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■ Horse Play in the Canadian West: The Emergence of the Calgary Stampede as Contested Terrain



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Abstract As one example of how modern Western societies are increasingly obliged to reconcile questions of civility and justice against common, indeed revered, practices that compromise nonhuman animals, this paper examines the recent history of public debate regarding the use of animals for public entertainment in the Canadian West. Using media-based public dialogue regarding the annual Calgary Stampede (and especially chuckwagon racing) as a case study and couching the high-risk use of horses in the sociological language of “sports-related violence,” the paper explores the various arguments for and against the continued use of horses at the self-proclaimed “Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth” despite unambiguous evidence of the harm that regularly, and sometimes graphically, occurs.

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