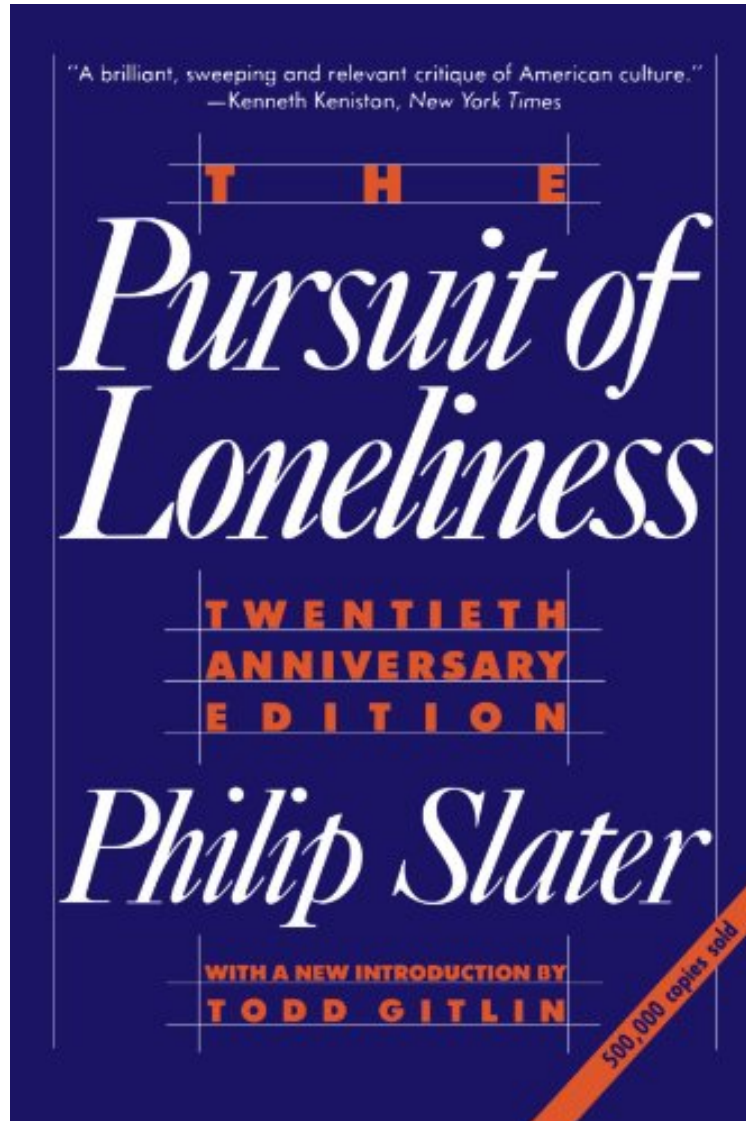


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## The Pursuit of Loneliness, 20th Anniversary Edition

*Philip Slater*

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**Philip Slater : The Pursuit of Loneliness, 20th Anniversary Edition** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Pursuit of Loneliness, 20th Anniversary Edition*:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Timeless Critique of American Society By Louis Foster This book, first published in 1970 and updated in 1976, provides an interpretation of the sweeping cultural changes which visited American culture beginning in the 1960s and forever altered attitudes towards work, family, women, cities, and American history. Its an academic literary document which critiques the American character and offers a few

suggestions for reform which would broaden and deepen happiness throughout society. Philip Slater begins by contrasting individualism, which he points out is the American fantasy, with interdependence and cooperation, shown to be the American reality whenever progress has been made, not necessarily a frequent or inevitable event in our nations past. He proposes that the vaunted independence lauded by our society tends to produce uniformity owing to the prescription for what is desirable being handed down to all by the culture. The freedom to independently pursue identical ends results in identical actors who share identical values, not a society of unique individuals who work together cooperatively. Slater excels at probing paradoxes such as this, using his wry humour to debunk experts from economists to Intelligence test makers and to expose the fruitless waste inherent in consumerism and war. His analysis is aimed at understanding the American character and the fissure he probes to get at it is that between the youth of the 60s and their parents who, equipped with Dr Spocks Baby Child Care, created a generation encouraged to be spontaneous but were then shocked when the younger generation refused to get on the same treadmill as their parents. While not offering up his own system, and with just a few largely idealistic proposals to alleviate the problems he describes, Slater does offer up a large number of brilliant insights into the culture on issues as varied as privacy, urban planning, and gender. Its an indicator of just how carefully observed and profound they are that they continue to be relevant and spot on decades after the initial publication of this book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Insightful, readable, and essential to understanding the social basis of psychological distress in modern life By RickGreat book, speaks to our times. I've long held that many personal and interpersonal issues are sociological in nature and not psychological. Insisting that issues are in our heads exclusively or the product of brain chemistry or upbringing neglects the social constructs external to us that stoke our inner struggles. This book discusses the social norms in first-world modern (capitalist/post-industrial) western countries and how they are abrasive to our human needs for community, belonging, and co-dependency. It is on the same shelf as "The Adjusted American" and "The Lonely Crowd", two other books that discuss these types of issues. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good, well written, explains much of societies problems even today By James Buscemi The problem in America is that change is hard to produce because the system is quick to prevent it. Healthy new growths in society (have been) blocked by the overwhelming force and rigidity of economic inequality. People are prevented from rising in social status because the elite have designed enough measures to prevent this. One could argue that by withholding acceptance into the upper class, the rich have created an aristocracy in America, which has the rest of the population at its mercy. The rich buy protection and favor from Presidents; cheat, rob, and poison the consumer with impunity; continually widen the gap between rich and poor, and tie up in its own greed the resources we need to solve the problems of society. Philip Slater

In a classic indictment of American individualism and isolationism, Philip Slater analyzes the great ills of modern society-violence, competitiveness, inequality, and the national 'addiction' to technology.

"The Pursuit of Loneliness is still worth reading because it honors the mission of sociology not to train a caste of knowers but to contribute to society's knowledge of itself." from the introduction by Todd Gitlin "If I had to select a single book by which to tell a stranger what life in this country has become and why, it would be this one." Edgar Z. Friedenberg in The New York of Books "A brilliant, sweeping and revelant critique ... An insightful, well-written, and thought-provoking book that illumines each of the many aspects of American culture that it touches." Kenneth Keniston in The New York Times From the Back Cover In a convincing indictment of American individualism and isolationism, Philip Slater analyzes the great ills of modern society violence, competitiveness, inequality, and the national addiction to technology. About the Author Philip Slater lives in Santa Cruz, California. Todd Gitlin is professor of sociology at the University of California/Berkeley.