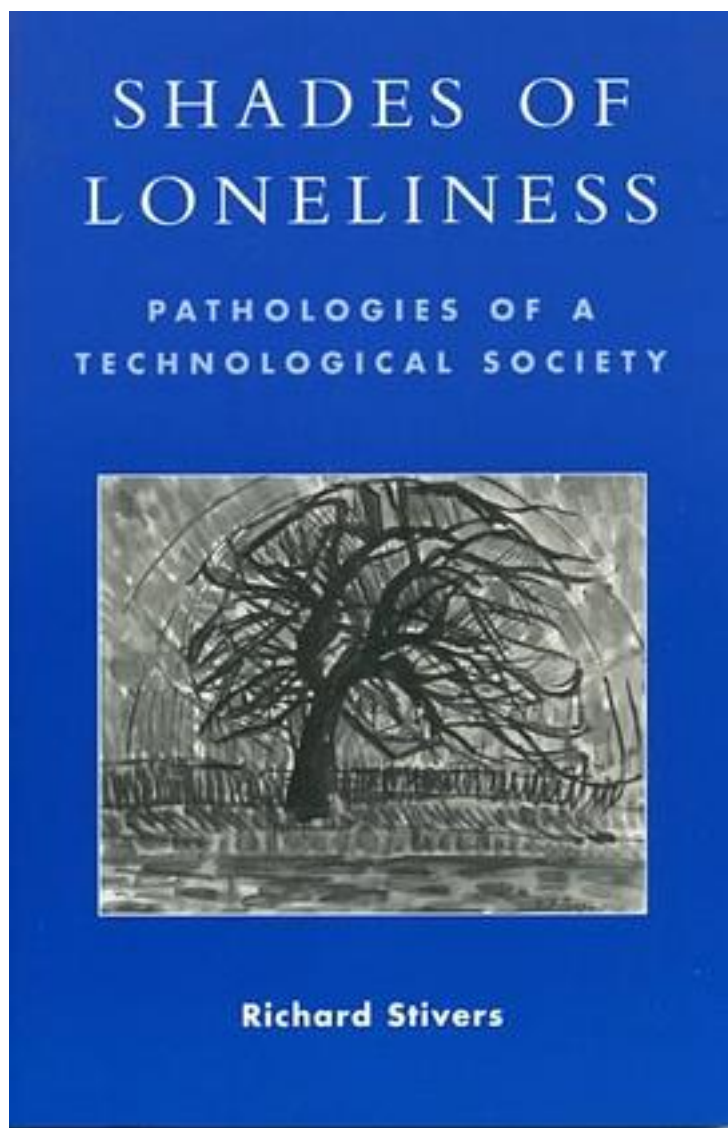


Shades of Loneliness



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To varying degrees, loneliness has us all in its grip. In this incisive and controversial book, Richard Stivers rejects the recent emphasis on genetic explanations of psychological problems, arguing that the very organization of technological societies is behind the pervasive experience of loneliness. The extreme rationality that governs our institutions and organizations results in abstract and impersonal relationships in much of daily life. Moreover, as common meaning is gradually eroded, our connections to others become vague and tenuous. Our ensuing fear and loneliness, however, can be masked by an outgoing, extroverted personality. In its extreme form, loneliness assumes pathological dimensions in neurosis and schizophrenia. Stivers maintains that even here the causes remain social. The various forms of neuroses and psychoses follow the key contradictions of a technological society. For instance, narcissism and depression reflect the tension between power and meaninglessness that characterizes modern societies. Stivers demonstrates that there is a continuum from the normal "technological personality" through the various neuroses to full-blown schizophrenia. He argues that all forms of loneliness emanate from the same cause; they likewise share a common dynamic despite their differences. Loneliness, in its many manifestations, seems to be the price we must pay for living in the modern world. Yet nurturing family, friend, and community ties can mitigate its culturally and psychologically disorganizing power. This book is a clarion call for a renewal of moral awareness and custom to combat the fragmentation and depersonalization of our technological civilization.

作者介绍:

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