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## Authenticity in the Skateboarding World

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## Chapter Twenty

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# Authenticity in the Skateboarding World

Becky Beal and Lisa Weidman

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the values and norms that constitute legitimacy, or authenticity, in the skateboarding world. Both authors spent a considerable amount of time with the skateboarding world in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Lisa Weidman worked at a skateboarding magazine for several years, and Becky Beal did an extensive ethnographic study of skateboarders. Using our experiences and research, we describe the characteristics that skateboarders and the industry use to identify an authentic skateboarder. The first section, on the skaters' perspective, is based primarily on Beal's interactions with skateboarders; the second section, on the industry's perspective, is based on Weidman's

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experiences and interpretations of advertisements placed in the skateboarding magazines by companies selling skateboards and related products and services.

### **Context of the Skateboarder Identity: The Skateboarding Community**

It is an anthropological notion that one's identity is bound by one's culture. Before we discuss what constitutes an authentic skateboarding identity, an overview of common values and norms of the skateboarding community will be presented. My previous research<sup>1</sup> has addressed how skateboarding differs from mainstream sport in two significant ways. Unlike traditional youth sport, skateboarding is not organized and run by adults. Secondly, skateboarding does not rely on competition. This contrast to adult-organized leagues is very important for the identity of skateboarders. Skaters have an identity of "other" which is represented in the following letter to a newspaper editor. "Skaters have a completely different culture from the norms of the world's society. We dress differently, we have our own language, use our own slang, and live by our own rules."<sup>2</sup> The following discussion relies on the interviews with and observations of skateboarders that I conducted over a two-year period (1990–1992), with follow-ups during 1997–1998.<sup>3</sup> From that research, two central values of the skateboarding culture were identified: participant control and the devaluing of competition.

#### **Participant Control**

Many skaters commented on their attraction to a sport in which they were the ones who made the decisions about the activity. This was mainly represented by their statements about the absence of authority as an important aspect of the sport. For example, Paul claimed that to skateboard "[you] don't need uniforms, no coach to tell you what to do and how to do it," and Kathleen noted that skateboarding has "no referees, no penalties, no set plays. You can do it anywhere and there is not a lot of training." Craig contrasted skateboarding with other sports and noted that it, "is not as military-minded" and "you're not part of a machine; [you] go at your own pace." The skaters asserted that this lack of formality allowed them more freedom to explore and express themselves. For example, Jeff described the skating context as "a lot less confined [than organized sport]. People are open to a lot of new things when you

skate. . . . Baseball, basketball, soccer, and swimming, I did them all pretty well, but didn't really pursue them that much. Skating is so fun because it's so progressive, there's so many things, like in baseball there's not much else you can do once you can hit the ball. . . . That's what I like about skating: it's abstract, it's not your average hit-the-ball-and-run sport."

### De-emphasizing Competition

The skaters often described their sport as something different from competition. Jeff stated: "I don't know if I would classify it [skateboarding] as a sport. I suppose I just define sport as competition. Unless you are on the pro or amateur circuit, you're not really competing against anybody." Pamela, an 18-year-old skater, made this comparison:

Soccer is a lot of pressure. . . . You have to be as good if not better than everybody else. You have to be; otherwise, you don't play at all. Skating, you can't do that, you just push yourself harder and harder. . . . Swimming is just sort of there, you get timed—now, for me—you go against the clock—now, when you skate, you *don't* go *against anything*, you just skate, that's what it is.

While discussing the issue of competition, Doug suggested:

Most skaters don't, you know, I don't hear, I don't hear skaters whining about, you know, other people being better than them or striving to be, or bumming out because they're not mastering something, whereas in other athletics you do. There's a pressure to succeed where there isn't in skateboarding because there's not huge goals to attain. How do people measure success in skateboarding if you're not skating in contests, which most people don't? Skaters, even in contests, it's more an attitude of having your best run, making all your tricks, as opposed to beating somebody. . . . It's not "I got to beat this guy, this is the guy I'm going to beat."

