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Punk Rock Vegan Movie

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Punk Rock Vegan Movie

Abstract

This is a film review of *Punk Rock Vegan Movie* (2023), directed by Moby.

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Author Notes

Michele Marie Desmarais was raised and educated in Vancouver, British Columbia on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. She is a Canadian scholar and poet of Métis, Dakota and European ancestry. She is Associate Professor in Religious Studies and a teaching faculty member in Native American Studies and Medical Humanities at University of Nebraska at Omaha, and a former editor of the *Journal of Religion and Film*.



Punk Rock Vegan Movie (2023), dir. Moby

This is a film about creation, souls, ethics, compassion, connection, and liberation from suffering. In other words, punk rock and veganism.

Moby's directorial debut explores the long history of punk rock, particularly straight edge—the subset of punk rock that eschews alcohol, drugs, and tobacco—as a voice for animal rights. A who's who of musicians explain how the punk movement's rejection of the status quo, and its determination to question everything, led to their own questioning of animal suffering, factory farms, and meat/dairy consumption. Punk rock, explains Moby, has at its core an ethos of confrontation and activism. The documentary shows the impact and expression of this ethos on those in the punk rock movement from the 70's onward as they made animal rights and veganism a focus of their lives, activism, and music.

Interviews in the documentary are interspersed with videos of animal suffering, animals responding to compassion, and a few lighter, but pointed, vignettes featuring Moby. In one, Moby

portrays Satan in an interview for True America News Report. When asked by an uncannily glittery-eyed reporter what he is most proud of, the gleeful response is, “convincing humans to use animals for food. Trillions and trillions of deaths and no one dies well....” The spoof interview, however, does skirt the deeper yet connected (given Moby’s costuming) issue of how some religious traditions support hierarchies that can be used to justify the consumption of other-than-human persons.

Punk rock is known for its loud, angry, visages. This documentary, while embracing those, also shows its long history as a vehicle for education, compassion, environmentalism, and a way of living ethically that extends to non-human animals. “Question everything,” is repeated throughout the film in explaining the punk ethos, but then, as this film shows, *do* something: create music, and work to create a more just world for all. Or, as John Joseph (Cro-Mags) states so succinctly in the film, “stand up for what the fuck is right.”