, well of the time I spend with them, and he tries to suppress it but when he gets grumpy he says (she puts on a deep, sulky voice), 'you spend more time with the horses than you do with me,' which is actually not true!" She laughs. "There was this article in *Horse and Hound* a few weeks ago about men who get totally neglected and I thought I really don't do that sort of thing! I don't spend all my weekends there, for instance, or all my evenings, there are maybe two or three weekends a year that I do something with the horses, he's got it easy really. I don't think he realizes how much time other people's horses take up."

Men who are marginally more supportive seem to be given inordinate amounts of praise. Mandy described her hectic routine of riding, teaching, competing, and sometimes caring for her stepchildren when they came to visit. She explained how

she had split up with her previous partner because he didn't like the horses and he didn't understand the commitment she needed to give to them to support her horse career. Her new partner is a big improvement. She describes him as "really good, really helpful, he's even learned to cook, which is good, simple meals with simple instructions, he's really understanding."

None of the men in the study talked about negotiations they made with their female partners or compromises or disagreements relating to the time they spent with the horses. This was because their partners were either involved with horses themselves, and thus worked alongside them in the care of the animals, or had been co-opted into taking on this supporting role, frequently doing the majority of the care of both horses and children. This is not to suggest that all men in equestrian sport have supportive partners or that all women must constantly struggle against their male partner's feelings of jealousy, but it does suggest that these support networks, which everyone in this subculture acknowledges as crucial for engagement in the sport, are perhaps more available for men at the elite level, freeing them up for the travel and hectic competition schedule that success entails.

Doing Gender Differently

Understood within the operations of the heterosexual matrix, normative expressions of gender are those in which sex, gender, and desire align (Butler 1999). Schippers (2007) argues that we regularly punish those who do not do their gender "right," those individuals in which this "myth of gender coherence" is not embodied, and thus exposed as nonself-identical, as not constitutive of the self (Butler 1993; Schippers 2002). The pressure to present a coherent gender identity is immense. Yet for such a coherent identity to be understood, there must also be a concept of incoherence, an "outside" of gender norms (Seidman 1996; Sykes 2006). The "outside" is just as important as the "inside," and so those who sit outside of gender norms and thus do not qualify for "full" status as a culturally recognizable gendered subject are just as much a part of gender relations as those who most closely approximate the norm. Emma provides a good example of this "outside" within equestrian sport.

Emma is in her late 50s and has had an extremely successful career in eventing, winning international titles. She still trains and competes horses now, but has scaled down her competitive involvement due to her growing dissatisfaction with the changing nature of the sport. As with Rachel, discussed above, the exhaustive demands of equestrian sport may have had a detrimental effect on Emma's ability to maintain heterosexual relationships.

"I think that the men that I had in my life were very jealous of the amount of time and commitment I gave, I had to give to the horses, me talking as I am now, you can see that there was just no time," she pauses to think. "The horses came first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sort of tenth down the road was the man in my life and how many men could cope with that? So it was much easier after various failed relationships and unpleasantness when relationships are failing, to just walk away, that's

just the way it was. You see I didn't do an adult horse trials until I was 24, and by the time I'd worked myself up to Badminton, I was in my late 20s, and then I was into my late 30s when I was on the team, and by that time you've sort of missed the boat, really."

In some respects this could be seen as a negative outcome for Emma, as it was for Rachel, as discussed above. However, Emma does not see it that way. When asked if she is happy that she chose to make horses her life, her response was quick and forthcoming. "Oh yes. I've had a fantastic life; I've had a freedom, which has come at a cost – which is why I'm broke! – but a freedom which is quite rare, really. You travel round the world, you meet interesting people, and I still enjoy producing young horses. I'm pushing 60 now and the life goes on, and it's a fantastic life, it really is."

In order to achieve success within elite eventing, Emma had to demonstrate all of the features necessary to elite sporting achievement – dedication, single mindedness, and commitment. These features are reified within sporting norms of masculinity (Messner 1992). Men who exhibit such behavior are praised and glorified, and it is probable that, as was the case for a number of male riders in this study, their female partners will accept the distantness and absentness associated with such dedication and achievement in elite sport. Women who exhibit such traits, however, are granted much less tolerance and acceptance. Women like Emma who embody the dedication and commitment required to excel in elite sport are treated with ambivalence. Although they may receive praise and admiration for their sporting performance, their gender performance, when evaluated against normative ideals, is found to be lacking. Female athletes are expected to excel at sport while still conforming to wider social feminine expectations as good wives and mothers (Griffin 1998). When women fail to live up to these feminine ideals, their sporting achievement is not sufficient to excuse them (as is the case for successful male athletes), and they suffer social sanction, such as a lack of partner or family.

Emma's gender performance thus sits at a distance from normative femininity. In order to achieve such success within international sport, she dedicated herself to sport and put her sporting ambitions before any man. Understood through the lens of compulsory heterosexuality in which women are expected to adopt a relatively subordinate position to men and put men's needs before their own, Emma's decision to "just walk away" from demanding male partners in favor of pursuing her sporting goals places her "outside" of gender norms and thus as somewhat deviant. She was unable to sustain heterosexual relationships, and this could be understood as a form of social sanction for her failure to embody norms of femininity. However, Emma's actions can also be understood differently. She mentions – briefly – that she might have liked to have had children and so acknowledges the normative link between women and maternity. However, she does not regret her decision to pursue her sporting ambition, regardless of the "costs." The "freedom" she talks about was in part facilitated by her lack of ties (children or partner), and this allowed her to achieve what she did within her sport. Emma can be taken as an example of gender trouble, in that she sits at a distance from gender norms (no partner, no children) but

has had a "fantastic life" and achieved an unusual level of success in a sport she loves.

Emma sits outside of heteronormative gender ideals by refusing to put the needs and insecurities of jealous male partners above her commitment to her horses and her sport. She is not separate from wider societal gender norms or the dominant logic of competitive sport, and her refusal to embody these norms may have led to some sanction. Yet she has still lived a "fantastic life" in this outside position, and she is thus an illustration of aspects of Butler's argument that

> The subject is not *determined* by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition* that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantialising effects. In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; 'agency' then is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition (Butler 1999: 198, italics in original).

Emma shows such a variation and reveals how it is still possible to have "a fantastic life" on the outside of heteronormative gender norms. She represents an example of the agency of individuals to subvert normative gender logics, even within the highly constrained regulatory regime of gender binarism that underpins sport. Her high level of success within equestrian sport, competing against (and often outperforming) men demonstrates a challenge to male dominance of elite sport and a destabilizing of the commonsense assumption that men are always going to be better at competitive sport than are women. Gender integration within equestrian sport allows for such examples to happen and to become visible within sporting culture and thus represents a challenge to the frequently unquestioned dominance of men in sport.

Being Tough

Birke and Brandt (2009) note how, despite popular associations between horses and girls and women, the dominant discourse of horsemanship remains a largely masculine one, based on a "predominantly masculine knowledge" (p. 195), linked to the mythic figures of the cowboy, the old horsemen, and the strong male rider overcoming and "taming" the beast. Equestrian sport offers women the opportunity to challenge dominant discourses of femininity in terms of being strong, capable, and willing to get dirty, and indeed women must demonstrate toughness and tenacity to be successful in competitive sport (Hughes and Coakley 1991).

Women in equestrian sport walk a narrow line between acceptable toughness that is needed to succeed in sport and acceptable femininity, which is still commonly understood to be more submissive and demure (Smith 1998). Many of the men in this study commented on how for women to succeed in the top levels of the sport they needed to demonstrate exceptional tenacity. Andrew, a show jumper, sums this up. "I think if you're a woman in this sport you have to be really tough and driven. You've got more to prove than the men, unfortunately." This toughness and drive

may be necessary for success in sport, but its incompatibility with normative ideals of femininity may be unsettling and troubling for some.

Steve is a 24-year-old event rider who has worked for both male and female professionals during his training. He found the women to be much more focused and determined. "The females that I've known at the higher levels of the sport have been quite aggressive and abrupt and, well, a bit scary to be honest! They had that kind of grit and determination and drive which you probably don't see in the majority of females. Most women are a bit placid and laid back, but the women I've known at the top of the sport are quite competitive, well really competitive actually, and as I say, a bit scary!"

Steve juxtaposes "most women" who he understands to be "placid and laid back" with women who succeed at the top of the sport who are "aggressive and abrupt." The incompatibility between "most women" who approximate more closely normative ideals of femininity and successful women in equestrian sport is clear and suggests that these women may be successful in sport but their gender performance is unsettling, approximating masculine norms more closely than feminine ones. These women do not make sense within a binary gender framework in which men and women are understood to be complementary and opposite, as they are women yet appear to be acting in masculine ways to succeed in sport. This is a "scary" proposition as these women challenge normative associations between women and feminine gender norms and call into question the very basis of a binary gender framework which is predicated on difference between men and women.

For women to succeed in elite equestrian sport alongside men, they must take on and enact many aspects of the "sports ethic," including drive, determination, competitiveness, and single-minded focus (Hughes and Coakley 1991). These attributes are often understood to be incompatible with femininity, and so successful women in equestrian sport may begin to destabilize the links between femininity, women, and a more placid, laid back approach to sport and competition. This in turn may begin to unsettle restrictive and prohibitive binary understandings of gender and indicate ways in which gender norms may be reworked in more open and inclusive ways.

Conclusions

Equestrian sport offers a challenge to the gender logic of sport in that it is the only Olympic-level sport not organized around segregation along binary sex lines. Equestrian sport illustrates that in some cases, at least, men and women can compete against each other without women losing out completely to their male opponents. This begins to challenge the assumption that men and women are categorically different, with women being perceived to be athletically inferior in all ways, thus necessitating a binary division of sport to "protect" female competitors.

The discussion presented above indicates that abandoning gender binarism as a fundamental feature of sporting practice will not automatically result in the

exclusion of all women from elite sport. Neither men nor women are physiologically advantaged in equestrian sport as it is always going to be the horse who is the stronger, fitter partner, and it is consequently through a combination of training, skill, precision, balance, and "feel" that horses are guided, and these are attributes with no gender connotations. There are many other sports in which neither males nor females are physiologically advantaged, and in amateur and children's sports, the physiological differences are varied and minimal, and so there is little justification for using sex as a means of classifying these athletes. As Kane (1995) argues, we all exist on a "continuum of difference" in which some women are faster and stronger than some men and vice versa. As such, the decision to classify athletes by sex, rather than say height or weight, is more about normative gender ideals than sporting necessity or even "fairness." As a result, it should not be necessary to segregate many sports along sex lines.

If children's sport, amateur sport, and even many elite sports were not segregated along sex lines, this would be an effective first step in dismantling the hierarchy and exclusions inherent in the binary framework of sex that pervades most sporting practices. By consistently segregating sport along sex lines, a powerful message is given off: males and females are categorically different, with males being fitter, stronger, faster, and more worthy of praise, admiration, and reward. If this sex segregation were not such a feature of sporting practices, this message could be challenged and the hierarchy could begin to be called into question. Sport could also be opened up for those who do not fit within these narrow binary terms.

As stated throughout, equestrian sport is not organized around sex segregation and, despite the many limitations of this discussed throughout this chapter, this does not result in the exclusion of girls and women from all levels of equestrian sport due to the superior performance of their male peers. However, not all sports could be organized in this way and still leave space for both male and female athletes at the elite level. As Messner (2002) argues, the sports most valued in Western societies are those that are organized around the extremes of men's bodies, sports that emphasize strength and speed. If these sports followed the example of equestrian sport and abandoned sex segregation, then it is very likely that, at the elite level, women would be excluded from competition. Exceptional male athletes will be stronger and faster than exceptional female athletes because male bodies are physiologically advantaged in terms of strength and speed (Lamb 1978). However, this does not mean that a sweeping binary classification of sex is the best way of organizing athletes even in these sports. It would make at least as much sense to classify athletes according to height, weight, or testosterone levels as it does to classify by sex, and this may result in an opening up of sport to include athletes who have no place within the current binary sex classifications of sport.

This is not to suggest that all sports should immediately follow the example of equestrian sport and open up the field of competition so that men and women always compete together. Many women (and men) value sex-segregated sports as providing positive sporting spaces, for multiple reasons relating to religion, culture, and ethnicity (Cortis et al. 2007), as "safe" spaces away from the fear of homophobic abuse (Lenskyj 2003) or just as welcoming opportunities for female friendship (Gilroy

1997). Rather, the discussion here advocates a reevaluation of the ways in which athletic bodies are classified and segregated, and the political stakes, hierarchies, and exclusions inherent in these classifications.

The examples presented here illustrate that even in the absence of formal sex segregation and the hierarchy that accompanies this, men still perform disproportionately well in elite equestrian sport, and this illustrates some of the limitations of simply abandoning sex segregation within one sport, but not simultaneously challenging wider restrictive gender norms. As long as women remain responsible for the majority of caring duties, they may struggle to combine family life with the commitment and dedication needed to succeed in elite sport. If sporting discourses remain strongly masculine and incompatible with femininity, women who excel at sport may continue to be perceived as unsettling, "scary," and not as "real" women (Griffin 1998). The project of transforming gender norms requires us to question "what it might mean to undo restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life" (Butler 2004: 1), and the examples presented here indicate that such transformation is likely to be slow and gradual. The subversion of gender norms and the transformation of current hierarchical, restrictive, and prohibitive binary sex classifications is a necessity if we are to hope to expand the field of recognition within sport in more inclusive and humane ways and to value the sporting achievements of men and women equally. The example of equestrian sport suggests that just as sport is hugely influential in maintaining current restrictive gender norms and ways of understanding sex, it may also be an important way of challenging these assumptions and exclusions.

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Chapter 4
Becoming 'One of the Lads': Women, Horseracing and Gender in the United Kingdom

Deborah Butler

In 2008, Hayley Turner became the first female jockey in the UK to ride a 100 winners in a year, and she has been tipped to win the inaugural 'lady jockeys' championship for 2012. That said, she is but one of a very small minority of women jockeys in the UK who have established themselves in the racing field. There is a dearth of empirical research on women jockeys, and whilst many pages have been written on the British Government training scheme known as the modern apprenticeship, none refers directly to the training of staff for the horseracing industry. Little has been written about the wider experience of women in leisure and sport (Huggins 2000), and it is usually accounts of middle- and upper-class women and their struggle to be included as legitimate agents within the racing field that are described. Indeed, as Cassidy (2002) records, the text by Susan Gallier (1988) is the 'only lad's autobiography of which I am aware' (Cassidy 2002: 122fn).

Anthropological studies, such as *The Racing Tribe* (Fox 2005), record the 'experiences, habits and perceptions of the racing world' (Fox 2005: viii), and Cassidy (2002: vi) undertook an ethnographic 'case study of a "specific class system" which is known as "racing society".

Contemporary studies on horseracing more generally are often of either an encyclopaedic nature (Vamplew and Kay 2005) or social historical accounts and, whilst invaluable as reference tools, say very little about 'the lived experience' of the jockey or stable 'lad'. And whilst there is a long tradition of life histories of memorable racehorses, with Arkle, Red Rum, Phar lap and Sea Biscuit all having their own biographies, little is drawn out regarding their interaction with and the background of those who cared for them on a daily basis, namely, the stable lad.

Thus, the aim of this chapter is to help fill a significant gap in the research literature, exploring the working lives of those in racing, charting their entry into the racing field in the late 1960s and early 1970s and outlining the way in which

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women became a part of racing's workforce – the majority working as stable 'lads', a minority riding as jockeys. The data draws upon an ethnographic study of a National Hunt[1] racing yard, Conborough and seven interviews with female stable 'lads', three former female apprentice jockeys and one female apprentice jockey. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. In what follows, I look briefly at the impact the emergence of female employees has had on the horseracing industry and argue as part of a male-dominated workforce that women learn to accept as normal the gendered structure of the racing field embodying these practices in their work and within their working lives.

The work of Bourdieu helps to explain my second argument where I demonstrate how a woman's position in the racing field is strongly influenced by her access to economic, social, cultural and physical capitals. A field to Bourdieu is a structured system of social positions which are occupied by either institutions or individuals, and it is the nature of the field which defines the situation for their occupants (Jenkins 1992). It also acts as a system of forces which exist between these positions and is structured internally in terms of power relations. The positions that are taken up by way of subordination or dominance in the field are governed, to a certain extent, by the access of agents to the resources (capital) and goods that are at stake. This access determines how much power, influence and recognition women enjoy and positions them differently within the class and gender hierarchy of the racing field. This is illuminated in the way that women are expected to pull their weight with men as stable 'lads', yet when it comes to race riding, women's bodies are not seen as being suitable, and they are not fully accepted as professional jockeys.

Class, Gender and Power Relations

A woman's position in the racing field is strongly influenced by class, gender and power relations. These will have an effect on their attitudes and dispositions, that is, their habitus. Habitus is an acquired set of dispositions. It is a medium and an outcome of social practice as well as a bodily state of being (Wainwright and Turner 2006). It is a concept that expresses the way in which individuals become themselves and, on the other hand, the ways those individuals engage in practices (Webb et al. 2002). A habitus is produced within the body and mind and is shaped by social structures and how the individual acts. The habitus is embodied, and the way individuals treat their bodies 'reveals the deepest dispositions of the habitus' (Bourdieu 1984: 190). Thus, having a racing habitus disposes the individual to certain perspectives and activities that express the historically and culturally constituted values of the racing field.

[1] A National Hunt yard is where racehorses are trained that jump steeplechase fences or hurdles.

Being Accepted in Male-Dominated Occupations

This is also true where women work in other male-dominated occupations and have strategies they have developed which are consistent with those displayed within the racing field. Women's perceived lack of muscularity and lack of innate ability are seen as a potential barrier to women performing manual work, for example, as a carpenter or a bricklayer (Fielden et al. 2001). It has been estimated that in the construction industry where manual occupations dominate the workforce, only about 1 % of manual workers are women. Research into gender roles in the Scottish construction industry highlights the role of men's perceptions in explaining women's lack of participation; women are seen as lacking in strength and in the ability to use tools and therefore unsuited to working in some trades. 'Women don't have that natural understanding of building as the men do' and 'women don't have the innate ability to use the tools' so 'they are not equally suitable for the work' (Agapiou 2002: 701). Such comments are not seen as sexist or going against equal opportunities as men are talking about 'natural, God-given abilities that women lack' (Agapiou 2002: 701). These attitudes are similar to those found in the racing industry and legitimate women's lack of participation. Swerdlow's (1989) study of train conductors and operatives in the United States found that women threatened men's assumptions of male supremacy. A consensus was achieved as long as both women and men adopted accommodative patterns of work that allowed men to accept women as co-workers without the presence of women threatening beliefs of male supremacy.

Gender differences in strength have been used within the armed forces to question whether women should be allowed to become part of the armed forces, an organisation that epitomises heterosexual and masculinist ideals (Chandler et al. 1995). Cohn (2000) discusses how male officers in the American military used the gender-normed standards set for physical training (PT) as a way of arguing that women do not deserve equal rights because they have different PT standards from men. More profoundly, men's protest was more about the fact that women had no right to be in a white male military organisation which had hitherto been a male sanctum. This discussion illustrates how women who succeed in male-dominated occupations develop a style of working that reproduces 'male norms', but that is contradictory. Women could be said to be embodying a particular working style, which in the army is explicitly about bodies. Thus, women's perceived lack of embodiment is an element that can be used to exclude them from working in male-dominated occupations. In the sporting arena, women conform to the 'norms' of femininity away from the field of play at the same time taking part in male-dominated sports where, in order to be able to progress their careers, they have to challenge dominant notions of femininity and adopt 'male' ways of behaving. Female and feminine capital (Laberge 1995; Huppatz 2009) is useful to a degree but only where it has an exchange value that is seen as valuable within the field in which it is situated. If this is expanded to take in physical capital, it can be seen that women who work in racing may have the necessary physical capital, in that their bodies are often smaller and usually lighter than their male counterparts, yet the gendered nature of the hierarchy that exists in racing

and, as shown, in the army creates barriers which prevent women from succeeding as men do. Women must embody 'masculine' attributes in order to be taken seriously, yet if they are seen to be overemphasising this, their femininity and sexuality may be called into question. Their options are limited in that if they challenge 'traditional' notions of femininity, they are called lesbian and butch, but if they do nothing and accept the doxic values of the field, their roles will be limited to those that fit men's sexualisation of women and their place in society. The practices that are found in racing, in sport, in the army and at work are the result of resources and dispositions which, when they come together and are structured by power relations, cause the individual to learn a certain way of acting and reacting which in time becomes second nature, an almost unconscious action. Gendered behaviour becomes embodied and this is what indentured apprentices are referring to when they say it is 'in the blood' or speak about having a feel for it.

Habitus

The habitus is shaped by practices within the racing field but is also dependent on the actions and dispositions of individuals for its existence. Each individual's habitus will be partly similar but they are 'strands in a collective history for Bourdieu' (Crossley 2001: 94).

For example, the habitus acquired in the racing field, by the racing workforce and the racing establishment working in it, incorporated particular views of women. They were assumed to occupy a subordinate position, being physically weaker and not as tough or strong as men, and women were resented for taking up positions that could have been given to male 'lads'. At Conborough, the female staff all agreed with this but accepted that in racing such attitudes are hard to overcome. As a result, they became resigned to comments from some of the male 'rider outers',[2] particularly Neil whose entrenched attitudes and masculinity were challenged when a 'bird'[3] (27/3/08, field notes) rode a horse he thought only he could ride as it was strong.

Thus, the habitus underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences such as the assimilation of the messages regarding women in the racing industry and so continues, structuring and restructuring, and although attitudes to women are changing, their 'weakness' is still assumed. The contradictions that underpin such attitudes are brought about by Sarah, a 'lad':

> Yeah, what really gets to me is the fact that we, us girls, are expected to do all the hard jobs, pull heavy barrows, move bales, muck out, you name it, we do it, yet when it comes to race riding, we are not considered. Not strong enough *pulling a face as if to say*, *incredulously*, *we couldn't possibly ride*. (22/3/08, field notes)

[2] A rider outer is an individual who comes in on a daily basis and just rides out. They do not do any other work in the yard.

[3] A 'bird' is a term used to refer to women and has stereotypical inferences regarding a woman's ability to pull their weight in the racing field. Fillies (female horses) are sometimes called 'birdhorses'.

Dawn, a young apprentice jockey riding at present reiterated this point indignantly:

> the lads are chauvinist pigs. The older ones say it's a man's sport. Women shouldn't come into it, they have wrecked it. (Dawn, 19, apprentice jockey)

Dawn is challenging the fact that as a woman she is seen as subordinate and weaker than her male counterparts, yet women in racing have therefore developed a habitus that is subjected to symbolic violence whereby they are treated as inferior and limited in their social mobility and aspirations. Within the racing field, female bodies are 'imprisoned' to a degree by the workings of the habitus. This is accepted as 'the natural order of things':

> Near enough and all I, all I ever wanted to do was to be able to do every aspect of my job and do it well; I knew that I'd, I don't know where I got it from, but I just knew that if you were girl, you weren't gonna go far. (Ruth, 40, 'head lad')

Although attitudes towards women race riding are gradually changing and women are now an accepted though subordinate part of the workforce, they have developed a work identity that is predicated on the notion of being hard working, strong, tough and not acting 'like a girl'. Women could be described as being caught up in the illusion of racing, which embraces the logic, values and capital of the racing field. Thus, as Tina saw it, to be able to work, 'in racing, I'd just say, and it's, very bad face but, "get some balls about you"' (Tina, 37, former apprentice jockey and 'lad'), is to be assertive, strong and tough and neither embody nor perform the stereotypical femininity that is expected of 'normal' feminine, heterosexual women.

Capital

Habitus on its own does not allow for an explanation of how factors such as class and gender influence the way in which an individual's position in a specific field might be explained by differential access to capital. Capital therefore is an important conceptual tool; as Crossley (2001a) writes, capital to Bourdieu means the resources distributed through the social body which have an exchange value in one or more of the various 'fields'. These resources can be divided up into economic capital, social capital, symbolic capital and cultural capital. The latter three can assume a fairly 'field-specific' form, and their value may be tied to specific social 'worlds', so what might count as valuable in an academic world would be of less value in a sporting or theatrical world. The same argument holds for the 'connections' and status that may accompany an individual and help them progress in one field but have little or no value in another.

Economic capital is highly rationalised and has a precise numerical value, but it is the concepts of symbolic, social and cultural capital that have more resonance within this chapter. Social capital is a concept that can be readily applied to the racing industry as, for Bourdieu, it means the connections and networks which an agent can call upon in order to achieve a specified goal. To posses symbolic capital, its holder has, for example, a glowing reputation which people believe in that requires

an acceptance that there is something that can be exchanged; there is an exchange value present within the notion of the different forms of capital. Conceptually, cultural capital shows the value that is associated with, for example, culturally authorised tastes, skills and awards, so educational qualifications in the form of an academic degree would constitute cultural capital.

Bourdieu understands 'embodied' capital as a subdivision of cultural capital and interprets it as a cultural resource invested within the body (Bourdieu 1986). Shilling (1991) however sees the 'physical' as being too important to be just a component of cultural capital and so has developed Bourdieu's (1978) conceptual tool of 'physical' capital as a way of more adequately capturing the importance of the body as a form of capital in its own right. The racing field was and still is intersected with notions of class and gendered bodies. Given the widely held view within racing that women have 'weaker' bodies than men's and so are seen as not being strong and tough enough for race riding, the gendered nature of social inequalities and the conceptualisation of physical capital together are potentially useful for understanding some of the barriers faced by women working in racing.

Figure 4.1 below sets out the chain of events that led to women entering the racing field as stable staff and being able to race ride. It shows how the combination of a labour shortage in racing and the introduction of equal opportunities legislation in the 1970s led to women entering the workforce as stable staff and, eventually, to a few being able to race ride.

Figure 4.1 illustrates a shift in gender within the racing field which was brought about by a combination of factors. One of the more contentious issues was the fact that women wanted to be able to ride in National Hunt races, but this was seen as more dangerous than riding on the flat, and there was a lot of opposition from within the racing field and from the Jockey Club.

A 'Natural Love of Horses'

If all three concepts of field, habitus and capitals are looked at together, women's physical capital is shaped by the racing field that is gendered masculine and regulated by their habitus. In order to be accepted as 'one of the lads' (Waterson 2009), women must embody masculinity and perform certain lifestyles that are limited by material constraints. Initially, women's suitability as stable 'lads' was couched in terms of their 'natural love of horses' (Joint Racing Board 1974: 25). Many of the women interviewed said that they had indeed gone into racing for the horses. Sue, a former racing 'lad' who went to work in a yard in the North in the mid 1960s, explained how

> Girls went into racing for one thing. They didn't go in for a career. Although lads went in for apprenticeships to be a jockey, but the girls didn't go into racing years ago to be jockeys because you couldn't be jockeys. It was the horses. (Sue, 69, former 'lad')[4]

[4]The identifiers include the interviewee's pseudonym, age and racing experience.

1960s – 1970 A few women were entering racing yards to work as stable staff. **NO** opportunity to race ride professionally

1970 Only men could race ride and be apprentice jockeys.They had professional status.

1970 Labour shortage in racing

1970 Young women seen as an untapped source of labour.Recruitment of women as part of the work force. Women had no legitimate right to race ride as they could not be apprenticed as jockeys

1971 Incentive needed to encourage girls to stay in racing. No 'carrot'to entice them

1972 'Carrot' in the form of a 12 race series for amateur women. These were 'hijacked' by women with economic and social capital

1975 Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975. Less favourable treatment on grounds of sex, in relation to e.g. recruitment, training, promotion, provision of benefits, dismissal and not permissible. Male-only indentured apprenticeship no longer legal.Women were able to ride as professionals

1976 Indentured apprenticeship abolished

1976 Jockey Club had to issue **National Hunt (NH)** riders permits to either sex. Women could apply for amateur or professional licences like men

1976 Women now had the right to race ride but stable 'girls' were, because of the SDA, 1975 reclassified as professionals instead of amateurs as they were being paid for working in a yard and were seen as now having the same opportunities as a 'lad'

1976 'Stable girls' no longer eligible for 'amateur races'. 'Carrot' incentive no longer of use

1976 – 1978 Women allowed to ride in **Lady Jockeys Association (LJA)** races until 1978 to gain experience then had to ride as professionals

1978 LJA, as a recognised club, could hold races of its own. It would provide an outlet for stable girls to ride but the male Amateur Jockeys Association (AJA) was against it

1978 All male AJA races had to be open to all

1978 First woman professional jockey to ride winner on the flat

1978 First woman to ride a National Hunt winner

Fig. 4.1 Changes in the gendering of the racing field

This alleged affinity with horses meant that women's entry into the ranks of the 'lads' was on a different basis from their male counterparts. They were in racing because of their gendered aptitude rather than being seen as suitable material for race riding; they were therefore differentiated from the lads on the basis of gender, and their equestrian skills were not recognised. Furthermore, their difference from the lads was seen in terms of them not being strong and tough enough to be able to do what had hitherto been a 'man's job. In other words, their female bodies and feminine gender precluded them from being accepted as equals in the male-dominated world of racing, and they had to be tough, hard workers, necessary attributes to develop, in order to prove themselves.

Ruth, the 'head lad' at Conborough, was drawn to racing by the involvement and close working relationship a 'lad' can have with 'their' horse and did not mention going into racing with the primary aim of race racing. She thereby accepted the

doxic values of the Jockey Club and those in the wider racing field that women were there to make sure the horses made it to the race track:

> I loved show jumping, I thought there was too many people involved with racehorses, you know, the owner, trainer, the lad, the jockey and I thought you didn't get to do as much with the horse… but it's totally the opposite way round isn't it? Because when you're the lad you can do all the work, right up to the day he runs (Ruth, 40, 'head lad').

Dawn, 19, a young apprentice jockey, who, although she had already been given race rides, saw the racing industry as having little to offer by way of a career unless you became a travelling head lad or head lad. She is from a different generation from the other interviewees quoted here, being born in 1990 and having done 'A' levels; she had other opportunities within the world of work and would be prepared to go to college or study if she felt she was not getting anywhere in racing.

Proving Your Worth

According to some of the interviewees, women's entry into the ranks of the lads during the late 1960s initially caused some resentment. As 'girls' were not able to 'serve their time' as indentured apprentices, they were not permitted to race ride but they were often employed under the same terms and conditions as a 'board and wage man'. This meant that they were entitled to a higher wage than indentured apprentices and their board was paid; an indentured apprentice had to have 'served his time' before he was entitled to the same remuneration. This was a situation which grumbled on for many years until the abolition of the indentured system in 1976. The view of some of the women who were the first to enter what one author refers to as 'the close knit, feudal province of the male' was that they had to prove themselves by being conscientious, hard working and tough to show they were equal to if not better than a 'lad'. As Margaret, 64 and a former 'lad', explained, 'whilst there weren't many girls they had to be good girls, you had to be'. The implications of such a statement need unravelling as, to an outsider, women's working roles in the yard were the same as the 'lads' in that they were expected to ride the same horses and do the same tasks and did not expect any different treatment or working conditions. There were other implicit factors at play though as women were seen as taking over what had previously been male-only positions; both the occupational hierarchy and the gender order were upsetting, so had to be seen as strong, tough and able as the 'lads'. Margaret, who still rides out, recalls overhearing

> a couple of apprentices talking one day saying,
>
> 'bloody girls in racing, they can't jump up, they can't do this', which never entered my head you see…and I thought, I've never tried to jump up,[5] so I spent the next couple of days, evening stables, getting on my horse, so when I suddenly had to do it outside [it] was quite

[5]Getting on the horse by vaulting on from the ground without using a stirrup iron or getting a leg up.

> a plus and I went up about seven steps in the lads' eyes. Yeah, that made a big difference... and I enjoyed riding the silly ones which was another plus. (Margaret, 64, former 'lad')

Margaret and her other colleagues were working in racing during the early 1970s, and so it is easier to understand, perhaps, why they were seen as upsetting established working patterns and challenging the established gender regime within the industry. Working-class women with their different body shape from their male counterparts were recent additions to the workforce and stood out physically, too. However, as the following quote from a woman currently working as a 'lad' indicates little has changed. Women must still demonstrate that they are able to perform as well as the 'lads' if they are to survive and be accepted within the racing field. Mary, travelling head 'lad' at Conborough said,

> Cause you think, well if they can do that, I can do that and that's the thing, if they can get on that and ride that, I can ride that, and if they can push that, lift that bale of straw, I can lift that bale of straw, and I – I've always been a bit like that, at a young age as well, just… trying to keep up with them. I think…if you're a girly girl in the racing industry I don't think – well it's not for you anyway if you're a girly girl…it's a man's world isn't it? And… it's a pretty tough life isn't it? (Mary, 30, 'travelling head lad')

In other words, those that are 'still there' were able to take the harassment and stood up for themselves. They were learning how to become 'lads', developing a disposition, a habitus, that suited a male-dominated environment. And in many senses they have to develop a masculine work identity as Shelley succinctly put it: 'But you have got to be a bit laddish, and just get on with it' (Shelley, 33, former 'lad'), and Tina said, 'I think it's still a male-dominated sport, you know, although you can have, two lads and ten girls in a yard, it's still male-dominated really' (Tina, 42, former apprentice jockey and 'lad').

Women as Jockeys

As Fig. 4.1 shows, the first series of races for women held during the 1973 flat season was only open to female amateur riders and was introduced to give women who worked as 'lads' the opportunity to gain experience race riding and to act as an incentive aimed at recruiting women into the workforce. Anne Alcock, in her journalistic account of women's struggle to be allowed to race ride, points out that 'The Jockey Club nurtured the girls and followed a policy which encouraged them to work in racing stables when labour was increasingly hard to find' (Alcock 1978: 50). The same process was already in place for male apprentice jockeys who started off their riding career in what were known as 'boys' races', that is, inexperienced male apprentices rode experienced racehorses that were suitable for novice riders. It was thought that if women were given professional status too early, they would lack experience 'and it is lack of experience which can cause accidents' (JRB 1974: 25). It was further decided that although women were likely to apply for professional licences, they should be 'watched very closely in their races in 1974 to see that they have sufficient race riding ability to be considered for a full [professional] licence'

(JRB 1974: 26). Such a paternalistic attitude by the Jockey Club could be viewed as completely correct in that they were only protecting the women from their 'natural bodily weaknesses'; however, it disguised ongoing discrimination against women who aspire to race ride.

There are significant differences between amateurs and professionals who race ride, and this is an important factor in explaining women's entry into the amateur ranks rather than those of the professional. Riding as an amateur carries with it the implication that the individual has adequate time and financial resources to indulge in such practices; they are doing it for the love of the sport, their own well being and because they can. They are not gaining financially from doing this as it is their hobby. So how was it that these female pioneers of the pigskin,[6] the 'jockettes', as they were known, developed a sense of entitlement and were able, eventually, to be recognised as legitimate? How did they see themselves as qualified to race ride and how did they convince others of this?

These particular women, the first 'jockettes' had the economic, cultural and social capital that enabled them to achieve the goal of race riding. But how were stable 'girls' to get the opportunity to race ride given that they had little in the way of legitimate capital or distinction that would let them overcome the historically informed and culturally ingrained hurdles in their way? As the father of a young girl who was one of the first women 'lads' to ride out on Newmarket Heath explained to me,

> The jockette races were a good idea. They were to encourage girls into racing but girls who 'did their two' never got to ride. There was a shortage of lads you see, it was to encourage the girls. But slowly the trainers' wives took over and they never got a look in (Retired Stable manager, 71, Newmarket racecourse).

The Jockey Club, by giving professional licences 'by invitation' rather than application, were able to regulate who, in their view, had the right credentials to become a professional jockey. Initially the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) worked against working-class women who were working as 'lads' being able to race ride. This was because they were being paid for their labour and so were deemed professional, and the first 'ladies' races were for amateur jockeys only. Thus, those from racing backgrounds who had the experience and the economic and social capital had a head start over those entering the racing without these. This situation led trainer's daughter, Diana Bissell, who in 1978 was the Lady Jockeys' Association 'chairman' (sic), to give prospective women jockeys the following advice:

> At this time it is best to enter [racing as part of the work force] as a trainer's secretary which means one is still an amateur. If one proceeds as a stable girl (which means one is being paid for exercising and grooming horses) one automatically enters a different field and loses one's amateur status. (Martin 1979: 207)

This is itself a contradiction as the idea behind the series of races was to encourage working-class women to work as stable staff in a masculine, male-dominated occupation by giving them the opportunity to race ride. Instead, the race series gave women

[6]Racing saddles were often made of pigskin due to its hard-wearing but lighter properties than cowhide.

with the economic, cultural and symbolic capital derived from family connections the opportunity to ride. The rules have since been changed to allow 'stable girls' to ride as amateurs, and as the following tables show, riding as an amateur is the most popular form of race riding for women. These figures indicate the difficulties women face in entering a field that is gendered masculine and where women's exclusion is legitimated by the dispositions and attitudes that govern it. The proportion of amateur jockeys who were women was 68 % in 2009. This compares with figures of 1 % for professional National Hunt jockeys and 7 % for professional flat jockeys. Race riding as a profession is still heavily dominated by men. Moreover, amateur races are viewed by many who work in racing as a training ground, somewhere to have a ride where 'if you cock up, no one notices and if they do, they just say, "oh well it's an amateur, you kind of expect them to do things wrong"' (04/03/08, field notes).

Equality of Opportunity?

Developments in the 1970s meant that 'girls' have, ostensibly, been legitimate members of the racing field from that time, and in 1975, they were allowed to apply for apprentice[7] licences on the flat[8] in the same way as young men. This altered the balance slightly in favour of working-class women working as stable staff, as to be able to ride on the flat, they needed the necessary physical capital, that is, they needed to be small and light. Despite these developments, as Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 indicate, gender inequalities in race riding still persist. Although there has been a slight increase in the proportion of women professional flat and apprentice jockeys since 1989, they still constitute just under 25 % of apprentice jockeys and less than 10 % of professional jockeys. In National Hunt racing, considered potentially more risky, the participation of women as conditional and professional jockeys is even lower, the reasons for which will be discussed later in the chapter.

The tables illustrate the contradictions outlined earlier: that women do the same work in a yard as men, embodying a gendered habitus, yet when it comes to race riding the proportion of female to male apprentices has stayed relatively constant since 1994. An apprentice jockey often still works full time as a 'lad' for the trainer they are apprenticed to, so does not have to rely only on their riding fees for an income. For a woman to become a professional jockey, especially a National Hunt jockey, she must be confident she will receive enough rides to be able to make race riding a financially viable occupation.

The only category that is different is that of the amateur, where women can ride as a 'hobby' and still hold down other employment, be it in racing or another occupation. Some women will work as a 'lad' and keep their own horse at the yard where they work, running it under the trainer's name in amateur races.

[7] A young inexperienced professional trainee jockey on the flat.

[8] Racing that takes place on racetracks where there are no jumps to negotiate.

Table 4.1 Amateur jockeys

Year	Male no	%	Female no	%	Total	%
1989	13	32.5	27	67.5	40	100
1994	23	23.7	74	76.3	97	100
1999	37	35.2	134	73.2	105	100
2004	24	29.3	110	67.1	82	100
2009	22	31.9	47	68.1	69	100

Table 4.2 Professional apprentice jockeys

Year	Male no	%	Female no	%	Total	%
1989	178	81.7	59	18.3	218	100
1994	106	71.6	49	28.4	148	100
1999	90	4.4	31	25.6	121	100
2004	102	73.9	36	26.1	138	100
2009	94	76.4	29	23.5	123	100

Table 4.3 Conditional National Hunt jockeys

Year	Male no	%	Female no	%	Total	%
1989	245	92.8	19	7.2	264	100
1994	155	95.7	7	4.3	162	100
1999	99	96.1	4	3.9	103	100
2004	117	95.7	5	4.3	122	100
2009	92	97.8	2	2.2	94	100

Table 4.4 Professional flat jockeys

Year	Male no	%	Female no	%	Total	%
1989	115	98.3	2	1.7	117	100
1994	104	93.7	7	6.3	111	100
1999	100	96.2	4	3.8	104	100
2004	112	94.9	6	5.1	118	100
2009	109	93.2	8	6.8	117	100

Table 4.5 Professional National Hunt jockeys

Year	Male no	%	Female no	%	Total	%
1989	136	93.8	9	6.2	145	100
1994	117	92.9	9	7.1	126	100
1999	88	95.7	4	4.3	103	100
2004	78	98.7	1	1.3	79	100
2009	88	99.8	1	1.1	89	100

Source: BHA

Note: The data that was collected for these tables was incomplete for some years, hence the 1989 start and the 5-year gradients

Patronage and Capital

Many of the interviewees had always wanted to have a ride, 'just one, say I've done it', but most of them, as recorded earlier, were not given the opportunity to school[9] a horse due to their lack of economic, social and symbolic capitals. Ruth did not have the right cultural and social capital, so

> Unless you were the trainer's daughter, trainer's wife or you were going out with somebody, or a well connected background, you did not get to school. And when I was at Wrigleys [trainer], the only girls who were ever allowed to do any schooling of any type were his daughters, and you weren't even considered and at that time that's when I was, I wanted to be able to prove that, I could, I was up for it then, 'cause you are when you're that age. I would have loved to have been able to school and as time goes on you just think, what am I following this' cause, you're not going to get anywhere [here] but when I went racing and you talked to people, then you realise, well, actually, it's not just me, it's racing. I think that's why I work hard because that's the only way I could prove I could do anything (Ruth, 40, head 'lad').

Situations such as these are still common although there are some yards where young women get the opportunity to do all the tasks associated with working and riding out as well as race riding. Patronage plays an important part in a woman's occupational status in the racing field. Patronage of the trainer and owner played an important part in the careers of some of the first women apprentices who went into the racing field as 'lads':

> The head lad and me were walking back in from the paddocks chatting and he asked me, 'what do you want to get out of life and what did I want to get out of racing'? My reply was, 'Oh, you know, I just want to enjoy doing what I'm doing', and then, and I was quite shocked, 'Well, do you know, have you never thought about being an apprentice?' I replied by saying, 'No, I'd never be good enough to do that, but I'd, it'd be nice maybe one day to have a ride' so, that, that was sort of, that was kind of unheard of in those days, you know, the trainer giving girls the chance (Julie, 42, former apprentice jockey and 'lad').

Yards differ in the chances they give to women, and it is still the case that the patronage of the trainer can make the difference between becoming an apprentice jockey or not.

Not Enough Physical Strength?

Women still need however to consider the words of Bourdieu 'that social games… but also cultural games…are not fair games' (Bourdieu 2000: 214) especially when it comes to being given the opportunity to race ride, something young men take for granted. Women must show they are keen, fit and ready for the chance when

[9]To school is to jump a horse over jumps. It might also be called schooling.

it is given to them. Shelley offered the following advice to any potential female apprentice:

> and if there are two apprentices in a yard, one's male, and one female, you damn well make sure you're as fit and as strong as he is, and that you can push one out at the end of a race as well as he can, because that's what's going to depend whether you get the ride again (Shelley, 32, former 'lad').

