



'Caught In A Mosh': Moshpit Culture, Extreme Metal Music and the Reconceptualization of Leisure

Gabrielle Riches

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This study explores the ways in which moshing and extreme metal music reflects and informs the social worlds of metal fans. It investigates how underground subcultural practices contribute to our understandings of how violence, pain, and pleasure can be thought with compassion and possibility in leisure. Key concepts such as liminality (Turner, 1979), Dionysian aesthetics (Maffesoli, 1993; Bataille, 1986/1989), and Cagean philosophy (Cage, 1957; Kostelanetz, 1996) are used to examine the nuances and subtleties of moshing culture, practices and behaviours in Edmonton, Canada. Themes of physicality and reality of participating in a moshpit, pit etiquette, negotiation of space within the moshpit, and the significance of moshing for local metal fans are explored. The study accentuated how tensions, pleasures, and resistant practices are necessary in creating meaningful leisure experiences and calls on us to re-think the ways in which marginal leisure practices can be included within dominant leisure discourses.

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