


# Straightedge Youth: Complexity and Contradictions of a Subculture

*By Robert T. Wood*

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**Straightedge Youth: Complexity and Contradictions of a Subculture** By Robert T. Wood

Emerging out of the American punk rock scene of the early 1980s, straightedge youth have held their ground and made important inroads on the broader terrain of American youth culture for the last twenty-five years. Known primarily for their militant opposition to drinking, drug use, and casual sex, as well as for their commitment to vegetarian and vegan lifestyles, straightedge youth have received little scholarly attention, and then primarily through studies focused on the larger subcultural framework of punk rock. Robert T. Wood presents the first theoretical and in-depth treatment of the straightedge culture.

Drawing on interviews with founding members and current straightedge youth, content analysis of the music lyrics, and straightedge "zines," Wood places the movement within the context of contemporary subcultural theory and the framework of cultural studies.

Identifying straightedge as a movement whose cultural boundaries have transformed over time, Wood explores the ways in which the group members' diverse and often contradictory self-understanding has contributed to the movement's evolution. Wood details the complexities of the subculture from its origins in Washington, D.C., through the emergence of schismatic straightedge factions and the adoption of animal rights and vegetarian agendas. This book offers an excellent introduction for those interested in the sociology of punk rock and its subcultures and will be an invaluable resource for sociologists and straightedge adherents.

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## Editorial Review

About the Author
Robert T. Wood is associate professor of sociology at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta. He has written numerous articles on subcultural studies.

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