Very few women become successful jockeys and one of the many explanations for this is that they lack the physical strength that is supposedly needed when 'riding a finish' as the race nears its climax. This is something that women who have worked in racing tend to accept. When riding, at the end of the race, a jockey is expected to 'push a horse out'. This is when they will crouch down low in the saddle and move their whole body especially their arms in time with the stride of the horse. It can look as if they are rowing a boat extremely fast and encourage the horse to keep galloping to the winning post. Tina, a former apprentice held doxic values that made her see this as a reason why there are so few successful women jockeys. Women's bodily hexis does not quite match that of their male contemporaries:

> But, I think really it's the strength of pushing out and I really, even now, I think that's just, no matter how super fit you are, I mean you look at the girls now riding, you know, Hayley and erm, you know, lots of the others, you know Hayley, a real strong rider, pushes out really strong but, she has had to work so hard at that, she really has, you know, perfecting that technique and I think, lads do find that easier, the pushing out bit and…I think it's just about an inch out, for the girls, but the girls have to work a little bit harder at that. It's like, you know, girls riding fillies and lads riding fillies, girls can, get more out of a filly or, more out of even a colt sometimes, just by their horsemanship skills and the way they approach things, and I think, yeah, I think definitely the pushing out bit is, you know, it is, it is a, just that little bit (Tina, 42, former apprentice jockey and 'lad').

This quote is interesting in that there is an accepted view in racing that fillies (young immature female horses) behave better for women riders than for men. Fillies are seen as physically weaker, more temperamental, feisty, having attitude and being changeable in nature, attributes women are also said to have. Most colts (young immature male horses) are seen as strong, dominant and needing a firm hand. Women riders are categorised as being quieter and more patient than men and so suit fillies as they do not upset them as much as they do not try to aggravate and bully them. The fact that women might be better horse people in these situations tends to be overlooked.

There are some who refute the view that women do not have enough physical strength to 'push a horse out' and who challenge the notion of women being weaker and not as effective as riders. One of the interviewees cited a certain male racehorse trainer who

> made a quote once to the press, somebody had said to him, 'Why do you only have girls ride for you? Girls aren't strong enough, de, da, de, da, de', and he said, 'Strength is nothing to do with it because if, if strength, if you had to be strong to ride a winner, Willie Shoemaker [American jockey] would never have made it, and he rode four thousand winners and he was seven stone wet through' (Julie, 42, former apprentice jockey and 'lad').

What this quote illustrates is the opposite of the view expressed by Tina. Success on the racecourse is not about strength and men being 'naturally' physically

stronger than women, it is more about technique, being in rhythm with the horse and, ultimately, the ability and fitness of the horse herself.

Although things may be improving for women in that there are more opportunities and some trainers who will give them a chance to ra ce ride, opportunity is still weighted in favour of men. Ruth left racing for a whilst to work at Royal Mail where her attitudes were in sharp contrast to those she had previously encountered. She was surprised at the way she was treated, and it was only when she returned to work in racing that she realised how unequal it was:

> You've been expected to hold your own just like anybody else, so that's the way I look at it really. You do the hay, you do the bale carting and you're doing it…and I can see like in Royal Mail, 'you're not lifting that, are you alright with that? and I, [think], why not?, but, in racing you're just kind of expected to. See that's where you're alright being equals. Why are you alright being equals there? When you're not? Riding ability. They can't, they can't pick and choose where you're equal and where you're not. You're alright for your strengths, take your barrows out, but why aren't you strong enough to ride that horse? I think it's been a very male dominated [job], why it's been so male dominated and it's just taken so long to change, it was a male dominated area for such a long time (Ruth, 40, 'head lad').

One of the reasons advanced for women not being exposed to the rigours of race riding echoes Ruth's experiences at the Royal Mail and is in contradiction with women's ability to work as 'lads', undertaking hard, physical labour. It relates to the idea that women may be more at risk of physical injury than men, especially in National Hunt racing where the chances of being hurt are greater.

Risk

Historically, men's discomfort with women riding and the paternalistic nature of the racing field became evident as women began to challenge dominant ideas of what was appropriate for them and what women's bodies were capable of doing. One of the women told me about a trainer who will only have male 'lads' riding out; the 'girls' this trainer employs are ground staff, caring for the horses in the yard. She said,

> And it's a male trainer, and he has a wife and he's got girls that do pony racing and things like that and, so I'm not sure if it's 'cause he doesn't wanna be picking broken girls up or, you know, is he,' cause, there are some men that worry about injuring females and, it's a Welsh yard and it's a hard yard, as well…and so I'm not sure of his reasons for it, whether he thinks we can't do the job or are a bit softer…. (Shelley, 32, former 'lad')

Her comments show that injuries to women are viewed differently from those to men as something to be avoided at all costs. Similar attitudes to the possibility of injury were seen when women were first allowed to ride as professional National Hunt jockeys. National Hunt jockeys embody a specific masculinity which is characterised by mental and physical toughness, strength and stamina. The horses themselves tend to be bigger than in other types of racing, and there is more risk of injury and accident with horses falling and bodies being broken. When women were first allowed to ride as professional National Hunt jockeys, the accepted view of many in

racing was that women needed protecting from these dangers and that they should therefore not be riding as their bodies were not strong enough to withstand any falls they might have. Injury was also thought to be potentially more severe for female bodies. Former jockey, Bob Champion, saw National Hunt racing as being too tough for women as they were not competitive enough and their bodies were the wrong shape. In his view, chest-first falls could hurt a woman more than they would hurt a man (see also Pink 1996). Other trainers saw women's riding style – what one referred to as the 'fanny crouch, legs back, bottoms up, all bust and backside' – as a reason, along with their smaller bodies, why women should not be riding. Such views were both paternalistic and patronising (indeed they could more accurately be seen as paternalistic sexism (Pink 1996: 52)); furthermore, they ignored the fact that women had already been riding in mixed races in point to points.

Discussion

This chapter has explored the gendered power relations that operate in the racing field, which like the military and political fields is gendered masculine (Cohn 2000; Liddle and Michielsens 2007). Prior to the 1970s, it was very difficult for women to enter the field as trainers, jockeys and stable staff. And it was only through staff shortages and equalities legislation that women really gained a foothold.

I have argued that, in order to become accepted within the masculine racing field, women had to embody a racing habitus. Toughness, fitness, assertiveness, strength and stamina are all characteristics which are regarded as mandatory in order to be able to work in racing, and any woman (man) who is unable to embody these is singled out as being different and out of place. The working identities that women develop involve behaving like a 'lad' and not being 'girly girls' in order to be accepted. Women's working bodies embody masculine attributes, they engage in manual work as stable staff, they take risks as jockeys and are in authority over men as trainers, elements that are associated culturally with different types of masculinities.

The success of the few women jockeys has been achieved by relentless hard work and self discipline, together with the patronage of trainers and owners, something that all jockeys, whatever their gender, have to have in order to be able to race ride. Women's initiation into the racing field involves a process of developing elements of a masculine habitus, and for those who have the opportunity to race ride, their struggle for legitimacy is hampered by their female bodies which are seen as weak, the wrong shape and prone to being easily broken. They have bodily parts such as breasts which could be injured; men also have vulnerable genitalia, but this is never mentioned as a reason to exclude them from race riding. This point has also been made in relation to bull fighting (Pink 1996) and illustrates the way in which references to bodily and sexual difference are used as a means of legitimising women's exclusion from the risks associated with race riding.

There are still very few women who ride as professional National Hunt jockeys, but like their counterparts in flat racing, they have the necessary physical capital in

that they are usually lighter than their male colleagues. Weight is crucial and when interviewed by Lycett, Australian apprentice, Briony Dunn said, 'Your body is your business and, if you're heavy, you're not making runs'. She acknowledges that there is immense pressure on jockeys to maintain a low body weight so she must be very strict with her diet. Although many women in the racing field have the physical capital to race ride, their gender capital works against them. They have had to develop a habitus which embodies elements of masculinity, accepts the doxic values of the field, is wrapped up in the illusion of racing and can withstand the symbolic violence it is subjected to. Their gender capital however devalues their physical capital, making women's bodies unsuitable for race riding.

Women are in a subordinate position in the racing field, which is itself governed by chance and contradictions. Chance is strongly linked to patronage but can to a certain extent be manipulated if a young, female, stable 'lad' is careful which yards she works in. She needs to choose a yard which does not reproduce and embody the doxic values of the racing field and to resist the symbolic violence that shapes gender relations in the racing field. It is here that the contradictions arise. On one hand, women embody elements of masculinity, have the necessary physical capital and develop a racing habitus which enables them to fit as part of the work force, but, on the other, have not been considered as suitable apprentice jockeys in the way that young men are. Women's bodies are the wrong shape, they are not as strong and, whilst they have the physical capital, their gender capital devalues their lightness.

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Chapter 5
Tradition and Transgression: Women Who Ride the Rodeo in Southern Brazil

Miriam Adelman and Gabriela Becker

Introduction

"The emancipation of women," writes US historian Joyce Gibson Roach in her book, *Cowgirls*, "may have begun not with the vote, nor in the cities where women marched and carried signs and protested, but rather when they mounted a good cow horse and realized how different and fine the view. From the back of a horse, the world looked wider." In apparent contrast to the fascination – and fertile imagination – that has generated numerous volumes and historical debates on women, rodeo, and the US "frontier," including even a cowgirl's hall of fame (Roach 1990; LeCompte 1993), there seems to be little record of the history of Brazilian women's mounted participation in rural work, life, festivity, and conflict. Most often, commonsense notions and popular discourse alike perpetuate taken-for-granted assumptions according to which women's lives unfolded far from the hard, "dirty" work of animals, ranching, and the physical skills (sometimes including self-defense or armed conflict) they demanded.

Yet even though historical record still awaits further "deconstruction" and additional research to bring us closer to an understanding of that which official stories seem to have left out, certain historic and fictional characters – like novelist Rachel de Queiroz' fictional protagonist Maria Moura and the historical figure turned

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legend, Anita Garibaldi[1] – bring us more than a glimpse of women engaged in action, adventure, and hard work on the Brazilian "frontier" or hinterlands.

Writing about the Southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, a region of legendary Gaucho practice and culture, and making specific reference to the women of today, rider and historian Elma Sant'Ana appropriates the legend of Anita to describe a new (or perhaps not so new) breed of women who vigorously appropriate what has been posed as a very male (and homosocial) experience, courageously shunning restrictive attitudes and accoutrements:

> They remind us of Anita Garibaldi, mounted on their horses. They don't use fancy ("*prenda*") dresses. They wear men's clothes, because Anita did. These women are members of the ANITA GARIBALDI Corral, an itinerant tribute to citizenship and tradition, homage to our Heroine of Two Worlds, demonstrating the presence of women in society and our people's connection to their age-old partner, the horse. They carry banners and take their part in parades, rides and rodeos. (Sant'Ana 1993, back cover)

Thus, perhaps less dramatically, but in greater numbers, these women of today share something with their predecessors, as they venture out on horseback into a world that has been symbolically (heroically and romantically!) constructed as male, to defy culturally central notions that link women to domesticity and "fragile" femininity. Central to our argument here is the notion these women riders, in developing and demonstrating their physical competence and aplomb for adventure (in this case, largely through sport and leisure activities), contribute to bending gendered boundaries and redefining the very notion of womanhood.

The research presented in this chapter is part of a larger research project begun over 10 years ago. Initially stimulated by an article appearing in the sports section of Brazil's most important daily newspapers, the *Folha de São Paulo,* which claimed that one particular field of equestrian sport, show jumping, uniquely promoted "equality between the sexes" (Adelman 2004), we then moved on to cover other specific fields of equestrian sport and activities in Brazil (Adelman 2010, 2011; Adelman and Moraes 2008). The task at hand soon evolved into looking (comparatively) at gendered interactions within different modes of equestrian sport fields, through careful consideration of how particular institutional configurations mobilize (or produce) particular intersections of class, race, and gender, which in turn construct different contexts for the development of women's participation and sporting cultures.

Following this route, some social and sociological issues that we had not initially recognized as key considerations made their way, quite pressingly, into the picture. One emergent issue – the relationship between urban and rural spaces in the dynamic context of contemporary Brazil and the slowly but surely changing patterns of gender relations in communities that can no longer be considered "purely rural" in any

[1] Widely respected and honored for her bravery and courage, Anita Garibaldi, a native of the Southern Brazilian state of Santa Catarina, took part in the famed armed struggle of the nineteenth century known as the *Revolução Farroupilha* and has long since joined the ranks of Brazilian folk heroes.

conventional sense – has made its way to the forefront of our current concerns. Moreover, in each of the three fields that the larger project has encompassed – the elite world of show jumping, the still largely masculine turf milieu, and, finally, the rodeo world of Southern Brazil – we have detected patterns that reflect both the increasing gender equality that has been the goal of much contemporary struggle as well as particular types of contradiction and impasse. The tensions that we identify mirror those that characterize broader society, yet also reveal the specificities of conflicts in sporting arenas and the particular struggles that unfold around the maintenance of boundaries between women and men's bodies and practices.

Women, Men, and the Rodeo

The rodeo world of Southern Brazil is recognizably marked by certain regional characteristics distinguishing it from the "Country" Rodeo culture that has taken over in other parts of the national territory (particularly São Paulo state). While "Country" Rodeo has been known, and sometimes criticized, for its mass, US Western rodeo – influenced style and practice, Southern Brazilian rodeo enthusiasts like to portray their milieu as steeped in a historic "Gaucho" ("authentically South American") rural culture. In fact, such interpretations have served as the fundamental axis of a movement of cultural re-signification born in the twentieth century, known as the Gaucho Traditionalist Movement (*Movimento Tradicionalista Gaucho*). The initial political and cultural agenda of this movement, emerging in the Southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul during the mid-1940s, may be understood as a reaction to the processes of urbanization and industrialization that had been slowly intensifying since the century's start. Its founders (all of whom were men) were seeking, first and foremost, to promote and defend a traditional, rural, and provincial ideology/mode of existence and the primarily elite interests it represented. To put their ideals into practice, they created a new format for association and conviviality, which they baptized with the name of Center for Gaucho Traditions (*Centros de Tradições Gaúchas*), or "CTGs," as they are known today throughout the country (Becker 2011). The central icon and alleged protagonist of this cultural endeavor was the (reinvented, re-signified) "Gaucho," whose particular way of life was carefully reconstructed within CTG discourse and practice.

Represented through the notion – and concomitant iconography – of the strong, courageous man sprung from a rural environment and whose closest companion is his horse, the idea (myth) of a rural, harmonious past was continuously evoked. Leaving this strictly as a matter among men, however, would not be adequate for a movement steeped in conservative familialism. Thus, complementing this reinvention of a heroic man-on-horseback, the movement also attempted to engage the women of the community, inventing the notion of the "*prenda*" (literally, "gift") and the expressive binomy *peão (*peon*)/prenda.* The *prenda* was then adorned with the appropriate symbols of "true womanhood" such as a heavy, long-skirted peasant-style dress and some specific activities seen as suited to her femininity and

associated with home, hearth, family, and the transmission of particular cultural practices to the younger generations. Once constructed in this manner, the *prenda* was carefully set within a specific (protected/protecting) space and at quite a distance from the movement's highly valued material and symbolic resource, the horse. The *prenda* was, at this point, most definitely *not* signified as a rider.

Of course, as we have already suggested, running counter to the movement mythology, Gaucho history also includes a hidden history of women who rode the range, herded cattle, engaged in the hard physical labor of daily life on farms and ranches, and even rode horseback into battle (Sant'Ana 1993; Pedro 2008). Thus, as transformations in gender relations proceed apace today in all spheres of Brazilian society, it should come as little surprise that women of different ages and generations are now taking their place in CTG equestrian (rodeo) activities in ever-increasing numbers, a trend consolidated around the turn of the new (twenty-first) century. In the context of much-changed social and cultural conditions, the very CTG notion of *prenda* is being reshapen: where once women were basically restricted to handcrafts, singing, and reciting traditional verse, they are now moving *en masse* into activities which include reining, calf roping, and caring for their mounts.

It is also interesting to note that the CTG rodeo world continues to sustain particular practices that (re)produce (southern) Brazilian cultural difference, as opposed to the "*rodeio* '*country*'" which appeared in another part of Brazil (the state of São Paulo in particular) during the decade of the 1950s. It is "Country" Rodeo life that has clearly emerged as a site of (global) sport/media spectacle, and although commonly signified as a real *macho* environment, its barrel-racing and pole-bending competitions have become highly feminized and even marked as "women's" competitions (Costa 2003) (in contrast to roping and especially to bronc riding, the latter not a part of common CTG rodeo repertory). Similarly, CTG rodeos, which usually offer only reining and roping competitions, have in recent years institutionalized the practice of separate women's and men's competitions. In this regard, both forms of rodeo contrast with the elite world of "classical" sport (show jumping, eventing, and dressage) which as a general rule mixes the sexes within equestrian competition,[2] an issue to which we will return later.

On the other hand, it is precisely the less elitist and more "traditional" or popular character of this form of equestrian sport that drew our attention to it as object of study. Our initial introduction into the Southern Brazilian rodeo world began almost spontaneously, as riders with horses of our own stabled in a semirural community in the state of Paraná, some 40 km from the capital city of Curitiba and close to the smaller city of São José dos Pinhais.[3] In this community, only a handful of women,

[2]The practice of holding a separate national competition for women show jumpers continues, but is seen as an ancillary practice meant to feed into the major non-sex-segregated circuit and, as our informants tended to frame it, as a means of providing girls and women with added encouragement and incentive (Adelman 2004).

[3]With a population in the vicinity of 236,000 thousand inhabitants, the municipality belongs to the Greater Curitiba region (http://www.sjp.pr.gov.br/sjp/sao-jose-dos-pinhais-cidade)

mostly from the younger generations, take part in equestrian activities. Moving on from this initial contact to participant observation within the larger rodeo world, we met more young women who are active competitive calf ropers today and were soon able to identify several crucial theoretical issues to guide our research. One of them is linked to a broad historical and cultural issue of how women are able to re-signify traditions that are, in their origins, constructed as masculine and homosocial. On this matter, we have made use of discussions on the historical constructions of masculinity and femininity in Gaucho culture (Oliven 2006; Dutra 2002; Leal 1989) but also take inspiration in queer theorist Eve K. Sedgwick's (1985) pioneering usage of the concept of homosociality, as the typical format assumed by modernity's male public sphere relations. Another focus is on the rodeo women themselves, their subjectivity, their corporeality, their sporting experiences, and their "narratives of self" (and other). In this vein, we may be able to draw some parallels – and perhaps some comparisons and contrasts – with the women we have looked at in previous studies, jockeys and show jumpers (Adelman 2004; Adelman and Moraes 2008).

Most importantly, through this study, we draw attention to a group of women, many from working or popular class backgrounds, who actively engage in activities that expand notions and ways of being/becoming women in Brazilian society today. The rodeo world incorporates popular (reinvented) traditions of life in the countryside and involves a large number of "amateur" participants of different social backgrounds (women and men from the urban middle classes, people from rural and semirural milieux, etc.), a fact which – in addition to an eroding "homosociality" – may offer certain "democratizing" potential. As suggested above, we have been particularly interested in inquiring into the ways in which women's participation within this sphere promotes different ways of re-signifying women's corporeality/subjectivity and how women's growing presence within the milieu affects its historic construction as a space of male bonding and homosocial interaction.

We also inquire into the possibility of the construction of a women's sporting culture, encouraging women to identify with one another around their rodeo participation, thus contributing to a "widening of the social scripts of femininity" (Kehl 1998) in Brazil today. As Jane Ussher has explained (echoing Simone de Beauvoir's classic *The Second Sex*), "Becoming 'woman' is something women do rather than something women are: it is always at least in part a charade or a masquerade…" (Ussher 1997: 355). It is a process of "becoming" which unfolds over the course of a person's life, through practices, relationships, and exposure to (and engagement with) the cultural discourses that circulate within society at a given time and moment. Through the window we open onto a unique and singular space, we hope to shed light on this process of "becoming" for Brazilian women of the rodeo world today, that is, how they construct their own experiences and notions of womanhood, what kinds of contradictions they confront, what negotiations they engage in with their male peers and with powerful social legacies of inequality and male dominance, and, finally, how they participate in social and cultural reflexivity around what it means to be a woman, man, and human being in this changing but still-highly gendered world.

CTGs, "Cabanhas," and the Changing Face of Sport and Leisure

The rural heritage or origin of the Centers of Gaucho Traditions and the associated "campeiro" rodeo world is a trope that is commonly evoked by CTG fans and followers in Brazil today. However, the question of just what rurality means today is not easily answered; the world over, scholars who have attempted to address the issue increasingly speak of a "new rurality" (Silva 2000, 2002) characterized by intensified connections and ever more permeable boundaries between rural and urban. Perhaps these two spheres or modes of life have always been connected in ways that are much more dynamic and "dialectic" than was suggested, for example, by earlier (and largely positivist) sociologies that, for Brazilian or Latin American cases at any rate, identified the rural with the archaic or "anti-modern" and the urban with all that was quintessentially modern. Yet what is important here is to understand how, within our current postmodern context, changes in terms of work and labor markets, increased dislocation and travel, new social networks, and the virtual "mobility" of culture, among others, have worked to erode or break down the boundaries between rural and urban spaces and modes of life. The Brazilian countryside today is a site of "pluri-activities" (Carneiro 1996) – whether imposed by "capital" or springing from people's desires for diversity – and expressed in intensified interactions between different social groups, such as farmers and peasants, landless workers living in rural and semirural areas, lower-middle-class residents of small towns, and members of the urban professional middle classes who seek leisure or more permanent forms of "refuge" from what they perceive as urban chaos or disorder. Furthermore, growing ecological consciousness has stimulated a new respect for and interest in rural-based forms of life on the part of certain urban middle-class segments, who are now drawn to the former, through interests in organic agriculture, nature conservation, and/or "ecotourism," which often involves horses and riding.

Similarly, as our research has shown, people who participate in the "*campeiro*" equestrian or rodeo scene do not come from any one particular social class, group, or category, but in fact reflect a wide social spectrum that again testifies to the difficulties in identifying the scene – and the lifestyle it promotes – as clearly urban or rural. Many of the people we interviewed were city dwellers with rural roots, that is, people with links to a previous generation of family who were born and raised in rural environments. This is not atypical of the Brazilian population as a whole, since intensified rural to urban movement is still a fairly recent (1970s) phenomenon. Furthermore, "official" discourse and popular ideologies that are a part of the CTG movement claim an openness to or embracing of people from different social backgrounds. For example, the editorial of the first issue of a new "campeiro" publication from the state of Paraná waxes poetic in rendering homage to the "*humilde peão de estância, com as mãos calejadas da lida*"– "the simple ranch peon whose hands are calloused from work on the range" (Garcia 2010) – yet also provides space for wealthy ranchers to show off horses and cattle, and much advertising appears to be geared toward potential urban middle-class consumers of a rurally oriented lifestyle.

Daily life, as we have observed it unfolding at the "*cabanhas*,"[4] often sustains a heavy *homosocial* component. For example, during the more informal rodeo tournaments organized as everyday fun and training rather than part of the official circuit, participation is heavily skewed toward men, with a fair number of the women devoted to organizing functions or serving food and refreshments and the prevailing atmosphere that of a "guys' place" or "boys' club" (*clube masculino*). Yet sweeping generalizations should be avoided, since some *cabanhas* have greater female presence, and there are also a few barns that are run or co-managed by women. Furthermore, to the extent that *cabanha* activities move from a more exclusive focus on roping training and competition toward an attention to urban, middle-class leisure interests (such as riding lessons and trail riding), more girls and women become involved. It is also important to keep in mind that a certain stratification of leisure activities and markets plays itself out in this milieu, as this is a much more affordable riding option for urban school children (and adults) who want to enjoy horses but would have a hard time footing the bill at (and perhaps, feeling comfortable within) the much more costly, elitist and status-oriented "*hípica*" environment. Our own observation suggests that it is also an environment that promotes a rather uncommon mingling of girls and boys from both urban and small town or semirural areas, enjoying and caring for their horses on weekends and holidays. When rodeo competition and equestrian-based leisure activities meet, women's presence and participation in the former may find encouragement or stimulation.

In the region that encompasses the Paraná state capital, Curitiba, and a number of neighboring municipalities that combine city, small town, and rural living in intensely interwoven patterns, there is hardly a weekend without a rodeo or two to attend. The largest of them gather hundreds of competitors and thousands of spectators. They begin on Friday afternoon and last the rest of the weekend, turning municipal parks and arenas into veritable campgrounds overflowing with humans and horses, and include activities that range from rodeo competitions (mostly roping, some reining) *per se* to meal preparation and the traditional Saturday night dance – complete with live music provided by well-known "Gaucho" bands and recording artists.

Throughout our months of field research, we were consistently told that women's presence in rodeo competition had been sporadic at best until the mid-1990s. The new millennium was noted as a turning point, and there seems to be some general consensus around the fact that – as a recent rodeo horse world publication (Revista Crioulos 2011) put it in an article entitled "Women Invade" [*Invasão Feminina*] – "Women's participation in calf-roping competition is on the rise throughout the country, in each new rodeo where they demonstrate ever-greater technical skills".[5]

[4] Horse barns which bring people together around Gaucho traditions, the name itself draws a line between this space and that of English-style riding barns, commonly referred to as "*hípicas*."

[5] A monthly publication, this magazine features news, publicity, and articles related to Brazilian Crioulo horses. This particular report was published in September 2009 (http://www.revistacrioulos.com.br/)

However, "Traditionalist" movement iconography and "official discourse" campaign much less for gender equality. Although rodeo world participation does not necessarily imply affiliation with the Southern Brazilian "Traditionalist" movement, this movement is the prime cultural and institutional force responsible for the organization and management of rodeo events, influential enough to garner subsidies from local politicians and even municipal sponsorship**.** Traditionalists continuously present themselves as the true heirs of a Brazilian popular cultural legacy and, in their discourse and practice, constantly (re)iterate these tropes of "reinvented tradition" (Prickett 2009), attempting to sustain a very *sui generis* identity formulation. This involves a discourse which, among other things, persistently alludes to gender binaries and reproduces an iconography centered around the figure of the Gaucho and his horse. In this context, women's participation in rodeo activities runs up against the symbolic barriers of the movement's conservative ideology and its decades of construction of the notion of the women as fragile, domestic, bearers of feminine virtue, which, as we stated earlier, has represented an ideological erasure of the history of Southern Brazilian women's participation in rural work and activities. This in turn becomes the cultural context of everyday gender interaction within the milieu.

As we now turn to look at the experiences and testimonies of the rodeo women we interviewed, it is important to note that all of them express some feelings of "otherness," that is, tensions as women entering a conventionally male arena of social practice. The eight women between ages 20 and 38 who were formally interviewed in different stages of our currently ongoing participant observation research are, of course (along with the many others with whom we spoke and chatted on an almost daily basis), singular human beings from different backgrounds and with different interpretations and experiences of being women within today's contexts of cultural change. Their identity strategies – "doing girl" or "resisting girl," to use Ussher's terms (op. cit.) – vary, but all of them in some way signify their relationship with rodeo sport and horses as guiding forces in their lives and ones that place them at a certain distance from culturally dominant definitions of the feminine.

Although our interviewees came from both rural and urban backgrounds, most of them reported initial contact with horses through family members or because of the significant presence of horses and horse culture in the rural communities they had familial connections to. In some cases, then, being around horses from a tender age brought them rather naturally, spontaneously into the horse world. Natalia, for example, began riding at the age of three, proudly reporting "the first present I ever got from my dad was mare… that mare is the same age I am today [23]. There's a picture [we have] of me, just a little baby, sitting on a horse."[6] A similar experience is expressed by another informant, Flavia (age 28):

> Ever since I was a kid I always lived in the country and we always had horses. So we always rode. We didn't know anything about the rodeo, so we just rode around bareback. We just put halters on our horses and rode, my sister and I. We spent the whole day on horseback. So you see, I have always had that passion, always loved horses, ever since I was a kid.

[6]For ethical reasons, we use pseudonyms throughout this article when citing or quoting our interviewees and informants.

Their stories of budding passions for equines echoed those of women we interviewed in previous research, as again and again we heard narratives of strong connection and often stubborn determination to carve out an equestrian niche. In some cases, such as Silvia's – an urban middle-class woman whose family had little connection to horses – a love for horses was narrated as a spontaneous and almost magical emotion, one springing from some unknown source and then moving on to completely color existence:

> I really don't know where this love for horses came from. But I know how strong it was from the very start. I remember I was a child and I always wanted to see horses. And once a year we went to my uncle's ranch, where I at least had the chance to sit on a horse, even it was just for fifteen minutes. And I would wait all year for that moment. I remember that every time my mother and father asked me what I wanted for my birthday, it was always the same answer: "I want a horse". And it went on like that till my mother realized there was no way she could get this horse business out of my head. Because maybe she thought it was just some childhood whim. But as time went on she realized that it was a real obsession. (Silvia, age 33)

With the exception of one interviewee, Valeria, age 26, whose involvement in the "Traditionalist Movement" began with her participation in the artistic sphere (the Gaucho music, dance, and poetry recitals that are also organized competitively) and who later met a man (her future husband) whose connection to horses brought her into equestrian life, all of our informants told stories of involvement with horses beginning in a desire they saw as surging from "deep within" the self and clamoring for channels of expression. Even in Valeria's case, deep emotional investment becomes a prime element of how she narrates her relationship to horses: she casts herself as someone who finds deep fulfillment in running the barn with her husband and explains that once she became involved in roping competitions, she lost all interest in her previous Traditionalist activities, which, it is worth reiterating, imply compulsory dress in "reimagined" *prenda* garb, replete with long skirts and careful attempts to reconstruct an image of delicate, ladylike, romantic, and restrained femininity.

Rodeo competition itself, as it opens up to women, becomes ensconced in a central predicament regarding what women's increased participation means and how it should be handled and represented. Some of our more experienced informants related that when they first began to participate in roping competitions in the mid- to late 1990s, women's presence was scarce, and the few women who took part (mostly or exclusively in the more informal local tournaments) competed (and occasionally won) against the guys. As was also noted in a history of the US rodeo (LeCompte, op.cit: 14–16), increased women's participation, while in this case not leading to a separate circuit (as it did in the USA), did lead to the creation of a separate category for women, with at least one institutional difference: the prescription of a lighter rope for female roping contestants. On the other hand, although the organization of separate categories is apparently accommodating to notions of women's "physical inferiority," it may also encourage the development of a women's sporting culture. Women's teams, for example, may become important sources of support, in particular for young women who feel the need for solidarity and encouragement, not always forthcoming in a space in which, not long ago, only male homosocial sport and leisure were possible.

Several of our informants spoke of initial or persistent male resistance to women's participation in rodeo competition. Silvia, whom we cited above, considers herself (and was referred to by others) as a key figure in pioneering efforts to open the field up to girls and women in the state of Paraná. Silvia went into considerable detail in explaining the strategies she used in attempting to convince male CTG leadership to formally open the rodeo to women's participation. She discovered that it was important to approach them one at a time and engage in personal persuasion, rather than putting herself in the potentially frustrating or even humiliating situation of having to confront all of them, as a group, head on. Once she had convinced each member individually, she was then able to demand their consistency when facing the whole group.

Yet "the guys" were not the only problem. Women (especially those of older generations) sometimes positioned themselves as defenders of tradition and normative femininity. Silvia mentioned having a hard time convincing the women (particularly those who were involved in the arts, crafts, and culinary skills division of the Traditionalist movement) that it was okay for rodeo girls and women to wear the traditional "*bombacha*" pantaloons:

> In fact, I had to use the figure of Anita Garibaldi in order to show people that it wasn't as they thought, asking people over and over again if Anita Garibaldi could have gone galloping from state to state behind Giuseppe Garibaldi if she were wearing a long dress. From what I know, and what I imagine, she really used soldiers' clothing. And we can't use the *bombacha*? How ridiculous!

Furthermore, once women's participation began to be accepted, conflicts over the meaning of rising female interest in the sport did not disappear but became woven into institutional and everyday interactions in several ways. Discourse on women's participation surfaces in both gender (and heteronormative) policing and the attitudes which have been referred to as **"**apologetics" (Festle 1996), in which women are expected to reassure the general public that although they are athletes, they are also (sufficiently, safely) feminine. Rodeo sport narrators, always male, systematically elicit this type of response from women in the type of commentary they provide around female competitors, most often couched in celebratory discourse: "Here they come, *laço perfumado* [the perfumed lasso]!" or "Now it's time for the *laço* '*prenda*' [girl ropers] bringing their beauty to our rodeo!"

Thus, we were able to observe a scenario in which CTGs and their offshoots in media and iconography, as well as some individual women, engaged in efforts to accept, justify, and domesticate women's participation. Yet other female informants resisted attempts at gender policing and complained about persistent sexism. Silvia, for example, went back into her own history to relate how, in the first competitions in which she took part (as one of the very first woman to participate in rodeos in her region), she was met with suspicion and even animosity:

> Of course there were many people who scowled at me, who gave me strange looks, who walked by and asked me if I was gay or something, if I was a dyke, what I was. But I thought to myself, "I'm not accountable to anyone but to those who raised me, my mom and dad know what I am doing and I don't owe anything to anyone else, and that's all!" And I went on. Just doing my own thing, nice and calm, and when my turn to rope came, I did it….

Other informants commented on persisting ambivalent attitudes: "There are older folks who say that the *prendas* just get underfoot, that there should only be *vaca-gorda* competitions [only for guys]… [and] only for adults" [rather than the current categories for boys][7] and adds that for this reason, a [female] novice may have a harder time getting started, "And when you're just learning, too, there are a lot of people who don't want to teach you, you know? They just expect you to go out there and do it. We should get more encouragement," says Tatiane, age 20 at the time of our interview. Valeria put it this way:

> I think that there is a certain amount of prejudice, really. Because in the world we live in there is still *machismo*. In fact, in our first [CTG rodeo] district, the women [prendas] are really taking their place. There are more than a hundred of us nowadays, here in Curitiba and surrounding areas. But there will always be prejudice, there always will be. There will always be some macho guy who will say, "Oh, you aren't good enough, you aren't capable", that's just the way things are […]. Amongst the guys, the oldest of them who should be encouraging the Traditionalist movement, there are a few who [still think that] "a woman's place is in the kitchen." They even say that!

Unlike earlier times when there was little female participation in competitions that, for that very reason, brought women and men together, today's sex-segregated categories entail – as mentioned above – the promotion of greater diversity (e.g., separate categories of boys and adult men) and higher prize money in men's categories. Our informants read this as a lack of interest in encouraging female athletes (Becker 2011:.41), making it next to impossible for them to become "professionals." Furthermore, small local competitions tend to take place within highly homosocial contexts – a recent weekend event that inaugurated the new arena at a local *cabanha* attracted somewhere in the vicinity of 100 male competitors and only *three or four women*. And when some outstanding young woman surpasses the guys in her performance, skepticism or even resentment may be expressed, as in a recent conversation in which a middle-aged man – father of a young man who is a recognized local talent – grumbled, "Well, that's just because it's so much easier for them to rope with those short lassoes!!"[8]

Male and female interactions unfold within a highly charged cultural context. Prevailing stereotypes cast Gaucho culture as very "macho." Men coming from or strongly identified with rural communities and activities are characteristically associated with "traditional" macho attitudes – including male authority over women, highly valued "virility," and inflexible behavior linked to the homosociality that sometimes places men closer to their horses than to the women who serve them in any variety of ways. At the same time, it is quite common to hear jokes made about the "Gauchos" with no uncertain undercurrent of sexual innuendo and allusion to fears regarding male homosexuality. Yet with all the power and significance that

[7] According to official rodeo programs and our observation, separate (age-specific) categories are organized for men (*peão*) and for boys (*piá*), whereas there is just one female category, that of the so-called *prendas* [girls and women].

[8] Women use a lasso that is shorter and therefore lighter than those that men use.

such a social imaginary may have (and certainly there is much to be explored regarding this latter issue and persistent heteronormative controls), our own research reveals a fairly wide spectrum of behavior, gender ideologies, and willingness (conscious or not) to participate in a world that is engulfed in deep and contradictory processes of change.

While individual men may oppose women's participation in different ways, overt or covert, all the men we interviewed formally (as well as most of those with whom we chatted informally) positioned themselves – at least for the record! – as highly favorable to the new trend in women's sporting engagement. This includes men who made joking reference to what "feminine charm and beauty" add to the rodeo environment or spectacle and those whom – as in the case of the three formal interviews we did – spoke openly about changes in women's rodeo participation as part of broader social changes that they portrayed as positive. They claimed to encourage the girls and women who are closest to them – wives, daughters, and sisters, for example – to take part in rodeo competition. Over the course of our interviews, they seemed to take care to sustain the impression that they did not uphold a doctrine of male superiority but considered that, in this sphere of social life as well as in others, women can come out "ahead of the guys." It is also worth mentioning that the three formal interviews we carried out were held in the aftermath of presidential elections in which the Worker's Party candidate Dilma Rousseff became the country's first woman president. Thus, we could suggest that the views that they expressed are a reflection of new values that are being generated in Brazil today – most certainly, as a result of global, national, and local social movements and the discourses they help to produce – which attribute a negative valence to *machismo* and sexism, permit new ways of thinking about masculinity that no longer automatically construct it in radical opposition to women's ways of being, and (at their most advanced) recognize people's right to diversity and difference.[9]

Since men were considerably more reluctant to give formal interviews, the three interviews that we were able to conduct may in fact represent the position of those who are more open to the wave of change. Guilherme, age 26 at the time of our interview, born and raised in a small town near the outskirts of a major city, holder of a university degree in animal husbandry, and partner in the family business of running a "*cabanha*," ropes since his preteen years. He noted that "The quantity and quality of the women who rope have gone way up…. Today there are more people supporting them than repressing them." Olavo, a 44-year-old man of rural origin who has spent his life around horses in different rodeo or equestrian milieu, quite evocatively compared women's increased rodeo presence to that of women's overall gains in society's public sphere:

[9]Without any interest in constructing an apology for the decade of Workers' Party national administration, it seems reasonable to argue that there has been a much more visible feminist presence in Brasilia and that several types of government policies have supported new ways of thinking about gender and sexual diversity (Adelman and Azevedo 2012). Feminists in academia have also become increasingly visible as interlocutors in public and political debates, although there is still much to be done in this vein.

> Our daughters are always around, so they come with us [to the rodeo] for the Sunday meal and they say things like, "Dad, I want to ride a horse too!" And in the beginning you find it annoying and you say, "No, no, no!" But then when your daughter comes running up to you and says, "Dad, I roped my calf!" You say, "You did, sweetie?!" [and she replies] "Yeah!"…. Then they all start showing up and wanting to rope, and it's so moving to see the family there and the daughter roping… so the dad then gives in… […] Things are getting equal, almost equal, And that's the way I want it, because before I was the only one supporting the family, and now my wife is pitching in (*laughs*) […] so much that now many of us guys are afraid of this, because just look, we have a woman president… [*laughs*] Women are almost taking over, they are really showing their ability and they are right, there is nothing wrong with that!

A third male interviewee, who made sure to emphasize his own fatherly encouragement of his daughters' participation, pointed to a greater diversity in female presentation, which he said has gone from "rural girls who rode with fathers and mothers" to "city girls" including university students, veterinarians, and lawyers.

Confirming these male self-representations as favoring change are the commentaries of several of our female informants who note that nowadays, many men do encourage women's participation in rodeo competition. Flavia, age 28 at the time of our interview, has been involved in rodeo for over 10 years already; like Silvia, her involvement dates back to the period in which women were first gaining recognition as competitors and soon became an official category. In her opinion, many men do in fact promote their female companions and counterpoints to "share the arena":

> You see a lot of guys encouraging their wives. You see married women with children who rope. There are a lot of really *machista* types of guys around, but there are exceptions too. But I think the majority support women. Because in the past women just went to the rodeo to cook for their husbands and children and sit around the campsite. The husbands roped, the kids [boys] competed in the *vaquinha parada* [mock calf] and the wives didn't do any of that…. But then the women started taking part and everyone saw it was a good thing.

As we begin to see above, one element that seems to work in favor of women's participation (at least partially and certainly with its inherent contradictions) is the insistence in or construction of the rodeo as a "place for family-oriented leisure." One informant whom we have mentioned above, Valeria (daughter of a divorced small-town schoolteacher and currently co-owner, together with her husband, of a CTG-aligned riding establishment), has perceived this with lucidity when she told us that "A certain amount of *machismo* has come to an end. It's still there, but less than before. Because now everyone sees it as normal to take the whole family [to the rodeo]. So now you can't refuse to take your wife by saying, 'I'm not taking you because this is a man's place.' No, it's a family place. Nowadays everyone is preaching family, taking their children, so that helps [women's participation], and it's expanding." Another female roper (Natalia, age 23 at the time of our interview) had these interesting observations to make about the process of women's incorporation:

> I never suffered personally from someone coming around complaining. But in the beginning, at the very beginning, it was more complicated. There were guys who would say, "Oh, those girls roping, that's just a nuisance." Because a few years before I began roping, there was no *prenda* category, females roped in the [male] categories of *piá*, *guri* or adult, according to their age. After that women's roping began, and that was when that talk started up.

> In the past you would be hard pressed to find fathers, husbands, someone to encourage you. With such a lack of women they were even afraid, insecure about it, like "Goodness, how am I going to let my wife do that sort of thing!" But today it's the fathers, husbands, grandfathers, they are all out there encouraging us.

Nonetheless, men's overwhelming prevalence in the day-to-day life of the *cabanhas* (as we have observed ourselves and as corroborated by our informants) as well as in CTG leadership positions seems to have undergone very little "destabilization." Competitions are always narrated by men, referring here to the official sports narrator whose voice resonates throughout arena and bleachers, interpreting moments of excitement and tension and invested with a singular kind of symbolic authority – one which, in fact, rarely strays from preexisting notions that portray women still as "minor players" whose beauty and charm grace an environment of [greater] male skill.

Furthermore, the proportion of men to women competing reveals not only the great numerical advantage that men still enjoy (somewhere in the vicinity of 4:1), but perhaps most significantly, that there is a visible tension between persistent homosociality and women's participation, sustaining a contradictory relationship to the Traditionalist movement's familist discourse. "Reproducing" more than "interrupting" the historical tradition or "reinvention" of the Gaucho tradition that was the goal of the Movimento Tradicionalista Gaúcho, the symbolic languages that infuse public rodeo/CTG discourse continue to be highly stereotyped, as demonstrated by daily and sports context speech that emphasizes "real" masculinity and feminine "beauty." At a more private level, this easily slips into the kinds of homophobic jokes that perform a convenient policing function for homosocial environments in which many men feel compelled to enunciate disclaimers, in an attempt to dispel any suspicion about possible continuities between "homosociality" and "homosexuality."[10]

At this point – and this is of fundamental importance in relation to women's attempts to create new forms of corporeality and subjectivity (Ussher 1997) – we come to the issue of women's identification with and pleasure in the rodeo world. Feelings of this sort were emphasized over and over by our informants, who mentioned not only love for horses but for the excitement of physical challenge and competition. As Flavia put it, "Roping wasn't hard for me at all, I was doing what I enjoyed. So when I got into the ring, and they called my name and I could feel all that adrenaline, that was just what I wanted, and […] all I cared about at that moment was to run after my calf and try to get him. That was my passion, and it still is." The other rodeo women we interviewed, like Flavia, asserted the pride and pleasure they felt when engaging in this moment of play, which given its connection to traditional links to male physical culture and attitudes signifies, for women, a link to less conventional construction of womanhood.