Not only was competition devalued, but competitive attitudes were seen as a negative attribute. As noted by Charles, "Skaters who are

assholes are people who brag or skate to compete." This was echoed almost universally, as Jeff noted:

Nobody really seemed to like competitive natures. For instance, me, Philip, and one of our friends all found that to be a really big turn-off. This guy would pull a really good trick and rub it in their faces. And then there's Hugh, who can do stuff and doesn't go, "Oh, wow, bet you can't," but he's fun to be with . . . and he encourages you, so that's pretty cool.

### **Skateboarding and Individualism**

The skateboarding structure that developed from the values discussed above encouraged each individual to create a personalized form of skateboarding. Each participant identified his or her own criteria regarding training procedures, goals, and style. The internalization and personalization of these core values were central to being accepted as a legitimate member. The participants expressed this by noting that skateboarding was a lifestyle as opposed to a separate realm of one's life. This finding is similar to Fox's (1987) analysis of punk subculture, where the central members were those who lived the punk ideology throughout all aspects of their lives, and not just on Saturday nights.<sup>4</sup> This consistent commitment to subcultural norms, identified as a specific lifestyle, was also an indication of authenticity for skateboarders. Their commitment was demonstrated by the daily practice of sport and by the regular display of core subcultural values (for example, anti-establishment behaviors). The skateboarders' lack of interest in competition is partially explained by its formal environment and partially by the fact that legitimacy is constituted by their daily engagement as opposed to the outcome of an isolated event.

Another indication that individualism was central to the skateboarding identity was the status bestowed upon newcomers. Often those who just entered the sport had not yet cultivated a personal style. Instead, they displayed a prefabricated version of a skateboarder. In my research, these newcomers were often referred to as "rats." They were often younger and proved their interest in skateboarding by conspicuously displaying name-brand clothing and equipment. The older skateboarders saw this as an initial stage and were quick to point out that these were not true skateboarders. For example, one long-established skater poked fun at the rats: "He wears the clothes, he is a skater. I wear; therefore, I skate." This

flaunting of subcultural markers often occurs in the initial stages of developing a subcultural identity. Donnelly and Young described a similar situation with novice rock climbers who bought all the right equipment but did not know how to use it.<sup>5</sup> The unsuspecting rookies' knowledge was often tested by the longstanding members. This testing helped to identify and demarcate authority and status within that subculture.

Having individualized criteria also provided frequent opportunities for self-fulfillment because each skateboarder had many chances to successfully meet his or her own criteria. This differs greatly from adult-run "little leagues," where an outside authority sets the goals for all participants and success is distributed only to those who win. The following describes the value the skateboarders Beal interviewed placed on individualistic standards.

### Nonconformity

As noted above, skateboarders defined their sport, at least partially, by claiming that it was significantly different from mainstream sport. In particular, skateboarders saw themselves as nonconformists. The average age of the skateboarders Beal interviewed was 16 years. One common topic of conversation was their experiences of school. An experience that was often described was being an outsider, and not wanting to fit into a world of conformers. For example, Pamela described the different social groups in her school and remarked about how the most popular girls were the "trendies," girls who "end up being like everyone else. . . . Trendies are really superficial." I asked her what "trendies" thought of skateboarders. She replied, "I don't know. I really don't pay much attention to what they thought. If I listened to what everybody else thought, I would be a trendy. No, I do what I want, and if they don't like it, too bad." Philip described the students in his high school and claimed that those who conformed or had money had the most prestige. The group to which he belonged had the least prestige:

After that comes the group I'm in. We're the alternatives and that—basically we're, we're individuals. That's what they say we are: "You're an individual" [stated ironically]. I hang out with George, and he and I make up the alternative group.

