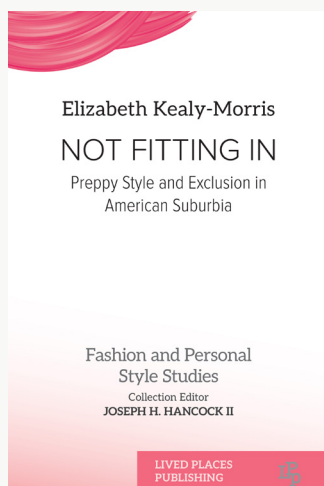




Not Fitting In: Preppy Style and Exclusion in American Suburbia

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COLLECTION EDITED BY Joseph H. Hancock II

COLLECTION

Fashion and Personal
Style Studies

EDITION

1st edition

MARKET

College/higher education
and Professional and
Scholarly

This course reading...

- Goes beyond the “classic” look to examine how the preppy aesthetic grew from 19th-century middle-class leisure into a powerful tool for social gatekeeping in American suburbs.
- Uses the poignant, first-hand account of a young girl wearing a spinal brace to illustrate how rigid fashion standards can physically and emotionally marginalize those who cannot “fit” the mold.
- Contextualizes the international dominance of massive labels like Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, and GAP, showing how their “relaxed” image contrasts with the reality of social exclusion.
- Bridges the gap between fashion theory, disability studies, and sociology, offering a profound look at how our bodies and clothes intersect with the places we live to form our identities.
- Is perfect for academic researchers, sociology and fashion students, and cultural critics interested in the psychological impact of dress codes and the complex relationship between disability and social belonging.
- Suitable for courses in: American studies, cultural geography, cultural memory studies, disability studies, dress history, fashion studies, gender studies, material culture, memory studies, and sociology of fashion.

How does a simple dress code become a rigid gatekeeper of social belonging?

In *Not Fitting In: Preppy style and exclusion in American suburbia*, Dr. Elizabeth Kealy-Morris explores the evolution of the preppy aesthetic from its 19th-century suburban leisure roots to its current status as a global symbol of “relaxed” Americana. While brands like Ralph Lauren and J. Crew have exported this look as a universal ideal, Dr. Kealy-Morris reveals the sharper edges of this style through a deeply personal lens. By centering the narrative on a young girl navigating the late twentieth century with a spinal deformity, the author illustrates how a back brace transformed the preppy uniform from a fashion choice into a symbol of shame and exclusion. Through this poignant case study, Dr. Kealy-Morris dissects the complex intersection of body image, geography, and the social myths we construct around the clothes we wear.

This book is an essential read for scholars and students of fashion theory, sociology, and disability studies, as well as anyone interested in how suburban environments shape our desire to conform or our pain in standing out.

Elizabeth Kealy-Morris is Senior Lecturer in Fashion, Ethics, and Inclusion at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Her research explores the intersections of dress, cultural memory, disability, and identity through the concept of ‘Body Dressing Work’.

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