The fact that roping competitions encourage the formation of women's teams may also be a stimulus for the creation of women's sporting subcultures. We spoke elsewhere (Adelman and Moraes 2008) of the degree of discomfort that women

[10] See Sedgwick's (1985) brilliant contemporary classic for historical discussion of this issue.

often feel when having to circulate in sporting spaces populated exclusively by men, whether at the race track or, in this case, male-dominated *cabanhas* which in certain contrast to organized rodeo competition seem to be bastions of male bonding more than "family leisure." At the rodeos, however, the small groups of women competitors that are formed create a sense of alternative sociality, defined by women's relationship to each other through sport and camaraderie rather than "family." The importance that this may have can be further deduced from the fact that, for women who participate in rodeo competition, this sporting practice does tend to become a fundamental axis of their existence and a place where they spend what they may very well consider to be their "best hours." As one informant, 20 years old at the time of our interview, put it, an activity which begins linked to family may quite easily move beyond it:

> Well, I plan to rope till I get old, I'm not planning to stop. And now, when my dad doesn't want to go to the rodeo, I'm going to find a way to get there on my own, it's not something you can just stop doing, you know? You miss your roping, your horse, your friends, the whole climate. You miss it so much that in January, December [Brazilian summer holidays], we feel like we are going nuts without our rodeo (Tatiane).

Conclusions

The changes we have observed in women's involvement in *campeiro* rodeo have a strong generational element, linked to the temporal dimension of shifting gender relations in Brazil. Our female informants – for the most part between the ages of 20 and 30 – are different from their own mothers, largely represented as women who accompanied children and husbands mostly by obligation and did not themselves appreciate the rodeo environment "because they come here and get stuck with the cooking," in the words of a brother of one of the "roping daughters" we interviewed. Yet our interviewees, members of a younger generation of women with their own investment in participation, also projected their own daughters (whether already mothers of daughters or imagining their future as such) as future participants and active members of the rodeo world, thus representing a new movement in which this symbolic resource or "sport capital" is passed along from mother to daughter.

Nonetheless, as processes of change generate diverse types of reaction and receptivity, the boundaries previously drawn around women's posture and behavior are still policed. Constant references to women's good looks and "charm," the repeated male discourse on how females grace this still predominantly "macho" sporting environment with their (domesticating?) presence, may very well serve as a form of control insofar as women and girls are constantly reminded that male approval depends on their playing a certain role. As Green (et al., *apud* Tomlinson 2003:.4) has noted, "male control over women's behavior, rather than being control by coercion, relies on norms of respectability and appropriateness, and can be regarded as control by consent." Thus, the concern that was expressed that women's performance might not be adequately aligned with norms of feminine body and

appearance – even in times in which such norms are less restrictive that in the days in which women were not supposed to use the *bombacha* pantaloon – came not only from the men. Women's consent and compliance, however, may come wrapped in confusion, ambivalence, or mixed messages, as women themselves are sometimes torn between change and "tradition." Just how far can a girl (woman) go?

> […] Maybe not us so much, but there are a lot of girls who come to rope all made up, with lipstick and all. So I think that with each day that goes by, women are getting more vain. And we think that's cool. Because some time ago, there were some meetings held to try to encourage the girls to be more feminine. Because women started roping and wanted to act just like the guys (o *peão*[11]). Some girls went down the path like, "Hey, I'm a *peão*, I'm a *Gaúcho*," and so we started a campaign to encourage [them] to be feminine… because there is nothing wrong with being a woman and a calf-roper, right? (From interview with sisters Natalia and Fabiane, 23 and 20 years old).

Not infrequently we heard references to the threat posed by the "masculinization" of women or even the use of the word "lesbian" in clear reference to an abject condition. In this regard, it becomes evident that current changes run up against the persistence of naturalized dichotomies of gender "difference," held up by a deeply rooted culture of "heterosexual matrix," to use the now well-known concept coined by the philosopher Judith Butler (1990). The deconstruction of these notions within common sense and daily social practice will thus depend upon the scope and depth of cultural change as it proceeds apace throughout the country and its diverse regional cultures. These are slow processes and rough ones, held back by a long history of conservative gender ideology and practice.

Thus, our research within the Brazilian rodeo milieu reveals a fundamental tension between a persistently homosocial, binary, and heteronormative culture, which continues imposing a gendered structure on many aspects of daily life in Brazil today, and the diverse ways in which male monopoly over public space – whether those of work or leisure – is being questioned, contested, and renegotiated. In the case of the CTG rodeo world itself, it seems that Traditionalist movement culture has been somewhat accommodating to changes that, we believe, have sprung rather spontaneously from girl's and women's *desire* for access to this channels of pleasure, sociality, and fulfillment more than to any a priori commitment to an ideology of gender equality.[12] Generational aspects reflect a very particular historical moment in which many young women find growing opportunities and even social approval in breaking through previously strong barriers and crossing into new terrain. CTG discourse and culture themselves are hardly impervious to the changing social scenario of the Brazilian new millennium, and our research has been able to point to some of the "microlevel" conflicts and resolutions that have allowed women to broaden their sphere of participation, while not freeing them from pressures and forms of sociocultural control. A pivotal element of CTG discourse, alongside informal mechanisms of policing gender transgression, has been the framing of women's

[11] Peon, cowboy, ranch hand.

[12] The term "feminist," for example, continues to be largely demonized and misunderstood in Brazil today.

activities within a familialist ideology of normal, heterosexual families whom through this particular Southern Brazilian "traditional" identity are able to sidestep the risks of (post)modern life ("keeping young people away from drugs" – and close to familial surveillance – is the most frequently repeated trope).

Yet, one way or another, the young rodeo women we spoke to all emphasized the fundamental role of horses, riding, and rodeo competition in their lives, and in doing so – in ways that were sometimes explicit but not always so – presenting a proud challenge to normative notions of domesticated femininity. Although our informants differ in their attitudes or sensitivity toward ways in which women are judged or pressured to conform, they all expressed disapproval of some type for the *machismo* they saw as still too present in Brazilian society. They tended to portray themselves – as did the women jockeys and show jumpers of our earlier research – as being in some way different from other women and certainly as brave and daring as amateur equestrian athletes. We see this as enormously significant and all the more so if we consider the particularities of gendered cultures in Brazil, where women face persistent difficulties in articulating identities that are free of the normative pressures and "discursive production" that promote the policing of bodies, their use and their image (Goldenberg 2008). Within this context, then, rodeo women – and women in other fields of equestrian sport – may be seen as exemplifying new ways of constructing corporealities and subjectivities, moving ahead through a dense forest where prejudice and domesticating notions of "what it means to be a woman" still prevail.

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Chapter 6
Romancing the Horse: Adventure and Femininity in Juvenile Equine Fiction for Girls

Ellen Singleton

Introduction

> *She glanced at Meg's shining eyes and transfigured face.*
> *I might have known – she thinks riding is fun!*
>
> (Siamon, *Mustang Mountain*: *Sky Horse*, 2001, p. 34)

Juvenile series fiction aimed specifically at males or females has been a literary staple for over 100 years. From the perspective of cultural studies, the long publishing history of juvenile series fiction offers a window into adult conceptions of children's social customs, attitudes and actions over time (Nodelman 2008). Series fiction in particular has built its continued popularity and production on the notion that children welcome familiarity, security and predictability – in some ways it may be regarded as the 'comfort food' of the reading world. Familiar characters appear again and again, plots are formulaic and endings are almost always happy, at least for most.

Although various sporting activities have bloomed and faded in these publications over time, the continued production of vigorous physical adventures for juvenile readers in the equestrian world indicates the popularity these stories have maintained to the present day, especially for girls. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the young women of book series such as *The Ranch Girls* (Vandercook 1922), *Grace Harlowe's Overland Riders* (Flower 1921a, b), *Ruth Fielding* (Emerson 1917) and *The Outdoor Girls* (Hope 1922) cantered fearlessly into adventure after adventure, fighting off bandits, escaping stampedes and surviving runaway horses. Today's 'pony book' series characters are the

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modern young teens of *Heartland* (Brooke 2000), or *Mustang Mountain* (Siamon 2001) or *The Saddle Club* (Bryant 1998), and their escapades are governed to some extent by their age (younger than the vintage riders) and the times. No one today is naïve about the consequences of a bear attack, the very real threat of armed poachers, or the dangers contingent on being lost in the wilderness (especially if the GPS fails).

The term 'adventure' however presents special problems in literature prepared for juvenile consumption (Nodelman 2008), particularly when the adventure is fuelled by an embodied physicality that is profoundly affected by the abilities of the rider and the horse to work together. The word 'adventure' itself implies '…challenge… danger… enterprise… risk' (Pratt 1998: 15) and is defined as '…an unusual, exciting and daring experience; excitement which is the result of daring or risk' (Soanes 2001: 12). While these terms often define idealised masculinity, these are not words commonly or comfortably applied to feminine behaviour. In series fiction, success in meeting challenge after challenge is imperative. Females featured in juvenile adventure fiction face challenges similar to those encountered by male figures in the same genre, and like males, they must find ways of meeting these challenges without compromising their gender. But where success usually serves to confirm masculinity, it can also serve to undermine and threaten femininity. While girls and young women in these stories participate in a variety of realistic and not-so-realistic adventures, many of them demanding extraordinary physical strength and stamina, never are they far removed from an apparently urgent need to have their female gender confirmed and reconfirmed.

Juvenile equine adventure fiction is an ideal genre within which to conduct an examination of what may happen when young women are portrayed as both adventurous and feminine. Unlike other sport or activity-oriented adventure fiction requiring displays of strength and skill, the 'teammate' in these stories is far larger, faster and more powerful than any human 'player'. In terms of size, temperament and care, and regardless of whether the topic is formal competition, recreational riding or the daily work of ranching, the presence of the horse in series adventure fiction for young readers elicits the potential for physically demanding action and tests the femininity of its young riders.

This chapter is organised as follows: first, I describe and discuss the struggle evident in vintage juvenile series fiction, and equine-oriented adventure fiction in particular, for females successfully to combine risk-taking and strenuous physicality with femininity. Next I compare and contrast the ways in which femininity was viewed and constructed in vintage juvenile equine adventure fiction to constructions of contemporary femininity through and by female characters' activities in modern-day 'pony books'. I do so by examining how patriarchal hegemony has continually downplayed female adventure and controlled constructions of femininity as caring, maternal, heterosexual and dependent on masculine leadership and strength. Finally, I explore the ways in which the maintenance of cultural conventions of femininity has moved from a reliance on external discipline to a much more subtle emphasis on self-surveillance and embodiment.

The Problem with Adventure

> *She needed to feel the strong rush of the wind in her ears, the splendid sensation of being part of the movement which she so enjoyed.*
>
> (Vandercook, *The Ranch Girls and their Heart's Desire*, 1920, p. 146)

Adventure books for boys modelled on a combination of action, moral behaviour and public and personal success first appeared in the United States around the end of the nineteenth century. Authors such as Horatio Alger and William T. Adams (or by the pen name 'Oliver Optic') turned the juvenile book world around by writing stories specifically about boys (preferably white, poor and American boys) who dared to seize opportunities and, through a combination of luck and fearless enterprise, rose to financial and social success (Gardner 1978; Soderbergh 1972). Book sales for children rose and then in 1904 reached new heights with the advent of Edward Stratemeyer (1862–1930) and his stable of pseudonymous writers (Billman 1986; Keeline n.d.; Soderbergh 1972). Stratemeyer perfected story 'formulas' for boys or girls, and writers turned out book after book in record time (Gardner 1978; Rehak 2005; Soderbergh 1972). These were designed to appeal to the more conventional members of the reading and buying public – that is, the adults who bought books for their children. Formulas for adventure book series for both boys and girls usually included non-stop action, 'wholesome' same-sex friendships, few adults, or, if young adults were featured, few familial restraints on their activities. Incomes and lifestyles were mostly upper or upper middle class, and racial stereotypes that clearly highlighted white superiority and dominance were common. In each book there is a mystery or problem that must be solved, cliffhanging dilemmas and a happy ending for all but the villains. Further, vintage series books were characterised by the inclusion of specific behaviours and responses that marked the protagonists as 'typically male' or 'typically female', and books were marketed to specific audiences of boys or girls. Thus, boys' adventure stories emphasised technical knowledge, physical skill and independence, bravery, resourcefulness and leadership. Girls' adventure books focused on bravery in the face of (usually) unprovoked threats to the protagonist or her friends; the rescue and rehabilitation (if possible) of one or more helpless unfortunate; dependence on friends, family or other sympathetic adults; and at least one heterosexual attraction. When 'girls' interests' were combined with boys' adventure story structures, tensions arose between the need to reinforce and reproduce appropriate feminine behaviour and the difficulty of fitting this into the traditional boys' highly skilled and physically active story line. Nancy Tillman Romalov (1997) observes,

> On first read the books appear to follow the narrative formula of boys' adventure stories; a formula which clashes with another, the contemporary romance formula. The girls' adventure series might also be profitably viewed as a form of travel, or quest literature, and that spiced with a heavy dose of melodrama. (p. 76)

Librarians and teachers tended to think of these books as examples of poorly written literature and encouraged children to avoid these mass produced stories

(Ross 1995; Soderbergh 1972; Saltman 1997). However, as Stratemeyer observed, 'Young folks are the most direct critics in the world. Any writer who has the young for an audience can snap his fingers at all the other critics' (Keeline n.d., no pg. number). The formula that worked so well for boys' series books was applied with little alteration to girls' adventures, and modern young women were portrayed as 'new women ready to inhabit a modern era' (Romalov 1997: 76). She comments,

> As series protagonists venture into the wide unknown-as travelers, tourists, adventurers, and thrill seekers-they seem far removed from obligations of home and family. Often traveling alone, frequently without male companionship or protection, heroines are set up to cross not only physical boundaries but social and cultural ones as well. (p. 76)

But as much as vigorous physicality was a part of girls' stories, it was never, as it often appeared in male fiction, the only aspect. Relationship issues that were played out through friendships, child care and romance were an integral part of most adventure stories for girls. As an added incentive, dust jacket covers and back page book summaries promoted the advantages of female authors who 'understood the modern girl' and who created stories that appealed just to them. A typical example from an early series dust cover reads,

> May Hollis Barton is a new writer for girls who is bound to win instant popularity. Her style is somewhat of a mixture of that of Louisa May Alcott and Mrs. L.T. Meade, but thoroughly up-to-date in plot and action. Clean tales that all the girls will enjoy reading. (Goodreads 2011)

Interestingly, like the fanciful adventures themselves, many of the 'female authors' were not real, but pen names representing a variety of writers who, at different times, were assigned to write for a particular series. Pseudonyms also served to mask the gender of the author, allowing both women and men to write books intended for either boys or girls. 'May Hollis Barton', for example, was a 'house name' for Stratemeyer's writing syndicate. Many Barton books are credited to either W. Burt Foster, a prolific ghostwriter for Stratemeyer who seemed to have had an authorial hand in many of their publications (Leithead 1968), or Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, the daughter of the founder, who took over the family business when her father died (Goodreads 2011; Rehak 2005).

Once it is understood that girls' series books, particularly those that featured sport or skilled physical activity, could be and often were written by males, it becomes difficult to assess the cultural or personal impact these adventure stories may have had on girls. That is, if young female readers believed the exciting stories they were reading were authored by women, then it is a short leap to conclude that girls found it easier to believe that they might be as capable and skilled as their brothers, and that females might be able to branch out into freer forms of physicality than their current lifestyles allowed. However, it is reasonable to question whether males of that era were able to write as women without including ambivalent messages of the suitability and dangers of extreme physicality for young girls to ponder. An example of this 'gender ambiguity' is found in the four *Grace Harlowe* series. The first two series, featuring Grace and her friends in high school and college, were written by Josephine Chase, under the pseudonym of Jessie Graham Flower. The

third and fourth series focused on Grace (and friends) and their adventures in France during the First World War and finally as the Overland Riders. Each of these series was written by Frank G. (Glines) Patchin, again under the accommodating pen name of Jessie Graham Flower (White 2011). Grace, as a high school and college student, (both mostly segregated female environments) was an independent and responsible leader among girls – although she *did* have a steady boyfriend. In the next two series, although very physically skilled and adventurous, she relies almost exclusively on men for support and aid if she finds herself in a scrape she cannot get out of by herself. She resorts to almost stereotypical feminine 'weakness' if her adventures begin to verge on dangerous levels of physicality and skill. Thus, when Grace decides to choose a lively horse for a planned trek into the desert, she must first negotiate permission with her husband Tom to 'try him out':

> "Very well, go ahead. You won't be satisfied until you have tried him, but remember, I warned you," returned Grace's husband with some heat.
>
> "Now Tom," begged Grace pleadingly, "You have been so perfectly lovely about it up to this moment, that it would be too bad if you were to get peevish now. If you say I must not, of course I will not try to ride the animal, but I do so want him."
>
> "Go to it, little woman. You have my full permission to break your neck if you insist." (Flower 1921b: 21)

Grace, of course, rides the bronco to exhaustion, his and hers, as well as to the great admiration of the watching cowboys, and then, when the ride is over and Grace has dismounted,

> "Grace's fingers had slowly relaxed their grip on the black bronco's mane, a faint moan escaped her lips, and the Overland girl slipped down under the pony's neck in a dead faint." (Flower 1921b: 31)

What are young female readers to make of this? It is made abundantly clear that women cannot demonstrate physical competency and power without accompanying these inappropriate actions with reassuring (to some) weakness. Romalov (1997: 76) makes the point that

> …the girls' adventure series is a genre often at odds with itself, replete with contradictory impulses and convoluted narrative strategies, meant, it seems, to reconcile greater freedom and fitness for girls with their continued subordination to a patriarchal, genteel order.

Many of the more adventure-oriented stories written for girls during this era displayed similar difficulties in reconciling action and physicality with acceptable femininity.

My Friend, the Horse

> *I loved to sit like this, the two of us as close as we could be.*
> *No saddle, no blanket nothing separating us from each other.*
> *Honey is the love of my life. I couldn't imagine life without her.*
>
> (Helidoniotis, *Horse Mad Academy*, 2006, p. 1)

In the current era of concern among educators for the reading habits and skills of boys (Ontario Ministry of Education 2004), it is interesting to note that vintage adventure and sport book series for boys were published, marketed and sold in much greater quantities than similar books for girls. This leads to the question of whether boys' series were more popular than girls' because the topics were more amenable to masculine reading interests or whether young girls also read 'books for boys' because they offered a vicarious adventurousness and physicality not often found, or at least not often found without feminine equivocation, in books for girls. Furthermore, the idealised images of masculine gender displayed in these stories were not only more congruent with the physically challenging adventures portrayed in the stories but also less problematic for both young male and young female readers to envision (op de Beeck 2005).

It is intriguing to consider whether cultural notions of gender were being constructed in these stories or whether early book series for juveniles instead simply reproduced and reinforced conventional cultural constructions of idealised masculinity and femininity (Langerman 1990). Although adventure and activity was rife, juvenile fiction did not stray far from its moral or didactic roots, and clear messages about expected and acceptable feminine and masculine behaviour were barely concealed below the surface of these tales. Although boys' books were resoundingly successful in promoting idealised masculinity, formulised series fiction encountered difficulty when attempts were made to mould femininity around rousing tales of physicality and independent leadership – in short, to appear to promote the development of personal agency through skilled physical activity. Too much physical exertion pushed the boundaries of 'femaleness' into an uncompromising stand-off with patriarchal assumptions of femininity as passive, gentle and supportive. Active, skilled, strong females presaged outright rebellion to male dominance.

In addition to female pseudonyms, ambiguous messages and demonstrations of the correct way for females to negotiate with dominant males, authors of horse-oriented adventures attempted to diminish threats to male dominance while still producing exciting adventures by introducing into the stories two other techniques for allaying masculine worries about tough, independent, skilled and powerful females. The first was that the young women were always surrounded by friends – usually a group of close girl friends as well as another less evident group of males, some of who were their friends and some boyfriends, as well as older adult males ready to rescue anyone in serious danger. The second captivating and emotive technique involved the protagonist's befriending of the horse, an action that provided the 'weak' female protagonist with a strong, powerful ally willing to do whatever was asked of it. In the preceding passage, Grace 'busts' a bronco, who immediately becomes her caring and willing partner:

> The bronco, merely by lifting a forefoot, could have crushed the life out of (the fainting) Grace Harlowe.
>
> Instead, the horse arched his neck, curled his head down and nosed her with the nearest approach to affection that any man there had ever seen a bronco exhibit. (Flower 1921b: 31)

When these books were written in the first decades of the twentieth century, horses were a familiar sight on city streets. Many businesses depended on (real) horse power to make deliveries, and the even clip-clop of the milkman's horse (who knew just which stops to make along the way) or the looming presence of a resting horse softly munching a nosebag of oats was familiar to the sensibilities of urban dwellers everywhere. On farms, horses were essential. They provided transportation and power – pulling ploughs, carts and wagons, hauling loads, herding cattle and carrying riders from place to place. For most people, horses were simply another mundane aspect of everyday life. But for publishers of series fiction for juvenile readers, 'horse stories' proved to have an enduring appeal.

What was it about series fiction that turned the docile workday animal into a figure of romance and excitement for girls and boys? I believe the answer turns upon the nature of the relationship developed between the rider and the horse. In vintage series fiction, the horse became the means by which the protagonist could display their fearlessness and their physical skill. With a horse as partner, a hero/heroine could make a dramatic entrance (or exit), conduct a breathless chase, travel long distances and still retain enough energy to battle with evil on arrival, save a friend or be saved at the last moment through the loyalty and bravery of one's mount. With such powerful partners and allies from whom females could seek support or help, many of the subtle concerns raised by their unconventional activity (and their obvious enjoyment in doing so) were deflected.

Riding into Life: The Horse as Analogy

> *"I feel as if there's this bit of his heart that's locked away," she said. "The only time I've seen him look truly happy was when your grandfather came in just now, with you."*
>
> (Brooke, *Heartland*: *After the Storm*, 2000, p. 164)

Throughout the twentieth century, 'pony books' have enjoyed a large readership, supplied by many authors. Although books were written during this time for both boys and girls, it is evident that the majority of pony books published were created to appeal to female interests (Badger 2011). Today, some book series have been developed for television, and young readers have the option of reading or watching the characters from their favourite books portrayed on screen. In the past, authors of vintage adventure books for girls struggled to combine vigorous physicality, independence and risk-taking with notions of passive, docile, caring femininity. Because the female protagonist, not the horse, was central to early juvenile fiction, the author was left to wrestle with the problem of how to combine the physicality implied in adventure with the femininity of the character around whom the story revolved. The horse was used as a convenient shield for some of the more outrageous activities undertaken by females by being taken on as a member of the 'inner circle' of female

actors in the story. Although this group member was larger and more powerful than the others, the horse's evident regard for and loyalty to the leader matched that of her other friends, and it was because the female character had been successful in winning the large and powerful animal over that she was assured of a strong and capable ally as her adventures unfolded.

Notably, contemporary adventure fiction written to appeal to female interests focuses a great deal on the personal growth of the human protagonists through adversity, friendships and romance. When horses are an integral part of the story, not only can other dimensions of these three areas be explored but the horse can, through its own circumstances and actions, and through its own need for support and care become another representation of the protagonist's own personal difficulties. As the young rider/reader focuses on healing the horse, they realise they are also finding the answers to healing themselves.

In vintage fiction, the female and male protagonists are always portrayed as white, with solid middle or upper middle class backgrounds that assure them the leisure time and money to do the activities they want with the equipment they need. In contemporary fiction, in most equestrian venues such as the dressage ring, the jumping course, on the trail, at the ranch, or even in the rodeo arena, whiteness is still the norm, and very, very few characters in North American-based juvenile equine fiction appear in other racial guises. While it is made clear that some young people's families have less money than others, access to horses or riding never seems to be compromised by lack of funds. Unlike real life, where riding horses on a regular basis, or owning a horse or living on a ranch with horses is not the norm for most young people (in North America), poorer 'horse mad' riders work at stables or on farms or ranches, or are lent a mount and equipment by a more well-off friend, or are sponsored by someone else or visit someone with horses.

Vintage equestrian-oriented adventures written in Canada or the United States almost always took place 'out west'. Wilderness sites, trail rides or a ranch were exotic venues that were for the most part completely out of the experience of young female readers of the time. While the wild and remote west continues to be a popular setting for hard-riding adventure (and just as out of reach for many readers), pony stories for Canadian and American youth today also have been influenced by British pony book fiction that is 'placed firmly in a rural, domestic setting and enclosed stable yard, with riding perceived as a leisure or sporting pursuit' (Haymonds 2000: 57). For some readers, this is a much more familiar locale, where horseback riding is an accustomed form of leisure physical activity (MacPhail et al. 2009). Fictional adventures are just as likely to take place inside the arena, stable or school as they are on the prairie or mountain side, and equitation – dressage, jumping and other events – challenges the physicality of the riders and provides most of the action. If the story's location is a ranch, horses are likely the business and livelihood of the characters in the story, and the protagonist's attention is focused on an 'untamable' renegade, or a horse that has been injured or traumatised, or one that appears to be outside of the family business in some way.

Like vintage stories, often the first challenge for the young female protagonist is to find a way to make a favoured horse 'hers'. This is illustrated most clearly in the *Heartland* series (Brooke 2000), in the following passage:

> "What are you doing with Raisin today?" she asked with interest.
>
> "I'm going to join up with her," Amy said. Joining up was a way of establishing a relationship of trust and understanding with a horse. It was a technique Marion (Amy's recently deceased mother) had taught Amy. (pp. 29–30)

Amy follows a specific procedure where she works out Raisin on the longline in the ring. She watches for particular signals from the horse, and when she receives them, Amy,

> turned her shoulders sideways so she wasn't facing the horse and dropped her eyes…
>
> Out of the corner of her eye she saw Raisin slow to a stop. The horse stared at Amy and then decisively walked into the middle of the circle up to Amy's back, stopping by her shoulder and snorting softly. It was the moment of the join up! …To Amy's delight, as she walked across the ring the young chestnut…followed, with her nose by Amy's shoulder, her warm breath on Amy's neck. (p. 31)

This seems to be a much kinder, gentler, less aggressive and more subtle world than the one occupied by Grace Harlowe or Ruth Fielding or the Ranch Girls in that Amy does not have to physically 'prove' herself to a group of critical males. Interestingly, there are very few incidents in modern-day equine fiction where the female protagonist actually seems to experience an authentic engagement in, or experience, any kind of challenging physicality where she has to prove herself at all. In vintage fiction a character such as Grace Harlowe stopped runaway stagecoaches, fought bandits and 'broke' wild horses, and she paid the price with bruises, exhaustion and even gunshot wounds. In contemporary stories, female characters must cope with challenges that often seem more social than physical – principally relations with parents, friends and boyfriends. Are there physical challenges? Certainly. Horses run away with riders, or attack groomers in stalls or are traumatised and aggressive and difficult to approach or ride or train. But regardless of how much time the rider takes with the horse, or how much training they undertake together or even how much strength or endurance or skill the rider may have had to exert to accomplish a task, full credit almost always is given by the rider to the horse. The horse, rather than the female rider, becomes the main focus of physicality in these books, and the need for young female teens directly to demonstrate strength or endurance is deflected. Girls demonstrate their skills in establishing relationships, in negotiating and in learning how to subtly accommodate themselves to respond to the needs and celebrate the accomplishments of their larger, more powerful 'partner'.

In modern-day pony books, practically every female protagonist has to meet standards of femininity, not physicality. These standards, and the means by which she will attempt to meet them, are made evident in each book by the adversities she must overcome, her feelings and thoughts about the friendships she forms or maintains, and the ways in which she manages the stirrings and/or upheavals of romance. Often these three aspects of the story are intertwined.

Adversity and Abjection: Great Change and Troubled Identities

Most contemporary pony books begin with the girl or young teen in the midst of some form of loss or upheaval or change in their lives. Often these changes have left her in a vulnerable and questioning state, trying to cope with changeable adolescent emotions and feelings that contribute to a loss of equilibrium and a feeling of powerlessness over her own life. The story of Amy in the *Heartland* series quoted above begins with her recurring nightmare of her mother's death in a car accident on a rain-slicked road. Gillian in *Riding Scared* (Crook 1996) must find a way to cope with her overwhelming fear of horses while dealing with her father's recent divorce and remarriage. Others must find ways to cope with their loneliness and anger at new schools or summer camps as they are persecuted by 'Queen Bees' and 'mean girls'. In all of these incidents, it is ultimately the relationship the rider is able to establish with a horse that enables her to move on and begin to experience new and more mature aspects of life. Moreover, it is not always the case that the protagonist chooses the horse. Particularly in the more fantasy-oriented stories, the horse may choose the girl for her special traits of compassion or empathy. The realisation by the human protagonist that they have been chosen because of their special characteristics encourages the development of new feelings of self-esteem, confidence and belonging (Marchant 2005).

Furthermore, various theorists (Haymonds 2000; Kendrick 2009; Marchant 2005) have noted a tendency to apply psychoanalytic evaluations of the pony story, 'usually only… to girls' (Kendrick 2009: 188). Kendrick (2009) sums up these evaluations as

> varied and perhaps contradictory, typically focusing on constructions of the child as caregiver; or the horse as focal character, surrogate child-self, and locus of fantasy; or the dominating child rider; although these constructions rarely appear in isolation from each other. (pp. 188–189)

Other theorists are more overtly interested in the sexual signs and symbols manifested by horses, regardless of whether they are stallions, geldings or mares and the ways in which these are interpreted or acted upon in these stories. Haymonds (2000) notes that 'The size, power, and physical beauty of the horse do seem to be key factors in their effect on adolescent girls. They are objects of desire for young teenagers who can channel turbulent and often difficult emotions safely into their passion for ponies' (p. 64). Although Haymonds (2000) and Kendrick (2009) note some aspects of psychoanalytic theorising, they do little more than touch upon some of the more obvious aspects of sexual symbolism – physical appearance and personality, for example. Marchant (2005), on the other hand, turns to Julia Kristeva's interpretation of Freud's Oedipal process to explore the attraction felt between the young girl rider/reader and the horse and examines in some depth the notion of abjection and the effect it may have on the developing identity of the young girl reader (p. 4). At a time in their lives when girls are struggling to become more autonomous and less dependent on their mothers (abjection), young readers may identify themselves with the horse, imagining '…a kind of ideal representation of the self…free, strong

and sexual and powerful' (Ackerman 1994: 205–206), an identification that 'girls and women may seek [as] an alternative social system in which they are not regarded as the inferior 'other'' (Marchant 2005: 9).

Constructions of Femininity

In these contemporary stories, the protagonist is positioned as empathetic caregiver, struggling with personal emotional issues that are exacerbated by adversity and her developing sexuality. When compared to vintage equine adventure books for girls, it is clear that contemporary pony books speak to young female readers on a much more personal basis than the action-focused book series of before. Characters are more developed and closer in age and even closer in interests to their readers than their predecessors. The problems and dilemmas of death, divorce, separation or loneliness faced by the protagonists are more likely to strike a spark of recognition from some readers than the privileged lives and over-the-top escapades of vintage heroines. The challenges faced by modern-day fictional characters encourage the reader to face her own difficulties, and provide opportunities for in-depth reflection. Conclusions, while not always ideal, usually contain elements of hope and optimism.

Care and Empathy

But for all that, femininity, even when depicted during physically demanding circumstances, appears to be constructed on traditional lines of care, and empathy, and reliance on masculine strength and experience. Regardless of whether the action takes place in the show ring or on a snowy mountain side, the heroine is portrayed as one who always puts the horse first, in some cases displaying a great deal of courage to care for and help an animal in trouble. Her actions may be displayed in contrast to those of other girls who appear, at least at first, to be more self-serving and self-centred. In addition, unless the story clearly involves only girls, or younger children, an attraction to someone of the other sex is usually introduced early, and carried as a subtext throughout the book or the series. Femininity is connected very closely to the heroine's ability to be at once active, skilled, warm, friendly, sensible, reflective and heterosexual. Over and over again it is made clear in these stories that it is only by first developing a caring relationship with a horse can further steps to maturity be accomplished. As a result, 'genuine' friendship and romance has a chance to grow.

In the following passage, care and empathy is exemplified by Gillian when she asks permission to stay with her horse all night when he appears to become ill on a road trip,

> "Thanks, Elizabeth." Gillian let out a long sigh of relief. "I'm supposed to exercise Hawkeye in the night," she explained. "And, anyway, I don't want to leave him."
>
> "Not if he's emotionally distraught," Elizabeth agreed solemnly.

> "It's not funny, Mom," Carley said. "He needs to be petted a lot. The vet might be right. Maybe he's just feeling depressed."
>
> "He needs me, whatever is making him sick," Gillian insisted. (Crook, *Riding Scared*, 1996, p. 76)

Care is also foremost when Ashleigh, in *Horse Mad Academy*, takes her traumatised horse through the first steps of a return to the dressage ring:

> I stroked her nose over and over, telling her what a good girl she was and how much I loved her for being so brave. She nuzzled my hands and I reached into the back pocket of my jeans, pulling out a slice of carrot I'd swiped from the kitchen. (Helidoniotis 2006: 208)

When her horse succeeds,

> I wrapped my arms around Honey's neck and breathed her in. She was so good, so brave. Warm tears ran down my face. (p. 209)

Although Ashleigh has worked hard with Honey to retrain her for the dressage ring, it is Honey who is given all the credit for succeeding. Ashleigh's physical skill in directing Honey through the course, and her courage in leading a large, powerful, scared and reluctant horse into a location she knows is terrifying for the horse, go completely unmentioned in the story.

The notion of empathy is summed up in an interchange between Becky and Meg in the *Mustang Mountain* series:

> She [Becky] shook her head again, "That's what I don't like about horses. You never know what they're thinking, what they're going to do next."
>
> "Sometimes I feel like I do," Meg said hesitantly. "I can almost feel what they're thinking." (Siamon 2001: 69)

Normalising Male Dominance

While some pony books focus almost exclusively on the female actors in the story, most also include a subtext of various interactions between male characters and the female protagonists in the story. Some of the interplay is labelled as a family relationship of some sort, some as friendship or as a working relationship and some as romantic heterosexual attraction between the female protagonist(s) and male[s] they know or meet as the story progresses. In many cases the girls turn to the males in their lives for confirmation of friendship, instruction or support. When Amy, in *Heartland*: *After the Storm* (Brooke 2000), feels she has made progress in befriending a traumatised and aggressive horse, she turns to a male friend for advice on the next steps in the horse's rehabilitation, even though she knows what she has to do:

> …she thought about how she was going to rehabilitate him. Amy knew it wasn't enough for him to simply trust her – he had to learn to have confidence in other people as well.
>
> She would have to get as many people as possible to handle him… And what about riding him? A thrill ran through her at the thought. When should she try that? She decided to ask
>
> Ty what he thought. … She felt the breath catch in her throat, anticipating Ty's answer.
>
> She respected his opinion and knew that as much as she wanted to ride Spartan, if Ty told her to wait a month she would. (pp. 91–92)

In contemporary juvenile equine fiction, it seems impossible to construct physically active femininity without calling on masculine representatives to act as critics, or as knowledgeable experts or even as a source of the physical and emotional strength young women may find necessary to achieve certain ends. Examples are so common they are easily taken for granted as simple exchanges between two people. Thus, when Becky, who is afraid of horses, is praised by Henry, a young man who has no knowledge of horses, for her expertise in fixing his horse's shoe, the next step seems to be natural:

> "You say you're scared of horses, and then you just lift a hoof, casual like, and pound a nail into it?" Henry said. "How do you know he isn't going to kick you to Kingdom come? I'd never have the nerve!"
>
> …The fear inside her seemed to shrink a little smaller. "Do you mind staying alone with Julie while we ride down to get the others?" she asked Meg. She felt suddenly glad Henry was coming with her. He still looked and acted like a space alien, but she liked his smile. (Siamon, *Mustang Mountain*: *Sky Horse*, 2001, p. 107)

Unlike vintage series literature, feminine characteristics are rarely depicted in modern juvenile literature as polarised opposites of more desirable masculine traits. Female teens (in particular) are portrayed as understanding: they need to work in concert with males, even males who are less skilled or knowledgeable, in order to make significant decisions or to obtain the support they need to accomplish a difficult task.

Negotiating Femininity

> *"You are one lucky girlfriend," Carole said admiringly. Even though she was usually more interested in horses than boys, she was impressed by Phil's romantic idea.*
>
> (Bryant, *The Saddle Club*: *Horse Thief*, 1998, p. 25)

"So I Changed Her"

Who determines how femininity is depicted in juvenile adventure fiction? Vintage juvenile series fiction writers struggled with depictions of femininity that would hold up to the implied masculinity in rowdy adventures favoured by readers. Should depictions of femininity be attributed wholly to authors? Many vintage book series were written by any number of authors under one 'house name'. That more than one author may have a significant impact on the development of a series character's femininity is best exemplified by the changes in personality undergone by the girls' series 'icon', *Nancy Drew*. Nancy was 'invented' by Edward Stratemeyer. Her first book was written by house author Mildred Wirt Benson and published in 1930 under the pseudonym of Carolyn Keene (Rehak 2005). Stratemeyer, because he wanted a female character similar to successful male adventure characters, and Wirt Benson, because she liked the idea, both felt Nancy should be feisty, independent, inquisitive

and assertive (Rehak 2005). Wirt Benson wrote the first seven Nancy Drew mysteries and then other authors carried on the popular series under the same pen name. Over time, Wirt Benson periodically contributed further books to the series. Altogether, she completed issues 1–7, 11–25 and 30 (Fisher 2010). It was another person writing under the Carolyn Keene pseudonym, Edward's daughter, Harriet Stratemeyer Adams, who made significant changes in Nancy's personality. This is an interesting and perhaps unique example of how a fictional character's feminine personality was affected by the class and status of the authors who developed her. As Stratemeyer Adams explained, 'I also felt that she [Nancy] was too bossy, too positive…there are places in early books where Nancy spoke to people too sharply… So I changed her' (Rehak 2005: 296). Wirt Benson agreed that '…the Nancy I created is a different Nancy from what Mrs. Adams has carried on. … Mrs. Adams is an entirely different person: she was more cultured and more refined. I was probably a rough and tumble person who had to earn a living… That was my type of Nancy' (Rehak 2005: 297) To Stratemeyer Adams, born as the daughter of the very financially successful Edward Stratemeyer and raised in the culture of upper class New York, Nancy's brand of femininity was too abrasive for the kind of young woman whom she felt girls should be emulating. To Wirt Benson, who had worked hard all her life as a journalist and staff writer for the Stratemeyer Syndicate, these were just the qualities Nancy, a young single female, needed to get on in the world.

Sidestepping the Femininity Issue

In vintage juvenile fiction, authors struggled with portrayals of femininity, because acceptable cultural standards of the time were not, in many ways, similar to the kinds of behaviours female protagonists had to undertake to make their adventure stories attractive to young readers. In the first book of the *Overland Riders* series, for example, Grace had to deal with a runaway stagecoach, a gang of ruthless bandits, mysterious attacks at night, a pitched gun battle (in which she is wounded) and a kidnapping. At the same time, in order to confirm her femininity, Grace was expected to appear modest, caring and interested and willing to partner with men. The author neatly sidesteps these issues in the introductory book of the *Overland* series by having Grace recount to the stagecoach driver some of her adventures (from her previous series) in France during the First World War:

> "I have not had such an exciting ride since one time when I was racing with my ambulance in France to clear a cross-roads ahead of a shell that was on the way there," declared Grace.
>
> "I was goin' to ask you 'bout the war." …"Never got hit did you?"
>
> "I was wounded three times."
>
> "S'pose your ambulance got hit once, anyway?"
>
> "I lost four cars during the time I was driving. Two were blown up and the others were wrecked in accidents," Grace informed her companion in the driver's seat. "My husband is still in the service. He is now in Russia where he was sent when the armistice was signed."
>
> "Your husband? You don't say! I wouldn't think it. Why, you don't look more like more'n a school girl. I'll bet he'd like to be here right this minute."

> "And I'll bet I should like to have him here, too," answered Grace smilingly. …
> "Never was a prisoner over there, was you?" asked Ike.
> "Yes, the Boches got me once and sent me to a prison camp, but I made my escape. They came near to getting me twice after that."
> "Huh! Got a family?" Ike was determined to get all the information he could. …
> "If you mean children, I have a daughter, an adopted French girl." (Flower 1921a: 42–46)

Grace's accounts of previous exploits in WWI as an ambulance driver place her directly in the post-war era of women emancipated from some of the more restrictive and limiting expectations for appropriate feminine behaviour. Her matter-of-fact descriptions of her wartime activities provide her with a background that at once explains and excuses her desire for post-war adventure. At the same time, the author makes it very clear that Grace, as adventurous and courageous as she is, is still a 'womanly woman', complete with a husband and child. Although the message may seem innocuous (What does it matter if this 'adventuress' is married and has a child?), the meaning intended for young female readers is clear – sexuality and physical activity are very much intertwined, and in order to successfully negotiate the right to participate in challenging and exciting activities, girls and women ought to be feminine, that is, identified with males in subordinate, heterosexual and, if possible, maternal relationships as well.

Some critics argue that authors and publishers purposefully produce stories that they believe juvenile readers not only want to hear, but need to hear. For example, Perry Nodelman (2008: 5) states,

> … the "young adults" in the phrase "literature for young adults" are most usefully seen as the adolescent readers that writers, responding to the assumptions of adult purchasers, imagine and imply in their works. … The six texts I have described were all written or published with the idea that their main readers would be children or teenagers and the conviction that the youthfulness of these readers would influence what they might like to or be able to or need to read.

In vintage adventure series books, an acceptable standard of femininity for female protagonists was depicted clearly and consistently as being imposed by patriarchal forces from within the culture. Grace's litany of accomplishments not only as an 'adventuress' but as a woman manifestly indicates to young readers the exacting, socially defined standards that their culture believed they ought to know and follow to grow into 'feminine females'.

Plus Ça Change

Belinda Louie (2001: 143) has commented that after three decades of study in gender issues in children's literature, there is strong consensus that

> Although the number of female characters has increased over the years, they are portrayed in similar stereotypical behaviors. Boys have been generally known as powerful, independent, problem solvers, active, and in charge of situations, while girls are often portrayed as demure, weak, dependent, problem causers, passive, and followers.