During my two and a half years with the skateboarders, I frequently had them give me feedback on my interpretation of their

subculture. One of the most significant comments they gave me was that even though they shared certain basic values (for example, participant control and de-emphasis on competition), it did not mean that they shared all values or were a homogenous group. I did encounter a wide variety of skateboarders. Those interviewed identified themselves as high school honor students, committed Christians, skinheads, feminists, high school teachers, or high school drop-outs.

An apparent contradiction occurred. I wondered how skateboarders could be identified as such if there was not a standard with which to conform. The skaters claimed that their type of conformity was considerably different from that of traditional groups because they consciously chose to conform to a certain set of values, whereas others simply accepted the status quo. The conversation of two skaters illustrates this.

Philip: We're not saying that skating doesn't have any conformity, but it's more by your own choice.

Jeff: It's not conformist conformity. . . . I think skaters are more aware of conformity than jocks. I think jocks just seem to deal with it and say, "Okay, well, that's just the way it is." But skaters go, "Jeese, why do I have to do that, man? I don't want to buy these shoes. I don't want to have to buy 100-dollar shoes just to fit in."

Skaters valued most nonconformist behavior. I found that skaters distinguished types of nonconformity. They valued it more if it was seen as a creative means of self-expression, and valued it less if it was simply an unreflective rebellious act. Those who thought that skateboarding had an essential nonconformist meaning were seen as not grasping the individualized and personalized core of skateboarding. Jeff and Philip explained that as these people became involved in skateboarding and realized there was no inherent meaning to the activity, they dropped out of skateboarding. Jeff and Philip claimed that those who quit skateboarding were the ones who were looking for a predetermined rebellious meaning.

### **Creativity and Self-expression as the Valued Means of Nonconformity**

Warning: Surgeon General states that skateboarding may be hazardous to the health of our society because it pro-

motes creativity and individuality at a young age. Could promote devastating amounts of enjoyment. (Statement on a T-shirt of a skateboarder)

One of the most frequent comments addressing why people liked to skate was that it provided an outlet for creativity and individual expression. Doug, a 25-year-old skater and public school teacher, commented,

A lot of them [skaters] are really involved with artistic endeavors, are very artistic. You can see the parallel, it's a kind of freedom of expression that skating is. How do you express yourself playing football, playing basketball? When you're skating it's—basically skating reflects your mood at the time and how you're skating, what you're doing. You know, it's definitely, you know, a way to express yourself.

Many athletes, as well as sport sociologists, would claim that one can express oneself through organized sport, but the point is that these skateboarders felt they had more opportunity to be creative in skateboarding than in traditional organized sport. The opportunity to set one's own standards was essential to feelings of self-fulfillment, as illustrated by Grace's comment: "For who's to say what trick is better? I like to do stuff that feels cool, that gives me butterflies in my stomach." Alan, a fifth-grade student and skater, wrote a school essay about the ability to express himself without judgment: "The reason I love to skate is because its [sic] a challenging [sic] sport. It's the way I express myself. It's something I can do by myself and nobody's there to judge me." The skaters were quite aware that there were no formal or outside standards by which they needed to judge themselves; as Craig noted, "There's no such thing as a perfect '10' for a trick."

Not only did skateboarders appreciate the lack of authority that enabled them to freely create, they also creatively challenged authority. In fact several skateboarders felt that the essential values of skateboarding—participant control and lack of concern for competition—directly defied the status quo. One 15-year-old participant claimed that people thought skateboarding was "dumb" because there was no outcome. In other words, skateboarding was worthless because skaters did not rely on competitions to judge the outcome. Another way to judge the worth of an activity is whether



one gains physical health benefits. Philip commented, "What I kind of figured out is that Rollerblades are the socially acceptable skate tool. . . . Here's their big excuse: 'It's aerobic exercise.'" An older skateboarder explained that people don't like spontaneous sport, such as skateboarding, in which unstructured and expressive human interaction is demanded. He claimed that people prefer sport that is organized and where the goal—to compete and to win—is concrete.

