

Symptomatology of hikikomori:

a philosophical perspective

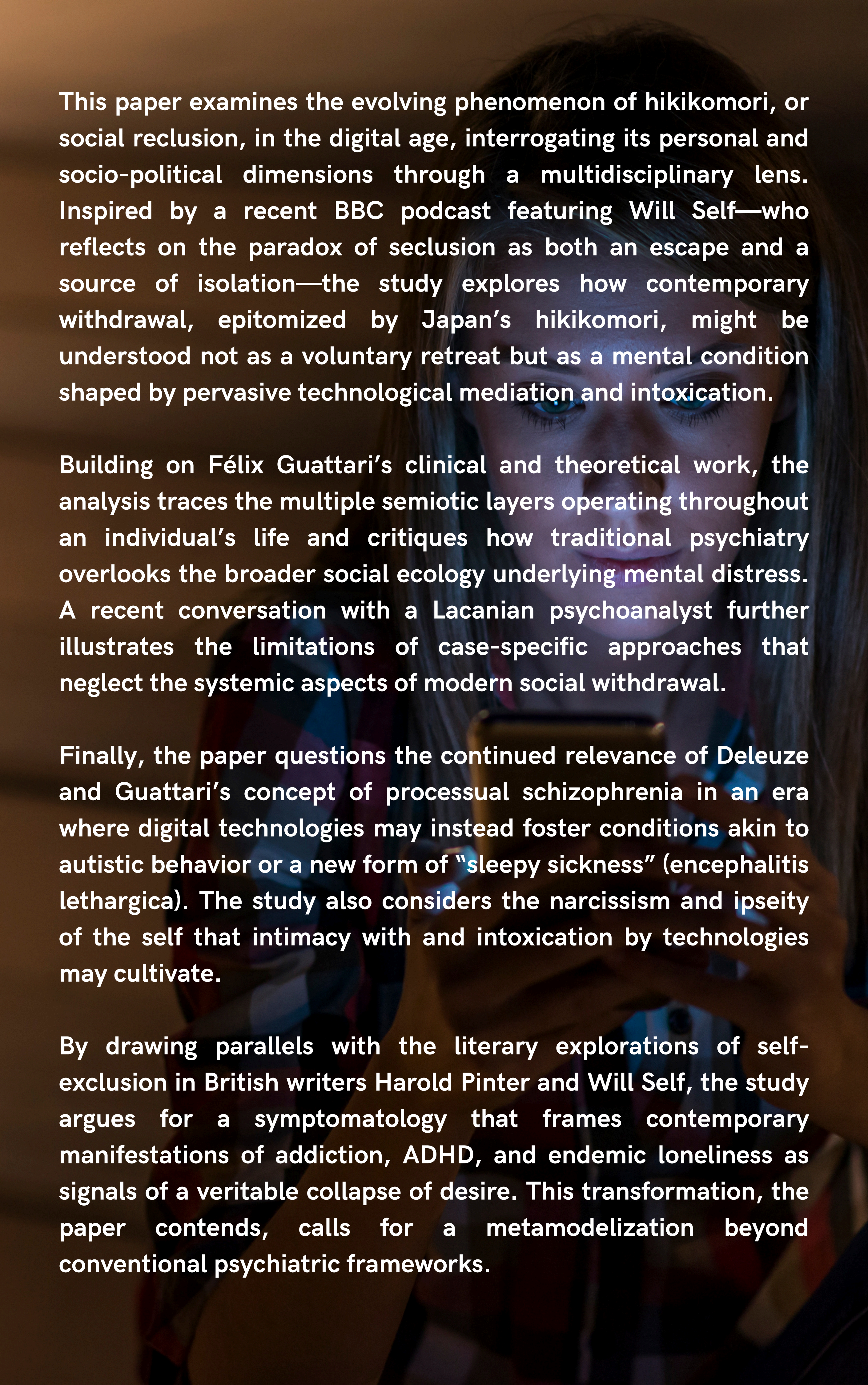
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This paper examines the evolving phenomenon of hikikomori, or social reclusion, in the digital age, interrogating its personal and socio-political dimensions through a multidisciplinary lens. Inspired by a recent BBC podcast featuring Will Self—who reflects on the paradox of seclusion as both an escape and a source of isolation—the study explores how contemporary withdrawal, epitomized by Japan's hikikomori, might be understood not as a voluntary retreat but as a mental condition shaped by pervasive technological mediation and intoxication.

Building on Félix Guattari's clinical and theoretical work, the analysis traces the multiple semiotic layers operating throughout an individual's life and critiques how traditional psychiatry overlooks the broader social ecology underlying mental distress. A recent conversation with a Lacanian psychoanalyst further illustrates the limitations of case-specific approaches that neglect the systemic aspects of modern social withdrawal.

Finally, the paper questions the continued relevance of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of processual schizophrenia in an era where digital technologies may instead foster conditions akin to autistic behavior or a new form of "sleepy sickness" (encephalitis lethargica). The study also considers the narcissism and ipseity of the self that intimacy with and intoxication by technologies may cultivate.

By drawing parallels with the literary explorations of self-exclusion in British writers Harold Pinter and Will Self, the study argues for a symptomatology that frames contemporary manifestations of addiction, ADHD, and endemic loneliness as signals of a veritable collapse of desire. This transformation, the paper contends, calls for a metamodelization beyond conventional psychiatric frameworks.