When the thoughtful, introspective, independent-minded, courageous and skilled young female riders of contemporary equine adventure stories are compared to the impetuous, risk-taking yet male-dependent young woman of vintage adventure fiction, it may seem that Belinda Louie has it wrong. The young 'horse mad' person of today does not appear to be very like her vintage 'grandmothers' at all. However, a careful look below the surface indicates it is not feminine behaviour that has changed so much as it is a difference in the source of disciplinary control for the appropriate display of feminine behaviour that emerges from these stories.

Patriarchal ideology supports a hegemonous cultural reliance on masculine leadership and decision-making, that is, on the concept that social power was derived and regulated through masculine sources. This perspective was reproduced and reinforced in vintage adventure tales by imposing upon female characters unending external cultural and social cues for how to look and act acceptably feminine within the reality of a male-dominated culture. Women could go ahead and stop a stampede or bust a bronco if they wanted, as long as they asked the men for permission first, and remembered to faint 'grace'-fully after.

In contemporary juvenile equine fiction, however, young female protagonists are seemingly more introspective and, at first glance, much less dependent on masculine direction and approval for their actions. The males in the stories are not always strong, or skilled riders, or even knowledgeable about horses and their care. Friendships and romantic relationships (always with the opposite sex) often seem negotiated, and not always happy. Alison Haymonds (2000: 51) notes that

> Horses empower girls in pony books. A horse gives a girl a sense of her own identity, self-respect, control, and an almost mystical understanding of nature. Timid girls discover reserves of strength, diffident girls find self esteem, troubled girls attain peace with horses.

In modern-day pony books, girls 'discover' their femininity through their relationships with their friends and their loving, caring relationship with their horse. Rather than having ways of 'being feminine' imposed upon them by dominant external influences, contemporary performances of femininity appear to be self-generated and self-imposed through self-scrutiny, thoughtful reflection, and close attention to others' responses. The following passage clearly illustrates the self-scrutiny undertaken by one young woman as she compares herself to her well-off friend:

> But then Alison was always calm, poised perfectly groomed. Meg often why she'd chosen her for a friend. It wasn't that she was actually repulsive, but that she could never get it all together. If her long brown hair looked right, her clothes looked wrong. If she managed, by some miracle, to dress like a normal person, her hair stuck out like a porcupine. Most of the time she didn't really care, but when she was with Alison, she felt like a Shetland pony beside a thoroughbred. Short, and brown, and shaggy. (Siamon 2001: 18)

Sandra Bartky (1988: 81) observes that 'normative femininity is coming more and more to be centred on women's body… its sexuality, more precisely, its presumed heterosexuality and its appearance. … This self-surveillance is a form of obedience to the patriarchy'. In other words, when it comes to juvenile adventure literature, depictions of girls displaying independent action and vigorous physicality are much more subtly melded with femininity when the feminine behaviour

appears to be generated and regulated by the females themselves, rather than imposed through regulatory strictures from external sources.

That is, it appears as though the power to enforce compliance is exercised, not through a patriarchy that infuses its will through social and cultural institutions and systems but through choices and decisions made by the individual herself. Thus, 'the site of modern power shifts to the micro-practices of everyday life: power is 'in' all of us, or, better, it is manifest in and through the details of our behaviour as seen or seeable by others; everyone can assume primary responsibility for shaping power relations with others' (MacCannell and MacCannell 1993: 211). More specifically, 'power now seeks to transform the minds of those individuals who might be tempted to resist it…' (Bartky 1988: 79).

It is not clear if young female readers are tempted to resist the patriarchal power shaping conceptions of femininity or whether they are just confused by it. In a study that involved female students in grade 10 discussing female characters they had encountered in literature, Pamela Hartman (2005/2006, no pg no.) observed,

> The girls seem to possess competing discourses-one informed by mainstream feminism and the other informed by traditional cultural roles. First, the girls talked about how females should be independent, speak their minds, and stand up for what they believe in.
>
> But they also said that women should do what they were told, keep their opinions to themselves, and sacrifice themselves and what they believed in for the wishes of their husbands, lovers, fathers, and families. While these two sets of beliefs would appear to be in total opposition to one another, the girls embraced both. In some cases the girls were able to resolve the conflict by requiring the female character to fulfill both roles at different times. In other cases, the girls were unable to resolve the conflict, but maintained the two discourses, nonetheless.

When the discourse of female physicality is also included in this discussion, another facet of feminine character and behaviour is added to an already complex and confusing range of variables available for young women to inspect and, perhaps, own.

Concluding Remarks

> *Maybe caring about Hawkeye, caring about riding and caring about doing well made a difference in the way she saw life.*
>
> (Crook, *Riding Scared*, 1996, p. 94)

This chapter began with an examination of the ways in which authors of vintage equine-oriented adventure fiction for girls struggled with how to combine the embodied physicality necessary to meet the demands of riding with conventional cultural expectations for feminine behaviour and appearance. I concluded that authors used a variety of strategies in their attempts to create credibly feminine characters capable of performing the feats necessary to move the adventure narrative along at an engaging pace for young readers. Among them was the use of female pseudonyms regardless of the gender of the author, depictions of a 'common

sense' approach to male dominance in male–female relationships, that is, portraying female protagonists as 'naturally' relying on masculine permission to engage in challenging activities, following up vigorous activity with demonstrations of weakness, surrounding the female protagonist with a close cadre of supportive and loyal female friends, and befriending the horse, removing some of the female character's need to personally demonstrate strength or endurance by handing it over to a large, willing and powerful ally.

Next I explored how the (mostly) female authors of contemporary 'pony books' also use a variety of techniques to engage the interest of their readers. The most common approach is to predicate the storyline on a personal problem or recent trauma experienced by the female protagonist. These realistic difficulties are quite different from the obviously fictional adventures undertaken by vintage heroines. They are intended instead to draw in young readers through their familiarity with the issues that are depicted – moving, loneliness, bullying, losing a parent through death or divorce, personal injury or trauma and so on – and to present ways in which a relationship with a horse who is also suffering may help alleviate some of the stress the girls are experiencing in their daily lives. The message is that by working to help the horse, the girl comes to find that she is better equipped to deal with problems as they arise. Femininity is established and maintained through the care the protagonist lavishes on her horse and the romance she finds as the story progresses (Haymonds 2000; Kendrick 2009). Like vintage fiction, the pony books of today often demonstrate a continued reliance by young females on masculine support and a pronounced interest in heterosexual romance.

I concluded my examination of how femininity is constructed in vintage and modern-day juvenile equine fiction for girls first by surmising that fictional depictions of femininity in female juvenile adventure fiction have not changed much over time. I theorised that in a culture that continues to be dominated by patriarchal interests, changes in the methods used by authors to reproduce and reinforce conventional standards of femininity have shifted from required strictures that were externally imposed and supported by masculine interests to depictions of acceptable femininity that appear to be internally generated by the young female herself, maintained through constant self-surveillance and supported by both by females and males.

Alison Haymonds (2000) concludes her article with the remarkable statement that adolescent girls are reading fewer books that 'place the female hero at the centre of the action' (p. 69), because 'Teenagers of the 1990s have less need for a female hero who excels on equal terms in a testing, physical sport and is responsible for the care, training and transformation of a large, living being' (p. 69). I could not disagree more – but that is a topic for another time.

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Chapter 7
Women in Equestrian Polo: Cultural Capital and Sport Trajectories

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Introduction

One significant development in sport over the last century is the greater involvement of women resulting from transformations in the gender order (Cahn 1994). Studies in the sociology of sport document the gradual transformation of sport as a male preserve as women are becoming more involved (Dunning 1999). Women continue to encounter significant structural barriers to involvement in sport; however, the social conditions for participation are greatly improved. Literature on equestrian sport (Wipper 2000; Marvin 2007; McConville 2008; Hedenborg 2009) points out its distinctive gender relations as men and women compete alongside and against one another. At all levels of competition, equestrian events can give the impression of gender neutrality. As such, equestrian sports provide an interesting yet complex case with regard to gender equity and participation among women.

This chapter is devoted to examining the shifting gender dynamics within equestrian polo in Canada. Consistent within equestrian sport in North America, women have a long history of participation in polo even though the sport is and has been primarily dominated by men. We sketch the historical importance of American and English influences on women's polo in Canada, with recognition of how women in many different countries such as Argentina, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India have become involved in polo (Laffaye 2009). Lately though, as in the case of sport in general, polo has undergone a transformation as participation and

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activity levels among women have increased (Merlini 2004). This trend is also reflected in equestrian sport in general, which has become more popular recently among women (Eichberg 1995; Nikku 2005). Our analysis considers the changing nature of equestrian sport to better understand what it means for women who are playing polo, the challenges they face, and their influence on the sport generally.

We take as our starting point prior studies that examine the subcultures of equestrian sports and interspecies sport in general (Sheard 1999; Schaffner 2009; Gillespie et al. 1996, 2002; Baldwin and Norris 1999). Although some studies have looked at subcultures such as horse racing for the ethics of violence or gambling, we are interested in equestrian sport subcultures, following the work of Bourdieu (1984), as gendered fields of cultural production. As Lee and Macdonald (2009) outline, traditional gender roles shape young women's perceptions of realistic sport and physical activity options. When compared to boys, girls are more likely to choose individual sports and are also more prone to drop out when they reach adolescence (Gratz et al. 2002). Haragreaves (1994) and Choi (2000) show that despite the rise in female sport participation and the growth in feminist interventions in sports theory, sport is still afforded less importance than in the lives of men. Given that sport is often a masculine domain (White and Brackenridge 1985; Pfister 1993; Adelman and Moraes 2008), equestrian sport provides an opportunity for the development of a feminine sport preserve. Unlike many masculine dominated sports, studies such as Pfister (1993) argue that equestrian sport is appealing along gender lines and empowering for young women because it is a social space where women are in the majority and have a heightened sense of control. A recurring theme in this literature is the significance of relationships built between human and nonhuman in the context of sport. Game (2001) argues that in equestrian sport the horse and rider work together in a mutually constitutive way. Tracing this partnership, Wipper (2000) examines the process of preparing for competition, in some cases over the course of many years, and suggests that there is a precarious social dimension to partnership building between horse and rider.

This prior literature raises interesting questions about the nature of women's participation in polo. In what capacity are women involved in polo? How did they become interested in the sport and why do they play? What opportunities and barriers exist for women in the structure of polo? Has the structure of polo changed as women have become more involved? To explore such questions, we conducted a mixed method study that included in-depth qualitative interviews, survey responses, participant observation, and archival data. Our interviews were with women polo players from across Canada, primarily in the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta. There is a history of polo clubs that are over 100 years old in each of these provinces. Interviews were also conducted with several men who have promoted polo in Canada. Survey data was collected from women polo players who preferred not to speak to us personally. Participant observation took place at the horse farms of polo players and at three major equestrian polo events, one of which was a women-only event. Newspaper articles were collected and analyzed. We also collected information through analysis of polo club websites and professional websites (Polo Management Services 2010) and polo interest websites (Sport Polo 2010). We are thankful for and appreciate the assistance and cooperation of everyone who was involved in this study.

History of Women in Polo

The modern form of polo originated in India. It then spread to Europe in approximately 1870 where it gained popularity (Fitzpatrick 1910; Board 1956). Its growth in England established it as an aristocratic pursuit (Board 1956), a sport of royalty and nobility (Laffaye 2009). In 1876, Mr. James Gordon Bennett introduced polo in the United States (Fitzpatrick 1910), and shortly after, British military influences brought it to Canada in the 1880s (Rees 2000). Although Canadian polo was rooted in British influences, it began in western Canada as a cowboy sport (Rees 2000). It struggled to survive through the world wars and the depression, but breeding and exporting of polo ponies to the United States allowed the sport to continue (Laffaye 2009). First introduced at the Olympics in 1900, polo is one of the few team sports that still holds Olympic designation, but it has not been played at the Olympic games since 1939 (Merlini 2004; Hedenborg 2009). It is a unique sporting opportunity because it is not sex segregated; men and women are ranked based on their skill (referred to as a "handicap") and play together and against each other.

In the late 1880s to early 1900s when women in North American began playing polo, most were still riding "sidesaddle" (riding with both legs on one side of the horse), wearing restrictive clothing and being held to unwritten codes of conduct characteristic of the Victorian era (Laffaye 2009). Although the modern game of polo has its basis in a South Asian heritage, particularly India, the first involvement of women in the sport was among British and European members of an elite social class. This European revision of a primarily South Asian sport was imported to North America through early settlers, and polo in Canada and the United States has remained since that time ethnically homogenous. Unlike social relations regarding race and class, the gender dynamics of polo has transformed significantly in response to shifting societal conditions. In 1901 the *New York Times* published an article about a women's polo match held in Aiken, South Carolina. The article explained that the "women had practiced for some time. Those who rode 'man fashion' seemed quite at home" (Women Play Polo 1901). Women recognized that sidesaddle was dangerous as it restricted their ability to make contact with the ball and with sudden turns they would be easily unbalanced. Younger women that began playing rode "man-fashion from the first time they mount their ponies, and in playing polo they dress almost like the men. Skirts are tabooed" (Women Riders Play Dashing Polo Against Men 1913). As Hedendorg (2009) explains, mixed gender sports were foreign to newspapers and as a result women and men were consistently portrayed as having very different relationships to sport. Early interest in polo by women was met with trepidation. In 1910, it was reported that "the women are taking unusual interest in polo, and there is now some talk of a polo match between two-teams composed of women at the Point Judith tournament" (Women Play Polo 1910). No one questioned their ability to ride a horse, but they challenged their ability to engage in aggressive play (Laffaye 2009).

It was a time of change in the sport as the media recognized that women were invading what was "so long exclusively a man's domain" (Women Riders Play Dashing

Polo Against Men 1913). The movement of women into polo faced resistance in the United States and the proximity and dependence of Canadian polo clubs on the American polo association discouraged Canadian women from pursuing the sport. In the United States "society women" gradually began to gain recognition for their abilities on the field. One article noted,

> about four periods were played, and the young women acquitted themselves very credibly. Two of them rode astride, and because the other two rode side-saddle they were considerably handicapped, but never the less played a surprisingly strong game against their male opponents. (Women in Polo 1910)

Intercollegiate sport held what was believed to be the first North American women's college polo game in 1915. *The New York Times* reported,

> probably the first polo game ever played by teams of college women was watched by a large crowd last night at the Central Park Riding Academy…The women played a splendid game, and many of the spectators who went there expecting to see a burlesque on outdoor polo were pleasantly surprised and applauded the numerous good plays that were made. (College Women Play Polo 1915)

Despite the good play on behalf of the women, gender stereotypes were still rampant in media reports. Such inequalities were evident in coverage of a 1928 women's Canada vs. US match. Referring to some talented female polo players, *The New York Times* claimed "that women can never be as good at the game as men but that doesn't prevent them from getting enormously excited about it" (Women in Polo 1928). The article goes on to explain,

> The thing that polo demands most of all, of course, is strength. Women can handle their ponies as well but they cannot ever hope to get the distance that even mediocre male players expect. In golf, 50 yards on a drive can be canceled by five feet on the green; not in polo. (Women in Polo 1928)

The newspaper credited women such as Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock as the trainers of great male polo players, but they also compared this skill to the raising of children, stating: "that field has been the nursery and Mrs. Hitchcock the nurse of International Polo" (Women in Polo 1928). Mrs. Hitchcock was the first and currently the only woman ever inducted into the United States Polo Hall of Fame (Museum of Polo 2011). In 1972, Sue Sally Hale became one of the first female players to be admitted into the United States Polo Association (USPA). As Reynolds (1990) reported,

> it has been a long road for Sue Sally Hale, but it's a road that's finally becoming more traveled. After nearly four decades of playing polo, the 53-year old grandmother has seen women's polo come a long way from the days when she had to disguise herself as a boy in order to play.

Currently women still hold very few positions of power in polo hierarchies and when we review the directors and officers for both Polo Canada and the USPA, few women are represented. In Merlini's (2004) study, she notes that "women's participation at both the macro and micro levels of polo is resisted, marginalized and constrained, and problematic" (p. 17). The types of injuries that occur in the

sport are used as evidence that it is a very demanding game (Merlini 2004), and the marginalization of women is reinforced by the assumption that they do not wish to participate in the sport because it is a dangerous and competitive game (Board 1956).

Despite the dominance of a masculine polo habitus, women have made great efforts to show their passion and commitment to the sport. Since the 1980s, women-only tournaments have grown in the United States and Canada. At the first USPA Women's Open, Carolyn Anier a three-goaler from France and three-goaler Lesley Ann Masterton of Jamaica competed alongside American women polo players. At the time, Anier was one of ten women polo players in France and the only one that was rated, while Masterton was also one of a few women polo players in Jamaica but had successfully competed on the Jamaican national team on more than one occasion (Reynolds 1990). Female polo players have suggested that the establishment of the US Women's Open is a positive development for women in polo because it gives female players something to strive toward. Such advancements in more equitable gender relations have been gradual.

The historical structure of polo as a sport played by men and watched by women and families (apart from the exceptional female player) continues to inform in the practices of many clubs. In Canada, for instance, a 1990s *Globe and Mail* article on Polo for Heart depicts women in polo as primarily spectators and fund-raisers. The article explains that the 1979 "women's committee" responsible for organizing fund-raising events expressed concerns about the development of a heart and stroke fundraiser. The long-standing involvement and recent advancement of women in polo indicate that historically the sport is at a gender crossroad. On one hand, there are indications that the structure of polo is bending to accommodate women as more than just exceptions to the masculine norm. In 1992, Canadian Julie Roenisch became the first woman to play in the US open. Yet, despite the increased number of women in polo, there are still strong perceptions of male superiority that persist among players, coaches, and spectators. As a field of cultural production, hegemonic masculine remains a key organizing principle in the leadership and practice of polo, especially at the club level. In the next section, we explore the perspectives of women who are currently playing polo and are living through and helping to drive forward this transitional moment in the sport.

Women's Involvement in Polo

In Canada there are two primary venues for women to play polo. The first is club polo. Like sports that are organized around a club structure generally – skiing, golf, curling, or tennis – members pay an initiation fee along with annual dues that support the infrastructure and facilities necessary for polo. Clubs can be elaborate with stables, a club house, and even stadiums, or they can be as simple as an open field large enough to accommodate the sport. The organization and operation of the club is usually done by members themselves, and while the central purpose is polo,

alongside the game there is an explicit social dimension to being members. Most polo internationally is played in a club context and the majority of respondents in this study were affiliated with a specific club. Women have always been able to be playing members of polo clubs in Canada, though compared to men they are, and have been, less prevalent as playing members. Women's polo teams date back to as early as the 1920s in Canada. And while studies of club polo indicate they are predominately male, women are taking a more active role in playing the game and not just limiting their participation to the social aspects of the club (Merlini 2004). Consistent with this history, female pioneers in the sport have a primarily British or European ethnic heritage. Although the dynamics of polo are shifting in regard to gender, they appear stable with regard to ethnicity. Even though Canada is a multicultural society, with increasing immigration from South Asian countries, the diversity and range of ethnicities that are involved in polo remains limited and consistent. As polo has become more transnational, however, there appears to be emerging ties between Canadian – particularly western Canadian – polo clubs and Latin American polo clubs. This suggests that although polo remains predominantly British in ethnic origin, ethnic diversity is being brought to the sport through linkages being made between Latin American and North American participants.

A second venue for women in Canada is intercollegiate polo. University and college polo is very small in Canada and is supported by smaller, grassroots-orientated polo clubs. Intercollegiate polo is much more popular in the United States and the United Kingdom and appears to be growing through the support of universities and colleges. As one respondent explained, "the University section is one of the few growth areas in Polo at the moment, due to the global recession." This individual estimated that 75 % of university-level polo players were women, but few maintained handicaps higher than zero. Unlike club polo, the intercollegiate polo in Canada and the United States is predominately sex segregated. North American university polo is the only type of polo that is primarily single gendered, whereas in the United Kingdom the game is played both as single gender and mixed gender. The Schools and Universities Polo Association (SUPA) of Britain requires one female player on each team. As one of our respondents outlined, this has been challenging for young female players because it "has been condemned in the past as a "token" gesture," but the recent success of female players in higher levels of competition has begun to eliminate the negative perception of this requirement. In Canada, intercollegiate polo began with an Ontario team called the Kempville Koyotes. This team was sponsored by a local polo player whom encouraged the development of intercollegiate polo in Canada. Its inception was made possible because it was established at an equine college where many of the students had their own horses assigned to them for the purposes of the program. It began with young women riders who saw an opportunity to play polo at college. The team competes with colleges and universities in the Eastern United States.

Internationally, women also have opportunities to play polo at the high school or interscholastic level. Private schools and some public schools with ties to established polo clubs offer students a chance to participate in polo. In Canada, little has been written about interscholastic polo. Teams are organized on a more informal basis made up of high school students but are not associated with any particular

school when they play together. Respondents told us that teams are mixed gendered like club polo and competitions appear to be aimed at providing opportunities for junior polo players who play with a club already. In club polo, junior polo members are enrolled with family members, and given opportunities to play, interscholastic sport is an opportunity for junior players to showcase their talents, but it does not encourage those who do not already play polo to become engaged.

In interviewing women about their involvement in polo, several themes emerged about the distinctive perspective that they brought to the sport. The themes are: (1) the horse-rider connection, (2) polo as a team sport, and (3) entry into the sport and style of play. This distinctive perspective spoke to the reason why women participated in polo and the ways in which they were contributing to the development and advancement of the sport.

Horse-Rider Connection

In the majority of cases we encountered, women who play club polo began because they were riders and wanted to try a new equestrian discipline. Given that the trajectory of these women was from one equestrian sport to another, we found that their participation in polo was for the love of horses, to be engaged in a team sport, and for the competitive challenge. Our research showed that the trajectories of men into the sport of polo are different in important ways. First, men are generally not riders before they become polo players. Second, as Merlini (2004) explained, men are sponsored into polo by multiple members, whereas women are more likely to enter because of a single (often family) affiliation. This means that once involved in polo, men have greater opportunity to establish social capital (Merlini 2004). We found this to be true in larger and more established polo clubs in Canada; however, in newer more grassroots-orientated clubs, this was less apparent.

In Wipper's (2000) study of eventing, she showed that riders recognize their horses as partners; they are fellow athletes, and as a result, the horse and rider establish a meaningful relationship. Like eventing, the relationship between the rider and horse in polo, and what it means to be a polo player, is constructed through the practice of riding, training, and competing. Unlike many equestrian events, however, our research suggests that in polo the bond between horse and rider has a greater gendered component. One illustration of this gender difference was seen in how the horse is viewed by men versus women. Women respondents in the study stated that most men who play polo often treat the horse as equipment or a type of technology or tool that makes playing polo possible. This idea of the horse is reinforced by the fact that, in many cases, a polo player will have multiple horses that need to be used interchangeably throughout a match. Contrary to this view, women who played polo felt they had a closer relationship with their horse or horses. One interviewee explained:

> Men and women approach the sport differently. Women will get on and they spend the first twenty minutes just riding around, whereas men will get on and they will just start hitting the ball right away.

The horse for women was considered a partner because of the time they spent together as well as the speed, agility, and competitive drive that is needed (on behalf of the horse) to play the sport. One female interviewee said, "I think with polo you are more at one with the horse than you are in other disciplines." Another went so far to say that the competitive nature of the sport means that there is greater potential to foster a close tie between horse and rider: "for me it's the type of horse – a polo pony – that I really like. It's not like your hunter horse that spooks at nothing in the corner; they are really athletic and bold horses." This appreciation of the horse as a partner in polo was not as evident in conversations with male polo players, although they recognize that to play "good polo" you need a good mount, the necessity of a horse-rider connection was not emphasized.

Team Sport

A second theme that emerged was that women in polo appreciated the team aspect of the sport. In most equestrian sports, the rider and horse compete against one another but not in the context of a team. There are competitive events at the Olympics or at the World Championships, for instance, in which riders will form a team based on the nation they represent. In such events, however, the competitors do not ride as a team. Polo, in contrast, is an equestrian sport that is played as a team. There are four riders for each team on the field or pitch at the same time. The skill of playing polo as a sport is in large part the ability to work as a team. Women engaged in both club and intercollegiate polo expressed their interest in playing polo because it is a team sport. One interviewee said: "for me I always played team sports and then I kinda had to pick between riding and my other sports, so when I heard that Kempville was going to have a team, it was like a chance to play a team sport but still ride." A recurring story among respondents was the frustration that they felt in equestrian sports that were too individualistic and formalized. They turned to polo because of its informal and team dynamic. It allowed them to combine their interests in team sports with their love of horses and equestrian events. In exploring the nature of sex-segregated teams, we found that the interviewees felt there was a sense of camaraderie or family among the players regardless of whether they were on male or female teams. The coach of a university team explained, "it's a team sport, even though the men and women's teams are separate [at the university level] – they support each other, it's like a social fraternity."

Entry into the Sport and Style of Play

The third theme that was made apparent through the course of our research was that women were attracted to polo because it offers an interesting, competitive, and challenging option for those who were already engaged in the equine

industry. The interviewees suggested that polo was more of a lifestyle choice than other forms of riding, and it is more family orientated. Encompassed in this were characteristics of the sport itself that were appealing and also ways in which the sport was practiced. First, there were those that valued the flexibility and challenging physical nature of the sport. One interviewee explained, "many other sports are really rigid in what is expected of the person, polo isn't like that you have to adapt and think quickly, it's a challenging sport, it's a very different kind of sport." They explained that playing polo made them better riders because they had to be less conscious of their riding. University polo players explained that they had been forced to become better riders because the horses that were donated to them were not always the best horses. Second, there were individuals that valued the approach to polo in Canada, for instance:

> It's nice, not like hunter where you get up at 5:30, show at 8:30 and then wait around to go back into the ring at 3. We generally play around 2 in the afternoon and then socialize, have some drinks and maybe a barbeque afterwards, and that is what we do on Sundays.

Aside from explaining why they themselves pursued the sport of polo, respondents also felt compelled to explain why they thought men were drawn to polo. Given that polo is one of the few remaining equestrian sports still predominated by men at the amateur level, the interviewees suggested that this was because of similarities between hockey and polo. Some explained how ex-hockey players had tried their hand at polo and suggested that the aggression and competitive nature of polo was like that found in ice hockey. One interviewee explained, "men want to play polo because it's like hockey on horseback, its fast, its rough and its competitive." Even in intercollegiate polo, there were differences in the trajectories of male and female players. One interviewee said, "at Kempville all the girls who played came from the equine program, whereas the guys came from the agriculture program, so one of the guys had ridden before but the rest hadn't." It was evident that almost all women involved in polo had developed an interested in the sport because they had already been involved in riding at some level and were looking for a different style of equestrian sport, one that offered a more exciting, informal, and team dynamic. Respondents noted that while a number of men involved in polo had equestrian backgrounds, many came to the sport through other avenues like family, business, or friends without necessarily haven ridden extensively before beginning to play.

Gendered Polo Fields

In this section we identify four organizing structures in the cultural field of polo that create both opportunities for and barriers to participation among women: (1) financial resources, (2) kinship, (3) club structure, and (4) gender stereotypes.

Financial Resources

In polo the primary structure that influences participation is access to financial resources. As one interviewee said, "the biggest thing with polo is that it's such a financial commitment." Merlini (2004) explained that polo costs a player approximately $17,400–$33, and 500 per year in the United States. Even in 1953, Board (1956) wrote that in England, to keep a polo pony for 1 year, it would cost 150 lb, and anyone wanting to play polo needs a minimum of three ponies. According to the USPA, the 2002 mean yearly income of registered USPA members was $175,000 (Merlini 2004). In order to play polo, many women spend 11–25 % of their yearly income, whereas men spend less than 10 % (Merlini 2004).

In Canada, polo is perceived as a sport representative of a cultural elite, and distinct sense of style and taste; those with significant amounts of disposable income have become the controllers and producers of polo culture. The financial commitment of the sport can be seen not only in what it costs to play but also in the competitive advantages that can be arranged by players with considerable monetary resources to draw upon. Players that have money can afford to hire quality trainers and grooms that will better prepare their horses for competition. Victory in polo can be influenced by purchasing high-quality horses and teammates with high goal rankings, which enables a low goal player to excel beyond their own abilities in the sport (Merlini 2004). According to Laffaye (2009), polo clubs look to recruit patrons to ensure the financial well-being of their club. As the interviewees explained, although women sometimes participate in highly competitive matches, their role is often as a patron. A patron is someone who funds the team for competition, not all teams have patrons, but in elite-level competitions, they are common. Merlini (2004) explains that patrons are the oldest, least likely to practice, least skilled, and wealthiest players. In the United States, there is a small group of very wealthy patrons, which in recent years has caused conflict because of the influence these individuals have over the governing of the sport (Merlini 2004). The conflict is a representation of how money complicates the dynamics of competition. It also demonstrates the opportunity that financial resources create in polo. Even those whom have not expressed interest in the sport may be recruited because of their economic and social status. For women, the more money they have at their disposal, the more opportunity they will have to play polo.

Canadian polo players, however, disagree as to whether money is a barrier to participation. Most agree that money provides increased opportunity to play polo but as one respondent explained,

> it depends on how much you want to play, if you have one horse and you want to play just that one horse, you can do that and it won't be that expensive. But when you get three or four horses and you need the truck and the trailer then that's when it gets expensive.

Another said, "[polo] requires modest means, because it depends on the level you want to play." The interviewees suggested that polo is no more expensive than other types of riding because equestrian sport as a whole requires a particular amount of financial capital. One interviewee explained, "I think the cost of playing polo is

different than say dressage. Like to get a really good polo pony it would cost you about ten to thirty thousand dollars, but in dressage or another discipline it would probably cost you a lot more." Club support is perceived as a means of overcoming money as a barrier, as it was explained that in the past, clubs have allowed students to work off expenses and players to share one position on a team between two riders. But when survey respondents were asked: *Is polo an equal opportunity sport for men and women?* One respondent said, "absolutely not. A woman finds it harder to join a team in Ontario- there are large financial commitments and women still make less money than their male counterparts." Therefore, women in Canada diverge in their views of financial resources as a barrier to the sport.

Kinship

The second structure in polo that creates opportunities/barriers for women is kinship. While interviewing polo players from across Canada, we found that many players identified polo as a family sport, and this quality helped sustain the participation of players. Historically, kinship was a barrier to polo; only those that were members of particular families were encouraged to play. As one of our survey respondents explained, polo is not a welcoming environment for female participants, "not unless a woman has a connection with someone of influence within the club." Currently, kinship acts as an informal barrier to the sport, not enforced but inevitably influential in who participates in the sport. As one player explained, there was a time in Canadian polo when women had to be affiliated by kinship to a male member in order to participate. This is no longer the case, but there are still strong family ties that are characteristic of polo across the country. In addition to the formal families that compete and socialize together in each polo club, the clubs also represent an informal family within which members are committed to maintaining friendships, family, teamwork, competition, and the future of polo (Merlini 2004). One interviewee explained,

> polo is a close community, it's a family thing where people grow up playing polo and there's also a social aspect to it … . it's interesting because if I am going on a vacation almost anywhere in the world and I call up the local polo club in the area where I'm going, they will invite me out to play, give me a horse, it's just a great community of people.

Today, kinship acts as an opportunity for women to become involved in polo, as exposure to polo through family members offers easy access to the sport.

Club Structure

Our research shows that polo clubs in Canada are heterogeneous and subsequently so are the people who play polo. We identify two types of polo clubs in Canada: traditional and grassroots. In what we term grassroot polo clubs, there are fewer members and the clubs have arisen through more recent European influences within the last 15–20 years. These types of polo clubs encourage new members by holding

introductory sessions open to the public and providing horses and instruction as charity for those that cannot afford the cost (such as in the case of the intercollegiate polo in Canada). Gender divisions are less pronounced and participants are more likely to recognize the lack of opportunities for women to advance in polo. Further, they were generally more concerned with the direction of polo in Canada, as they perceive horses, coaching, and fields as scarce. Grassroot polo clubs have become an opportunity for women to become more involved in polo.

Traditional polo is more elitist in nature, whereby players are sponsored into the sport by kinship or close social networks. In this form of polo, there is a distinct gender division that is reinforced by gender stereotypes depicting females as weak and inferior to men. There is also a stronger confidence in the future of polo in Canada within these clubs, which we argue is reflective of longer family histories in polo and stronger financial positions of the clubs as a whole. We found that traditional clubs did not encourage open clinics or the donation of horses so that new players could learn. They were tighter social networks because the size of the clubs enabled them to play matches within their own club. Women within these clubs could seek out higher-level games in the United States, but the interviewees explained that it is not always easy to find a club or a team that will take players without a connection. We argue that the structure of polo clubs in Canada may be contributing to the lack of expansion in the sport, because grassroot clubs that are trying to encourage expansion do not have the resources to do so, and traditional clubs are not doing enough to promote development. The interviewees explained that if polo is growing in Canada, it is doing so very slowly. Some attributed this lack of growth to organizational barriers at the national level:

> I guess the question is, why isn't polo growing more? And I don't think polo Canada is doing enough to encourage the growth of the sport at the lower levels, like they say they are but that's really just talk, there are only a few people who are actively trying to encourage new people to become involved in the sport, and support grassroots level polo.

Our data suggests that the expansion of polo in Canada has been limited by the lack of affordable coaching and horses. At the university level, the establishment of more intercollegiate teams has been slow because as the interviewees explained, "you have to have someone who will lend you their horses and will volunteer their time to help you learn how to play." Even at the club level, players explained, "I think we welcome new players but we don't have the ponies and facilities to really go out and seek new members." In our analysis, however, we found that the slow growth of Canadian polo is also a reflection of the gender inequalities that persist in the discipline. Other Canadian equestrian disciplines continue to expand and draw new participants, particularly female riders, but polo has remained a male domain.

Gender Stereotypes

We recognized that the majority of polo players we interviewed held the perception that male players were physically more equipped to play the sport than their female counterparts. Heliman (2001) explains men are perceived as forceful, aggressive,

decisive, and independent, whereas women are said to be concerned for others, kind, and sympathetic. Male polo players are also held to stereotypes by both sexes. A female interviewee explained, "men want to play polo because it's like hockey on horseback, its fast, its rough and its competitive." Other interviewees identified that polo is a fast, competitive, physical, and aggressive sport. Merlini (2004) suggests that male polo players have had to reinforce their masculinity by playing more aggressively and working harder to prove their masculine qualities that playing with women would otherwise undermine.

Our interviews demonstrated that polo players generally believe that women have to work harder to be good polo players because they are physically less capable than men. One respondent said: "I think it's harder for women in the sport more because of what it takes to manage a pony and hit the ball and be aggressive, it's the combination." Very few high goal players are women; the highest ranked female polo player in history was a five-goal player (*Telegraph* 2009). Special mallets have been made lighter for women (Las Pampas Polo 2011), reinforcing the perception that women polo players are weaker than men. As Heilman (2001) explains, in the corporate world even the most competent women face gender stereotypes and often do not excel to the same level as male counterparts because of them. We argue that women in polo are not inferior physically, but structural and ideological/cultural circumstances do not allow them to fulfill their abilities in the sport.

Conclusion

Our study is an important contribution to understanding women in polo because as Laffaye (2009) explains, literature on women's polo, particularly in Canada, is underdeveloped. Polo is a unique form of equestrian sport, but we need to understand the changes in polo in relation to broader equestrian sports and the involvement of women in them. The increased involvement of women in polo coincides with overrepresentation of women in equestrian sport as a whole.

Merlini (2004) suggests that male and female polo players bring different amounts of physical capabilities and financial capital to the field. While polo has gained more female players, the structure of the sport has remained a relatively closed male preserve (Dunning 1986). The sport is currently and has been historically selectively open to women. Structural barriers in the sport linked to class, gender, race, and ethnicity offer occasional opportunities for women of British or European backgrounds to become involved in polo, but the same pathways for women with different ethnic backgrounds are not available. South Asian countries have a history of involvement in polo, but in Canada the people from these different ethnic backgrounds are not becoming more involved in the sport. We found that the increasing participation of women is changing the sport without necessarily challenging its dominant hegemonic masculine structure. Women are fitting themselves into the gendered roles that have been created while they are changing them. As women demand more active roles in places that were conventionally reserved for men, like polo, gender transformations are being encouraged in upper middle class

social structures. Women are breaking through traditional class barriers and seeking change, but the structures of social spheres such as polo do not currently allow for equality. Thus, changes in the gender order of polo have occurred over the last 100 years but women and men are still not equals on the polo field.

Further research would benefit from an analysis of gender, polo, and social class, in other countries. Polo is played all over the world and it would be valuable to investigate the role of gender in the sport globally. The unique gender division of North American intercollegiate teams makes an ideal opportunity to study gender and sport, but its underdevelopment in Canada limits what we have been able to accomplish in this chapter. Future researchers should consider the structure of polo at the intercollegiate level in the United States. As we have shown, grassroots polo in Canada appears to be encouraging development and gender equality in the sport, but how much can be accomplished by the limited influence of these clubs and their members? Polo is one of the few equestrian sports not currently female dominated, some women do move from other disciplines into the sport but overall men have maintained control of the polo field. Will women ever become equals in polo? Not without structural and ideological change.

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Chapter 8
Cojones and *Rejones*: Multiple Ways of Experiencing, Expressing and Interpreting Gender in the Spanish Mounted Bullfight (*Rejoneo*)

Kirrilly Thompson

Introduction

The footed bullfight (*corrida de toros* or *toreo*) has been the subject of much anthropological research into Spanish culture. It has resonated particularly with discussions of sex and sexuality, especially in psychoanalytic terms based around Freud's concept of the Oedipal drama and notions of patricide (see, e.g. Desmonde 1952; Grotjahn 1959; Hunt 1955; Ingham 1964; Kothari 1962; Paniagua 1992; Pollock 1974) or the expression of repressed anger towards male authority (Conrad 1957). From anthropological quarters, there has been an interest in the ways in which masculinity and femininity are reflected in and constructed by the bullfight. With the notable exception of Pink (1997b), the majority of this work is embedded within structuralist approaches, positioning masculinity and femininity in hierarchical binaries (e.g. Douglass 1984b; Marvin 1994; Pitt-Rivers 1984).

As argued elsewhere, binary gender interpretations of the footed bullfight reflect their academic milieu (Thompson 2010a). They have been easily transposed to a form of bullfighting characterised by a dyadic relation between a human/'cultural'/(typically)male bullfighter and an animal/'natural'/(always)male bull. This is where the mounted bullfight (*corrida de rejones*, or *rejoneo*) can provide particular insight. The use of a horse to conduct a full bullfight distinguishes mounted bullfighting from footed bullfighting. Because the mounted bullfight involves one human and two animals, with whom the human relates in very different ways, it is resistant to binary gender interpretations. Moreover, the symbolism of the horse as a particular kind of animal is significant. In Andalusia 'there is … one animal which is most

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important in this culture, and with which humans have a more complex relationship, and that is the horse' (Marvin 1994: 133). In this chapter, I consider the impact of the horse on gendered cultural constructions of the mounted bullfight (*corrida de rejones*) *and* mounted bullfighters (*rejoneadores*). Given the focus on material bodies, embodiment and intercorporeal human-animal relations, the mode of analysis can be understood as 'bio-aesthetic'.

I present a bio-aesthetic argument based in the presentation and posturing of the bodies of male and female mounted bullfighters. Specifically, I consider the ways in which being astride a horse de-emphasises the biological sexual identity of the rider. Unlike the footed bullfight, the riders' 'biological manliness' is de-emphasised, and it is acceptable to entice the bull with the rider's/horse's buttocks/rump. Whilst some might consider my approach a structuralist return due to its emphasis on a physical sexual identity, my objective is to demonstrate the ways in which mounted bullfighting accommodates performances of multiple and alternative ways of being male, female and expressing sexuality. This is achieved by pairing a bio-aesthetic reading of the mounted bullfight with an analysis of opinions expressed by mounted bullfighters and their fans. Whilst offering an explanation of the greater cultural acceptability of female mounted bullfighters than female footed bullfighters, this chapter highlights the powerful and polysemic ways in which gender intersects with equestrian sports. I propose that the horse can be considered a liberator (by degrees) of biologically determined and culturally normalised expressions of gender.

This chapter reaches across the interface of the gendering of riders on one hand and the gendering of horses on the other (Lynda Birke and Brandt 2009). It also extends the literature on bullfighting in general and develops the relatively neglected body of research into mounted bullfighting and gender in equestrian endeavours in Spain. Moreover, it considers the significance of women's participation in an event traditionally dominated by men.

Fieldwork

This chapter is based on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in Andalusia from September 2000 to December 2001. My field-base Jerez de la Frontera was selected due to its synonymy with a number of influential and successful *rejoneo* dynasties and its association with Andalusian equestrianism through the location of the *Real Escuela Andaluza de Arte Ecuestre* (REAAE or Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art). I carried out formal open-ended interviews with *rejoneadores* from renowned bullfighting families and watched them prepare and perform at various bullfights (*corridas*).

I also conducted ethnographic fieldwork with lesser-known *rejoneadores* based on either side of the Guadalquivir River, in Huelva and Cádiz provinces. I watched them train and perform. I travelled with one *rejoneador* and his assistants to numerous bullfight*s* across Spain and thus gained intimate access to the *rejoneo* event and other *rejoneadores*. I recorded these experiences with ethnographic field notes and a field journal and collected and analysed photos, videos, newspaper articles and

bullfighting and equestrian books and magazines. Whilst I participated in the role of researcher, fan, amateur photographer and assistant, my focus was on the *rejoneadores*/performers, rather than the audience. This was due to my primary research interest in the human-animal relationship in general and the riding relationship in particular (Thompson 2011). It should be noted that my ethnographic fieldwork was dominated by male *rejoneadores*, although I interacted with a woman who had performed briefly as a *rejoneadora*. I discussed *rejoneo* with *aficionados* belonging to the MSN group '*rejoneo*' from 2002–2005.

Rejoneo: Bullfighting from Horseback

As bullfighting from horseback is lesser known than the footed bullfight, and frequently confused with the mounted *picador* from the first stage of the footed bullfight, a brief description of *rejoneo* is warranted. *Rejoneo* is bullfighting from horseback which is practised variously in Spain, Mexico, Portugal, France, Colombia and California (the latter based on the Portuguese 'bloodless' version). Following the term '*corrida*' to refer to the Spanish bullfight in general, *rejoneo* is also known as a *corrida de rejones* (bullfight of *rejonenes*), distinguishing it from its footed counterpart, the *corrida de toros* (bullfight of bulls). Mounted bullfighters are referred to collectively as *rejoneadores*.[1]

Rejoneadores combine their skills as horse riders with those of a footed bullfighter (*torero*) to manoeuvre their horse close enough to the bull to spear it with an array of pikes and barbs called *rejones* and *banderillas*. Each mounted bullfight starts with a procession of performers (the *paseíllo*).[2] This is followed by an equestrian display based on various *alta escuela*[3] (high school) movements and sometimes 'tricks' such as sitting the horses on their haunches or making them bow. This display is particular to the mounted bullfight and contributes to it being seen as an *espectáculo* (spectacle) in contrast to the footed bullfight which is constructed as an *arte* (art).[4] As with the *corrida de toros*, the mounted bullfight comprises three *tercios* ('thirds', acts, phases or stages)[5] characterised by specific types of *rejones* and a horse which has been selected and purpose-trained for that phase. The bull is also constructed differently at each stage. Unlike the *torero* of the footed bullfight, the *rejoneador* actively takes part in each *tercio* of the mounted bullfight. The *rejoneador*'*s* horse is considered analogous to the mounted bullfighter's cape (Arévalo 2001). That is, the horse is to the *rejoneador* as the cape is to the *torero*.