Another sign of a skater was the ability to challenge social standards. Kathleen and Mark frequently mocked the dominant standards of conformity. One story they told was of an "inspirational" speech about personal control given by the high school football coach at a pep rally. The coach held up a weed and a corn stalk and explained that each individual could choose to be a weed or a plant. Mark commented that dandelions used to be considered plants. Mark and Kathleen noted the irony of the message. According to the coach, taking control of your life meant conforming to what the dominant group labels as good.

### **Authenticity**

It appeared that embracing the central values of the subculture—participant control, self-expression, and a de-emphasis on competition—was essential to the authenticity of a skateboarder. As noted previously, these values implicitly challenged those associated with traditional sport and, therefore, nonconformity to mainstream standards was also an indication of authenticity. This must be qualified, because not accepting the rules and regulations of adult authority was the outermost layer of legitimacy. What gave a skateboarder more status was whether his or her style of nonconformity was a creative form of self-expression. From this point, authenticity becomes more fluid; it is the individual expression of self (as long as it challenges some aspect of traditional values and norms of organized sport or society at large). Yet, authenticity seemed to have one other component that was not directly identified by the participants, and that was masculinity.

### **Gender**

Through my interactions with the skateboarders, it became apparent that females were not taken as seriously as males. Females who skated were often perceived as groupies and were often

referred to as "skate Bettys." Doug explained "skate Bettys" in this way:

They do it because they want to meet cute guys, or their boyfriends do it. It's the alternative crowd; it's like the girls that are kind of into alternative music and that stuff, and kind of skating goes along with it, not as much punk, but not mainstream, and, um, they like the clothes. It's a cool look. I think it's a cool look.

Obviously, this comment marginalizes the role females have—it's not that of a skater, but of someone who wants to associate with real skaters, who are assumed to be male. Not only did the male skaters assume that females were looking for cool guys, but they also assumed that females were less physically capable. One example is Brian's comment: "Oh, sometimes there are girls that like skaters, like they hang out, but they don't really, they aren't like, they just try to balance on the board." Eric claimed that "it takes too much coordination for a girl, and it's too aggressive."

The four females I interviewed were quite aware of this attitude. Grace, a 21-year-old skater, believed "males feel threatened by her," and thus treat her differently. Specifically, she felt patronized and overprotected by her male friends. For example, they were more concerned when she fell, and more enthusiastic when she learned tricks for the first time. Pamela claimed that she had to be better than the males to be accepted by them. To negotiate being part of the group, all of the females stated that they had to become "one of the guys." This indicated that masculinity was assumed to be the norm on which authenticity was evaluated. Females are not accepted as legitimate participants until they become guys (that is, like males).

### **Authenticity from the Perspective of the Skateboard Industry**

#### **The Nature of the Skateboard Industry**

The companies that manufacture and sell skateboard parts, accessories, and clothing in the United States and Canada (collectively known as the skateboard industry) are also concerned with authenticity, particularly their own. The owners and managers of these companies work very hard to maintain an authentic image in the eyes of their clientele. Some of the strategies they employ in order

to be seen as authentic are self-selection, sponsorship of professional and amateur skateboarders, and appealing to skateboarders' values through the advertisements they place in skateboard magazines. Each of these strategies is described below.

### Self-selection

Certain people are more likely to be successful as skateboard entrepreneurs than others. Arguably the most important factor affecting a company's success is whether or not the owner understands the skateboard culture. If the owner demonstrates a good understanding of skateboard culture, skaters will deem the company to be authentic. Thus, skateboarders themselves, particularly well-known, professional skateboarders, have the best chance for success (if they have sufficient funds to get a company going), as they tend to have the best understanding of skateboarders. People who do not understand skateboard culture tend not to get involved in the skateboard industry, and those outsiders who do attempt it are usually unsuccessful.

