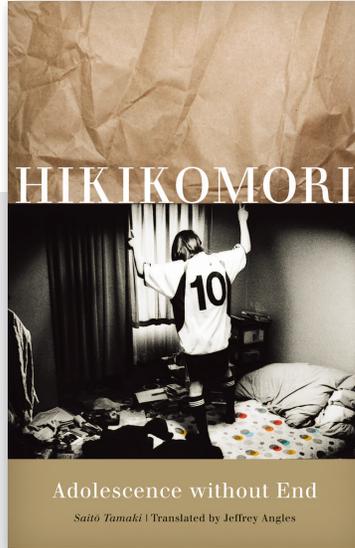


Hikikomori

Adolescence without End

Saitō Tamaki

Translated by Jeffrey Angles

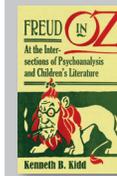


This is the first English translation of a controversial Japanese best seller that made the public aware of the social problem of hikikomori, or “withdrawal”—a phenomenon estimated by the author to involve as many as one million Japanese adolescents and young adults who have withdrawn from society, re-treating to their rooms for months or years and severing almost all ties to the outside world. Saito Tamaki’s work of popular psychology provoked a national debate about the causes and extent of the condition.

Drawing on his own clinical experience with hikikomori patients, Saito creates a working definition of social withdrawal and explains its development. He argues that hikikomori sufferers manifest a specific, interconnected series of symptoms that do not fit neatly with any single, easily identifiable mental condition, such as depression. Rejecting the tendency to moralize or pathologize, Saito sensitively describes how families and caregivers can support individuals in withdrawal and help them take steps toward recovery. At the same time, his perspective sparks contention over the contributions of cultural characteristics—including family structure, the education system, and gender relations—to the problem of social withdrawal in Japan and abroad.

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