[1] This collective is masculine.
[2] *Paseíllo* is the diminutive of *el paseo* from the verb *pasear* for a walk or a stroll.
[3] *Alta escuela* is the Spanish translation of *haute école*, a French term for high school training which is commonly used in equestrian discourse to refer to the advanced classical training of horses involving various 'airs above ground' (see Helmberger 1994; Tucker 2005).
[4] Douglass refers to the footed bullfight as a 'plebeian spectacle' (1984b: 255).
[5] For a detailed description of the *corrida de toros*, see Marvin (1994, especially chapter one).

Rejoneo is typically mentioned in historical overviews of bullfighting from foot, as its antiquated precedent. The footed bullfight is presented as a working class phoenix rising from the ashes of an elitist pastime of royals and nobles lancing bulls from horseback that peaked in the seventeenth century. This antecedent of the footed bullfight is considered to have become obsolete around the beginning of the eighteenth century but to have been 'reinvented' in the 1920s and 1930s.[6]

Whilst mounted bullfighting is considered an art, it is accommodated by typical definitions of sports activities, such as:

> a formal and rule-directed contest ranging from a gamelike activity to a highly institutionalized structure [involving] competition between individuals or teams or [it] can result in internal competition within an individual; a basis in physical skills, and strategy, chance or a combination of all three; and potential tangible rewards for the participants, money, material or status. (Sands 1999: 3)

The importance of the body in bullfighting also resonates with the sports genre, especially where Weiss considers sport to be a 'traditionalized set of rules to be exemplified by men (sic) who try to be excellent in and through their bodies' (1969, cited in Ingram 1978: 89). In equestrian sports, however, humans seek body excellence in and through equine embodiment and its excellence. The importance of equine embodiment to gender is discussed below.

Rejoneo as Feminine?

The relative lack of anthropological and sociological interest in mounted bullfighting (compared to footed bullfighting) may derive from anthropologists being influenced by *aficionados* of the footed bullfight who frequently claim that the mounted bullfight is elitist (e.g. Arratia 1988: 188; Douglass 1984b: 245–246; 1997; Marvin 1994; Mitchell 1991: 48–56; Pink 1997b),[7] outdated, unpopular, less risky (Douglass 1997: 37) and less serious (Marvin 1994: 110). Of most relevance to this chapter, the mounted bullfight may have attracted less academic interest because of its construction as feminine (in relation to both audience members and performers) (Marvin 1994: 45; Pink 1996: 47; 1997b: 138).[8] Whilst this chapter considers the

[6]The history of mounted bullfighting is discussed in more detail elsewhere, where I detail the significance of *rejoneo* being constructed by *rejoneadores* as the 'oldest and the newest' form of bullfighting (Thompson 2010b). See Campos Cañizares (2007) for an exploration of bullfighting from horseback during its seventeenth century 'heyday'. See Thompson (2012) for further detail on the upper-class construction of mounted bullfighting.

[7]The elitist construction of mounted bullfighting is questioned by Thompson (2012).

[8]This feminine construction was acknowledged by mounted bullfighters with whom I spoke. *One* clearly thought that it was a derogatory construction, as demonstrated in the following comment: "That [rejoneo is feminine] has been written by several journalists who claim they are fans of el toreo [bullfighting] and they are not; because whoever is really a fan of el toreo likes all that is related to the bull and they are not fans; what's happened is that they have caused damage by writing that". It is not my intention in this chapter to refute or support the construction of rejoneo as feminine or masculine. Following Pink's emphasis on multiple femininities, I too regard the bullfight as a 'cultural resource to *which* a range of ideologies, meanings, experiences and aspirations *may be* connected…' (1997a: 161).

extent to which this feminine construction may derive from the physical markers of maleness being obscured by the rider-horse relation, the feminine construction of *rejoneo* is influenced by a combination of all the aforementioned constructions.

Female mounted bullfighters are distinguished as *rejoneadoras*. The most famous female mounted bullfighter performed around the same time that mounted bullfighting (re)appeared after a 200-year absence from practice (see Thompson 2010b). Chilean rider Conchita Cintrón (Concepción Cintrón Verrill) fought bulls from horseback from the late 1930s until 1950. She is remembered for her combination of skill and uncompromised femininity (de la Serna Miró 2008; Welles 1968), the latter emphasised in the moniker '*la diosa rubia*', or 'the blond goddess'. At a landmark bullfight in Jaén, Spain, she circumvented the Francoist prohibition of women fighting bulls on a technicality: by fighting from horseback. However, she was arrested for dismounting to kill the bull (which she feigned by dropping the sword to the ground at the 'moment of truth'). According to Cintrón's autobiography (1968), this was a cause for great anguish and frustration, especially in light of her claim that what she really wanted to be was a bullfighter from foot (cited de la Serna Miró 2008: 23).[9] Despite her importance in women's bullfighting, Cintrón is seen as tokenistic of female success in a male-dominated world (MacClancy 1996: 73; Marvin 1994: 165; Pink 1997b). When a male *rejoneador* told me that no female *rejoneadoras* had become figures, I asked him about Cintrón. He replied by saying that whilst she was famous, she had not become a figure.

In the late 1990s, Paco Dorado formed and managed a quartet of *rejoneadoras* that toured with the name the '*Amazonas del Arte*'.[10] The *rejoneadoras* in the group were Ana Batista, Maria Sara (later replaced by Patricia Pellen due to injury), Ana Natalie Gomford 'Nathalie' and Raquel Orozco. Dorado's ambition was to book the *Amazonas del Arte* in at least 27 second and third category bullfights[11] in 2007 (Montoya 1997), but there is scant record available of their performances[12] and the group is notably absent from academic and popular literature.

Spanish-born contemporary *rejoneadoras* include Saray María, Noelia Mota and Mónica Serrano. From Portugal there is Sonia Matías, Ana Batista, Verónica Cabaço, Ana Rita and Joana Andrade; from Columbia, Maria Alba and Laura Maria; and from France Anita Maureau, María Sara, Patricia Pellén and Julia Calviere.[13] Whilst women are a minority, it is more acceptable for a woman to become a mounted

[9]Cintrón goes on to say that she preferred to fight from foot than from horseback, claiming that anything done in a pair is more beautiful than by three, and that having to accommodate the horse's intentions made her angry (de la Serna Miró 2008: 24).

[10]'*Amazona*' is a general term for female horse riders.

[11]There are three categories and types of bullrings in which *corridas* can officially take place. The first category consists of bullrings erected in the capital of a province, or in which at least 15 *corridas* are held each year, ten of which must be *corridas de toros*, that is, *corridas* from foot using mature bulls. Permanent bullrings that do not meet these criteria are second category bullrings, and those that are nonpermanent or portable are third category bullrings (Abarquero Durango 1984:106–107). Most bullfights are held in category 2 bullrings with the least in category 1.

[12]For a notable exception, see Muñoz (1997).

[13]Pink identifies five female *rejoneadoras* as active in the 1993 season (1996: 46).

bullfighter than a footed bullfighter (*torera*) (as noted by Marvin 1994: 159; Pink 1996).[14] However, this is not due to the association of 'girls and ponies' in countries like England. Whilst modern horse riding in general is dominated by women, particularly at amateur levels (Lynda Birke and Brandt 2009),[15] *rejoneo* is embedded within the male-dominated genre of *doma vaquera* or 'cowboy' style of riding traditional to Andalusia and derived from bull management practices on large ranches (Thompson 2010b). Given the strong association of horse riding and *doma vaquera* with men and masculinity in Spain, there is a need to consider other factors which render mounted bullfighting 'feminine' and a more acceptable option for women than footed bullfighting. Moreover, as women are rarities in *doma vaquera* competition (less so in its practice), there is a need to understand women's experience in *rejoneo* which can be understood as a competition.[16] Indeed, there are several explanatory factors coalescing around legacy, class and notions of risk.

For instance, there may be a stronger historical association of women and *rejoneo*, as '[i]nitially woman fought on horseback, not on foot' (Shubert 1999: 97). Moreover, Marvin observes that 'horsemanship has always been associated with the aristocracy or landowning class, and within this class there has been a long tradition of female equestrianism. It is also quite acceptable for women to ride in public' (1994: 160). Following from the upper-class associations of *rejoneo* is the belief that '[w]ealth is thought to reduce a bullfighter's willingness to expose himself to danger' (Pink 1996: 60). As such *Rejoneo* is often considered to be less risky than footed bullfighting, due to the distance that the horse is considered to create and mediate between human and bull (challenged below). The height afforded by the horse, in tandem with physical distance, could also construct *rejoneo* as less risky, especially where height is considered an advantage for footed bullfighters (Pink 1996: 57). Whilst there are concerns that the breasts of a footed female bullfighter may be injured by the bull's horns (Pink 1996: 51–53), I am not aware of similar concerns for mounted female bullfighters. Additionally, the 'tipping' or blunting of the horns of bulls used in *rejoneo* reduces the risk of the rider being penetrated by both a symbol of animality and masculinity. In relation to the *rejoneadora*, this practice could be construed as 'safe sex'!

[14]It is difficult to procure exact numbers as the official registry does not record nationality, gender (which could only be assumed from names) or status and some may be listed/registered but inactive. In 2010, Noelía Mota was described as the only active *rejoneadora* in Spain. Resource document. http://www.antena3.com/noticias/sociedad/dos-mujeres-mundo-hombres_2010091700143.html Accessed 21 March 2010.

[15]Myers et al. note that 'over 80 % of equestrian competitors today are female' (1999: 399).

[16]Although *rejoneo* does not provide for simultaneous competition (between men and women) such as characterised horse racing, the performance of *rejoneadores* in the same bullfight is compared and can thus be seen as competitive. The number of occasions where male *rejoneadores* refused to fight in the same programme as Cintrón also supports the competitive elements of *rejoneo* (Cintrón 1968: 214). A similar boycott befell Mercedes González-Cort in the late 1970s. As the first woman to be accepted into the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art, she had to train her horse to perform the capriole in long reins by herself: 'Normally, the airs about [above] the ground are performed by two riders, but no one would put themselves under my orders…' (cited Vavra 1981: 108).

Another reason for *rejoneo* being seen as more feminine than footed bullfighting is the more diverse audience that it attracts, specifically a higher percentage of women. As one *rejoneador* explained,

> Sometimes it is true that *rejoneo* has a much younger audience; many more children, many older people and many women. Many women come because they like the horses, they like how the horse gallops.

It may seem counter-intuitive for a higher percentage of women in an audience to detract from the masculinity of a performer. However, the ability to appreciate a bullfighter's performance is considered to derive from the extent to which 'the spectator identifies with the bodily experience of the bullfighter' (Pink 1996: 49). It is for this reason that Pink notes that female footed bullfighter's bodies are problematic in the footed bullfight, which has a male-dominated audience. Given that there are more women in the audience of a mounted bullfight, and that female *rejoneadores* are still a minority, it could be the case that the ability of *rejoneo* spectators to identify with or imagine themselves riding a horse outweighs their ability to identify with or imagine themselves being male or female (or their desire to do so). Finally, whilst the bull is always, obviously, male, *rejoneadores* ride a mixture of male and female horses, and *Rejoneadores* I spoke with had no preference (although one thought that the tendency for mares to urinate more frequently than males could detract from a performance). It seems that in relation to the horses that characterise this form of bullfighting in which women more readily participate, gender is much more flexible.

The construction of *rejoneo* as feminine may not derive solely from the polysemic horse or from women's participation as bullfighters and audience. Rather, this construction is multifaceted, complex and culturally contextualised within specific equestrian and taurine 'communities of practice' (see Lynda Birke and Brandt 2009). What is clear is that the horse plays a central role in enabling different experiences and interpretations of gender.

Gender Analyses of the *Corrida*

The ways in which men relate to bulls in the bullfight have been analysed as a commentary on Andalusian masculinity. Analyses are inherently dualistic, being seen to simultaneously account for femininity as the opposite to masculinity. For example, by analysing vocabulary common to the *corrida* and sexual contexts, Douglass (1984b: 243) argues that the *corrida* is a metaphor for the Andalusian social order, especially male–female relations. She perceives the bull as a female symbol or at least analogously female with women in Andalusian gender relations (1984a). In doing so, she diverges somewhat from the widespread view of the bull in the *corrida* as a male symbol and the bullfight as a commentary on masculinity (Davies and Marvin 1987; Marvin 1986, 1994; Saumade and Delaplace 2000; Shubert 1999). Pitt-Rivers' (1984, 1993) often referenced interpretation of gender symbolism in the

corrida traces the symbolic gendered identity of the bullfighter from enacting male and female roles but becoming increasingly masculine as the bull is 'feminised' in parallel (critiqued by Pink 1996: 48).

Pink's research into women footed bullfighters (*toreras*)[17] and discourses of gender provides an important redress to a lack of research into femininity in Spain (noted by Valiente 2002: 779). She transcends binary approaches by aiming 'to consider the bullfight in a context of multiple masculinities and femininities … to account for a variety of subject positions' (1997b: 54). Pink considers women bullfighters as an example of the various and contrasting ways in which gender, identity, modernity and tradition are constructed and contested in Andalusia. Similarly, this chapter adopts Pink's approach by emphasising the multiple and alternative ways in which mounted bullfighters can be understood to express gender in relation to the horse. Whereas Pink is primarily interested in how a range of social experience is connected through 'public discourses and personal subjectivities' (1997a: 161), my concern in this chapter is how gender is experienced and performed through the body (its appearance and movements) and, more specifically, the relationship between human and equine bodies.

Balls and Bulls: Masculinity in the Footed Bullfight

In the bullfighting literature, gender has been based in the ways in which humans (men) relate to animals (bulls). As noted above, this literature is characteristically binary and masculine-centred. It has also been biologically reductionist, locating masculinity in testicles, hence the phrase '*tener cojones*' (to have balls). For example:

> The animal is always, and the human almost always, male. The testicles of bull and man, the bull's naked and dangling, the man's smoothly evident in his tight trousers, are visible in the event and much used in images of it. (Corbin 1999: 12)

However, there are homoerotic connotations to this male-to-male relation. That is, the *corrida* represents the danger of a male being tamed, subdued and dominated by another male (Davies and Marvin 1987: 545; Marvin 1986: 126). Orson Welles discussed this danger as one reason why Cintrón was prohibited from fighting bulls from foot in Spain:

> The bull must be treated as an enemy, not as an object of coquetry. The matador needs to be careful about that. When his labours with the flannel and silk are ornamentally purposeless, his relationship to his enemy is, to put it delicately, rather ambiguous. This is one of the keys to the mystery of why Miss Cintrón was denied the use of her sword. (1968: ix–x)

Welles suggests that being able to kill the bull with the sword from foot is crucial to a male bullfighter establishing his masculinity. As such, he implies that preventing Cintrón from being able to do the same was a political act to reinforce her femininity.

[17]For a discussion of the term 'women's bullfighting' being preferred over 'female bullfighting', see Pink (1997b: 205–206).

One could go further to consider that her prohibition was also based in fears that allowing her to fight from foot would demean the value of masculinity accorded to men from the same act.

Gilmore (1987: 10) contextualises the homoerotic elements of hyper masculine challenge in the bullfight as an aspect of masculinity within a broader Mediterranean culture where male-to-male interactions or sexual rivalries are not seen to threaten a man's masculinity unless a 'feminine' position is assumed by a male. This suggests a construction of homosexuality based on passive/active, feminine/masculine hierarchical binaries whereby the use of a sword (*estoque*)[18] constructs a bullfighter as an active penetrator, and thereby male. Using an argument similar to Pitt-Rivers' interpretation of the final sword thrust as symbolic of rape, Corbin narrows the homosexual elements of the *corrida* to a discourse on homosexual rape. Of most interest to this chapter, he considers the horse as a prophylactic for symbolic homosexual rape and feminisation, stating that '[t]he role of the horse in the bullfight as sexual drama is to assume the greater risk of "femalization" by being gored' (Corbin 1999: 12–13).

A number of issues arise from this comment relating to the role of the horse in the gendered dimension of the bullfight. Corbin's interpretation of the corrida as homosexual rape is based on the dominant view that being penetrated is a female position, relative to the penetrating male. However, there are a 'variety of alternative sexual moralities' (Pink 1997b: 41) in Andalusian culture and 'several, ideal models of sexual behaviour' (Pink 1997b: 42). Moreover, Corbin's argument, like others discussed in this chapter, is based on the presence of actual testicles. In contrast, Pink found that masculinity (or qualities culturally constructed as masculine) can arise from metaphorical 'balls' as much as actual testicles (Pink 1997b: 166).[19] This is clearly aligned with the widespread acceptance that gender is not biologically determined, but can be 'performed' (following Butler 1990).

Other fundamental concepts and categories such as animality have also been shown to be performed through specific social and cultural relationships (Birke et al. 2004). With regard to the relation between rider and horse, the categories of human and animal are collapsed into the metaphor of the centaur (Thompson 2011) which is more than horse plus human. The idea of a centaurian relation highlights the ways in which rider and horse are mutually implicated or compenetrals. This is relevant to a consideration of Corbin's aforementioned presentation of the horse as 'risk sponge' and concordant feminisation prophylactic. He presents human and horse as mutually exclusive and therefore suggests that the risk of goring can be restricted to the horse only, without implicating the human. However, the *rejoneador* and the *caballo torero* are intercorporeally interrelated such that harming a

[18]Indeed, the bullfighter is sometimes named after the *estoque* through the generic term for sword, '*espada*'.

[19]That is, having balls is not exclusive to the biologically or physiologically male. As Pink notes, '[i]n these discourses which redefine masculinity and femininity, testicular power is not exclusive to those who have testicles. The terminology has been retained but the concepts does not refer to an exclusively masculine social characteristic' (1996: 59).

part of a hybrid relation harms the whole (see also Linda Birke and Michael 1997). Neither should be gored and should one sustain a *cornada*, then it is felt by the rider-horse as a centaur.

If the horse is knocked to the ground, the rider is put at risk of being gored themselves, especially if their foot gets stuck in a stirrup or they are pinned underneath the horse. This mutual implication of risk (and safety) can be demonstrated empirically. During a bullfight in Marbella in October 2010, the Spanish female *rejoneadora* Noelia Mota suffered severe head, cervical, thoracic and abdominal injuries when her horse lost its footing and fell, rolled over her body and exposed her to the bull's horns and hooves. Besides this being evidence of the very real mutual implication of horse and rider risk, there is a metaphorical risk of injury incurred to the horse being felt by the rider. When the horses of *rejoneadores* Antonio and Luis Domecq were attacked with Molotov Cocktails in 2001, pain was felt by humans and horses alike (Burgos 2001a, b; Gabinete de Prensa de la Dirección General de la Guardia Civil 2001; Gayo and Rendueles 2001; n.a. 29 November 2001).

Corbin and Marvin emphasise literal testicles and Pink suggests the importance of acknowledging metaphorical ones. Amidst this 'much ado about testicles', it is necessary to ask what happens when they are not 'on show', as in the mounted bullfight? How do arguments around the juxtaposition of human and animal maleness being central to gender relate to a context where the silhouette of the riders' groin is neither emphasised nor necessarily obvious and where an animal with unprescribed sex is involved and intimately connected to the human? In the remainder of this chapter, I address these questions by considering the impact of the horse on the way that a mounted bullfighter's body looks and moves.

The Appearance of Bullfighting Bodies

There are significant differences between the ways in which the *rejoneador* and the *torero* relate to the bull through their bodies. If the bullfight is about proving masculinity, the essence of which is believed to reside in the testicles (Marvin 1986: 128), then the *torero* presents their body in a way that undeniably draws attention to their groin (hence, the conundrum presented by the female *torera*). The appearance and movement of bodies is intimately tied to clothing (Tranberg Hansen 2004), which impacts on embodiment and identity. As *rejoneadora* Conchita Cintrón recalls:

> While I was still in a skirt and high heels, the thought of bullfighting was always unnerving to me, but I always felt particularly well the moment I put on the starched-collared shirt and tight -fitting trousers. As I pulled on the boots and strapped up the leggings, I began to feel like a different person…as if I needed my robes of office to command respect from the bull. I never danced, nor do I know how to sing flamenco, but once in my Andalusian traje de corto, I felt I could. (1968: 180)

This quotation is even more significant given that a costume traditional to Andalusia empowered a woman born in Chile to identify with a traditional Andalusian identity.

Footed bullfighters, their assistants and the assistants of *rejoneadores* wear the *traje de luces*, described as 'a symbol of the truly male' (Marvin 1994: 147).

This costume is specific to the bullring (*plaza*) and to those roles. Even though homosexuals are thought to lack the courage to be a good *torero*, 'once someone is dressed in the suit of lights … that person of necessity is regarded as a man and the public's expectation of that person is that he be a man' (Marvin 1994: 147). Clothed in the skintight stockings and high-waisted calf-length pants (*taleguilla*), the *torero* strikes an explicit pose. With genitalia tucked to one side of their crotch to form a package (*bulto*), the physical 'manliness' of these men is undeniable. This is further emphasised by their stance with hips thrust forwards and lower back arched, a position that should be maintained regardless of how close the bull's horns come to the *torero*'s body. An aesthetically pleasing *torero* will not compromise this stance by moving a single muscle, even as the bull passes very close (Douglass 1997: 34, 79). In other words, the *torero*'s masculinity should not 'back down' or 'back away' from the challenge posed by the bull's horns.

As the bull passes 'through' the *torero*'s cape, its horns pass parallel to the bullfighter's crotch. Similarly, as a *banderillero* leaps in front of the bull, with his own arms held high like horns as he holds a *banderilla* pointed down from each hand, his crotch faces the bull's horns. In fact, at the centre of the typical composition of images of bullfighters in posters, photographs and so on is the nexus of bull's head/horns and bullfighter's groin. When the *torero*'s face is not shown, the bull will usually be facing the viewer, and *vice versa*, suggestive of a 'minotaurian' relationship. Clearly, the visibility of biological maleness is an important aesthetic feature to the footed bullfight and footed bullfighters. It is made possible by the clothing and stance of the footed bullfighter. But what happens when this visibility is obscured?

In *rejoneo*, there is little emphasis on the groin area of the *rejoneador*. It is obscured by clothing, saddlery and the horse itself. Rather than wearing the *corrida-specific traje de luces*, the *rejoneador* wears the *traje corto* which is used in a variety of rural horse and bull-related contexts and at fairs (*ferias*). Also known as the *traje del campo* (country suit), the *traje corto* consists of a wide-brimmed hat, a short collarless jacket usually accompanied by a vest, a crisp white shirt, high-waisted mid-calf-length pants which match the jacket and have white cuffs, boots and leather *zahones* (apron-style full-length chaps). In contrast to the *traje de luces*, the *traje corto* de-emphasises the 'natural' lines of the lower body.

The *rejoneador's* clothing adds bulk to the waist and groin area, whilst the *zahones* detract from a clean silhouette of the rider's legs. The *zahones* are wrapped twice around the waist like an apron and tied with a plaited leather cord with small tassle-like decorations at the ends. From waist down, there are many trinkets and decorations which swing about in time with the rider-horse's movement. Silver or gold *caireles* (charms) adorn the five eyelets on the rider's trousers.[20] The movement

[20] *Caireles* are like cufflinks joined together by a short chain, which chink against each other whilst the rider-horse is moving. *Caireles* are usually only worn during the *corrida de rejones* and not under general working conditions in the countryside. At the time of my fieldwork, the Guarnicioneria Duarte in Jerez sold five different types of *caireles*: Spanish coins, horse heads, the holy virgin of *El Rocio*, nails and stirrups. Other charms include acorns, bull heads and stud brands.

of these charms and tassles emphasises the movement of the rider-horse and assists with their physical merging as it marks just one beat for 'two' beings.

The horse also plays a role in the de-emphasisation of the lines of the rider's body. Its high head carriage and front-end conformation favoured in bullfighting horses is typically 'uphill', rising high out of the horse's wither like an equine shield. Viewed from the front, the mounted rider's groin area is obscured by the horse's head and neck, even 'replaced' by it. From other angles, the rider's groin is de-emphasised by the horse's free mane or, when that is plaited and decorated with ribbon or pompoms, by the high, sheepskin-covered pommel of the *doma vaquera* saddle. A fringed blanket is rolled and attached to the front of the saddle by leather cords. As each end hangs well past the rider's knees, it often blows back and over the rider's thighs. This also has the effect of visually blending the rider's legs into the horse's body and creating a visual centaur. Thus, markers of biological sex are obscured by the *rejoneador's* relationship with the horse, clothing and the technology that mediates the rider-horse relation such as saddlery.

The Movement of Bullfighting Bodies

Not only are there differences between the visible form of the footed and mounted bullfighter's bodies, there are differences in the ways in which their bodies move. As noted above, the footed bullfighter aims to keep his body still and express movement through the cape. The mounted bullfighter, on the other hand, covers much ground in the bullring, with frequent turns, stops and starts.[21] Instead of a focus on the rider's groin that can be seen in the footed *corrida*, the viewer's eye in *rejoneo* is drawn to the dynamic and '*vistoso*' assemblage of rider-horse as a whole, galloping across the bullring. The viewer's gaze could move from the mounted bullfighter thrusting a *rejón* in the air to entice the bull to charge to the horse's legs as it leaps from left to right, performs a *piaffe*[22] or *passage*[23] or rears, to the bull as it charges, to the flag that is unfurled from the first *rejones* that are placed. Thus, there is a significant shift from a static and poised body emphasising the groin in the footed *corrida* to an emphasis on the movement of two intercorporeal human-horse bodies in *rejoneo*, the quality of their relationship and the skills of both horse and rider. In addition to the groin being de-emphasised and the outline of physical 'manhood' being obscured, *rejoneadores* do not use their groins to entice the bull. They do, however, use the horse's rumps or quarters (*grupa*) and tail.

The buttocks of the footed bullfighter are as well defined in their *traje de luces* as their groin, 'framed' by the embroidery which runs down the side of each leg.

[21] In fact, this element of movement is essential to the development of a centaurian relationship between rider and horse (Thompson 2011).

[22] This is effectively a trot on the spot, with slight advancement.

[23] This is a slow motion trot with a prolonged period of suspension between steps involving diagonal pairs of legs with minimal forward advancement.

The silhouette of a footed bullfighter's buttocks is on view during a footed bullfight, but not to the bull except when walking slowly away from it, during *el remate* (at the end of a series of passes). Turning a back on the bull demonstrates the footed bullfighter's domination over the bull and is not intended to incite it in any way.[24] In fact, if the footed bullfighter turns their back on the bull, they are signalling the end of their mutual engagement. It is unimaginable that a footed bullfighter would allow the bull's horns to be in any way visually composed in relation to their buttocks, or that they would use their buttocks to entice the bull to charge. This holds true for all actors in the footed bullfight including the *picador* in the first phase and the *banderillero*s in the second.

Whilst mounted, the rider's buttocks are obscured by the high cantle on the saddle. They are integrated into the flesh and technology of the centaur image where it is unclear where one body ends and the other begins. The obscured buttocks of the mounted *rejoneador* contrast with the aesthetic of the footed bullfighter, as does the fact that the bull is encouraged to chase the horse (a repercussion of the idea of the horse and especially its tail being to the *rejoneador* what the cape is to the footed bullfighter as noted above).

The *rejoneador*'*s* trousers are well fitted across their buttocks and their silhouette is visible when dismounted, even when wearing chaps. The moments when the *rejoneador* is dismounted occur at the end of a bullfight and include collecting trophies (ears or tail of the bull), walking a lap of honour and dismounting to kill the bull or watch it die.[25] Once dismounted, the *rejoneador* relates to the bull through their body in a similar way to the footed bullfighter. Although the *rejoneador* may perform some *flamenco*-like dance movements, including full turns in front of the bull, they end with him facing the bull or walking away in the manner described above in relation to *el remate*. At no time does the footed *rejoneador* entice the bull with their buttocks in the same way that when mounted they uses the horse's buttocks and tail to entice the bull, demonstrating that the mounted bullfighter relates very differently to the bull when dismounted from the horse.

This comparison of the ways in which footed and mounted bullfighters' bodies look and move during bullfights (their bio-aesthetics) has identified some significant differences. As noted above, previous research into the gendered dimensions of footed bullfighting has centred on the importance of testicles (those of man and bull). However, in mounted bullfighting, the *rejoneador*'*s* groin is not on display. Rather, it is muted by the rider's physical and intercorporeal relationship with the horse and saddlery. The *rejoneador*'*s* groin is subsumed into the physical connection between human and horse, following and absorbing equine movements. As a result, the gaze in *rejoneo* (at least in relation to the body of the bullfighter) is not centred on physical markers of masculinity. It is on the dynamic movement of the rider-horse,

[24] Garry Marvin, email to the author dated 17 July 2003.

[25] The *rejoneador* is required to make a minimum of two separate attempts with the *rejon de muerte* before being allowed to dismount (Ministerio de Justicia e Interior 1996: Article 85.5). After two warnings from the president, the *rejoneador* must dismount from his horse and kill the bull from the ground. The significance of dismounting is discussed elsewhere (Thompson 2010a).

their intercorporeality and their relation with the bull. Indeed, the *rejoneador* could be seen to lure the bull with the horse rather than with testicles, although in the centaurian relation the horse necessarily entails the rider (and *vice versa*). This is related to another significant divergence between footed and mounted bullfighting discussed above; the mounted bullfighter entices the bull with the horse's buttocks and tail and, by positional default, their buttocks and back as well.

Thus, unlike the footed bullfight, the mounted bullfight does not juxtapose a human symbolic seat of masculinity: the testicles against an animal symbolic seat of masculinity, the bull's horns. Even when the testicles of stallions are displayed during a rear, this imagery is fleeting, and stallions are not always used. Testicle-centred interpretations of gender in the footed bullfight thus do not entirely account for constructions of gender in *rejoneo*. Whilst the biological and physical are important, and in the case of bullfighting do impact women's acceptance, there is more at play. In *rejoneo*, movement and positioning of human and animal bodies provide a complex array of gendered meaning and interpretations.

For example, a homosexual interpretation could be made in relation to the *rejoneador* using the horse's buttocks to lure the bull.[26] At the same time, none of the *rejoneadores* I spoke with thought that they were compromising their masculinity in any way. As one *rejoneador* commented:

> Women are attracted to the bullfighter. The gear worn is very impressive, as well as the fact that he is someone who is risking his life. Women like it when we pass by them, wherever they are… Women go to the first row taking flowers or something else, and when I go around the ring they say: *Guapo* (handsome)! When the bullfight ends everyone wants an autograph, and a kiss; imagine what silliness, a kiss from me! … [but] after I change my clothes they don't recognise me. I … have a shower, I tidy myself up, return to the *feria* and apart from 40 or 50 people who have seen me in the *plaza*, the remaining 2000 don't know who I am. They go past and they bump into me but they don't see me. [The others] are attracted to the outfit, the hat, the horse and so on…

Besides demonstrating the impact of this bullfighter's costume on his identity and relations with others, his comments question the association made between sex and gender in existing gender interpretations of footed bullfighter*s*. His testicles might not be emphasised, but he was in no doubt over his masculinity.

Rejoneadoras: Female Bullfighters from Horseback

To explore the ways in which women and femininity might relate with the concept of *rejoneo*, I asked male *rejoneadores* about their opinions of female *rejoneadoras*. *Rejoneadores* had mixed opinions of their female colleagues. Whilst my own female

[26]This interpretation is made in Guarner's psychoanalytic study of the *corrida* from foot in Mexico where he suggests that 'anal aspects are evident in the different back passes, which imply a contact with *matador*'s buttocks, while genitality is represented by the need of having the bull pass as close as possible in front of the genitals' (1970: 19–20).

gender could have introduced a social desirability bias and encouraged them to soften any criticism of *rejoneadoras*, those who were not in agreeance expressed their views without hesitation. One even turned off my tape recorder before commenting on *rejoneadoras*,[27] demonstrating his awareness of political correctness in relation to gender and the bullfight.

All the *rejoneadores* I spoke with believed that bullfighting is 'every inch a man's thing'. Interestingly, their view was shared by a female fan of mounted bullfighting, who emphasises a traditional supportive and 'decorative' role of women at bullfights:

> I don't like to see *rejoneadoras* but I accept that they are there. I never want to see a *torera* in the ring. To me, facing a bull is a man's activity. This is how [men] demonstrate their courage, their strength. Women are the ones who are there to motivate the bullfighters, to offer them flowers when they have triumphed…. (French female fan, by email, 9 April 2003)

This female fan invoked an animal ethics defence for her objection to female bullfighters. She continued the quotation above by describing how, because women do not have the strength to place *banderillas* or to kill the bull, their manner of killing is often unnecessarily and cruelly extended.

This fans' view is one extreme opinion amongst a multiplicity of views. Amongst male fans, for example, I found support for female *rejoneadoras*. I discussed such gender issues with an online group of *aficionados* throughout 2003.[28] One male fan interpreted my interest in the topic of female bullfighters as my own desire to become one. He responded by enthusiastically encouraging me. Another male *aficionado* knew the personal and professional details of at least four *rejoneadoras* from memory and was disappointed that the *Amazonas del Arte* were no longer together. Their disbanding was, however, the cause of joy for the female fan quoted above.

Notwithstanding their perception of *rejoneo* as an activity for men, not all male *rejoneadores* I spoke to were opposed to female *rejoneadoras*. In fact, one stated:

> Yes, of course [women] are accepted in *rejoneo*, as anything that is done well and… what could be more beautiful than a woman on horseback in front of a bull?

For many *rejoneadores*, the 'beauty' of a woman from horseback was directly related to her physique being naturally more slender.

Whilst male *rejoneadores* felt that women could ride better than men in some equestrian disciplines such as showjumping, and that on some days, female *rejoneadoras* could outperform men, they did not feel that women could do this consistently enough to guarantee success throughout an entire bullfighting season. Many referred to women's lack of physical strength relative to men, emphasising the arm strength required to hold a horse in front of a bull and to use the barbs effectively.[29] As discussed by one young *rejoneador*, who considered himself 'very old fashioned':

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[27] Thus, the comments supporting his disagreeance are not reproduced here.

[28] http://groups.msn.com/*rejoneo*/

[29] MacClancy (1996: 82, fn 4) notes the same concern with women's physical strength in relation to footed bullfighters.

> Imagine what it takes to hold a horse outside a plaza and you have no idea of what it means to hold a horse in a plaza. Your hand gets to bursting point. You pull and pull and you can't control [the horse] and so you have to help yourself with your right hand.[30] That's why there are many girls who attempt it but very few who achieve it… Then I think, well… why is she there? And she realises that she can't do it. Let her attempt it a couple of more times and then get out of it, alright?

This rationale for women's 'natural' lack of relative physical strength and endurance has also been noted in relation to women and footed bullfighting (Pink 1996: 58) and other physical activities or sports such as cross-country skiing (Rudie 1999: 177). However, the agreeance amongst many *rejoneadores* and fans that women are advantaged as horse riders by being more sensitive demonstrated an acknowledgement that the skill involved in being a *rejoneador* exceeded strength alone.

Finally, whilst *rejoneadores* expressed concerns about women's capacity for strength and ability to be consistent, they believed that in the eyes of the bull, gender was irrelevant.[31] This suggests that issues surrounding gender relate to physical capabilities of riders, not so much the juxtaposition of human sex and gender against the maleness of the bull:

> At the end of the day, when the bull comes out we are all equal in the bull's eyes (male *rejoneador*)

> It is clear that when the bull when it comes out it can't differentiate if you are a woman, a man, or if you're 10 or 40 years old; it only knows that it must get you and it's going to get you one way or another (male *rejoneador*)

In drawing from a similar perspective of seeing 'from the bull's eyes', Conchita Cintrón provides an account of what it was like to be the human standing in front of the bull. In response to a journalist explaining that he admired her for her being a 'sensitive woman, feminine and intelligent, who was able to take on a man's life' (de la Serna Miró 2008: 25), Conchita says:

> I don't know if I was feminine in front of the bull, because I never saw myself. A bullfighter does not see, a bullfighter feels. I just happened to be a woman. (cited de la Serna Miró 2008: 25)

Considering the bull's perspective, its potential irreverence for gender and Conchita's transcendence of a gendered identity in its presence highlights the ways in which the debate over gender and bullfighting is socioculturally fought and fraught.

The terms on which women are accepted as mounted bullfighters, and the ways in which they are dependent on their ability to interact with a horse (and the bull by implication), illustrate the complexity of gendered constructions of mounted bullfighting and mounted bullfighters that are obscured by the face-value assertion that mounted bullfighting is a more feminine form of bullfighting. Rather than reducing

[30] The *doma vaquera* style of riding, and the need to carry *rejones*, dictates a style or riding with the reins in the left hand.

[31] MacClancy (1996: 73) notes the same idea of the bull being a great leveller of social distinction but in relation to the gender of footed bullfighters. Similarly, Moreno Pidal (2004: 258–259) acknowledges that having money might help a *rejoneador* get into the *plaza* but that the bull doesn't discriminate if he is rich or poor.

interpretations of mounted bullfighting to gendered binaries such as male/masculine, female/feminine or even heterosexual/homosexual, mounted bullfighters could be considered to have at their disposal a different, if not broader, array of aesthetic and embodied ways of inciting and engaging with the bull than footed bullfighters which includes buttocks/rumps and does not emphasise testicles. Rather than asking what the mounted bullfight is, on gendered terms, it seems more fruitful to follow Pink's lead and consider it 'as a performance which refers to, but does not advocate or reinforce, a particular version of 'traditional' gendered social order' (1997a: 173).

Whilst the incorporation of the horse in mounted bullfighting is not the *raison d'être* of mounted bullfighting being seen as feminine, the gendered polysemy of the mounted bullfight is intimately bound to the general polysemy of the horse (Lawrence 1982, 1985: 195), as well as the specific kind of centaurian relation engendered in mounted bullfighting. As noted above, in contrast to the explicit masculine symbolism of the bull, the horses used in mounted bullfights include mares, stallions and geldings. The gendered identity of the category 'bullfighting horse' is as muted as the physical markers of human maleness amongst mounted bullfighters.

Could the polysemy afforded by the horse in the mounted bullfight result in the binaries of male/female and masculine/feminine being collapsed from horseback? This is not to suggest that the horse is a great leveller. It can't be, not only because gender always matters but because it is inseparable from cultural constructions and specific communities of practice (Lynda Birke and Brandt 2009) such as those outlined in other chapters in this volume. Perhaps the horse can be understood instead as a 'liberator', at least by degrees.

Discussion: Gender on Horseback

This chapter took as its starting point the assertion that it is more acceptable for a woman to become a mounted bullfighter than a footed bullfighter. As noted in the early sections of this chapter, previous research has concentrated on the presence of literal and metaphorical testicles in the footed bullfight to explore gender, or more specifically masculinity, in the bullfight. This is not the case in the mounted bullfight where the bullfighter's relationship with the horse de-emphasises and 'over-rides' the physical presence or absence of 'testicular' maleness. It is easy to assume from this contrast that mounted bullfighting is constructed as more feminine because 'it doesn't have balls'. However, this reductionist idea of mounted bullfighting as feminine is undermined by the above analysis of the ways in which the bodies of mounted bullfighters look and move, the ways in which they are experienced and the ways in which they relate to and with, and are mutually implicated in equine bodies.

Pink emphasises the heterogeneous personal motivations, interpretations and experiences surrounding a bullfight event involving young bulls and bullfighters typical to Cordoba. She highlights the ways in which people involved in this event 'may invest a range of different meanings in its symbols' (1997a: 171). So too are gendered interpretations of the mounted bullfight made according to various personal and

sometimes conflicting perspectives. In the same vein, mounted bullfighters perform their own versions of femininity, masculinity or something else.

Whilst equestrian sports are often distinguished as a forum where men and women can compete on equal terms (Miller 2002: 94), the horse is not the great omni leveller, as suggested in relation to showjumping (Adelman 2004) and horse racing (Adelman and Moraes 2008). It clearly does not replace or erase the significance of gender. Using the case in point, whilst women are more accepted in *rejoneo*, they are still a minority and the *Amazonas del Arte* was short lasting. However, the horse can be considered a liberator-by-degrees. It affords superhuman power, strength, ability and corporeality to humans. As such, I propose that the horse plays a central role in liberating gender from binary interpretations of the Spanish bullfight, not only because the human-animal triad of mounted bullfighting is resistant to those interpretations but because of the inherent polysemy of the horse.

Whereas many riders have been drawn to the horse for the liberating freedom of movement that it provides (Lawrence 1985; Midkiff 2001), could the horse not also provide the freedom to express, perform and interpret gender in ways both cultural and personal? In a framework of desire traced by Probyn, 'becoming-horse is a strategy for figuring the undoing and redoing of the lines between and among entities' (1996: 62). This kind of undoing and redoing could be as radical as the 'gender bending' that Landry associates with eighteenth-century female British travellers 'bonding with and mastering foreign [Eastern] equines' (2001: 467), or as intimate as 'images of girls and girls and horses … [moving] as lines of desire between lesbians and horses and lesbians' (Probyn 1996: 58–59). Of course, gendered equestrian identities may be outwardly expressed in different ways when in the privacy of a stable, paddock or yard in comparison to a competition arena (Lynda Birke and Brandt 2009). Inwardly, however, being and becoming *with* a horse provides revolutionary means for a human to be and become male, female or something else (something equine?), who performs, experiences, desires and interprets male/female and masculinity/femininity (and humanity/animality) in and on their own terms. This is the horse, not as leveller but as liberator-by-degrees of many cultural and mortal constraints, including sex and gender.

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Chapter 9
"We Have to Make Horse Riding More Masculine!" On the Difference Between Masculine Needs and Feminine Practices in the Context of Swedish Equestrian Sports

Birgitta Plymoth

In the Swedish context, equestrian sports and horse-related activities are widely regarded today as feminine, and horses are considered as objects of feminine adoration and care. Equestrianism is associated with Swedish middle-class girls and thus differs from the general notion of sports as genuinely masculine (Messner 2002, 2007; Hargreaves 1994; Connell 1995; Hedenborg 2008; Forsberg 2007). As the title of this chapter suggests, the lack of men and boys is a concern that is being addressed within equestrian sports. The purpose is to analyse how the *Swedish Equestrian Federation* (SEF) through its organisation and membership journal, *Häst och Ryttare* [*Horse & Rider* (H&R)], deals with the gender issue, primarily the lack of boys in these sports, a situation that is also indicative of a masculinity problem (Connell 1995). In this chapter I analyse how boys and men are represented in the journal, and how equestrian sports should be described and what actions should be taken to make these sports more suitable for boys and men. I am also interested in how this gender boundary work affects the images of girls, women and femininity (Messner 2007). How is masculinity constructed in relation to femininity? About 85 % of the roughly 200,000 members of the SEF are women. How then does SEF manage to balance the importance of girls and women for the sports, while at the same time expressing concern over the absence of males? It is important to take into consideration the complexity involved in the construction of the masculine subject positions (Messner 2007). For example, are boys and men supposed to express feelings for horses, and does care signify something positive even in the construction of masculinity?