### Sponsorships

The skateboard industry maintains close contact with its consumer base by sponsoring professional and amateur skateboarders. Sponsorship involves an exchange of goods and services: the manufacturer or retailer supplies a select group of skaters with free equipment, clothing, stickers, etc., in exchange for feedback and creative input with regard to product design, distribution, advertising, and overall company image. For example, sponsored professional skateboarders are generally involved in the creation of the graphics that appear on the bottom of their signature boards. Some pros even draw the images themselves. Thus, board graphics generally reflect the personality, sense of humor, or interests of the sponsored pro. This gives the board an authentic, skater-created look, which reflects positively on the manufacturer that has allowed the sponsored pro to express him- or herself creatively on the signature board.

### Advertising

The skateboard industry advertises in skateboarding magazines—and almost nowhere else. Since the late 1980s, the industry has had four

or five nationally-distributed skateboarding magazines from which to choose, but two magazines have dominated the market in terms of sales, circulation, and influence. These are *Thrasher*, which has been published since 1981, and *Transworld Skateboarding*, which has been published since 1982. Most viable members of the skateboard industry advertise regularly in one or both of these magazines.

Skateboard industry manufacturers and retailers use the feedback and creative ideas they solicit from sponsored skaters to create a company image that is authentic in the eyes of skateboarders. The authentic skateboarder identity is not always depicted explicitly in ads for skateboard products, but the ads usually appeal to some aspect of what is considered authentic by skaters. In other words, the core values described earlier in this chapter are often played to in skateboard industry ads. Below are descriptions of some of the ways that those core values are employed.

### *Participant control*

Many ads use the core value of participant control to appeal to skateboarders. One aspect of this strategy is that manufacturers are rarely pictured in ads. The few who are shown are skater-owners, and they are almost always shown skating. Most often, sponsored skaters and the products they use are depicted in ads, giving the appearance that skaters are in control and are of primary importance.

### *De-emphasizing competition*

Like the skateboard culture in general, ads for skateboard products de-emphasize competition. As mentioned above, most ads feature pictures of sponsored skaters in action, but these photos are rarely taken from contests. Far more often, the pictures are derived from impromptu skate sessions or from planned photo shoots that take place at a favorite skate spot, such as a schoolyard or a backyard ramp. Taken in these "natural" surroundings, the photos are not flashy or professional looking. They belie their commercial purpose. They depict regular guys (mostly) having fun and skating on their own terms, thus sending the message that the pictured skater has a total commitment to skateboarding, not for the sake of winning competitions or making money, but for the pure enjoyment of skating.

### *Individualism and nonconformity*

Another value to which the skate industry appeals through its advertising is non-conformity. Ads sometimes contain images of

skateboarders breaking the law, taking great risks in their skating, or behaving in an otherwise unconventional way. For example, an ad for Anti-hero Skateboards depicts one of its team riders smoking a joint and another holding a pistol while sitting in the driver's seat of a car.

The appeal to individualism is accomplished through the display of individualized board graphics and individualized ad campaigns for signature products. As mentioned above, it is customary for pro skaters to design their own board graphics. It is also quite common for skateboard companies to hire skateboarders as ad designers. Self-expression and individualism are valued just as much in this arena as they are in skateboarding itself. Thus, the authenticity of the skaters themselves comes through in the advertising and becomes a part of the company image. An example of this, where individualism takes the form of quirky humor, is an ad for the Ed Templeton signature skate shoe (run in the November 1997 issue of *Thrasher*). The ad features a full-page photo of two older women, conservatively dressed in matching blouses and skirts, walking next to a large, pebbly beach. Each lady's head is obscured by a black circle in which appears an illustration of a sheep's head. Next to one sheep head is a handwritten statement: "have you seen the new sheep ed templeton skate shoe?" Next to the other head is this reply: "f—k that fool! i'll knock him upside the head with my handbag!" The only other writing on the page is a telephone number and a tiny "S" logo.

