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# Elsewhere, U.S.A.: How We Got from the Company Man, Family Dinners, and the Affluent Society to the Home Office, BlackBerry Moms, and Economic Anxiety

Dalton Conley


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"Fascinating. . . . Admirably frank. . . . Conley is a master chronicler of our attention-challenged age, tallying up the social and personal costs of always striving to be somewhere else." —*Time*

## Elsewhere, U.S.A.

How We Got from the  
Company Man, Family  
Dinners, and the Affluent  
Society to the Home  
Office, BlackBerry Moms,  
and Economic Anxiety

Dalton Conley  
Author of *Honky*

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**Dalton Conley : Elsewhere, U.S.A.: How We Got from the Company Man, Family Dinners, and the Affluent Society to the Home Office, BlackBerry Moms, and Economic Anxiety** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elsewhere, U.S.A.: How We Got from the Company Man, Family Dinners, and the Affluent Society to the Home Office, BlackBerry Moms, and Economic Anxiety:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. What led to our current aggregate economic anxiety? [Penned before the recent market crash]By J. M. GormanPreface: This book was penned before the recent market crash.Clay Shirky's 'Here Comes Everybody' was the best book that I read in 2008. Dalton Conley's 'Elsewhere, U.S.A.' may prove to be the best book that I read in 2009. [And it's only February 1st!] [Interestingly enough, both Clay Shirky and Dalton Conley are both affiliated with NYU.]The two central questions that Dalton Conley raises and attempts to answer are these:Given that:- When Mr. 1959 (depicted in William Whyte's 'Organization Man') attained a dignified level of professional success (i.e. established one's own dentistry practice, become a vice-president at a tire company, etc.), he often parlayed the accompanying level of income and wealth into more leisure time for he and his family.- Whereas when Mr. (or increasingly Mrs.) 2009 attains a comparable level of professional success (i.e. rises to the rank of marketing executive for a multinational corporation, joins a prestigious law firm, etc), he (or she) increasingly does \*not\* parlay the accompanying level of wealth into more leisure time. Instead, he or she winds up working more hours with more economic anxiety.- How and why did this happen?- What are the ramifications of this change?Throughout, Conley asserts that it was not one thing, but many that led us to this economic reality:Here are just a few:- Rising economic inequality between high and low wage earners, and self-imposed pressure to "keep up with the Joneses" in a post-materialist society.- Technology that enables a 24x7 work week.- Females earning more and remaining in the work force for longer spans of time.- A lower marginal income tax rate for the top bracket.- A greater recognition of the opportunity cost associated with "not working".At the book's conclusion, Conley cautions the reader that it would be unproductive to use one's entire energy to rally against our new reality. In fact, Conley never labels the new reality as universally bad. Instead, he urges the reader to recognize the tradeoffs between what once was and is today.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Understanding the Networked SocietyBy Sheryl DawsonDalton Conley is a researcher with a soul! He connects with today's busy families to ask the question, "Are you feeling like you should be elsewhere?" We are so busy we feel guilty that we are not spending enough time at anything we do. Conley helps us understand the trends that create the feeling so we can assess our own answer to the acceleration of our pace in life. Obviously we can not increase the time we have, but must consider how we allocate it to family, work, social life, volunteering, and ourselves. Since we can not return to a bygone age, Conley says we must "blend and bend" among the many roles we play. His insight into consumption and investment and the maddening incentives we use to induce certain behaviors, is cause to pause, if even for a moment. Conley addresses the broader social issues as well -- taxes and social policy and how they impact society. If you want to reflect on how we got to where we are -- "elsewhere, USA" -- take his book with you on your next "short vacation weekend".Sheryl DawsonTotal Career SuccessAuthor Job Search: The Total System (3rd Ed)0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Timothy Caffreyamazing read

Over the past three decades, our daily lives have changed slowly but dramatically. Boundaries between leisure and work, public space and private space, and home and office have blurred and become permeable. In *Elsewhere, U.S.A.*, acclaimed sociologist Dalton Conley connects our day-to-day experiences with occasionally overlooked sociological changes, from women's increasing participation in the labor force to rising economic inequality among successful professionals. In doing so, he provides us with an X-ray view of our new social reality.From the Trade Paperback edition.

