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## Buttoned Up: Clothing, Conformity, and White-Collar Masculinity

*Erynn Masi de Casanova*

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**Erynn Masi de Casanova : Buttoned Up: Clothing, Conformity, and White-Collar Masculinity** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buttoned Up: Clothing, Conformity, and White-Collar Masculinity:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Buttoned Up by Erynn Masi De Casanova is a free ...By Kristine Fisher Buttoned Up by Erynn Masi De Casanova is a free NetGalley ebook that I read during a Trivia Night in early November. I believe that I chose to read this book in tandem with Fashion Victims, but the latter book was released a lot earlier than this one. Buttoned Up takes a much more scattered, qualitative interview approach than I would've

expected to such a narrow topic. That being said, it's a bulky, dense, pompous read, where it could've been more exploratory and diverse.

Who is today's white-collar man? The world of work has changed radically since *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and other mid-twentieth-century investigations of corporate life and identity. Contemporary jobs are more precarious, casual Friday has become an institution, and telecommuting blurs the divide between workplace and home. Gender expectations have changed, too, with men's bodies increasingly exposed in the media and scrutinized in everyday interactions. In *Buttoned Up*, based on interviews with dozens of men in three U.S. cities with distinct local dress cultures—New York, San Francisco, and Cincinnati—Erynn Masi de Casanova asks what it means to wear the white collar now. Despite the expansion of men's fashion and grooming practices, the decrease in formal dress codes, and the relaxing of traditional ideas about masculinity, white-collar men feel constrained in their choices about how to embody professionalism. They strategically embrace conformity in clothing as a way of maintaining their gender and class privilege. Across categories of race, sexual orientation and occupation, men talk about "blending in" and "looking the part" as they aim to keep their jobs or pursue better ones. These white-collar workers' accounts show that greater freedom in work dress codes can, ironically, increase men's anxiety about getting it wrong and discourage them from experimenting with their dress and appearance.

"Office culture is full of passive aggressions and radical uncertainties. *Buttoned Up* is a delightfully firm hook on which to hang your hat, if hats are your thing. The author has a fun, personable tone. She's not heavy on numbers or footnotes or jargon. The language is not dry or overly academic, though academics are the obvious target audience. I hope *Buttoned Up* is read by a lot of regular people, because it's about regular people and more regular people could use some reassurance that they've been reading their work situations correctly."—Megan Volpert, *PopMatters* (January 6, 2016) "*Buttoned Up* evokes sociological thought through considerations of the embodiment of gender, social constructions of dress style, and differences across age, region, or workplace. The book reads like a well-rounded documentary on white-collar dress: delving into histories, uncovering biographies, exploring workplace habitats, pondering symbolic meanings, and comparing geographies.... Scholars can make use of this book in a myriad of interdisciplinary courses on fashion and identity formation, the body, gender, and masculinities." -- Trenton M. Haltom, *Culture, Society, and Masculinities* (August 2016) "*Buttoned Up* is a compelling and engaging analysis of the ways that men in white-collar professions understand the significance of clothes."—Adia Harvey Wingfield, Washington University in St. Louis, author of *No More Invisible Man: Race and Gender in Men's Work* "While we may think of white-collar masculinity as the timid commuter in the gray flannel suit, Erynn Masi de Casanova's erudite book demonstrates that middle-class men understood that such complacent conformity was the price tag for class, race, and gender dominance. Being buttoned-down meant having privilege neatly sewn up."—Michael Kimmel, SUNY Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies and Executive Director, Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities, Stony Brook University, author of *Manhood in America* "I love this thought-provoking book; it is a pleasure to read. Erynn Masi de Casanova offers a nuanced and detailed exploration of a taken-for-granted and understudied topic: white-collar men's bodies. *Buttoned Up* attends to issues of ethnicity, sexuality, age, place, and company culture as they intersect in complex ways with masculinity and bourgeois class. It is a terrific example of qualitative social science research; Casanova's in-depth interviews support her theoretical insights."—Susan B. Kaiser, University of California, Davis, author of *The Social Psychology of Clothing and Fashion and Cultural Studies* About the Author Erynn Masi de Casanova is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati. She is the author of *Making Up the Difference: Women, Beauty, and Direct Selling in Ecuador*, winner of the National Women's Studies Association's Sara A. Whaley Book Prize.