### *Insider mentality*

The Ed Templeton skate shoe ad also represents an appeal to an in-group mentality, another common strategy for convincing skaters of a company's authenticity. Usually, such ads contain little or no information so that those in the know (the insiders) will "get" the ad and feel validated for having gotten it; outsiders will be left out (and will strive to become insiders). Nike's recent campaign ("What if we treated all athletes the way we treat skateboarders?"), which has been run in the skateboard magazines as well as on television, demonstrates an attempt by an outsider company to appear to be an insider. This effort has been largely unsuccessful, however, as sales of Nike skate shoes have been slow. Skaters know that Nike is a huge sportswear corporation, not a member of the skateboard industry, and certainly not an insider.

### *Masculinity*

Many ads appeal to skateboarders through the core value of masculinity. Some of these ads appeal specifically to male, heterosexual desires, while others appeal to skaters' admiration of toughness and risk-taking. Of those that appeal to skaters' desires, some depict masculine (hetero)sexuality and sexual prowess through the use of female models who possess a number of feminine characteristics, such as long hair, classically beautiful faces, bronze skin, curvaceous but slender bodies, and little in the way of clothing. The models sometimes function as trophies or adornments for fully-clothed (and usually recognizable) male skateboarders. In other cases, the female models appear only with the products being advertised (or even without the products) and function as sexual enticements to the young male readers. For example, Fresh Jive clothing company ran an ad in the May 1997 issue of *Thrasher* featuring a full-page picture of a young woman sitting in a seductive pose and wearing only a see-through baby-doll-pajama top and a g-string.

An appeal to masculine toughness, or the ability to tolerate unpleasant experiences, can be found in ads that depict scary, morbid, or creepy images, such as skulls, skeletons, blood, spiders, and monsters. One example is an ad that Blind Skateboards ran in the November 1997 issue of *Thrasher*. The company logo features a cartoon image of the Grim Reaper, complete with scythe. The ad promotes a "Safe Death team board" which features an illustration of a man lying on the sidewalk beneath a giant metal safe which appears to have fallen from a window where the Grim Reaper character now stands, smiling. The dead man is lying in a pool of blood. The image of the board and its graphics is contained within a photo of a skateboarder holding the board and reenacting the scene in the board graphics (his head appears to be crushed beneath a safe). Most readers would quickly realize that this photo is staged (the blood looks very fake), but the image is sufficiently gory to appeal to skaters' appreciation of a masculine toughness in which mortality is mocked. Yet another ad that appeals to the value of toughness is for Slimeball skateboard wheels (run in *Thrasher*, June 1998). This ad features a profile image of a professional skateboarder leaning over and vomiting; the former contents of his stomach, vegetable-rice soup and two Slimeball wheels, are suspended in air.

Ads that appeal to masculine risk-taking and the teenage sense of immortality often depict death-defying skateboard stunts. For

example, an ad for Stereo brand skateboards, run in *Thrasher*, June 1998, features a full-page photo of a well-known pro skater, riding his skateboard in a crouched position, with the front wheels of his board in the air and his back wheels resting atop a wall that appears to be about four inches wide and ten feet high. The skater is just about to drop down to the sloping cement below the wall—a very risky move, to say the least. As mentioned above, this kind of picture could also represent individualism.

### *Commitment to the sport/lifestyle*

Skaters have a keen appreciation for skateboarding history. They honor legendary skaters from the past and admire longevity in the industry. A deep and long-term commitment to the sport and lifestyle is another form of authenticity. Companies that are well established in the industry often demonstrate their authenticity by emphasizing in their advertising that they have a long history in skateboarding and a long-term commitment to the sport. For example, when Santa Cruz Skateboards reached its twenty-fifth anniversary, it publicized the fact in its ads. New companies owned by prominent skateboarders or other respected members of the skate community demonstrate their authenticity by emphasizing the long-term involvement of the owner.

### *A final note on skateboard industry advertising*

Skate industry ads do not authenticate skateboarders. In fact, the reverse is true; the skaters who read the magazines and see the ads are critical judges who evaluate ads for their authenticity. If an ad is deemed authentic, the advertiser will be respected. If not, the advertiser will lack credibility in the eyes of skateboarders and will have to work very hard to overcome this reputation.