.com Book Description Over the past three decades, our daily lives have changed slowly but dramatically. Boundaries between leisure and work, public space and private space, and home and office have blurred and become permeable. How many of us now work from home, our wireless economy allowing and encouraging us to work 24/7? How many of us talk to our children while scrolling through e-mails on our BlackBerrys? How many of us feel overextended, as we are challenged to play multiple roles--worker, boss, parent, spouse, friend, and client--all in the same instant? Dalton Conley, social scientist and writer provides us with an X-ray view of our new social reality. In *Elsewhere, U.S.A.*, Conley connects our daily experience with occasionally overlooked sociological changes: women's increasing participation in the labor force; rising economic inequality generating anxiety among successful professionals; the individualism of the modern era--the belief in self-actualization and expression--being replaced by the need to play different roles in the various realms of one's existence. In this groundbreaking book, Conley offers an essential understanding of how the technological, social, and economic changes that have reshaped our world are also reshaping our individual lives. Exclusive Essay: Dalton Conley Writes in from His BlackBerry (Typos Intact) I am writing this on my BlackBerry as I sit on the sidelines of my daughter's soccer game. My wife, her mother, is off in Indiana on business. And this pretty much captures life in *Elsewhere USA*, where professional couples with children feel the pressures of work 24/7 and solve their multiple commitment conflicts by doing all at once with partial attention. We are afraid to stop working (ir perhaps can't) since, though in objective terms we may be doing better, rising inequality makes us feel as if we are falling behind... it struck me that as of 2007, when I set out on this project, no one had yet written a book that captured the subtle but unmistakable ways that everyday life has changed for this class of Americans--or, for that matter, the socioeconomic roots of such changes, above and beyond the

obvious technological advances that have besieged us over the last two decades... (Coach scolds me for coaching my daughter from the sidelines...) There had once been an esteemed tradition among sociologists to try to crystallize a historical moment, in order to reflect it back to those living it in the hope that one has put words to something that was felt by many but unarticulated. The 1950s were filled with such classics like, *THE ORGANIZATION MAN*; *WHITE COLLAR*; *THE LONELY CROWD*; and *THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY*, to name a few. So I decided to try to swing for the fences, so to speak, and put into words what I--as a sociologist and victim of the elsewhere ethic--saw happening around me. The economic red shift (anxiety caused by rising inequality at the top), the price culture (the spread of markets into every nook and cranny of daily life), investment (investment + consumption), leisure (work + leisure), the portable workshop (what I am writing this on), intravidualism (an ethic of fragmented selves replacing the modern ethic of individualism), and, of course, the Elsewhere Society (the interpenetration of spheres of life that were once bounded from each other). All these terms were attempts to describe the gradual--yet fundamental--ways that life has changed beneath our feet since those days of those 1950s classics. The organization man is gone, replaced by the elsewhere dad, the blackberry mom and various other figures in our new social landscape. Or so I claim... It's up to you to tell me if I've struck out or connected... (Goal for the Ravens!!!! Go E!) (Photo credit Lisa Ackerman)

From Publishers Weekly  
Conley (Honky) makes a prescient analysis of how technology and free markets have transformed American life, comparing the mid-20th century American with the present-day incarnation. These are two very different animals; one compartmentalized and motivated by the traditional American ethos of success, and the other a psychological hybrid of impulses connected to work, pleasure, materialism and consumption. The results of this brilliant and, at times, chilling comparison, are manifest not only on these pages but in real life. Cheap and easy credit, he writes, has been a major reason why the United States recently dipped into negative savings for the first time since the great depression. Conley examines how, technology has altered how Americans earn and spend money, playing out the behaviors characteristic of late capitalism, or simply an evolving economic system that, by attaching a price to virtually everything from child rearing to dating, has helped devalue people, the work they do and the material goods they desire. A sociological mirror, this book is equal parts cautionary tale, exercise in contemporary anthropology and a spiritual and emotional audit of the 21st century American. (Jan.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Bookmarks Magazine  
A busy professional with an equally busy spouse -- he is Chair of New York University's Sociology Department; his wife is experimental designer Natalie Jeremijenko -- Dalton Conley lives the multiple lives he describes. Most critics think he has honed a forward-looking book that successfully combines personal anecdote and hard science. Even if his ideas are not cutting-edge, he is a "lively if sometimes overheated writer" (New York Times Book Review) who presents a snapshot of our times that some of those "intraviduals" might actually read on the morning commute. Conley's penchant for coining new expressions and his ability to synthesize discrete strands of information draw a few comparisons to the work of Malcolm Gladwell. That's not necessarily a good thing, though, as some critics feel Conley is more interested in creating lingo than in figuring out where Elsewhere is really at. Copyright 2009 Bookmarks Publishing LLC