There is obviously a wide range of interesting aspects and issues that are essential to the analysis of identities and subject positions in sports. It is useful to regard the gender issue and the construction of male positions and identities as power processes. The concept of discourse is used here to understand and make sense of the production and construction of masculinity.

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Sports and the Status of Gender

Most sports are male dominated and defined as masculine; furthermore, female athletes are not awarded the same status as men (Messner 2002). There is extensive research that deals with this issue (see McKay et al. 2000; Tolvhed 2008). Research also suggests that feminisation can be seen as a potential problem for the status of a sport (Connell 1995; Messner 2002, 2007). Messner (2002) has pointed out that the dominant media coverage of certain masculine core sports defines which sports are of importance. Despite some efforts and increased attention within equestrian sports, this remains basically unchanged. This situation contributes to the reproduction of a gender order in which female athletes appear to be less important, although many women are athletes in general and successfully perform at different levels. Within this context labelling riding as "girlish" certainly contributes to low status and thus also to media invisibility.[1] The latter could be exemplified by the Swedish show-jumping equestrian Mr. Rolf-Göran Bengtsson when he won an Olympic silver medal in Hong Kong in 2008. Although this was one of the five medals Sweden received in the games, no attention was paid to this performance in the talk show summarising the games of the day (*Olson's studio*) on Swedish public service television.

In Sweden, as well as in other countries, it is regarded as a democratic right for girls to be offered the same opportunities as boys in sports and other recreational activities. This is an important part of the Swedish welfare model. At least ideally, this means striving for an essential equity goal (Larsson 2001). Thus, investment in equestrian sports receives positive attention because it constitutes a step towards greater equity between the sexes (Plymoth 2012a). Compared to most other sports, in equestrian sports the gender situation is the opposite in terms of the official (quantitative) goal of equity. The chairman of SEF, Bo Helander, argued in an article in *Horse & Rider* (2007: 7) without further justification that it is a strength for equestrian sports to have so many female practitioners. If one looks at the situation from the point of view that female sports should be promoted, the current state of equestrian sports undoubtedly is at an advantage.

Unlike in most other sports, in equestrian sports female and male riders compete against each other in the same classes. In that sense and in that context, it is possible to talk about equality between the sexes, since no differences are created in the competition. However, as Raewyn Connell (1995) has commented, sports are hierarchical and competitive institutions. If the concepts of centre and periphery are applied to the equestrian field as a whole, clear differences emerge. Girls and women dominate the everyday life in the stable, but at competitions, especially at higher levels, boys and men are considerably more numerous, even if they still do not represent the majority. In the centre men compete and are experts ("horsemen") in a very special knowledge culture, as well as occupying positions of leadership in the

[1] Another view on the invisibility is, since equestrianism traditionally is associated with the upper-class practices rather than being a "real sport", it could be a contributing factor to the fact that equestrian sports have not really stepped into the heart of the Swedish sports culture.

sport. In the periphery, at the riding schools, where the future of the sports in some sense is taking place, you find very few boys and men.

In Sweden equestrian sports are not regarded as "real sports", as are soccer and ice hockey, which make up the core interests of the sports media. Perceptions of equestrian sports in general are formed by images from the periphery, e.g. the everyday life in the stable or literary portraits of caring "horse-girls" (Hedén et al. 2000). From this perspective, there seems to be a problem of feminisation of the kind that, according to Connell (1995), could affect the image of the sport.

A Gender Turn?

In Sweden this historically new feminisation of equestrian sports and the stable environment has occurred in the second half of the twentieth century and has taken place parallel with the emergence of the Swedish welfare state. From the 1960s onwards, municipal grants to civilian riding schools contributed to the increase in their numbers near towns (Hedenborg 2009b). These opportunities for new categories of civilian riders attracted numerous girls with equine interests and paved the way for a gender turn in equestrian sports. The horse had earlier been a status symbol related to men and masculinity, as well as being a working animal. The military, nobility and farmers were dependent on the horse and made use of it in different ways. In the first part of the twentieth century, equine competition was considered an activity for the nobility and for the military, mainly men (Hedenborg 2009a). Early depictions of horses and humans generally represent status, power and action. Today, the horse is instead mainly considered as an object of female adoration, an idea that appears when attitudes towards equestrian sports are articulated from perspectives outside the sport rather than from the activities themselves (Plymoth 2012a).

During the latter part of the twentieth century, the caring aspects of horse handling have been emphasised in literature, film and media as well as in SEF's educational materials (Hedén et al. 2000; Hedenborg 2009c). According to Hedenborg (2009c), SEF's focus on what she calls caring education has legitimised girls' and women's activities and participation in equestrian sport activities and thus contributed to feminisation. This orientation has been in line with traditional conceptions of femininity, while competition- and performance-related aspects of the sport have been relegated to the background. During the 2000s SEF has chosen to highlight the sport's ability to develop good leaders in the stable environment, and within the organisation, although to a great extent, this leadership deals with educational and caring functions (Plymoth 2012b; Forsberg 2007).

The issue of feminisation in equestrian sports during the past half century is undeniably interesting and also contradictory when viewed in relation to some of the physical aspects of the sport that would normally be associated with masculinity. There is no doubt that the sport is action filled. It is a matter of mastering a large animal, and there are numerous risks involved in dealing with horses. The competitive element is demanding and includes elements of danger, even for skilled riders. Hence, from a

traditional male perspective, it is somewhat paradoxical that men are reluctant to ride horses when masculine characteristics such as courage, strength, leadership abilities and competition are doubtless needed on every level. The relationship between the horse and rider is important, for instance, being able to understand and interpret the horse and having the ability to communicate commands in a sufficiently clear manner. Undoubtedly, horses also require plenty of care. History shows that not only various aspects of equestrian sports have been highlighted at different times but also that the construction of gender in various sports changes over time and space.

In spite of the special conditions in equestrian sports, it is highly relevant to use research on sports and gender in order to obtain perspectives for theoretical interpretation. In particular, the encounter between representations of masculinity and femininity is highlighted. Messner (2002, 2007) points to the negotiations of the boundaries in gender issues as means of defining and creating gender images. He shows, for instance, that elements of femininity affect the adult world to act in favour of the boys' masculine status (e.g. Messner 2002, 2007). Where femininity appears to be a threat in sports, a struggle takes place to maintain or increase a masculine imprint, as can be seen in the work in the creation of boundaries. According to this view, it is also relevant to think in terms of stigma when, for example, sport activities result in shame and threaten masculine identities (Connell 1995).

Horse & Rider in a Gender Analysis

As mentioned above, this research makes use of SEF's journal *Horse & Rider* (H&R) from its first edition in 2005 until June 2010. The journal is for all association members over 15 years old. It is published ten times a year and has about 100,000 readers, according to the journal's own information. This means that the journal reaches many of those who are interested in equestrian sports. Prior to the publication of *Horse & Rider,* SEF produced the magazine *Equestrian Sports* (*Ridsport*). *Equestrian Sports* covered above all international and national competitions, as well as issues concerning breeding. The target groups of *Horse & Rider* are instead ordinary members, most of them riding at riding schools or competing mainly at lower levels, who own their own horses. *Horse & Rider* includes an editorial column, pages devoted to letters to the editor and articles dealing with riding, safety, horse behaviour, portraits of elite riders and activities at riding schools and clubs, where various "voices" are heard. The last pages contain information directly from the SEF on current issues, courses and conferences. All parts of the journal have been perused and used when relevant to the problem dealt with here. Texts and images have been analysed that specifically address the "problem" of the presence and absence of boys and men in the field of equestrian sports. Particular attention is given to the representations of men, when and where gender is of relevance and how they are represented and indirectly compared with girls and women. Boys and men as well as persons of ethnic and social background other than Swedish middle class can to some extent be said to constitute the "deviant" in this context, as these categories are less represented in the journal.

However, the journal appears to highlight boys and men as frequently as possible in, for example, articles about the stable environments, training and riding in order to show the presence of boys in equestrian sports. Representations of boys and men are found in a variety of equestrian-related contexts. They are especially highlighted in everyday activities in the stable environment or educational situations where the boys actually are less common. For example, one article describes how youths have the opportunity to try riding in a riding school. Despite the fact that girls also participated, only boys appeared in both the text and photos. Men are also overrepresented as experts and in key organisational rolls in the federation. The presentations of elite riders, which appear in almost every issue of the journal, more often concern men than women, even if women are in majority. However, the content of *Horse & Rider* is primarily about everyday life in equestrian sports. Most articles and photos reflect the quantitative dominance of girls and women in the periphery of the sport, but they are also represented in the centre as successful riders, experts or in leading positions. Thus, the journal seems to express a desire to negotiate a new image of riding which is not dominated by femininity to the extent that it is today.

An analysis of the contents of the journal shows that the specific topic "boys in the stable" is treated repeatedly over the years both in the letters to the editor and in the editorial material. The topic is dealt with in different ways, but the following categories emerged in the texts:

- The importance of masculine identification (men's special needs and homosociality)
- The internal attitude problem (how the girls respond to boys)
- The problem of femininity
- "Normalised" subjects in equestrianism

Paths to Remasculinisation?

The prevailing feminine gender labelling has in some sense come to be regarded as a problem: the "girl-sport" riding makes boys and men more or less reluctant to participate in equestrian sports. Part of the problem seems to be that boys and men involved with horses and riding are ridiculed. As both Messner and Connell suggest, there is a risk involved for boys dealing with activities that are associated with femininity. The idea has emerged from several perspectives that more has to be done to get boys to stay in equestrian sports and, of course, to start riding. Thus, in 2010 SEF started a project called *Where are the boys*? This is the most clearly expressed initiative to increase the share of boys in equestrianism. At the same time a successful Swedish male show-jumping rider with two sons in their twenties in the same spirit has started a boy's team with elite aspirations, the purpose being to show that equestrianism is also for boys. The male competitive team is called the *Zetterman Stars*. These two initiatives were reported in *Horse & Rider* in early 2010. They are both designed to attract more boys to equestrian sports by increasing visibility and demonstrating that riding is attractive to boys. The analysis of the competitive project *Zetterman Stars* shows how it is portrayed and legitimised.

Competing Boys and Male Sport Identification

The team leaders in the *Zetterman Stars* have an analysis based on their own past experiences: first, boys involved in horse riding are considered as wimpy because equestrianism is regarded as girlish. Secondly, to be able to continue and concentrate in equestrian sports (preferably show jumping), boys need support and solidarity from other boys and men. This is a task for the team.

The gender problem is constructed in an external discourse, and it seems obvious that equestrian sports have not been capable of dealing with the consequences of the gender-stigmatising image. There is a need for special *male* support from boys in the same situation but also from male role models and coaches. Still, this is not enough. Training, competition and hopefully success for this special team could contribute to revive male interest in the sport. The project is supposed to contribute towards creating legitimacy for boys participating in equestrian sports and to offer the possibility of masculine identification. The image promoted by the project is also of importance.

When the newly formed team presented themselves in a picture, they were dressed in identical black jackets and helmets marked with a logo in black, blue and yellow, an appearance that challenges the image of riders as feminine. The blue and yellow part of the logo probably signifies Sweden, the country they represent as athletes, and may be interpreted as made for the international arena. The goal of the team members is a career in competitive show jumping, i.e. they strive for positions that boys and men normatively take in sports, and this should apply to equestrianism as well. Nothing in the picture suggests that the boys should wield horse brushes in their hands, pat a horse or perhaps plait their ponies' manes for a competition. The tough helmets, not obviously similar to traditional riding helmets, indicate instead that the boys are on their way to taking part in risky activities. The team musters itself to meet the outside world, asserting the masculine potential within equestrian sports.

Using Connell's (1995) concept, the team transforms the image of masculinity in these sports from a subordinated role characterised by femininity to a more hegemonic and in some ways traditional one. Equestrianism should not deviate from other sports, and male practitioners in the equestrian sphere ought to be respected.[2]

[2]This stigmatisation through feminisation is currently represented in the journal and not only by the men who are involved in the two projects *Where are the boys*? or *Zetterman Stars*. In an article on the special award "Best Boy", there is a young proud winner, who receives the award from the hand of the famous jump coach Mr. KG Svensson. The price is a small statuette of a rearing horse. The artist said that the winner is likely to be representative for riding boys: he does not ride at riding school but has his own horse and trains on his own. Despite the progress, says his mother, he does not talk about his sport (H&R 2006: 7, p. 19). After jumping rider Mr. Rolf-Goran Bengtsson's Olympic silver in 2008, he was asked to answer the question as to whether he was teased when he was a young boy because he rode. RGB confirmed that this was the case and says further that "In this age, many people think that riding is a female sport and that men should do tougher things… You should ignore those who tease and maintain focus on riding" was his prescription for the problem.

Rather than being in the context of a stable in the periphery, they place themselves in the centre of the sport dressed in a special uniform. Through their appearance, their focus on competition in male fellowship, they draw a boundary against the femininised world of equestrian sports.

Challenges and Excitement Versus "Pottering" and Chatter

SEF hoped to attract more boys to equestrian sports by means of the project *Where are the boys?* In an article *Horse & Rider* (2010: 4) reports from a conference on the theme organised by the federation in May 2010. According to this article, 20 male riders of varying ages with different skills and disciplines were brought together to discuss the issue.

This group had a broader mandate than the *Zetterman Stars* and thus focuses on the issue of horses and equestrianism. For example, everyday life in riding schools was one of the issues raised at the conference. The report in *Horse & Rider* also includes statements from male representatives from other Nordic countries, Denmark, Norway and Finland, where there is obviously also an extensive lack of boys in the stables. Their argumentation is analysed below with an emphasis on beliefs about the relationship of boys to the sport; their rejection is dealt with but also what the boys need to discover in order to maintain their interest. The issue of masculinity and male identity is related to the concepts of subordinate (feminised) and hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity includes changing norms and ideals of masculinity, but as an analytical concept here, it is related to traditional and ideal physical attributes and skills related to sports (Connell 1995). Connell has also suggested a different kind of masculinity that diminishes those aspects. The importance of gender is reduced, and instead equality between the sexes appears to be emphasised. Despite this, men related to this kind of masculinity can benefit from the standards associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995; Nordberg 2001).

The title of the article gives an instant view of what boys want and what they are supposed to dissociate themselves from: "*Challenge and excitement attracts boys – Pottering and chatter disappear*" (H&R 2010: 4, p. 28) is the clarifying summary. This creates two dichotomous categories that can be inserted well in a traditionally masculine type; the boys are assumed to dissociate themselves from the female horse world. Creating challenges and excitement was in the article expressed in negative terms: not wanting to "ride round and round…" as a beginner or not spending time in the stable taking care of the horses. The latter is what usually happens and is expected in riding schools and obviously something that is spoken of as a problem for boys in the more general sense, at least when boys (and men) discuss this issue together.

For many of the participants in this meeting, competition has been the strong motivating force. To give boys a chance to progress in equestrian sports, successful male role models are needed. These role models have to be visible and encourage the boys in particular. In addition to the ambition to "remasculinise" equestrian

sports, competition and performance are aspects of a normative, hegemonic masculinity. The discussion referred to above (and the *Zetterman Stars*) connects in a number of ways to an ambition to construct equestrian sports as "normal" sports. By doing so, the male riders could be accepted as athletes. The goal in sports is to perform; with more focus on challenge, excitement and performance, equestrian sports could make boys feel at home. In this discourse on the desirable masculinity in the stable, an attempt is made to distance elements considered more feminine, such as caring and chattering.

The 20 men and boys who gathered to discuss the question *Where are the boys*? also provide an analysis of the importance of an institution's gender character, i.e. not only what is done in equestrianism:

> … and the fact that horse riding is transformed from an occupation for military to be one of the country's most female dominated sports, scares a lot of guys. That riding does not have as much status in Sweden, as in many other countries is another fact… (H&R 2010: 4, p. 28)

The gender labelling on the one hand and the relatively low status of equestrian sports in Sweden on the other are the key aspects in the explanation of boys' rejection of riding. The present status and the gender pattern correspond. These perceptions affect the external view of these sports, and from the inside one obviously calls into question the value of the sports because of the male absence. It also seems to imply that men who are active in equestrian sports highlight a discourse on masculinity that dissociates feminine practitioners and labels them as problematic.

According to the article, it would be possible to increase the masculine element in the periphery of equestrian sports by means of having the presence of successful men, the male community and more competition while emphasising "less pottering" in the stable. Equestrian sports could be remasculinised in a modern, civil and sporty everyday environment where competition and performance are accentuated (Yttergren 1996). The importance of similarity is emphasised, and male gender is no doubt represented as a key aspect to get boys more interested in equestrian sports. Homosociality also implies an increase in the status of sports (Holgersson 2006). This is a way of working on the boundaries in order to change the image of equestrian sports as formulated by more or less well-established men within the area.

Interesting enough, this discussion is solely among men and boys; females do not discuss this gender problem in the journal. But, as will be seen below, some worried mothers have raised their voices about this issue. In order to take male needs into consideration, the discourse about separate spheres for the boys seems important.

Male Needs and Equestrian Opportunities?

> I have a two-year old son and hope that when he is old enough to begin at a riding-school or to go to a riding camp, he will have the opportunity to choose boy teams (where he can meet buddies among his peers and not have to feel different or apart), perhaps with a 'cool' approach as western riding or knights. (H&R 2007: 6, p. 4)

The above quotation is from a mother who in a letter to the editor page of *Horse & Rider* shows both fears and hopes about a future change in equestrianism that would benefit her son. She is doing a kind of boundary work when she points both to her son's (and probably also other boys) special needs in a feminised stable world and a need to defeminise the sport. As we have seen above, the identity of boys and their opportunities for male identifications are issues that she is not alone in worrying about. When the question of boys' interests in riding is raised, one of the influential arguments is that boys have to identify themselves as boys and do "cool" things. As Connell has pointed out, masculinity is powerful. But at the same time, there is an implicit threat against masculinity from, in this case, femininity. Homosocial communities are one solution to protect masculinity and emphasise its qualities (Connell 1995; Messner 2007). As a consequence females have to be excluded.

The projects referred to above have highlighted the need for male role models and stressed the importance of the competitive elements. Especially among the letters to the editor, like the one above, the concern is highlighted that girls do affect the image of equestrianism negatively and boys therefore disappear from the sport. One problem mentioned is that girls in the stable fuss too much with the horses and it becomes too much "pottering" (H&R 2008: 4, p. 4). Instead, special spaces oriented towards tougher tasks would have to be created for boys; in other words it is therefore necessary to fashion a male homosocial environment separate from the feminine one.

Other perspectives are also represented. Some of the letters to the editor also assert that an internal attitude problem exists: boys are not welcomed by those who dominate in the stable, the girls. In one letter entitled "*The girls have to get the boys to feel at home*", it was noted "…that a prerequisite for having more boys in the stable, is that they actually get on well" (H&R 2005: 4, p. 46). The presence of boys in the stable has to be regarded not as something weird "but [as] completely normal". Responsibility is placed on the girls to create a welcoming environment and conditions for a change in the prevailing gender pattern. They are not supposed to create any boundaries against the boys, as the boys have to do in order to avoid a gender stigma. However, it must be noted that this letter to the editor, unlike many others, did not argue that the sexes should be separated but instead should carry out their activities together. But the girls ought to act more complaisant towards the boys.

Another voice chose to point out that "…developments have come from the military spirit, to today's totally female dominated riding-school environment, but without the stimulus that boys desperately need and without male role models" (H&R 2007: 7 P4). Ulf, who along with his wife runs a riding camp, also believes that "a way to get more boys to start riding is to go for cooler riding with more adventurous sports. Boys need challenges" (H&R 2006: 8, p. 7) and denotes, as do a number of other voices, a boundary in relation to girls' practices. The boys have to be attracted to riding, and to do so equestrian sports must emphasise more action, which is considered to especially appeal to boys. A coherent set of voices verbalise their special needs.

The journal has a number of representations, however, which suggest that riding is tough and that those aspects must be highlighted much better. Equestrian sports suit masculine practices and can be consistent with male needs. The female editor

argues that a sport such as endurance could be used as a lure: "Action, excitement, stamina, strength and horse knowledge" are pointed out as masculine elements of the sport (H&R 2008: 7, p. 3). The representation of male needs as a response to the question can be seen in another letter: "Why doesn't SEF try to get more boys to riding school and focus on riding as a tough sport?" (H&R 2008: 2, p. 4)[3] Within equestrianism there seems to be a conviction that it is possible to actually compete for the interest and leisure time of boys; the sport per se ought to be masculine enough.

The opportunities are highlighted in what one might call a counter discourse to the discussion of feminised sports. The editorial material exhibits examples of where boys discover the qualities and coolness of equestrian sports, from what might be called an initially distanced position. Under the heading "*Riding to revive soccer boys*", Fredrik, age 18 years, relates the soccer players' impression of riding. He is a participant in a collaboration between a riding club and a soccer club, the purpose of which was to provide soccer boys with "better balance, muscle strength and cohesion" by trying equestrian sports (H&R 2008: 2, p. 20). Here Fredrik, who originally thought that it was "just a matter of enduring the riding lessons", has now changed his approach to the task. "Today I want to learn to canter. I tried last Friday, but after riding the length of the manege, I was scared. Cantering is very different from running motocross at 150 km per hour" (H&R 2008: 2, p. 20).

The representation of the soccer player Fredrik is evidence that riding could be attractive enough (tough and cool) to be able to interest boys: it is a real sport. When Fredrik refers to and compares with the masculine-defined activities such as soccer and motocross, he displays the potential equestrian sports have as sufficiently challenging sports and therefore also possible for boys interested in sports. He represents the possibilities of transformation in riding, the possibilities of a new gender turn. Meanwhile, along with his teammates, the soccer player Fredrik, mounted on horseback and riding, is actually just a tool to realise something else in their own (real) sports. But for SEF this discourse contributes to the association and legitimisation of equestrian sports in a more masculine sports discourse. It could contribute to a gender negotiation of equestrian sports, and obviously it works on the gender boundaries.

Normalisation?

Horse & Rider represents a direction where female horse practices and skills are both obvious and significant, not least according to the girls and women who constitute the majority of the SEF members. They have the responsibility for everything from everyday activities to elite performances and management functions in the organisation. The journal is probably also aware of their role as a voice in something

[3]The motive for pursuing the issue is that her son was harassed by what she described as "soccer players" for his interest.

as odd as a predominantly female sport. On the one hand, this is something to be proud of from a gender ideology perspective, while, on the other hand, it constitutes a problem for the status of the sport. Thus, the entrance of boys and men is prevented, as they apparently are affected by the prevailing gender norms. Gaining more practitioners is an important goal, and, as in other sports, SEF has to deal with issues of equal opportunities for men and women. One must focus on the "underrepresented sex", in this case the boys, in order to act on the official gender equality goals. The journal therefore provides representations of men in riding. This includes not just the elite portraits, men in leading positions or as experts, but also "ordinary" men and boys who ride at riding schools. Thus, these articles emphasise the existence of males in equestrianism at the same time that they are often asked how they relate to their situation in the "feminine" stable environment. They are present but deviant and should have problems with the prevailing gender situation.

A special feature of these articles is that boys and men may speak without special comments but are guided into the subject of gender by the editor's questions. *Horse & Rider* probably strives for a discourse in which men in equestrian sports are normalised, but in spite of this, questions are constantly raised about femininity in these sports and what it means to be a man in a female-dominated environment. The "problem" of gender is emphasised. So when *Horse & Rider* under the heading "*The boys who dare*" writes about the three boys who train vaulting with a horse, the boys were asked what it is like to be a boy in a girls' world. The boys seemed to be clearly aware of their unique position and said, while laughing, "We are Sweden's best boys' team – we are the only one!" (H&R 2007: 8, p. 20). The boys usually train alone but have previously trained with girls: "-Before we had a team with both boys and girls. Then it was like the boys just listened to the girls" (H&R 2007: 8, p. 21). The boys also told the readers that they have other interests they might give priority to, so perhaps they will stop vaulting. Riding will not last forever.

Although the article was intended to be about vault training and notwithstanding that this sport is highlighted as a special and fun activity, the male subject position is under review. The article alternates between striving to make the boys in the stable normal and to representing them as deviant. A similar structure and discussion appears in the short article about "The good old men [Goa Gubbar] who got their own camp in Gothenburg". This piece shows middle-aged men who cultivate their interests in riding together in a male group. They think it is great not to have the "youths" in their group but acknowledged that women are not banned: "…we want to be men in the group, but if any woman wants to ride with us, we will not stop her. But no one has asked, he says with a laugh" (H&R 2006: 8, p. 6). The laughter highlights, as in the example of the vaulting boys, a bantering rhetoric in what appears to be a homosocial community – we men want to be by ourselves. The group of men is an exclusive one that has its own exclusion mechanisms; women are not stopped, but neither are they welcomed in their community. It seems to be a question of well-being, and the laughter is a border excluding girls and women as potential participants.

What might be called "ordinary" riding boys and men emerge as happy with their single-sex groups, and they display a cautious attitude towards women and girls (or

youths) in the equestrian and stable environment. This approach is possible because they belong to the underrepresented sex; they have no position of power and they represent outsiders in equestrian sports. They do not emphasise themselves, and they are not represented as performance oriented. It is not about competition, but they apparently experience kinship and are related to a common interest which they seek to develop. The vaulting boys problematise the training fellowship with the girls according to the subordination they felt in relation to the girls when they were a mixed team. However, there is no discourse on femininity as a problem based on girlish "pottering" and "chatter". Hence, in both these examples a positive value is constructed for boys and men within the male fellowship, a homosocial community. They create their identities in the male community. What further emerges is that these boys and men in the equestrian periphery, surrounded by stable girls, do not say anything about these sports not being sufficiently cool, tough, challenging or masculine. It does not seem to be a problem. These men and boys could be described more or less as the "new men" (Nordberg 2001) who are not troubled with women. Instead, they go their own way.

The turmoil about the notion of riding as a feminine practice, as well as the lack of ability to communicate the coolness of riding, is highlighted mainly on the letters to the editor pages by mothers of sons and by the project that aims to attract boys to the sport. The external discourses of femininity threaten the image of the sport and its male practitioners; according to these arguments, there is a need to negotiate the gender nature. It is the external image that is the problem which contributes to threatening boys who ride with feminisation and subordination and to be bullied because they are in a sport that is perceived as feminine.

What Boys "Need" and What Girls "Really Do"

When the subject boys and equestrian sports is highlighted, an almost overly explicit dichotomising of what is masculine and what is feminine is reconstructed. First, the masculine definition appears as an opportunity because there is a consensus from inside equestrian sports on what kind of challenges it actually contains. Certainly these characteristics could appeal to a hegemonic masculinity and also be part in negotiations about the gender border. The second point is a potential threat from femininity that has influenced equestrian sports for the last 50 years and concretely affected boys in equestrian sport, as they have sometimes been called wimpy, girlish or gay. According to Connell's (1995) concept of masculinities, these characteristics used to ridicule riding boys can be related to a feminised and subordinated masculinity. In Connell's view, the subordination is constructed from the view of male homosexuality, that is, men who are subordinate and stigmatised because they do not meet the standard of real men whose desire should be directed towards women. According to a stigmatising discourse on male behaviour, a clear demarcation should be made against practices and places which are regarded as feminine. It is not unusual for male riders to explain the reasons for beginning to ride as the opportunity to meet many girls in the stable. In that way, they write themselves into

a normalised, heterosexual masculine discourse and primarily become conquerors. In this kind of discourse, a feminised environment is an advantage, instead of a threat, to masculinity. In that way the stables and riding are described as tools to achieve something other than a sports performance; it becomes instead an arena in which, thanks to the feminine dominance, masculinity could be tested and practised. As for the soccer player Fredrik and his teammates, riding was just a tool to achieve something else but in quite a different way.

The internal masculinity discourse implies a repudiation of girlish practices in the stable environment and an advocacy of more masculinised activities. References were made to the military tradition, and it is argued that for the boys' well-being, they should be knights or ride western and preferably ride in special groups without girls. In this line of thinking, boys need not just male role models; they also need male activities and male community fellowship, according to the statements made in *Horse & Rider*. Hence, ideally there would be a gender transformation of the equestrian sports so that boys would be secure in their masculinity, a "remasculinisation" that removes the threat that exists according to the prevailing gender norm logic.

In general, in *Horse & Rider* in the ongoing discussions of boys and riding, the fact that girls and women are dedicated to mastering the same challenges (which would possibly attract boys) is ignored. Girls and women are certainly competitive and are exalted by a fast canter, jumping, riding western and even playing knights. These aspects are not entirely appreciated by every girl and women in the stable, but such reactions are certainly also valid for boys and men. Looking at the journal in its entirety during the period studied, such practices and preferences related to girls and women are also found. The purpose of *Horse & Rider* is to take advantage of members' interests, and the journal itself must clearly present a reasonable amount of identification for its readers, the majority of whom are females engaged in equestrian sports. However, by limiting issues to boys' interests and needs, it creates representations of a narrower femininity in equestrianism focused on caring and social activities. This is especially the case when opinions on the matter centre on special masculine interests and the gender label of the sports is seen as a crucial problem. In this perspective, it seems to be a huge problem for the SEF and *Horse & Rider* to balance the view that women are valuable for equestrian sports with a desire to remasculinise the sport in order to attract boys.

In this work on gender boundaries actualised in the journal, there seem to be three main problems that are constructed in relation to female dominance and femininity:

- According to an external view, equestrian sports are labelled feminine (although "it is challenging and cool").
- The focus on caring and social activity in the stable, characterised by women and girls, as it was interpreted between the lines.
- Too few male role models in equestrian sports as well as limited access to male fellowship communities.

The discourses on men and women, masculinity and femininity, in the journal indicate that the practices of boys and men are radically different from those of girls

and women. In the periphery of the sport formed by everyday life in the stable environment, two dichotomous genders are created. Accordingly, everyday life seems to be the centre for girls and women and vice versa for boys and men. I have previously pointed out how the knowledge culture in the stable makes a difference between real "horsemen" and stable girls (Plymoth 2012a) and thus reproduces a gender order with different values for males and females. Here discourses have been met and interpreted that highlight male aspects such as toughness, action and competition in order to reproduce the attractiveness of riding. However, this way of expressing the expectations on boys and equestrianism implies a limitation of how boys are constructed. In dichotomous thinking the sexes become limited to two separate, one-dimensional characters who occupy different positions with differing preferences. Thus, boys are not expected to appreciate the social side and the caring part of the equestrian world, and the girls are supposed to have less interest in challenges and performances. Each becomes a negative counterpart to the other.

On the basis of *Horse & Riders*' representations of masculinity, it is possible to assert that there is a negotiation within equestrianism of the gender boundaries, as Messner (2002) argues. The discussion about change may be primarily considered a call for a new discourse on the importance of gender, to remasculinise and to define gender boundaries. The meaning of the different statements about masculinity and equestrianism appears as a signal of the wish to negotiate the external view through internal changes, with the aim of raising its status (Connell 1995; Messner 2007). There is a need to once again attribute equestrian sports with masculine values in order to attract boys. The discussions on boys in the stable indicate a new gender turn and a perceived need to defeminise the sports. In work on the gender boundaries, boys and men are making their own spaces with specific qualities, which mostly are defined *in contrast to* the feminine. The credo is clear: equestrian sports must be seen as less feminine; it must be perceived as tougher and more suitable for boys.

Some Final Words on a Collective Problematisation

Gender is a basic norm that affects approaches, actions and expectations in an ongoing process (Connell 1995; Fenstermaker and West 2002). This chapter would not have been written if SEF did not consider that gender is important, unless some mothers experienced a threat from the sex that is considered to dominate and characterise the stable, and, of course, these voices have been given space in *Horse & Rider*. The prerequisite is that a problem has been constructed around the negative attitude of boys towards equestrian sports which has been articulated in different contexts, and, as it turned out, that this discourse addresses the importance of masculinising equestrian sports to solve the problem.

Messner (2002) describes how boys and girls practise their gender collectively and how they as individuals in some situations strengthen their gender-typical behaviour, when confronted with one another. I have not listened to the men who

discussed the issue *Where are the boys*? but analysed how *Horse & Rider* has chosen to mediate their discussions. The nature of the issue, the composition of the conference group and the collective way of expressing opinions raise doubts about whether strong emphasis on the need for masculinisation and the call for homosocial communities was an effect of such gender-typical behaviour. In a collective discourse about male sports and male needs, talk concerning "the new man" for whom the importance of gender differences is downplayed will obviously not be highlighted. Rather, the potential threat of subordination and the feminisation of equestrian sports and its male practitioners need to be challenged.

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Chapter 10
Horse Power: Gender, Work, and Wealth in Canadian Show Jumping

Kendra Coulter

"We all know that ours is one of the few sports where men and women compete with and against one another on terms of absolute equality," said Equine Canada's Chief Executive Officer, Akaash Maharaj, in his speech at the International Equestrian Federation's 2010 General Assembly (Maharaj 2011, p. 28). Technically, this is true. There are no rules preventing girls and women from competing against boys and men. In fact, at horse shows in Canada, girls and women can be seen everywhere. From girls on ponies learning to jump to working mothers feeling the rush of competition in amateur classes, women's numerical dominance at equestrian competitions is clear. In most divisions, boys or men represent a small minority of participants, and in some cases, girls and/or women are the only competitors. However, at the top tier of professional show jumping, the Grand Prix level, this pattern changes. Where jumps range in height from 1.40 to 1.60 m and courses are most challenging, men consistently outnumber women. This pattern raises two related questions about gender and show jumping in Canada. Why, in a sport where women and girls constitute the majority of participants overall, do men constitute a majority of the competitors at the highest level? What factors are influencing men's and women's participation and achievement in Grand Prix show jumping?

A full analysis of gender and show jumping in Canada is an ambitious project beyond the scope of this chapter, and there are multiple angles which could be explored. Here I present an initial examination of the role gender plays in Grand Prix competition and in the lives of competitors. This discussion stems from a larger ethnographic and comparative research project on the intersections of work, class, and gender in horse cultures. These emphases are integral to highlighting and understanding what I call animal work and the nature/labour nexus (e.g. Coulter forthcoming).

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To assess gender and/in show jumping, I enlist and examine data collected through participant observation at horse shows, in show stables, and at other equestrian sites. Long-term immersion and naturalistic observation is a valuable way to watch and listen to the social interactions of riders, trainers, owners, grooms, horse show staff, sponsors, and others involved in the show jumping world. In addition, I have conducted formal and informal interviews, which has allowed me to probe more deeply into specific issues or events. Some informants agreed to be named, and their comments are thus ascribed to them personally. Others requested that their comments be non-attributable, and consequently their individual identities are obfuscated and replaced with a categorical description of their gender and relative position in the show jumping world. When a rider is identified as young, this means under 35 years of age. The participant-observation and interview data are bolstered by analysis of evidence from rider rankings, horse show statistics, the equestrian media, and mainstream media coverage of show jumping competitions.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of show jumping in Canada to explain the sport and outline the contemporary shape of competition. Then I move into a discussion of how show jumping is gendered. I provide the gender breakdown of competitors and then identify and reflect on the skills and attributes seen as key to Grand Prix achievement to probe whether the required attributes and/or gendered perceptions of women's and men's abilities explain the gender inequities in Grand Prix competition. Because Grand Prix show jumping involves professional horsemen and women, next I examine the social and economic factors which shape the sport. I conclude by synthesising the findings and highlight what is revealed about the gender politics of Canadian show jumping competition and culture.

The sport of show jumping is intertwined with its political economic context and is one kind of competitive activity within a broader for-profit horse industry and society. I have found that the political economy of show jumping has a substantial impact on the sport, and that the labour necessary for top-level participation reproduces gendered inequities. Accordingly, I argue that the cultural practices and socioeconomic relations outside of the ring play the most influential role in shaping the inequitable gendered makeup of Grand Prix show jumping.

A Snapshot of Show Jumping in Canada

Jumper classes are included at shows of different levels in Canada. Local fairs and schooling shows may include jumper classes, and organised equestrian show circuits recognised by the national sporting organisation, Equine Canada, are ranked as bronze, silver, or gold status. Gold competitions are of the highest status and difficulty and cost the most to enter. These competitions form what is called the "'A' Circuit" and are the focus of this chapter.

At gold-level shows, there are jumper divisions for junior riders (under 18 years of age) and adult amateurs, plus separate divisions for professional riders. Classes for professionals start with jumps of 1.15 m, which are raised by increments of 10 cm

up to the Grand Prix levels which have jumps of 1.40 m and higher. Amateurs are allowed to compete in classes against professional riders, but the reverse is not true. By and large, however, the professional classes are dominated by those who earn a living through horses.

Jumper classes are scored based on faults. Faults are added for knocking down jumps, going over the set allowable time ("time allowed"), or if a horse stops at a fence, ducks to the side, or otherwise crosses her or his own path (a "refusal"). The goal is to complete the course in the fastest time with the fewest number of faults, and prizes are awarded accordingly. Jumps are bright in colour and often involve bold construction ranging from large planks with sponsors' logos, to real or fake water pools ("liverpools" or actual "water jumps"), to the famous (or infamous) bicycle jump used in the international ring at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Courses are asymmetrical, technical, and challenging. Horses and riders are immaculately turned out with clean tack and equipment and formal show clothing, but the prizes are awarded solely based on performance and achievement (in contrast to judged hunter classes). Jumper classes and divisions are usually the referent when speaking of show jumping.

Gendering Show Jumping

In thinking about gender and show jumping, it is important to remember that we are reflecting on social constructions and relations. We are examining how ideas about women, men, masculinities, and femininities are enacted and reproduced, and how social and cultural processes shape women's and men's thoughts, experiences, and actions in both similar and uneven ways. Women and men are not naturally or inherently a particular way, and there is significant diversity evident across cultures and among people of the same gender within one culture. In other words, gender is context-specific and it is not a rigid dichotomy but rather a socially constructed continuum. Women and men can shape their gendered performances and contest or re-inscribe dominant gender regimes.

To begin to examine gender and show jumping, it is useful to start with empirical data about participation and success rates. All junior-amateur jumper divisions are numerically dominated by women. At the lower levels, class sizes range from approximately 20 competitors to upwards of 50 depending on the show, but never more than a handful of boys and men compete. As the jumps move up in height, the total number of competitors decreases. In 2010, twenty 1.40 m classes had amateur participant numbers that fluctuated between 5 and 11 competitors. Yet of these competitors, women still constituted a large majority and were aboard 79.3 % of the horses that competed in the division (Equestrian Management Group n.d.). In Grand Prix classes, the gender breakdown is quite different. In 14 classes held in 2010 which had prize money between $10,000 and $90,000 (Canadian dollars), 44.7 % of horses were ridden by women. In these classes, a woman won 42.8 % of the time (Equestrian Management Group n.d.).

Table 10.1 Canadian Grand Prix medals in the Pan-American Games, 1991–2007

Year	Place	Men	Women	Team
2007	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Bronze: Eric Lamaze and Hickstead	Gold: Jill Henselwood and Special Ed	Silver: Mac Cone and Melinda; Jill Henselwood and Special Ed; Eric Lamaze and Hickstead; Ian Millar and In Style
1999	Winnipeg, Canada	Gold: Ian Millar and Ivar		Bronze: Ian Millar and Ivar; Beth Underhill and Altair; Jill Henselwood and 'Till Tomorrow; Eric Lamaze and Kahlua
1991	Havana, Cuba	Gold: Danny Foster and Forever Diamond	Silver: Beth Underhill and Monopoly	Silver: Danny Foster and Forever Diamond; Beth Underhill and Monopoly; Ian Millar and Future Vision; Sandra Anderson and Scirroco

Note: Constructed by the author using data from multiple sources

To situate these data historically, it is clear that the gendered makeup of Canadian Grand Prix show jumpers has changed over the last 40 years and become more equitable. Canada first began competing internationally in show jumping at the Olympics in 1968, and the all-male won the team gold medal. In the 1970s, the faces of Canadian show jumpers competing internationally were predominantly male, although Barbara Simpson (1971), Norma Chornawka (1975), and Terry Leibel's (1979) participation on the Canadian teams in the Pan-American Games serves as exceptions, as does Terry Leibel's 1978 membership on the World Championship Team, that being the first year women were permitted to compete. Prior to women's admission into the World Championships, three Women's World Championships were held in 1965, 1970, and 1974. Barbara Kerr won a bronze medal for Canada in 1974 (Huddleston n.d.).

In 1986, Canadian Gail Greenough made history when she won the individual World Show Jumping Championship in Aachen, Germany. She was the first woman from any country to win and the first to make it into the top four. Of the 20 riders who have ridden for the Canadian team at the World Championships since 1986, eight have been women (40 %).

The Pan-American Games are the international competition where Canada has most consistently had success. Individual medals have been won by both men and women over the last 20 years of competition (see Table 10.1). Two of the three medal-winning teams demonstrated gender parity, and on the third, one woman competed. That one woman, Jill Henselwood, won the individual gold, however. Women earned two of the five individual medals won by Canada since 1991.

Of the 19 riders sent to represent Canada at the Pan-American Games since 1991, seven, or 36.8 %, were women.

The World Cup is another prestigious international event, and Canadians have competed in 28 of the 30 competitions held to date. In the 1980s, Canadian riders

Table 10.2 Percentage of female riders representing Canada internationally

Competition (1990–2010)	# of riders	# of women riders	% of women riders
Olympic games	12	3	25
Pan-American games	19	7	36.8
World championships	20	8	40
World cup	30	12	40
Total	*81*	*30*	*37*

Note: Constructed by the author using data from multiple sources

Ian Millar and Mario Deslauriers both won the World Cup, with Millar winning back-to-back titles aboard Big Ben in 1988 and 1989. Thirty riders have represented Canada in World Cup competition, 12 of whom were women (40 %).

Over the last 20 years, Canada has competed in Olympic show jumping at all but the 2004 games when the team did not qualify. Of the 12 riders, only three, or one quarter, were women. Canada's silver medal-winning team in 2008 was comprised of three men and one woman, Ian Millar, Mac Cone, Jill Henselwood, and Eric Lamaze. Eric Lamaze and Hickstead won the individual gold for Canada that year.

In total, at the Olympics, Pan-American Games, World Cups, and World Championships, over the last 20 years, 37 % of Canadian riders were female (see Table 10.2). It is worth noting that often riders will represent the country repeatedly, and thus some women and men competed multiple times wearing the red Team Canada show jacket in international events.