## **Epilogue**

Several researchers of popular culture have relied on Goffman's<sup>6</sup> dramaturgical concept of the self and social processes to help illuminate the concept of authenticity.<sup>7</sup> Goffman suggested that people had different styles and intentions regarding self-presentation, depending on whether they are in the front or back region of the stage. The front region is where people are consciously performing for a specific audience. The back region is the area in which one is performing for no audience and, therefore, is seen as a place

where people can be themselves, candid and authentic.<sup>8</sup> Donnelly and Young<sup>9</sup> claimed that a significant indicator of authenticity is when the participant is no longer worried about the *general* audience, while Fox<sup>10</sup> claimed that no longer consciously performing for *any* audience was a sign of authenticity.

Skateboarders use what is conventionally considered a front region—public settings such as parks and city streets—to display their backstage style and values. As Goffman noted, "By invoking a backstage style, individuals can transform any region into the backstage."<sup>11</sup> Authenticity for skateboarders is not determined by a successful front-region performance for a general audience, whereby the general audience grants authenticity to the skaters. Rather, authenticity is proven in the back region through an internalization and public display of the norms and values of the skateboard culture, which are really recognizable only to other experienced skateboarders. Thus, authentic style is developed in the back region, with and for other skateboarders, which may explain why the "rats" were not seen as authentic. They used the front region to develop their style.

Goffman argued that the behavior in the back region may constitute offensive or anti-social behavior in the eyes of the general audience, whereas the front region is a place of polite decorum. "In general, then, backstage conduct is one which allows minor acts which might easily be taken as symbolic of intimacy and disrespect for others present and for the region, while front region conduct is one which disallows such potentially offensive behavior."<sup>12</sup>

One sign of commitment to the skateboard subculture (and thus a sign of authenticity) is to willingly forgo any benefits that may come with conforming to general norms and values. Thus, skateboarders' public display of nonconformist (backstage) behavior has a cost: the general audience does not accept them as legitimate citizens of the larger culture. Skateboarders are willing to forfeit such public acceptance because being perceived as authentic by other skaters is so important. In fact, authenticity is arguably the single most important factor determining admittance into the subculture.

### Notes

1. Becky Beal, "Disqualifying the official: An exploration of social resistance through the subculture of skateboarding," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 12 (1995), pp. 252-267. Becky Beal, "Alternative Masculinity and its Effects on Gender Relations in the Subculture of Skateboarding," *Journal of Sport Behavior* 19(3) (1996), pp. 204-220.



2. K. Maeda, "Rights for Skateboarders," letter to the editor, *Windsor Beacon*, Oct 1991, p. 17.

3. I write as a witness and as a participant in the skateboarding subculture. In sociological terms I was a participant observer, though I didn't know it at the time. Yet like any participant observer, I was both involved and removed. I was not a skateboarder when I became involved in the subculture, and though I learned how to skate a little and became accepted as a legitimate member of the skateboard community because of my affiliation with the magazine, I was never considered, nor did I consider myself, a legitimate skateboarder.

4. Kathryn Joan Fox, "Real Punks and Pretenders: The Social Organization of a Counterculture," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 16(3) (1987), pp. 344-370.

5. Peter Donnelly and Kevin Young, "The construction and confirmation of identity in sport subcultures," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 5 (1988), pp. 223-240.

6. Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959).

7. Donnelly and Young, "Construction and confirmation"; Gianna M. Moscardo and Philip L. Pearce, "Historic Theme Parks: An Australian Experience in Authenticity." *Annals of Tourism Research* 13 (1986), pp. 467-479; Pirkko Markula, "As a Tourist in Tahiti: An Analysis of Personal Experience," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 26(2) (1997), pp. 202-224.

8. Goffman, *The presentation of self*; R. Wallace and A. Wolf, *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Continuing the Classical Tradition* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1986).

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