Buttoned Up: Clothing, Conformity, And White-Collar Masculinity

BUTTONED UP

CLOTHING, CONFORMITY, AND

WHITE-COLLAR MASCULINITY

Erynn Masi de Casanova

Synopsis

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 culturesâ ™New York, San Francisco, and Cincinnatiâ ™Erynn Masi de Casanova asks what it means to wear the white collar now. Despite the expansion of menâ ™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 workersâ ™ accounts show that greater freedom in work dress codes can, ironically, increase menâ ™s anxiety about getting it wrong and discourage them from experimenting with their dress and appearance.

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Customer Reviews

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.

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