Grand Prix riders compete against each other on home turf as well. Grand Prix competitions will be included at most gold-level national shows in Canada throughout the spring, summer, and fall. Many professional riders will also compete in warmer regions of the United States during the winter. Rankings compiled by *Horse Sport Magazine* provide a breakdown of the top ten prize money earners among Canadian Grand Prix competitors. Between 2000 and 2009, female riders constituted four of the top ten money earners, finishing 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 9th in prize money (Horse Sport 2010, March). A similar pattern was replicated in 2010, and the same four women were on the list of the top ten prize money earners: Jill Henselwood in 4th, Karen Cudmore in 5th, Beth Underhill in 7th, and Ainsley Vince in 9th place (Horse Sport 2011, February).

This is not an exhaustive list of Canadian show jumping data nationally or internationally. Team Canada will also compete in select Nations' Cups around the world, and some Canadian riders will participate in international competitions on European circuits, for example. However, the data analysed provides a good representative sample of the gender breakdown of Canadian riders in both international events and national competitions. All riders who have represented Canada are white. Ethnic and racial diversity at horse shows is very minimal at all levels.

So, what can be concluded from these data when thinking about gender and show jumping? On the one hand, the proportion of female athletes in Grand Prix competitions within Canada or internationally is below half, but it could be argued, not dramatically so. Women achieve strong results within national competitions and when representing Canada internationally, as well. In other words, women are not only participating regularly, they are achieving excellence in terms of competition results.

However, in comparison to the percentage of women competing in the highest amateur level (79.3 %), the drop is significant. The gender breakdown shifts from women outnumbering men by at least 4:1 to being outnumbered by men 4:6. The factors which influence people's participation in show jumping as amateurs versus as professionals clearly have gendered explanations, or the numbers would not be so dramatically different. Something occurs in the conceptual and literal space between amateur and professional which influences women and men's participation. The transition means fewer women compete as professionals but also that more men are in the saddle, both as a proportion of competitors and as a totality. No other classes at gold-level hunter-jumper competitions have as many boys or men competing, period. Both the decrease in women and the increase in men's participation are noteworthy, gendered dynamics. In the interest of space, here I concentrate in particular on the factors which contribute to the decrease in women's participation.

To do a gendered analysis of show jumping, we must be thinking not simply about percentages of horses with riders who have biologically female or male bodies. Because gender is socially constructed, we must examine a more complex set of social relations, expectations, and identities for men and for women and broader and deeper ideas about masculinities and femininities in professional sport.

Human and Equine Athletes

In their analyses of sports and gender, some scholars suggest that women prefer physical activities which are more private, a reflection of learned inhibition among women and their discomfort with the objectification of their bodies and their physical abilities (Young 1990; Ring 1987). Arguably, although any kind of jumper competition requires riders to be in public, on display in the ring individually with a horse, and under the gaze of all who are watching, there are far more eyes on Grand Prix classes. Moreover, those watching the Grand Prix ring rank much higher in the relative hierarchy of status in the show jumping world and include professional riders, elder statesmen and women of upper echelon horse circles, wealthy owners and sponsors with varying degrees of economic and cultural capital, and some members of the media, many of whom possess national and often international prestige. The spotlight, valorisation, and greater earning potential of Grand Prix competition likely make it more appealing than amateur classes to certain men seeking celebration and status through sport (Dworkin and Messner 2002; Messner 2002, 2007; Thornton 1993). In comparison, the amateur classes feel like much more intimate spaces.

However, there are, of course, women who compete in Grand Prix show jumping and other very public and prominent sports, simultaneously participating in their construction as celebrities (e.g. Ifekwunigwe 2009). Theories about women's preference for privacy may provide a better rationale for why many women who love horses ride for pleasure and shun competition altogether, but

do not provide convincing arguments to explain the gendering of Grand Prix show jumping, a process that appears far more complex than a desire to avoid the judgemental gaze.

Grand Prix show jumping is a challenging sport. Do the demands of the sport explain what role gender might be playing in shaping who can participate and achieve? Two bodies are needed for equestrian sport, one human and one equine. Horses that can compete in Grand Prix show jumping are elite athletes, weighing approximately 1,500 lb (700 kg) and possessing an outstanding combination of power, speed, strength, agility, and "scope," a term that means the ability and ease with which a horse can jump up and over obstacles. Grand Prix horses differ in what riders call "rideability", meaning, essentially, obedience and level of cooperation. The horses also range in temperament and energy level with most being very fit, as well as very energetic. Some Grand Prix horses can be spotted being lunged (exercised in a circle on a long lead with no rider) and/or ridden for up to 2 hours before a class to drain some of their energy.

Grand Prix courses are challenging in every possible sporting sense. The jumps are large, and the courses are technical, demanding, and tricky. The pace must be quick to remain within the time allowed, but horses' canter or gallop gaits must also be increased and decreased where necessary. The horses' "stride", or amount of ground they cover with each full canter step, must also be shortened or lengthened constantly to ensure the correct take-off location whether the jump is a single obstacle or in a combination (line with other jumps). In general, the horse should take off the same distance in front of the jump as the height of that jump. So, for example, if a fence is 1.50 m, the horse's arc will usually start 1.50 m in front of that fence, and the horse will land about another metre and a half past the jump. Of course, a rider is not using a measuring tape but rather is judging based on "feel" and on "eye" in real time, as the horse canters around the course.

Some horses, despite the years of experience necessary to train for Grand Prix classes, still spook or back off at certain jumps (e.g. water jumps) consistently or unexpectedly, and thus need particularly strong encouragement to urge them forward and over. Some horses, despite extensive preparation, are very powerful and fast and they try to pull their riders around corners or at jumps at an overly quick, flat, and forward pace. Horses are living beings. They have minds which on any given day can place them at different locations on a continuum of cooperativeness and disobedience, even after years of substantial and intensive training. They have moods which can change depending on weather, hormones, negative interactions with people or other horses, or any number of other factors. They have bodies which can feel pain, discomfort, stiffness, and so on. They also demonstrate a keen awareness of riders' stress, anxiety, and energy levels and can be affected in a range of ways by what they sense. As long-time Grand Prix rider Beth Underhill puts it, "When you go into a ring with a 1,000 lb horse, anything can happen."

Both sexes of horses are valued for Grand Prix show jumping, and mares, stallions, and geldings (castrated male horses) compete together in the same classes. Geldings are considered the calmest. Stallions are widely considered powerful and challenging to manage but are used for Grand Prix show jumping as a precursor to,

or sometimes, corequisite with, breeding roles. Thus, their fertility is valued, and disobedient behaviour, high energy, and lack of manageability which can stem from their hormonal drives are not lauded, but are accepted.[1]

Mares' bad behaviour, grumpiness, or disobedience is attributed to "mare-ishness" or "bitchiness." Mares are virtually always on a supplement to regulate their reproductive cycles and suppress their hormones while competing and often while training, a strategy seen to promote greater cooperation. Some barns and riders will have the ovaries surgically removed from mares as a preventative strategy, although this clearly eliminates the possibility of them reproducing at a later date. However, some Grand Prix riders really like to work with mares. Two young women, Amy Millar and Carly Campbell-Cooper, have both said, independently, that with a mare, a rider needs to make requests, rather than demands, to encourage the horse to cooperate and perform, but that if a successful partnership can be forged, they believe mares will "go the extra mile for you".

All told, show jumping is a challenging sport and Grand Prix show jumping is particularly difficult. Riders are trying to simultaneously read, modify, drive, and package half a tonne of horse power. Riders must respond to the actions of another living creature, while controlling and adjusting their own bodies, positions, and requests in dramatic or very subtle ways. Accordingly, riding requires a range of physical and intellectual skills and abilities. What are these demands and are they contributing to gender inequities?

Gender and Riding Excellence

The physical and the psychological demands of the sport are largely entangled. The essential or ideal qualities a rider needs to excel at the Grand Prix level are often discussed, and because the demands of the sport are so multifaceted, there is never simply one attribute or ability highlighted. For example, top Brazilian show jumper Rodrigo Pessoa, recognising the holistic challenges of riding, posits a series of necessary qualities: "work, intelligence, sacrifice, tactics, detachment, vision, and constancy" (Vagnozzi and Renauldon 2010, p. 25). While there was some diversity in the desired qualities highlighted by the Canadian show jumpers with whom I spoke, overall they were quite consistent with the Pessoa list and with each other.

Precision is also widely recognised as essential by equestrian athletes. I suggest this term is chosen to try and capture the complexity of the many kinds of multitasking identified above; that is, the intellectual, psychological, and physical demands as well as the interspecies nature of this work. Precision is about doing many things carefully and simultaneously and particularly being able to synthesise demands and factors, and react accurately. In a similar vein, riders and trainers consistently

[1] For good ethnographic discussion of how and why ideas about Thoroughbred race horses intersect with people's gendered identities and perceptions, and examination of the gendered politics of reproduction and breeding in horse racing, see Cassidy (2007).

stress the importance of "feeling" the horse and each ride. Riding is seen to be about technical correctness and methodical approaches to preparation, but equally as important is the idea that someone "gets" horses and can almost subconsciously feel each horse and each moment on a horse. One young male Grand Prix rider who stressed the importance of rationally and dispassionately breaking riding down into technical components was equally adamant about a feeling of connectivity with the horse. He said:

> I like working with horses, and recognizing their individual personalities and characteristics… I want to get to know them if I'm going to be working with them for a while and am asked to make them perform their best. But I ride for a living and I ride so many horses. If I rode your horse once a year ago, I won't remember its name, but I will very likely remember how it felt.

Horses can be developed and their abilities and performances improved through elaborate training and care. Horses, unfortunately, also can be coerced through punitive training measures which inflict pain as an attempt to counter undesired behaviours. But all riders and trainers with whom I spoke also stress that certain horses possess a desire to be "careful", that is, to not knock down or even touch jumps, which makes them excel in the sport above others. Such horses can be further improved through training, but the combination of physical capabilities coupled with a willingness or even drive to jump clear is heralded as ideal. For both riders and horses, the power of training and the value of a perceived inherent drive and talent are celebrated. Thus, equestrian competition is constructed as about intellect and preparation but also as about a sentient, relational dynamic. The "rational" is traditionally and stereotypically seen as a masculine characteristic, while emotionality is more often associated with women and femininities. However, these celebrated abilities are not seen by the riders as necessarily gendered.

The physical demands of riding were regularly identified. Grand Prix riders consistently battle back pain in particular but also knee and shoulder issues, as well as other physical ailments stemming from repetitive strain, accidents, and other injuries. Physical strength was clearly seen as a necessary element of riding. As part of their body work (Miller 2011; Wolkowitz 2006), both male and female Grand Prix riders engage in strength training, as well as strategies for promoting flexibility and pain management. Yet strength was not highlighted as a factor which gave men a greater advantage in the competition ring nor was it seen as required at a level unachievable for women. However, the physical impact of making horses one's career was highlighted in more gendered terms along with a package of other concerns, and I return to this side of bodily labour in the next section.

The emotional and psychological aspects of the sport were very consistently identified as absolutely key to successful Grand Prix riding, and this is a domain where we can begin to see some gendered differences. The overall theme of emotions and sport psychology was conceptualised in three ways by riders: as the need to manage emotions, repress emotions, or approach the sport with an absence of emotions. Accordingly, processes of gendered socialisation which encourage girls and women to be more emotional and discourage the expression and development of emotions in boys and men manifest in show jumping.

Bravery was seen as essential for both riders and horses to excel at the Grand Prix level. Male riders spoke about their female competitors being equally brave and saw the confidence and courage necessary for excellence as neither gendered masculine or feminine. Indeed, both top women's and men's performances embody boldness and immense drive.

However, female Grand Prix riders of all ages spoke privately about the efforts they make to manage and suppress emotions and feelings of nervousness, inadequacy, anxiety, and self-doubt. Younger women with less experience in the Grand Prix ring particularly recognised that they had moments, rides, and days, weeks, or even longer phases where they felt clouded by self-doubt and thus were more hesitant in the saddle. More experienced women riders spoke about having developed an ability to compartmentalise emotions, an approach usually associated with men (see classic discussions of this in Hearn 1987; Kaufman 1993 and a more recent view in Hooks 2004).

It is difficult to know if women speak more about these inner doubts because gendered socialisation has encouraged them to be more self-critical and introspective, as well as more forthcoming about their feelings. I am unsure about whether the men feel as much self-doubt. Moreover, if they do, they may be less open about such feelings. I suggest there is likely heterogeneity among male riders, with some battling self-doubt but keeping it to themselves, others possessing a strong level of confidence, and certain others simply not approaching riding in those terms or on in that way. One young, male Grand Prix rider, recollecting his first trip into the Grand Prix ring for an international competition, told this story:

> I remember I was sitting on [horse's name] outside the international ring, I think I was one or two away. Someone asked me if I was nervous. I said, "Not at all. Three things could happen. One, it jumps well. Two, it jumps poorly. Three, it doesn't jump. I hope the first happens, but my job is to deal with it if scenario two or three happens".

The importance of fostering a strong "mental game" was emphasised, with focus, concentration, clarity, and calmness constituting the ideal competition frame of mind, a pattern not unique to elite equestrian sports. Speaking of a more experienced and successful female Grand Prix rider with whom she had trained, a younger woman and newer Grand Prix competitor said:

> [She] can appear really cold and downright bitchy from the outside to some people, but she needs to be that focused. It's a coping strategy and necessary part of her preparation, putting everything else out of her head. She can get really intense when she gets in the zone. Obviously it works.

Women recognise that they and/or other female show jumpers are characterised by some as "bitchy" simply because of the persona they embodied when preparing for a class, but this was seen as a necessary risk and accepted as part of the gendered reality of the sport. The need to actually be focused was deemed far more important than some people's negative perceptions.

The men, too, recognised the importance of the psychological aspect of competition and its relation to emotions and feelings. Rodrigo Pessoa's list of desirable

qualities included "detachment". Some male riders, particularly younger men, engage in the same pre-competition ritual of seclusion and focus, un-self-conscious about how they might appear, perhaps aware that they are more likely to be seen as concentrating and not as "bitchy". Exemplifying the different perception of male athletes' pre-competition isolation, a female rider said of one male Grand Prix competitor, "He doesn't talk to anyone for hours before if he has a big class. It's part of his ritual. His staff just know not to talk to him unless it's urgent". Other men seem not to need this sort of mental preparation and can be seen around the horse show grounds socialising with other competitors, spectators, owners, and/or sponsors, reaffirming their image as confident, easy-going, approachable social beings.

I had an interesting discussion about emotions and their uses with a male Grand Prix rider I knew to be a jovial person. He was very conscious of the role emotions play in riding and linked training and reason with "feeling" but not feelings. He ascribed a negative causal relationship between emotions and success:

Rider: For me, I'm good at what I do because I'm able to take emotion right out of it… It's very straightforward if you can take that out. You put block A, block B, block C down and eventually you've built a house… Just do it purely off feeling, and the structural elements. Nobody goes in that ring to do badly, but there's a certain element of stress. For me, because there's no emotion, I just don't care. I go in the ring and I'm focused on the task at hand. I just don't get stressed, about anything. It drives girlfriends crazy.

KC: (laughs) I wondered if that translates to the rest of your life, if you're like the 'Dog Whisperer' and very controlled all the time.

Rider: I'm level.

KC: But happiness is an emotion.

Rider: That's true. That's a good point. I see that stress has a negative influence on riding, so why do something to increase stress? On very rare occasions, if [in my teaching] I see you are doing something very problematic, like being mean to your horse, or doing something repeatedly that I think might get you hurt, I might yell. But I save that so it has some shock value. And again, like if I get after a horse, there's no emotion in it. I'm going to yell because I intend to scare you, because what you did was wrong. I have no attachment.

KC: So it's a controlled, rational use of an emotional tactic?

Rider: Exactly.

Overall, riders were essentially unanimous in their belief that emotions were not good for riding. Due to their socialisation, women more often had to figure out how to manage or suppress emotional responses and learn to compete in a masculinist climate which emphasises toughness alongside detachment. That said, Eric Lamaze, one of Canada's most successful Grand Prix show jumpers, has welled up or shed tears on more than one occasion, including on the Olympic podium; at a Hall of Fame ceremony inducting one of his early mounts, Cagney; and, certainly, in response to the sudden death of his legendary horse, Hickstead, in the fall of 2011. Similarly, Ian Millar, a decorated and very experienced rider known as "Captain Canada", became quite emotional speaking about the death of his wife. However, these are specific instances after or away from competition where emotion is socially acceptable or justified and even men can safely demonstrate feelings without compromising their masculinity.

Work and Wealth in Equestrian Sport

Overall, the collection of skills and abilities needed for excellence do not vary substantially between the high-level amateur classes and Grand Prix events. The need to guide, encourage, gauge, and adjust oneself and one's horse and respond to the horse's actions is present at any level of competition. There are additional challenges to Grand Prix classes with larger fences and more technical courses, certainly, and these factors intensify the demands on competitors' bodies and minds. Moreover, the stakes are higher because the prize money is greater, and when someone earns their living through horses, achievement is an essential piece of earning, maintaining, and developing one's career. This dimension is crucial to understanding gender and elite show jumping.

Performance in the competition ring is interwoven with riders' other responsibilities and tasks in the business aspect of their careers. Riders do not make a rigid conceptual distinction between their sporting performance in the competition ring and the rest of the work they do to make their participation in that level of sport possible. Rather, the opposite is true. Competing in a Grand Prix class is conceptualised as part of a continuum of work within the "horse industry". Amateurs earn or obtain income elsewhere to finance their participation. Professionals earn income through their work with horses and horse people. Grand Prix riding athletes are also professionals and business people for whom top-level competition is possible because of a broad collection of other work performed. A very small number of Grand Prix riders are hired by stable owners to be predominantly horse trainers and riders. A small but growing number of Grand Prix competitors are young amateurs whose high-level participation is due to family wealth, a reality reflective of a trend in the sport to which I return below.

The vast majority of Grand Prix riders in Canada run their own stables. The stables are usually owned but sometimes leased. There may be a business partner and often a stable manager, but the Grand Prix rider is usually at the helm. They ride horses, they teach students, they buy and sell horses nationally and internationally, they train horses, they give riding clinics, and so on. Most Grand Prix riders have sponsorships of different kinds, involving local or family businesses, equestrian companies, and/or prominent national or international corporations.

All told, a Grand Prix riders' workloads and this kind of animal work are very multifaceted. Riders must engage not only in body work but also in emotional labour to shape and manage their emotions and those of others. Grand Prix riders are not able to concentrate solely on their Grand Prix mounts and personal development as athletes. The sport itself requires a high level of multitasking. The professionalisation of the sport and its contextualisation within a for-profit horse industry add other demands.

For many newer Grand Prix competitors, the multilayered aspects of their work present many challenges and much stress. Younger women speak more often than men of the need to build client bases, sell more horses, and grow their businesses overall, as they want to ride horses competitively and understand that they need to

engage in the full breadth of work to try and generate sufficient revenue to make high-level showing possible. Those from wealthier families are often well sponsored and subsidised and thus able to allocate more time to riding and training, although they, too, are building businesses.

The younger men have greater diversity in their attitudes to the business side of equestrian sport, seem to find fewer obstacles in their ascendancy, and have no trouble securing clients of various kinds. Keean White, a young Grand Prix rider mentored by top Canadian show jumper Eric Lamaze, speaks regularly and publicly about the business side of the sport and of being very driven, focused, and clear about his aspirations. He comes from a family with substantial wealth but emphasises his accomplishments as a self-made man and business owner. He has built an elaborate transnational business including horse sales, show management, equestrian-linked real estate, and even concert production at horse shows. He engages comfortably in the social labour necessary for soliciting clients and sponsors as a confident, athletic, and competent man. Other male riders spoke with a notably nonchalant attitude about how many people come to them wanting them to ride their horses.

Horses capable of competing at the Grand Prix level are sometimes bought as youngsters and trained. Others are purchased from other Grand Prix competitors locally, nationally, or internationally. Some are purchased from European breeding or show stables. These horses can be owned by riders independently, in concert with investors, by the rider's or another stable, by an external independent owner, by a consortium, or by a corporation. All of these different models of ownership are used. By any measure, Grand Prix horses are very expensive. The prices will vary extensively and range from approximately $150,000 to millions of Canadian dollars. Riders very rarely own their own horses independently, unless they purchased the horse when she or he was younger and less pricey, or managed to luck into a capable horse whose potential was originally unknown or who was seen as too difficult to ride.

Due to the high costs, horse owners are generally from the upper class. Some riders will actively seek out "rides" (horses to be shown), put together consortiums, approach owners with established relationships with other riders, and/or consciously draw on or build networks with wealthy people through social channels or business propositions. More men possess more wealth in Canada, and thus confident male riders who can engage comfortably in homosocial behaviour may be at an advantage. Most men who ride Grand Prix possess clear signs of self-confidence, exemplified in various ways, including the easy-going show day performativity noted above. In contrast, Beth Underhill, an experienced, decorated show jumper, will not solicit rides. However, she has put together syndicates to co-purchase horses, and she is comfortable approaching corporate sponsors whether she has a pre-existing contact or relationship or not.

Overall, there is no clear blueprint for exactly how gender figures in this integral socioeconomic work, but self-perception and confidence are factors. Gendered patterns of socialisation and expectations will no doubt shape riders' abilities to engage in the labour necessary for building relationships with owners and potential

owners to some degree. At the same time, wealthy owners can exercise power over who rides their horses and thus their perceptions about physical and psychological abilities come into play, and gendered ideas are likely interwoven with their decisions. A woman who is perceived as bitchy because of her pre-competition focus may be at a disadvantage over a sociable man or a male athlete deemed to be merely in a state of concentration. Simplistic notions about the relative merits of male and female riders may also shape the choices of rich owners selecting riders for their horses.

What is unequivocally clear is that labour and economics have a major impact on show jumping, and gender is bound up with these processes in different ways. Prominent Canadian show jumper, Beth Underhill, spoke frankly about the continuum of demands inside and outside of the ring and their possible gendered implications:

> There's a lot of pressure. Sometimes the pressure gets exhausting and I think that's when people stop doing it. It can be all-consuming. Whether it's the pressure of keeping a client, whether it's the pressure of financially staying afloat, whether it's the pressure of riding a horse that might throw you on your head, or the pressure to succeed when you're on the team… it's something you learn how to deal with. I think a lot of that comes with experience and I think that's why a lot of us get better the older we get in this sport.
>
> Quite honestly, I think it's a ridiculously difficult sport. I think it's physically hard, I think it's mentally hard. I'm a pretty sensitive person and I've gotten better, but I still find it hard. It can be very hurtful. And I think, honestly, about our personalities. Men are able to cope with it just that much better, or it doesn't bother them so much, or they're not as sensitive towards that side of things… I think there are fewer women who have what it takes to cope, or survive, to sustain a career, to financially stay afloat…
>
> It's very physical work. It's long hours, it's physically challenging to ride a thousand pound horse around the ring, or ten of them a day, or twenty of them… And emotionally, when you're a woman and at the top of a business, or running a business, you have a lot thrown at you. For sure men and women compete equally, but it's a pretty dog-eat-dog world. It's people soliciting [your] clients, or there's always going to be somebody trying to undercut you or step on top of you… I think not a lot of women choose to live that way.

Underhill makes clear the connections between the act of competing in Grand Prix show jumping and its inextricability from the labour processes required to make horses one's career. She moves back and forth seamlessly and repeatedly between analysis of the challenges in the ring and outside of the ring and the possible gendered implications of equestrian labour processes. She rightly makes a connection between elite equestrian sport and other sectors of the economy. The social, physical, emotional, psychological, and personal demands placed on top riders in the horse industry – long hours, various kinds of competition, many types of pressure, etc. – are akin to the demands in high levels of economic or political organisations, which are also male-dominated. Grand Prix show jumping has a greater proportion of women than do most high-level economic or political offices, but this is not too surprising, since equestrian competitions are, overall, dominated by women. However, the inequity at the top is still present, and Underhill hypothesises that some women may eschew the extreme workloads, psychological and physical demands, and life patterns in favour of greater work-life balance and alternative career paths which allow them to combine achievement with other things.

Women in the industry consistently highlight inequitable personal/familial support for men and women, with male riders often having a wife or girlfriend who is also "in the business". The reverse is less uncommon although not completely absent from the circuit. One lesbian competitor comanages a stable with her partner.

But in a majority of stables, if a female Grand Prix rider has a male partner, he does other work, either elsewhere in the horse industry or in a completely different sector. I was told twice about how the boyfriend of a Grand Prix rider briefly became her barn manager. It was raised as an example of a man not being happy working "under" his girlfriend. Their relationship did not end, but he now works in a related but separate branch of the horse industry. Certain young women express concern about finding boyfriends and husbands since they work such long hours and are regularly on the road at horse shows. They feel strongly that many men are not interested in a woman who works as much as they do (an issue not unique to professional horsewomen, of course) and are sceptical about the possibility of finding male partners who would assist with their business.

A common pattern on the show circuit is male Grand Prix rider and female partner providing supportive labour by doing work such as managing the day-to-day operations of the barn and/or the finances. This subsidises the operation and frees up the male rider to concentrate more on training, competing, or other specific aspects of the industry such as building and maintaining relationships with investors.

Another key contribution of the wives of male riders is in the realm of social reproduction, that is, the unpaid work done to sustain and reproduce people (e.g. Bezanson 2006). Male Grand Prix riders who wish to have children are not physically inhibited by pregnancy, nor are they expected to devote a great deal of time caring for children when their primary role is seen as professional rider. As in other economic sectors, the elite and up-and-coming male Grand Prix riders can benefit from time with their children while simultaneously being able to concentrate on their careers, confident that their children, in addition to various aspects of the business, are being effectively cared for by their wives. A prominent example of this pattern is exemplified by the decades of extensive and multifaceted behind-the-scenes work done by Lynn Millar, the late wife of Grand Prix rider Ian Millar. Her contributions to child rearing, stable managing, and horse training work are recognised as "an integral part" of his success (Huddleston 2008, n.p.).

Women riders who wish to have children must take some time away from riding during and after pregnancy, thereby affecting their ability to continue training, competing, and generating revenue. Top international show jumper, Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum, now riding for Germany, engaged in a battle to have her international points frozen, rather than lost, while she was pregnant and not actively competing (Dodd 2010). While she was ultimately successful, this gender-specific fight further demonstrates that while women are not actively prevented from competing, the sport, akin to the rest of the for-profit economy, has been designed based on a male athlete (worker) model of high-intensity, uninterrupted participation. Moreover, the social reproductive work involved in raising children is not easily combined with riding many horses a day, and clearly women require extensive paid or unpaid

support for child care if they wish to continue training and competing, let alone doing all of the other work highlighted as key to maintaining a show stable. All told, while gender inequities are not always explicit or immediately obvious, claims about gender neutrality can camouflage the differential experiences of women and men that have an impact on participation and success.

Conclusion

Women are not formally prevented from competing against men, nor are elite equestrian spaces devoid of women. However, the culture of show jumping emphasises a particular way of being which is more compatible with the ways in which men are socialised to think and act. Moreover, the majority of the attributes necessary for participation in the competition ring are not advantageously masculine, but engagement in the top levels of the sport is made possible by the labour required outside of the ring. These sites and labour processes are constructed by both women and men in ways that make men's participation easier. Professional and personal gender relations in the sport, industry, and culture of show jumping can create conditions which reproduce inequities and which are reflective of broader, enduring socioeconomic patterns in Canada and similar societies. Identifying these uneven dynamics, Beth Underhill said, "If you're a woman, you'd better really want it, because you're going to have to work twice as hard".

Most of today's experienced and prominent Canadian riders did not come from wealthy backgrounds, and some came from working class or even poor families. The economic comfort they enjoy today took decades of work and luck. They were often mentored and supported in their riding and assisted in the business aspect of their lives by individual and corporate connections honed through various kinds of social labour. The class origins of Grand Prix competitors is shifting, however, and this further demonstrates the role political economic factors play in shaping the sport. A number of young riders now competing – both men and women – have been able to move into the Grand Prix ranks quickly. These young women and men are very good riders, but they are also from families that possess substantial wealth. This allows the riders to enlist the best training, facilities, and equine partners. With an extensive transnational market for elite show jumping horses now established, many of these newer riders from around the world, Canada included, use family money to purchase the world's best horses. These riders are further privileged because they are able to concentrate more of their time on the demands of the sport itself rather than on revenue generation.

This shift suggests that class may be playing an even greater role in show jumping than it has in the past. Neither show jumping itself nor Canadian society at large is moving towards a more equitable model. In fact, Canada is marked by increasing economic polarisation. The wealthy minority comprises a large majority of equestrian competitors, and the political economy of show jumping continues to play a disproportionate role in shaping all aspects of the sport. The lack of formal gender

barriers to participation is celebrated, yet the extreme economic demands of the sport are normalised and not analysed as classed and also gendered.

Although merely hypothetical at this point, an interesting exercise is to think about what the sport of show jumping might look like if it were situated within a more equitable economic terrain, and if public policy steps were taken so that all those women, men, girls, and boys who wanted to develop as riders, foster relationships with horses, and participate in the sport could do so.

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Chapter 11
The Black, the White, the Green: Fluid Masculinities in Brazilian Dressage

Jorge Knijnik

If I can just allow myself to experience this, let myself go with it,
I can feel the angels here,
in this world where we live with animals (Ann Game)

Rio 2007. The Pan American Games. Nilo V.O.,[1] an elegant, well-trained, white stallion, parades on the tracks. Its horseman, wearing a tailcoat and a top hat, attempts to be discreetly inconspicuous, as the dressage competition rules demand. However, his discretion stops short of one detail: Rogério Clementino is the first black man in the history of the Pan American Games to be part of a dressage team. And he goes on, as a member of the 2007 Brazilian team, to win a bronze medal riding Nilo. The following year, again riding Nilo, Roger was to be the first black person to be a member of a dressage team in the Olympic Games. Unfortunately, the "Ebony and Ivory" tandem (Knijnik et al. 2008) was not able to compete in Beijing as Nilo failed medical tests before the competition started.

"Like human athletes, horse athletes have the power to inspire us, and sometimes break our hearts" (Warren 2003: 1). When I first saw the Nilo/Roger tandem performing in Rio 2007 – I was there to study "delicate masculinities" (Rojo 2014) – I was struck by both the "Ebony and Ivory" metaphor and the grace of their presentations. The flow of their dance showed their connection clearly. They were not a human riding a horse, or a horse being ridden by a man; they were another "creature" (Game 2001: 1–2). I was inspired to follow this "creature" in my research project on masculinities.

[1]The V.O. indicates that the horse comes from the stable of the Brazilian entrepreneur, Victor Oliva.

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My inspiration proved justified. Both Roger and Nilo had started as "outsiders" in the Brazilian equestrian sports scene; Nilo had been an abandoned horse in Victor Oliva's stable when Roger started to give him some attention, while Roger was a humble employee on the ranch when he began to work Nilo. Their relationship empowered them both and impacted not only on their own and Victor Oliva's gender performances (Butler 2006) but also on the Brazilian dressage scenario.

It is the co-embodied human/horse relationship between Roger and his white stallion Nilo and the tensions of this relationship with Victor Oliva – the "hegemonic" male (Connell 1995a) – that are important in the construction of what I call *fluid* masculinities on the dressage field. The image of the Amazon warrior (Adelman 2004) is just one example that illustrates how the human/horse interaction can become a factor in the "destabilizations of gender boundaries" (Plymoth 2012: 345). Birke and Brandt (2009: 189), in a seminal work on human/horse relationships, argue that the mutual embodiment that occurs within these relationships offers "several ways in which gender can be produced." The authors note that humans have singular gender experiences while dealing with animals, but "the animals themselves become gendered through the interaction" (2009: 189).

In a country where only a few are elite "horse riders" while the majority may still be treated in ways more akin to pack animals, this chapter will show how the interactions between Roger and Nilo, and between the two of them and Victor Oliva, make fluid the notion of a unique masculinity in the Brazilian equestrian world (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Anderson 2008). The data for my analysis comes from two sources: in-depth interviews I conducted with Roger in 2009 and my ethnographic notes made during dressage competitions in which Roger was participating and/or working as a coach for Victor Oliva's son, or during visits to Victor Oliva's ranch.

I begin the chapter with a brief explanation of the dressage competition scenario and of my research route within Brazilian dressage. I then outline some relevant aspects of the interconnected lives of the three protagonists of this paper – the black Roger, the white Nilo, and the "green" Victor Oliva.[2] Following that, I attempt to make the interconnection between them even more transparent, by exploring Roger's words and acts toward both Nilo and Victor Oliva. Within this, I conduct a discourse analysis (Denscombe 2003) of my interviews with Roger, using insights from my ethnographic notes to reflect on the gender issues that arose from the relationships between the three protagonists. I will show how the interspecies connection (Nilo/Roger) empowers Roger's masculinity while transforming that of Victor Oliva. I draw extensively on the theoretical framework provided by Birke and Brandt (2009: 189) in their research on the "mutual corporeality" or the "co-embodiment" that occurs between horse and human and which can produce new tensions within the gender order. As these authors claim, "the presence of horses enables a subversion of dominant gender practices particularly at the localized

[2] I refer to Victor Oliva as the "green" as he owns the Green Island ranch, where this story has started – as well as he is the one who owns the money, the "green" dollars to sustain his social position.

(private) level" (p. 189). At the end of the chapter, I provide a reflection on what might be not only further research development of masculinity issues in the equestrian field of Brazil but also new possibilities brought to the sports arena by human/horse relationships (Adelman 2011).

Dressage

Unlike other forms of equestrian competition which are based on measurable achievements of the horse/rider, dressage is subjective. In dressage competitions, tandems – the pairs formed by horse and rider – are evaluated by a group of judges for harmony and specific movements that they have to demonstrate in the arena (Rojo 2014).

The particularities of the dressage competition – rhythmic and delicate progressions which are compared to dance movements – have created a gender stereotype for this competition and its competitors (Rojo 2014). Despite the fact that it has its origins in males aiming to show control over their horses, nowadays within the equestrian world, dressage is seen as a feminized arena (Adelman 2004; Birke and Brandt 2009). Ethnographic research has found that effeminate and gay men are likely to be better accepted in the dressage context (Dashper 2012) than in some other sports fields.

My Research Route into Brazilian Dressage

I followed the Brazilian competition until I was able to make contact with Roger, who invited me to attend the national championships in Sao Paulo, in 2009. For a middle class university lecturer like myself, the scenario was quite new: a large wealthy country club in an upper-class area of my city, where people of European descent assembled to cheer on their horses. Most intriguing for me, though, was that the whole competition was held in English; no Portuguese language either in the announcements or in the flyers distributed to the audience.

During the days I interviewed Roger, I was able to meet his boss, Victor Oliva, and even have lunch with him, his ex-wife Hortencia, some of his friends, and Roger, who was the only rider allowed to eat at the restaurant with the horse owners. All the other riders, professional competitors, went elsewhere to eat, many having brought their own food and sitting under a tree to eat. Below it will become clear how Roger gained the right to lunch with his boss as he gained power through his relationship with Nilo. What follows is the outcome of my conversations with Roger, which became, with his express authorization, in-depth interviews (Minichiello et al. 1995; Denscombe 2003). These conversations were conducted for the duration of the national dressage competition.

The Black

To become a member of the Brazilian team for Rio 2007 and Beijing 2008, Roger had endured an epic history. As he stated, "nobody, not even I, would imagine a *neguinho* (small black man) from Mato Grosso do Sul riding a white horse in the Olympics!" He was well aware that, if he had lived more than 100 years ago, he would not even have been in the place of the well-treated competition horse; he would have been humiliated and used as traction in the sugarcane mills. At that time, to be a black man in Brazil meant you were a slave.[3]

Rogério Clementino, 27 years old at the time of our meetings, was born in the tiny town of Viena, in a remote region of Brazil. His father passed away when he was a toddler, and his mother moved with him, his sisters, and brothers to a farm, where he was raised by his stepfather, mother, and aunts and where he had contact with all types of animals. He had little formal education, as he was forced to leave school in Year 5, at the age of 12. At that time, he started full-time work on a farm in order to support his mother. He worked with cattle and rode bulls and wild horses. It was then that his passion for horses began:

> this passion for riding…it came from my childhood, sometimes I used to ride a bull or a wild horse, my brothers and I rode adults' horses…it was an adventure, something crazy… but in my teen years, when I was 12, I started to work on a farm to help my mum, and my life was to ride wild horses and bulls…it was my dream, and I guess these crazy early adventures have helped me a lot in the dressage competition.

As the wages on this first job were so low, he decided, at the age of 14, to move to a neighboring city to make more money in order "to better help my mom." As a worker in dairy production, he still had opportunities to ride horses on the farms where he went to get the milk. After a while, he went to Sao Paulo to work as a helper on a stud. He worked with Leandro Aparecido, who at that time was already a renowned rider and dressage competitor. Leandro admired Roger's hard work and talent. Roger always acknowledges Leandro as the one who gave him his first chance to work a horse, a spirited animal called Romantic ("I will always remember Romantic, my first horse, I worked and tamed him a lot, and after 7 months he became a cool horse," says Roger).

[3] From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Negroes were brought from Africa in the basement of ships, taken ashore with ropes around their necks and marked with a branding iron. Despite the fact that the slavery of blacks in Brazil was terminated more than a century ago (1888), its real and symbolic marks still linger in the country. According to official government data, racial inequalities remain strongly present in Brazilian society. *The Summary of Social Indicators 2007 – an Analysis of Life Conditions of the Brazilian Population* (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) 2007) found that the "illiteracy rate of black and brown [or *mulattos*: mixed race] people is more than twice that of white persons." They also reported that "white persons earned, on average, 40 % more than black or brown people with the *same level of schooling.*"

One day, Leandro told him there was a job going in a distant ranch, but he had to make a quick decision. It was at Victor Oliva's Green Island ranch. Roger decided to go.

> It was a unique opportunity, I had to take it, and I have always strongly grabbed the few chances in my life. I was to be the helper of an established rider (Fabio Lombardo) but he soon left Green Island, and I had to ride Nilo in a competition. I didn't know anything, but I won that competition against really experienced riders. It was God, his hands, that helped me there. Mr. Oliva came to me and said he would not hire another rider, and I was to be the official rider of that horse.

It was a turning point in Roger's life. He had to use all his ability to surf the wave that was to change his life forever. He was the humble black employee, with no education or training. However, he started to negotiate his position in the hierarchy, and as a result, his masculinity, at that moment. Roger, who was originally employed as a humble employee in the stud, at the bottom of the social and masculine hierarchy (Connell 1995b), suddenly became empowered by his relationship with Nilo. As Birke and Brandt (2009: 193) affirm, horses have been active part of the gender constructs around their riders, and usually "the maleness of the horse (…) reflects the masculinity of the rider."

After Victor Oliva told him he was to "be Nilo's official rider," Roger demanded better work conditions so he could deliver what the owner was expecting. He reported speaking to his boss:

> Mr. Oliva, I don't know much about working competition horses, I don't have either the technique or the time to work this horse. However, if you give me an instructor, if you make some investment, I have the strongest will that anyone can have. That's what I'm telling you, sir, I have the disposition, but it's up to you sir'. And he started to do that! He paid for some instruction for me, and I worked hard, man, I worked as hard as I could and a bit harder!

In speaking to Oliva this way, Roger established a dialogue with him, a conversation that would become an essential part of the relationship of the three protagonists of this story.

The White

Nilo V.O. is a white Lusitanian stallion, with withers of 1.62 m, born in 1994 at Green Island ranch. In the equestrian world, Nilo fights for space against more traditional European breeds. However, even among the other Lusitanian on Green Island ranch, Nilo was not considered valuable before Roger's arrival. As Roger said,

> Nilo was a horse that no one cared about…when I first came to the stud, he was a heavy horse, tough to ride, so nobody would work him…Only the children stayed with him, more bullying him than riding…The best horses went to the professional riders who did not want to ride or work with Nilo…So, he was abandoned, and I picked him…I thought that, as nobody wanted him, he would be the best for me to work and learn something…I thought here is the good one for me…

Roger started to work Nilo, and step by step, people started to see him as a "different" horse. From being a "nobody" in the stud, Nilo began to be seen as a *stallion-to-be*. At the same time, Roger began to be seen as more than a mere employee. Their connection was transforming both. There was no more "pure horse or pure human" (Game 2001: 3). They developed a daily "cross-species communication" which is how people who live with animals connect with them (Game 2001).

Their connection was, of course, mediated by their dressage practice. Their training that made a "horse-human rhythm" (Game 2001: 3), the cadences of the dressage movements, and the control that Roger had to have over Nilo (with the latter's acceptance), in sum, the enactment and performance of their bodies, formed a "living centaur" (Game 2001: 3). Their bodies were mediators in their relationship (Brown 2006). Through their embodied connection, or better through their "co-embodiment," Nilo and Roger were transforming their world and, as I will show, transforming the gender order around them.

The "Green"

Jose Victor Oliva, as he defines himself, is a restive self-made man (MaisUol 2009). He started his life as an entrepreneur during the 1980s, running successful restaurants and night clubs in Sao Paulo, two of which became legendary meeting places for the social elite of this richest of Brazilian cities. At that time, he was known as the "King of the Night" and was seen constantly in newspapers and TV shows. He was married to Hortencia Macari, a legend in the basketball world,[4] and they had two sons. During the 1990s, Oliva started working in a different industry (promotional marketing). Since then, he has built up a "business empire" in this area (Farah 2003).

Oliva has social and economic power. Compared to Roger and Nilo, he is certainly at the top of a "masculine hierarchy." The "cultural ideals" (Donaldson 1993: 646) of masculinity he emanates are those of a hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995a). He is the boss, and other men are subordinate to him. However, he starts to change when horses appear in his life.

In 2002, Oliva, by this time divorced from Hortencia, fell in love with horses. He purchased his first horse, a black Lusitanian called *Bolero*, and never looked back (Farah 2003). He transformed his farm (Ilha Verde or *Green Island*) into a ranch where he raises nearly 100 Lusitanian horses, all of whom he knows personally by name. In his ranch, Oliva is aiming to transform his passion for horses into a lucrative business. At the same time, he believes that horses have been a powerful turning point in his personal life: "Horses fascinate people. They have helped me to reconnect with my sons, my current wife and my friends. With horses, I've started a new cycle in my life. This is priceless" (Farah 2003).

[4]Hortencia is considered one of the best female basketball players in world history. She was world champion with the Brazilian Team in 1994, when she received the nickname Queen of Basketball; at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, she took the silver medal. She is also part of the Female Basketball Hall of Fame in the USA.

Oliva's relationship with horses has changed his whole life. His relationships have become more dialogical, bonding again with significant people in his life. In the following sections, I will show how the Nilo/Roger co-embodiment has affected the masculinities of all the protagonists in this story.

