

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations xi

Acknowledgments xiii

Introduction: Placing Sneakers within Sociology 1

Sneakers and youth subcultures within sociology 7

Subcultural ethnography as an outsider/insider researcher 9

A background of the sneaker industry 11

Literature on sneakers 15

Outline of the book 16

1 Academic Research on Footwear 19

The sociocultural significance of footwear 20

Footwear in fashion and dress studies 21

Studies on historical footwear 24

Footwear and sumptuary laws 28

Footwear in rituals and religion 30

Footwear as a fetish object 32

Conclusion 35

2 Sneakers as a Subculture: Emerging from Underground to Upperground 37

Three waves of the sneaker phenomenon 43

The First Wave pre-Jordan Phenomenon as an underground subculture 44

Rejection of a legitimate aesthetic taste 47

The Second Wave post-Jordan Sneaker Phenomenon 50

The production of new sneaker technologies 52

Controversies and debates to strengthen the subcultural bond 56

Conclusion 57

3 Sneakers as a Symbol of Manhood: Wearing Masculinity on Their Feet 59

Footwear and gender 60

High heels: Mobility for men and immobility for women 62

A male material object that binds subcultural members 64

The exploration of masculinity in subcultures 65

Male socialization through sneaker trading using social capital 67

Distinguishing oneself from a female shopper as a male entrepreneur 71

The culture of endorsement: The personification of success 73

The increasing significance of gender and the declining significance of race 77

The construction of masculine identity 78

Conclusion 80

4 Sneakers as Fashion: Reclaiming Masculine Adornment 81

A functional shift from practicality to adornment 83

Reclaiming fashion and adornment as a male affair 86

In pursuit of limited edition sneakers: Neophilias and neomanias 91

The Third Wave Sneaker Phenomenon: Sneaker hunting as a game 94

The commodification and diffusion of sneaker subculture 96

Sneakers as part of the growing streetwear industry 102

Sneakers as postmodern fashion: Transcending categorical boundaries 104

Conclusion 105

5 The Sneaker Subculture from Durkheimian Perspectives 107

Connecting theory and practice 108

Transition from modernity to postmodernity 109

Overcoming accelerated anomie in postmodern society 110

Social cohesion, collective conscience, and mechanical/organic solidarity 111

Conclusion 113

Conclusion: Future Directions and Possibilities in Footwear Studies 115

Notes 123

Bibliography 127

Index 144