

Reservoir Dogs

Greyhound Racing, Mimesis and Sports-Related Violence

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Sociologists have been slow to turn their attention to 'blood sports' involving animals or activities where animals suffer neglect and abuse. Although there seems to be a heightened sense of public contempt in many countries toward the outwardly cruel treatment of animals such as dogs, and toward the place of animals in 'sport' per se, the ways in which racing greyhounds may be enmeshed in wider formations of sports-related abuse and violence continues to be ignored. In this article, data gathered on greyhound abuse in the North American racing figuration are examined in the process of understanding the social chains of interdependence necessary to perpetuate 'tolerable' deviance against the dogs. Using central tenets of figurational sociology, patterns of neglect and abuse are discussed and conceptual typologies of the main 'players' in the greyhound figuration are outlined.

Key Words: animal abuse • figurational sociology • greyhound racing • mimesis • sports-related violence