Black and White

> There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man (Winston Churchill)

The "new creature," the "centaur" that was made by the Nilo/Roger relationship, is the focus of this section. My conversations with Roger became more intense with bigger breaks needed to recover and breathe, as we moved from talking about his life, and Nilo's life, to the topic of the relationship between them. In our second meeting, I asked him to talk "a bit" about his relationship with Nilo. Roger was reluctant; I could feel how moved he was while talking about this relationship. As Game (2001: 4) would state, "the relation is what matters here – individuals, human and horse, and species, are forgotten."

> Mate, I'll tell you something…This horse to me… he is…he is a blessing…he is a blessing…It was God, God alone who put him in front of me…When I first started in the stud, nobody would take care of him… He was the first horse I had an opportunity to ride in a competition…So, everything that I learned with my colleagues I taught to Nilo, everything…Then I worked hard with him, I started to do dressage with him, and in our first year together we went to the Brazilian championship, for beginners… And we won it!

The concept of "relationship" is also central in Connell and Messerschmidt's theory on gender and masculinities. They conceive masculinity not as a rigid trait with which someone is born; rather, masculinity is enacted in the social world, within people's daily lives and practices. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 836), "masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting."

The empowerment of both Nilo and Roger throughout their relationship is evident in Roger's words and was confirmed in my observations. Roger states that at the beginning, Nilo was

> An ugly duckling…It was impressive as nobody would talk about him except to complain… Mr. Oliva was trying to sell him, but he couldn't find anyone to buy… But now, wow! We are trying to mate him with some mares…Mr. Oliva has already sold his semen once, he made some money…He gave me a percentage as well!

As Roger explained how Nilo stepped up in the economic and social hierarchy, he tells me that he, Roger, with help from Nilo, has also stepped up the hierarchy. As a man and as a worker, he now felt more valuable.

> Before Nilo and I started winning the competitions, I was the guy who everyone in the ranch came to with an order to do something. I was what they called the fixer, the one who was happy to do everything. The difference was that I never had to listen twice. I always did whatever they asked of me. I woke up at 6 am and went to bed after 10 pm. My wife was

> always complaining…But I said I had to work hard to achieve my aims… And I was frequently spending time with Nilo, talking to him, caressing him, taking care, kissing him…

As can be seen by his discourse, Roger was at the bottom of the social hierarchy on the ranch. However, at the same time, he was building up his relationship with Nilo; he was also performing gentleness and caring. Plymoth (2012: 337) affirms that "boys and men are to a considerably lesser extent [than women] engaged in the daily tasks of caring for the horses in riding schools and elsewhere." Roger, however, was performing these tasks – enacting "feminine values" as stated by Birke and Brandt (2009: 192) – which in this case may perhaps not be seen as "tainting Roger's masculinity" as he was also trying to work on Nilo's wildness to make him a better dressage horse. Yet, there was an ambiguity in their relationship, since at the same time the horse would "symbolize great feats of conquest, those feats depend upon the horse becoming tamed, its wildness contained by domestication – and so implicitly feminized" (Birke and Brandt 2009: 193).

The ambiguous fluidity of the tandem's masculinity started to become clear to me. As they built up their relationship ("each day we spent more time together, he understood me, I understood him, it has been 6 years now," Roger says), Nilo moved from an "ugly duckling" to a great stallion, even though he performed a "feminine" dance in his dressage. His fame as a good stallion grew, as the tandem became well known in the dressage competition circuit, ending among the top three in several contests. Of course, not only was Nilo being recognized as a "better male"/a good stallion, Roger was also going up the masculine hierarchy. Here, it was their co-embodiment that helped them both to become seen more "valuable" as males. In their theoretical approach to the co-embodiment of horses and humans, Birke and Brandt (2009: 196) clearly state that it is the specifics of the mutual corporeality in the human/animal relationship that makes a new gender performance:

> But here, unlike many of the social worlds in which we perform gender, we engage in choreography with another – with another who is not human. People and horses create a kind of intimacy when connected through embodiment, an intimacy which is both enacted through, and brings about change in, the body. (…) it is also an embodiment that could carry a multitude of meanings and fluidities

It is within this fluid gender context where feminine and masculine frontiers and stereotypes are blurred and where horse and rider modify themselves as they increasingly understand each other, it is here where the "green" Oliva is challenged to make a contribution to this gender fluidity, and it is also here where his own masculinity becomes more fluid.

The Rainbow

After several years, the Nilo/Roger relationship was well-established. They were performing well in both local and national competitions. However, the support they received from Oliva was still minimal; they had access to formal dressage training, but not with the best instructors. Then, Nilo/Roger was invited to be part of a series

of dressage workshops, which were run by Mr. Eric Lette, who was to be the Brazilian Team's coach in the forthcoming Rio Pan American Games. Roger's memories of those days are clear:

> There was an internal competition in this workshop. At the beginning, there were more than 20 tandems, and Mr. Eric was eliminating a few couples for the next workshop. And we stayed, stayed… and I stayed as a reserve of the team. I was still by myself, with Nilo, but our stuff was so good, so nice, the horse was in such good shape, that one day Mr. Oliva came to me and said: "You will practice with Joham Zagers"… That would be really expensive, Mr. Oliva paid everything, and there we went! Joham became my trainer; he is a famous Swedish trainer…

The formal training was what Nilo/Roger were looking for and this training process became central to an even more strongly connected relationship. As Game (2001: 5) argues, "dressage is the bringing to life of the relation between horse and rider, involving a mutual calling up of horse and rider in each other."

Yet, it was not only their relationship that changed through the training. The enhancement of the Nilo/Roger relationship was the start of another turning point in this intricate game of masculinities. As the "mutual corporeality" experienced by Nilo/Roger became more acknowledged and valued, Roger became more assertive toward Oliva, who, at the same time, started to move from his "superman" position, becoming more accepting of Roger's opinions and thoughts.

Just after the lunch with Oliva and his friends, Roger told me something that sounded quite unbelievable. It might appear a simple request, but in fact, it is an example of a big step and a big challenge for both men. Roger told me that just before that national competition, he asked for better conditions:

> I wanted to sleep in a nice and warm bed, to have a warm shower. So, some weeks ago I asked if I could go to a hotel in the period of the competition, instead of staying in the horse bay. Mr. Oliva agreed….

In the elite social group to which rich and powerful men such as Oliva belong, allowing a humble black employee to go to the hotel and to have lunch at the same table with the horse's owner is not well regarded. It is considered a sort of weakness. Rich men should be in control, exhaling their powerful masculinity (Connell 1995a) and not mixing with subordinates. While I accept Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005: 846) claim that "(…) certain masculinities are more socially central, or more associated with authority and social power than others," I could see that Roger and Oliva's increasing connection was making more fluid the once "tough" masculinity performed by the latter.

Roger testifies that Oliva was changing his behavior toward him. He was more talkative, and he even started to give advice to Roger about important issues such as racial prejudice. "His advice for me was to just ignore them if they said something about my color, just ignore it. Keep up my hard work and my aims, keep walking," Roger says, with an innocent smile. Oliva was using his position as a local hegemonic male to teach Roger to use a type of action and discourse to "promote self-respect in the face of discredit, for instance, from racist denigration" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 842).

Nonetheless, Roger is not naive. He is smart enough to realize that Oliva's acknowledgment of the value of his partnership with Nilo meant other things too. "It is business, mate, all business. He is making money with us, and if it is good for Mr. Oliva, it is good for us as well."

Roger's way of negotiating and challenging Oliva's position in the social and masculine hierarchy (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) was contributing to a softening of Oliva's toughness and rigidity; the latter was opening himself for dialogue with his rider. This can be seen in another facet of their relationship.

I was watching the dressage competition when the chairman called the children's competition in which Oliva's elder son, Joao, aged 12, was to compete. Oliva, agitated and nervous, went to talk with both his son and Roger, who, it turned out, was Joao's coach, a job he took up at Oliva's request. I observed the conversation, which ended with Roger smiling and Oliva departing, angrily.

Later, Roger told me that Oliva was hard on his son; he wanted his boy to be "the best man in the whole competition." Roger wanted the boy to play and to have fun with horses. To him Joao was still a child. Oliva disagreed, and this generated an increasing level of tension between the two men. Such tensions between masculinities are discussed by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 841) who show how the daily lives of boys and men are influenced by disagreements and the overlapping of several masculinities, "including the mismatches, the tensions, and the resistances." The interaction described above shows how Roger was learning how to practice and exercise, in his daily life, "gender power and resistance" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 841).

Fluid Masculinities

Birke and Brandt's (2009) research presents gender in the horse/human relationship as "ultimately a conjoint production, an accomplishment of both horse and human" (p. 190). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 836) make clear that "masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting." The authors claim the historicity of the gender relations in order to demonstrate that those relations are subject to transformations: "hegemonic masculinities therefore came into existence in specific circumstances and were open to historical change" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832).

I have tried to explain such historical changes in this chapter. Using a social setting with a unique animal/human embodied relationship, I sought to demonstrate how masculinities changed, becoming more fluid, with men and horse modifying themselves while the co-embodiment was produced. These modifications produced repositioning of masculinities for all of them, through both embodied and discursive practices (Knijnik et al. 2010).

This point in their history is just a beginning. The gender performativity (Butler 2006) that is profoundly embodied in the dressage competition allows, as Birke and

Brandt (2009: 195) explain, "bodily states which facilitate other ways of being." The deep communication between horse/human through their mutual corporeality, as the authors argue, helps to create what would be a "becoming with – the ultimate goal of almost all horse riders" (Birke and Brandt 2009: 194). The connection between human and not human, and the choreography they engage in the dressage competition, offers a unique stage to see the changes in bodies, and the emergence of a singular co-embodiment that can carry "a multitude of meanings and fluidities" (Birke and Brandt 2009: 196).

These are the meaningful fluid masculinities that have been created by the unique co-embodiment of the "Ebony and Ivory" tandem, with the participation of the Green, who not only supported the tandem but also made changes in his own life during this process. These fluid masculinities will certainly be seen penetrating the social spaces of the Brazilian equestrian world in forthcoming years.

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Chapter 12
Epilogue: A Research Agenda for Putting Gender Through Its Paces

Kirrilly Thompson and Miriam Adelman

The introduction to this volume recalled some of the most stereotypical ways in which human-horse relationships have been popularly gendered. These included ideas about sensual women seeking self-pleasure through their intimate relationship with the horse juxtaposed with rough men using the horse to publicly enhance their personal power whilst simultaneously using the horse for greater means such as expanding the nation. However, the contributions to this volume have shown that within the context of equestrian sport, women and men find and deliberately locate themselves in positions from which gender stereotypes are renegotiable and renegotiated. Be they male or female, polo player, fiction reader or bullfighter, riders contribute to and experience gender through their resources and personal desires and skills – regardless of how differentially these may be allocated. Sometimes, equestrian sports facilitate expressions of normative masculinity and femininity which reinforce tradition or the *status quo* (Chap. 7 by Gilbert and Gillett, Chap. 5 by Adelman and Becker, Chap. 4 by Butler, this volume). At other times, equestrianism facilitates open defiance to cultural norms and social legacies of inequality, thereby providing a platform for renegotiation and change (Chap. 3 by Dashper, Chap. 5 by Adelman and Becker, Chap. 11 by Knijnik, this volume). In addition to demonstrating the ways in which the male/female and masculine/feminine binary can be challenged in, by and through equestrian sports, the contributions to this volume also illustrated some of the ways in which women and men reveal themselves as complex social subjects whose class, race/ethnicity, gender, generation, sexual

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orientation and localisation within the geopolitics of the world also defy binary prisons. Sometimes, it is these complex articulations of multiple, constructed and shifting 'differences' (Stuart Hall 1996; Brah 1996) that make all the difference in the lived worlds of individuals, including those who live with and through horses.

The contributions to this volume support the idea that gender *always* matters. However, in what ways do interactions with horses and within the institutional, social and cultural context of the equestrian world affect *how* it matters? In the pages that follow, we extend the preceding chapters to suggest some salient areas for further research that can deepen our understanding of gender and equestrian sport.[1] Our suggestions are made with the aim of developing breadth in studies of gender and equestrian sports. However, this should not occur at the exclusion of depth. With this in mind, it is important to note that our suggestions for further research do not preclude research into the same topics and areas represented in this volume. Extended research can be achieved by considering the same activities in different places or by conducting research at different times, with different methods and different researchers (with different genders). These ideas are developed in more detail below.

Areas for Further Research

The chapters in this volume have demonstrated that horses, horse sports and human-horse interactions provide illuminating areas for thinking through gender. This has included women and men's relationships to horses through history, work and leisure; current gendered interaction within equestrian sport; considerations of the meaning that 'feminisation' and other reconfiguration processes have for women, men and equestrian institutions; literary narratives as forms of discursive production on gender and horses; embodied experiences of riding; changing masculinities; and women and men as professional and amateur equestrian athletes, amongst others. None of the contributions considered gender in isolation from other sociopolitical dimensions. This is because gender intersects – and is intersected by – a breadth of social, political and economic issues that are touchstones in the social sciences and unavoidable in equestrian worlds. The ability of the preceding contributions to capture this broader context within which gender is experienced and made meaningful is a strength of this volume. To encourage further fortification, we have identified ten different areas of further research (in no particular order); class, culture, risk, paring and equality, aesthetics, sector, identity, age, the environment, and the media. Addressing these interrelated areas will not only enrich our understandings of gender and equestrian sport, it may contribute to a broad literature on our social world today.

[1] See Thompson (2010) for suggestions on further research on human-horse relationships in general.

Class

Class has been a mainstay in research about the role of the horse in human society. The industrialised world has witnessed the role of the horse change from a beast of burden and transport working alongside the human proletariat, through to a status symbol of the leisured class (Raber and Tucker 2005), and more recently as a source of leisure and competition that is accessible by most social classes in one way or another. Cassidy's (2002) research into horse racing in the United Kingdom demonstrates how different kinds of interactions with the same kinds of horses (the English thoroughbred) characterise social hierarchies. Not only have horses been able to confer class status and identity to humans but humans have socially constructed different classes of horses (Garkovich 1983; Thompson 2012).

Mason (2000) considers class, gender and equestrianism in research comparing the disciplining of horses and the shaping of femininity in a nineteenth-century novel, whilst Landry (2001) explores instances of 'gender bending' that were accessible through horse riding to middle and upper class women travelling in the eighteenth century. A stimulating avenue for further research into gender, equestrianism and class is the impact of socio-economically defined class on the experience of riding, which is usually understood as personal, experiential, sensory, intercorporeal and phenomenological – in short, transcendent of external factors and free from the limitations posed by material wealth. However, money can facilitate access to better education, better horses, more child-minding, more time to ride and so on. The question thus becomes, can money or status buy a 'better' human-horse relationship? There may also be an impact of emotional and intellectual skills on one's 'experience of horse'. The role of (and relationship between) economic/material factors and personal attributes in relation to human experiences of interactions with horses requires greater delineation. As male and female bodies are constructed, perceived and treated differently, and subject to different pressures which detract from opportunities to ride and 'experience horse', future research in the area of class, access and personal experience should be conducted with an awareness of the kinds of gender issues discussed throughout this volume.

Culture

In this volume, class and gender were considered in a number of chapters: Coulter's, Butler's, and Gilbert and Gillett's discussions of particular types of riding (polo, racing, show jumping) that require particular types of (gendered) social and economic capital, together with Adelman and Becker's study of popular rodeo and Knijnik's consideration of race and gender in dressage. These chapters also engaged in discussion of the ways in which the class-gender relationship intersects race, ethnicity and cultural meanings in the creation of particular horse cultures and subcultures. This suggests the potential for work both within and between countries and geopolitical regions (e.g. Latin America, Northern Europe, the United States and Canada)

and would most likely point to some significant differences between countries where popular, folk and peasant equestrian cultures have survived into the twenty-first century and those countries that follow the route that Hedenborg's historical work (2007) has described, where modern forms of sport and leisure riding have dominated. Take, for example, traditional 'fantasia riding' in North Africa where young women are currently daring to and succeeding in setting up their own teams (Guedda 2006). This form of equestrianism coexists alongside horse racing and elite European-style equestrian competition (Belabbas 2012). Of related interest is the translation or dislocation of traditional forms of riding from their 'home' culture. This includes Spanish *doma vaquera* riding being practised in England, or bloodless bullfighting being undertaken in California. Whilst these forms of equestrian activities have been adopted outside of their sociocultural and geographic origins, other activities such as polo-cross, which is popular in Australia, have failed to gain popularity elsewhere.

As traditions are 're-signified', or as they come into contact with other equestrian cultures – as equestrian practices travel around the globe – how do dislocations, relocations and processes of 'cultural translation' produce and make possible differently gendered configurations? The movement or otherwise of equestrian traditions, sports and activities could be researched within a context of class and colonialism, if not of post-colonialism and globalisation. Again, gendered issues cannot be overlooked when considering cultural differences betwixt and between equestrian activities, performances and competitions, especially as gender is expressed in and through cultural norms.

Risk

The size and weight of horses, their herd animal flight instinct and their unpredictable behaviour have implications for human and horse safety (Thompson 2011). Horse riding has a reputation for being a particularly risky activity, especially the Olympic discipline of eventing. One study suggested that the cross-country phase of eventing was more risky than motorbike riding (Paix 1999), although this risk was calculated per riding hours rather than per jumping attempt. The risk involved in horse riding is aptly demonstrated by studies of horse-related injuries and fatalities (Bixby-Hammett 2007; Cripps 2000; Exadaktylos et al. 2002; Murray et al. 2005; Paix 1999; Singer et al. 2003; Thomas et al. 2006). It drives the 'safety first' approach of horse organisations and educational institutions (Finch and Watt 1996; Myers 2005; Wofford 2008) that is sweeping industrialised, safety-conscious nations and can be understood as an aspect of modern 'risk society' (Beck 1992). The risk of death to rider and horse is striking in activities such as the mounted bullfight described by Thompson (Chap. 8, this volume). However, there is a need to understand the actual and perceived risks in more mundane equestrian activities, where death might not have horns and cloven feet but lurks in all human-horse interactions.

The risks of riding and interacting with horses require that riders be mindful about their personal safety. There is a need to understand how riders incorporate knowledge of risk and safety into their daily and competitive interactions with horses, especially from a sports psychology perspective whereby people want to be safe, but don't want to 'tempt fate' by thinking about what could go wrong. Eventing riders, for example, often talk about being aware of and mitigating risks but emphasise the need to clear their minds of any potential negative incidents whilst riding a cross-country course (Thompson and Nesci 2011). The tension between positive thinking and risk awareness amongst horse riders requires further understanding, especially in relation to how it informs decision-making and what it can reveal about the cultural superstitions of horse riders. There is also a need to understand how issues of risk and safety are embodied by riders in their everyday comportment around horses and how such knowledge is transmitted. This includes research into the ways in which safety-related knowledge and practices become tacit, such as a rider's ability to 'read' individual horses beyond more generic knowledge of horse body language (Ainslie and Ledbetter 1980), towards work emphasising the mutual co-construction of corporeal relations (Brandt 2004; Hempfling 2001). Human-equine communication skills take on special importance in areas of equine tourism where providers need to observe and manage interactions between humans and horses with little to no pre-existing relationship, skill or experience. It is also crucial in equine-assisted intervention contexts.

At the same, the very issue of *risk averse culture*, as it has been produced by contemporary society (and has been a part of modern sportisation processes, which from the outset have had – as Norbert Elias eloquently argued – a 'domesticating' or civilising thrust), raises questions about how sporting rules, regulations and concerns lead to forms of bureaucratisation and control that some riders may feel as placing unacceptable limits on their pleasure and freedom. In many Latin American countries, for example, popular equestrian practices lie outside the realm of control of formal sports institutions and thus provide their incumbents – men and women – with the opportunity to re-enact cultural myths of frontier freedom. In fact, Sabine Grataloup has suggested that riding today is characterised by a paradox represented by contrasting needs for safety and for the 'search for freedom, independence and pleasure' (2012: 53). Following her lead, research can be done to look at how 'risk control' may conflict with riders' desires for adventure. Comparative studies might reveal different or similar attitudes regarding the 'costs and benefits' of safety and risk awareness and regulation. As one Catalonian equestrian entrepreneur who runs a small stable grumbled, in reference to increasing regulation of Spanish equestrian practice along Northern European guidelines, 'they won't let you do anything anymore' (Adelman 2011). Alternatively, there may be unintended consequences of 'risk compensation' whereby riders engage in more risky behaviours because of the faith they place in their protective equipment. As women are so frequently considered to be more risk averse than men, research on risk and gender in equestrian contexts will be well situated to comment on some specific ways in which the horse might moderate risk concerns for men and women. For example, do riders displace risk concerns from their person to their horse, do they carry dual concerns for self

and horse, or does the horse provide an additional source of risk? Finally, how might these concerns differ between male and female riders (of different class, age, etc.)?

Parity and Equality

Equestrians are quick to point out that their sport is one of the few arenas where men and women can compete on equal terms. Without trivialising the importance of this in a sporting world where the segregation of males and females has normalised ideas of women's physical inferiority to men, it is important to critically consider the idea of equestrian sports as a level playing field for men and women in relation to ideas about equal opportunity. That is, do male and female riders have equal opportunities to reach the same levels of competition? Authors Coulter (Chap. 10), Dashper (Chap. 3), Butler (Chap. 4), Gilbert and Gillett (Chap. 7) and Adelman and Becker (Chap. 5, this volume) have addressed these issues in relation to specific fields of equestrian practice. Much more research is required into the impact of marriage, children, family and work-life balance on women's participation in equestrian activities and the extent to which these responsibilities impact women's ambitions and opportunities. Within the context of heterosexual marriages with children, for example, a mother may find herself strapping for her children and male partner at competitions instead of competing herself. Alternatively, riders may find themselves with children who are disinterested in horses. Depending on how much support they receive from partners or family members and what other opportunities they have for sharing family interests, this may have repercussions for the ways in which male and female riders see themselves within the family unit and how they figure their equestrian interests amongst their other responsibilities and interests. Having a 'horsey' life that is kept separate from other family members may be a source of refuge for some and isolation for others.

The impacts of variable support for a woman's involvement in horse riding are particularly salient when female equestrians are pregnant. Pregnancy is a time when women find themselves more than ever under the medical gaze and subject to social surveillance from the public as well as moral judgement from family, friends and strangers. They find themselves obliged to take expert advice about what does and does not constitute risky behaviour that might impact their children (Lupton 1999 : 88–90). A woman's decision about whether or not to ride whilst pregnant (and after) – and if so, what kind of riding and for how long – can result in intense judgement from others, including other female riders. Where women do not share equestrian interests with partners, friends or family, they may find themselves isolated, misunderstood or coerced into making decisions they do not agree with or decisions which affect their quality of life. For instance, their decision to continue riding during pregnancy may be construed by others as being selfish or choosing horses over their unborn child. The tensions around the primacy or value that riders attribute to equestrianism – combined with their frustration

about how this is perceived by others – is summarised in the following popular bumper sticker: 'horses are my life, but my life is about more than horses'.

Research is also needed on the impact of women's participation in equestrian activities on their marriage, children, family and work-life balance.[2] Much equestrian humour in the public domain speaks to husbands who feel that they take 'second place' to their wives' equestrian interests ('horse widowers') and women who denounce housework and traditional roles in order to fully and unashamedly participate in equestrian activities. In the latter, women seem to be deliberately challenging stereotypes of the 'good housewife'. However, in terms of horse husbandry, their unwavering and selfless service to their horses can be seen to replicate a feminine ethics of care that is aligned with mostly outdated feminine ideals. For all those women who find equestrian sports a means for challenging feminine stereotypes, there are those who find ways to embrace traditional norms of femininity through designer equestrian clothing, diamond embellishments and so forth. One might well ask to what extent the horse is incidental to such expressions of individual femininities, or the extent to which horses facilitate these expressions in ways that other relations and engagements do not. As interactions with horses can require 'being tough' or 'a tomboy' (such as lifting heavy feed, getting one's hands dirty, being outdoors), some feminine 'horse girl' constructions may be offset by more masculine ones. This may result in female riders feeling more comfortable to express or experiment with gendered stereotypes with which they wouldn't usually be comfortable (feminine or masculine). Regardless of their self-perceptions of being more or less masculine/feminine, riders have little influence over how their gender is perceived by others. Where there is a risk of being perceived in ways antithetical to their self-perception (e.g. the self-identified tomboy being perceived as a 'pony mad girl') does the equine desire and inherent equine reward lead to an acceptance of that risk, a tolerance of the undesirable, or an emancipatory lack of concern for the gendered opinion of others altogether?

Many chapters in this volume have discussed statistics on male and female participation in equestrian sports in general and at specific levels of competition or involvement. There is an implicit assumption that parity would be ideal or that women's increased involvement in traditionally male-dominated equestrian endeavours would be positive for women and for those disciplines. However, there is a need to consider statistical representations of women in relation to the broader construction of the sport. As more women become involved and an equestrian sport is thus seen as more 'feminised', men who are attracted to an equestrian activity specifically because it has a masculine construction or is seen as male dominated may become disinterested in those activities, as Plymoth's chapter on Sweden suggested (Chap. 9, this volume). In such cases, women's success in achieving higher representational levels requires very careful interpretation, as that success may have fundamentally changed the nature and gendered meaning of that sport. Whilst higher representation might be celebrated by some, others might interpret it as

[2]Extending Price's (2010) preliminary work.

women 'muscling in' or a result of men abandoning the sport. Another concern is that the increased feminisation of an equestrian sport may negatively impact its professional status, as has been identified in relation to the feminisation of teaching. Yet as Francine Deutsch (2007) alerts, an emphasis on the contradictions of feminisation processes has inserted a bias in many attempts to theorise and, more importantly, to analyse current trends, obfuscating real, albeit partial, moments of social and cultural change. The equestrian world, as the chapters of this volume have shown, is a fascinating site for revealing analysis not only of how we *do* but also *undo* gender (Deutsch 2007; Butler 2004)

In this vein, it becomes important to reconsider issues of transgression, gender bending and the challenge to heteronormativity, and their place within equestrian sport. From the contributions to this volume, it is clear that equestrian activities provide an opportunity for many women to free themselves from the restrictions of conventional gender scripts. Moreover, as Knijnik and Dashper (Chaps. 11 and 3, both this volume) have pointed out, certain equestrian activities may be the site of the performance of 'new', different or non-hegemonic masculinities. But can the equestrian sphere – sometimes pointed to as 'inherently [more] democratic' than other spheres of sporting practices – really be considered more open, democratic or even tolerant than other spheres of sporting and physical activities? Plymoth's work (Chap. 9, this volume) portrayed gender anxieties that permeate the Swedish equestrian federation which rest on firmly conventional notions of manhood and manliness, whilst Adelman and Becker (Chap. 5, this volume) cited anxieties around 'real men' and 'real women' within a Brazilian rodeo milieu. There is certainly more research to be done on the riders who fall outside the pale of the heteronormative, and the extent to which forms of gender bending are policed, ignored or even affirmed within particular equestrian circles.

Finally, in a world where riders still debate the merits of male and female horses as competition prospects, are mares and stallions (so often relegated to the role of breeding stock) given equal opportunity to demonstrate their talent? Moreover, are horses being selectively bred to cater for more feminine or masculine markets? For example, are women considered to have the sensitivity required to settle 'hotter' horses or are women thought to lack the strength to 'hold' them? Gilbert and Gillett (2012) note the increasing importance placed on breeding for temperament in sport ponies intended for children and small adults, of whom many are women. Such gendered perceptions have implications for the ways in which horses are not only promoted, marketed, selected, sold and bred but are gendered by humans.

Aesthetics

The horse might be seen to neutralise differences between women and men, through equal competition. Its body of talent, power, endurance and so forth enable humans to achieve what they cannot themselves. However, this does not mean that human bodies are irrelevant on horseback. Not only are they functional, they are

subject to aesthetic standards and ideals. With particular exclusions, an overweight, uncoordinated and undisciplined rider is still the antithesis of the effective, ideal rider. In some instances, this is the norm, as with *picadors* in the first stage of the Spanish footed bullfight. However, riders who are 'less athletic' members of the human species – those who are simply 'bad at sports' or those who are older or physically disabled – may find unique freedom and pleasure through their riding, through their re-embodiment as a member of a horse-human pair. Aesthetic considerations therefore emphasise the intercorporeality of an embodied relationship between riders that requires further consideration in relation to male and female human bodies as much as male and female equine bodies.

Sector: Leisure, Amateur and Professional and Public and Private Sphere

One interesting consequence of the so-called level playing field for women and men in equestrian sports and activities is the fact that men compete against women. In such instances, masculinity is often at stake. This may explain the fact that '[m]ost leisure and amateur riders are female, whilst most professional riders are male' (van Dierendonck and Goodwin 2005: 74). Specifically, it can also account for the high representation, in certain contexts, of women as 'behind-the-scenes' stable hands track riders but their low representation as professional jockeys. Whether self-imposed or a result of patriarchy, the low representation of women in some equestrian arenas may result from men's desire to avoid direct competition with women, to compromise on homosocial behaviours and practices or to put their masculinity publicly 'on the line'.

The majority of statistics about participation in equestrian sports come from membership and horse registration databases of official bodies. As a result, little is known about the number or gender of 'leisure' riders who are disinterested in or who deliberately avoid being affiliated with any formal group or equestrian activity. These riders may represent a significant number – and, as suggested above, are likely to be significantly female. Given the centrality that leisure studies have taken in contemporary social thought and the renewed attention that gender scholars have placed on leisure, exploring women's and men's choice of equestrian sport as a leisure activity might bring a new empirical focus to a burgeoning field of scholarship. Leisure activities, after all, are now recognised as a key realm in which people forge their identities – often with greater enthusiasm than within the sphere of work, the privileged focus of much earlier sociological thought. Leisure is also a terrain in which to study family life and conflict, bringing gendered (and generational) issues of 'sense of entitlement' and allocation of familial resources into focus (as discussed above in relation to parity and equality). Comparative qualitative studies looking at the meanings and values that women and men give to equestrian leisure (as well as people of different generations, social classes, rural or urban communities, etc.) may provide unique insights into a variety of issues regarding contemporary social life, including

access to and use of a currently very cherished resource, ‘free time’ and its impact on equality and quality of life.

Furthermore, given that most of the public education strategies around horse health and welfare, as well as rider safety, are delivered through official channels (in countries in which such programmes exist), there is a need to better understand this potentially ‘hard to reach’ cohort of leisure riders. In particular, there is a need to determine how gender differently or similarly impacts their experience of equestrianism and the ways in which they engage with public education or social marketing strategies. There is an important intersection here with studies on the gendered experiences of risk and safety amongst horse riders, to be able to promote safe riding equally successfully amongst women and men.

Further research is required to more fully understand leisure riders and determine their gendered representations. Whilst leisure riders are more difficult for researchers to access than riders who are affiliated with formal bodies, equine tourism may provide one form for conducting research with leisure riders. Finally, it is important to note that leisure riding is not exclusive from amateur or professional riding. Many amateur and professional riders construct particular rides as a ‘break’ for themselves and their horses. These are often distinguished by a change of location or environment (such as a trail ride, or ‘riding out’) and a concomitant reduction in expectations of the horse’s performance on those occasions (or an increased expectation in its behaviour!). In fact, horse-mediated engagements with the world create, maintain and affirm cultural identities and nationalities that are embedded within places. The impact of riding places and spaces on the emotional aspects of riding also provides an interesting arena for studying emotional geographies as they occur in human-animal relations, and where gendered elements of culture contribute to and shape those experienced spaces.

Identity

Whilst the role of horses in providing a group identity and a sense of social cohesion has been explored, there has been little research on the exclusionary effects of horse people in the presence of non-horse people. Many ‘horsey’ readers will have experienced companions rolling their eyes and making comments such as ‘here they go again talking about horses’. These reactions can have the effect of making equestrians self-conscious about how they present their equestrian involvement to others. This may be experienced differently according to the equestrian’s self-perception as a leisure rider, amateur or professional, and their gender. In Brazil, although the equestrian world is by no means largely female, one might perhaps be able to suggest that it is a sport that provides many girls and women with the opportunity for identity and subculture building similar to that which men have created – somewhat exclusively – around soccer (Adelman 2010; Bellos 2002). Thompson (1999) has written about the impact of the juvenile stereotype of horse-mad girls on the ways in which she disclosed her equestrian involvement when she was in her 20s, as a

'dressage rider'. However, a decade later, she finds herself having to offset the stereotype of 'the dressage queen'. Such concerns of negative connotations of equestrianism (e.g. as 'girly', self-absorbed or 'prissy') may be less salient for men, with some exceptions such as the Swedish case described by Plymoth (Chap. 9, this volume). They may also be discipline specific, whereby dressage is seen as more feminine than eventing, as well as level specific, whereby international level dressage may be seen as more appropriate for a male rider than lower level competition. The creation, experience, acceptance or refusal of positive and negative identities of 'horse rider' in relation to different equestrian sports and disciplines requires further exploration from a gendered perspective.

Age

Research into equestrian sports and gender should also give particular attention to age. Not only do women and men compete against one another in many equestrian sports (especially the 'modern' Olympic events), there is a greater diversity of age amongst equestrian competitors than is frequently found amongst swimmers, track and field athletes and gymnasts for example (at least at elite levels). In fact, there is 'a substantial number [of female riders] competing into advanced age' (Meyers et al. 1999: 399). At the recent London Olympics, Hiroshi Hoketsu represented Japan in dressage at the age of 71. In fact, the skill, timing and feel that equestrians are considered to develop over time are often valued above the physical flexibility and physical resilience that is associated with youth. Moreover, this is interrelated with equestrian discourses about 'lightness', 'ease' and 'submission' as the ideal characteristics of a rider-horse relationship (rather than a relationship based on force). However, the physical risks to riders are considered to increase with age. Amateur show jumpers in Europe, for example, were found to be concerned about increasing recovery time from injury as they aged (Thompson and Birke 2013).

In the same way that Thompson (Chap. 8, this volume) concludes that horse does not replace or erase gender, neither does it replace or erase age. Still, there is a need to understand how age and gender interact and intersect 'on horseback' and what abilities and experiences they generate. As 'cultural meanings of animals and gender are complex and powerful' (Birke 2002: 431), so too are cultural meanings and experiences of age. There is therefore a need to further explore the construction and experience of age and life stages by equestrians. The impact of age on risk perception is particularly interesting, especially where women may delay intense riding or competition until after child-rearing, or where they may reduce or abandon their involvement in more risky equestrian sports altogether after having children, so that their ability to care for others is not jeopardised (see 'parity and equality' above). On the other hand, there is no particular age associated with a performance 'peak' for equestrians that might conflict with a woman's reproductive peak as can be the case with other sports. However, further research is required on female equestrienne's decisions to delay or otherwise alter their child-bearing and child-rearing

activities due to their equestrian concerns, expectations or responsibilities. Overall, the relative irrelevance of age in equestrianism compared with other sports makes it a fascinating case study for further research into age, sport and gender, especially given that the experience of ageing has specific gendered dimensions.

The Environment: Rural and Urban

At the same time as producing a sense of human identity ('horse people'), human-horse interactions contribute to senses of place and environment. The horse cannot only be considered symbolically as a part of the natural environment but also as a 'vehicle' for its experience. That is, the horse affords the mobility required to experience the environment in ways that cars cannot. However, the ways in which interactions with horses construct experiences of space and the environment can be understood through research into human-automobile relations. For example, Sheller explores the emotional and phenomenological aspects of the driver-car relationship:

> [T]he car is deeply entrenched in the ways in which we inhabit the physical world. It not only appeals to an apparently 'instinctual' aesthetic and kinaesthetic sense, but it transforms the way we sense the world and the capacities of human bodies to interact with that world through the visual, aural, olfactory, interoceptive and proprioceptive senses. We not only feel the car; but we feel through the car and with the car (2004: 228).

Likewise, horse people feel place through and with the horse. However, there is a fundamental difference between the mobility afforded by a car and the mobility afforded by a horse:

> Horses extend their human riders into the world without enclosing them, something machines seldom do. Through this process people become a part of the equine animal's forward thrust, reconfirming the human status as part of nature (Lawrence 1985: 195).

Further research is required into the ways in which horse riders (and carriage drivers) experience 'nature', the environment and the outdoors (see 'Sector' above). This might be in relation to riding horses through particular natural spaces such as parks or forests, living further from the city than desired so as to be able to keep one's own horses, or to riders who live in urban centres and travel to peri-urban or rural locations to access horses (each with its own impact on the environment through commuting, city planning and land management). Researchers should consider the impact of the horse on different experiences of places, as well as the role played by gender, especially where women have been traditionally associated with nature but where 'rugged' and 'brave' men have been more socially constructed as comfortable being in, traversing and renegotiating nature.

Notions of what constitutes 'natural', rural and urban spaces are neither static nor unchanging. Although historical discussion on the 'changing function of the horse' in Western industrial societies – from rural work animal to the object of affection and attention of urban sports folk – seems to be premised on unambiguous distinctions between rural and urban, contemporary studies emphasise that this very separation of

social life into clear-cut rural–urban dichotomies must be reconsidered. Scholars around the world are increasingly speaking of '*nouveaux ruraux*', new ruralities, or of a 'rural–urban continuum' (Siqueira and Osório 2001; Silva 1997) in which agriculturally based life in the countryside increasingly gives way to a new scenario of 'pluriactivities'. Amongst these new activities, tourism and leisure services that target urban residents stand out. There is much to be researched as to how these changes have impacted the horse industry, creating new demands and new markets, and how gender relations unfold within these contexts. Questions include: How do new urban–rural connections affect the gender balance in terms of work, sport and culture? Is feminisation of the horse world promoted? What kinds of jobs are created, for whom are they suited and who tends to want them or get them? In countries where rural equestrian tradition has been largely male, does new urban–rural interconnectedness promote cultural openings that favour greater female participation in equestrian activities? And how, finally, does global equestrian interconnectedness impact these 'local' scenarios – rural, urban or 'rurban'?

Media Representations/Studies of Horse Sports

There is scant literature on the representation of equestrian sports in the media and a striking dearth of research specifically on gendered representations of equestrians in media coverage (for an exception, see Haro de San Mateo 2010). This includes the broadcasting of competitions as well as documentaries of diverse sorts and the promotion of the horse industry. As they are both global and local, equestrian media provide opportunities for research that can comment on how different equestrian sports represent their male and female participants: whether sportsmen and women, horse breeders and related businesspeople, veterinarians, amateur riders or simply audiences, consumers and spectators. Throughout our years of research on equestrian sport, we have heard frequent complaints about how (comparatively) little coverage horse sports get from mainstream media. As to the quality of this coverage, for example, research on Brazilian jockeys (Adelman and Moraes 2008) and the rodeo milieu (Chap. 5 by Adelman and Becker, this volume) have shown that both mainstream and horse industry media tend to engage in compensatory or 'apologetic' discursive strategies when they represent female riders, using images and language that attempt to construct an aura of conventional femininity around them. We argue that these are in contrast to women's own narratives, in which most often this concern is absent. There are also segment differences, as we have found for the Brazilian case, in which 'country' or rodeo publications reproduce an extremely male-centred iconography whereas horse magazines covering a wider range of equestrian sport often feature women riders, instructors and veterinarians, and may even – as one recent publication shows – seek to depict the equestrian world as not only a site of gender parity but also inherently 'democratic' and even 'ecologically oriented' (Mastrobuono 2011). As noted in Thompson's discussion of the female bullfighter's body being problematic for a male audience because of an inability to identify with that bodily experience

(Chap. 8, this volume, following Pink 1996), there is a critical need to understand the culturally informed gendered ways in which audiences consume, interpret and subvert discipline-specific equestrian imagery. Comparative studies within and between countries may have much to say regarding global tendencies and local contrasts. For example, the French horse magazine *Cavalière,* geared specifically towards a female readership, provides a singular example of contradictory forms of representing women in the equestrian world: a tension between promoting an image of women as competent riders and equine professionals and cultivating a 'horsey pink' subculture meant to attract and engage young girls. The same representations can be seen in advertisements for equestrian clothing and accessories. There is certainly a need for extensive and intensive research into these top-down representations and their bottom-up consumption, in different cultural contexts and media.

Wrap Up: Deepening Existing Research

The areas for further research proposed in this epilogue chapter are not new. They are the 'usual suspects' amongst the concerns of the social sciences and humanities: class, identity, age, etc. Whilst these academic fields are established in their own terms, they can benefit from research focused on equestrianism. This is because human-horse relations, like other examples of close partnerships, demand that *the relation* be acknowledged and taken into account. For example, trust and risk can be understood as distributed betwixt and between horse and rider (Thompson and Birke 2013). The experience of risk, as well as riders' experience of 'horse', is unavoidably gendered, not to mention relational.

The specific field of sports studies also has much to gain from studies into equestrian sports. As argued by Haraway, 'the relation [is] the smallest unit of being and of analysis' (2007: 165). By default, horse riding is a team sport: a team of human and horse. That this is obvious in equestrian sports where humans simply cannot compete without horses prompts a consideration of ways in which other types of athletes are inseparable from broader networks and relations with other non-humans, including equipment such as ropes, running shoes and balls, as well as other humans such as coaches, team members, competitors and officials (Thompson and Birke 2013). Whilst the chapters in this volume deal more with interpersonal relations between horse riders, the relationship between rider and horse is implicit, presupposed (Thompson 2011). As such, we recommend further research that explicitly compares equestrianism with other sports in order to disaggregate and understand the multiple and overlapping relationships in all sports – even those considered 'individual sports' and especially where relationships involve non-humans. An actor-network or science and technology studies approach would be well suited to such an endeavour.[3]

[3] See Thompson (2011) for an example of this approach to human-horse-technology-emotion relations in mounted bullfighting.

Methodologically, existing and extended research into gender and equestrian sports could benefit from a range of approaches associated broadly with 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' methods. Riders can be considered from theoretical and empirical perspectives on a spectrum from micro to macro levels of experience which span individual experiences that can be accessed through interviews and phenomenological enquiry, through to broader engagements with social demographics, national sports policies/agendas and flows and processes of globalisation that can be identified through surveys and statistical research (and vice versa). Capturing the lived experience at the meso level could be achieved through ethnographic methodologies. There is also great potential in bringing equine ethnologists and veterinary scientists together in multidisciplinary research teams to produce a comprehensive and revealing analysis of the human-horse relationship within equestrian sports. Studies of the ethical dimensions of equestrian sports would benefit from this approach in particular.

Ample and contradictory processes proceed apace in the twenty-first century. They can be traced globally in economic, social and political transformation.[4] Locally, they also impact expressions of gender and sexuality as well as the role, construction and symbolism of the horse. Socio-economic changes and economic crises continue to impact human-human and human-horse interactions (Thompson 2012), changing notions of what constitutes and what is possible and acceptable for 'male', 'female' *and* 'horse'. As we have begun to elucidate in this volume, these changes can be read in and through equines, equestrians and 'equiworlds'. It is our conviction that the diverse contributions to this volume ask crucial questions and take foundational steps in the direction of important answers. Our hope is that we have inspired others who are moving – walking, running, galloping or riding – in a similar direction.

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[4]For a discussion of this in relation to mounted bullfighting, see Thompson (2010).

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