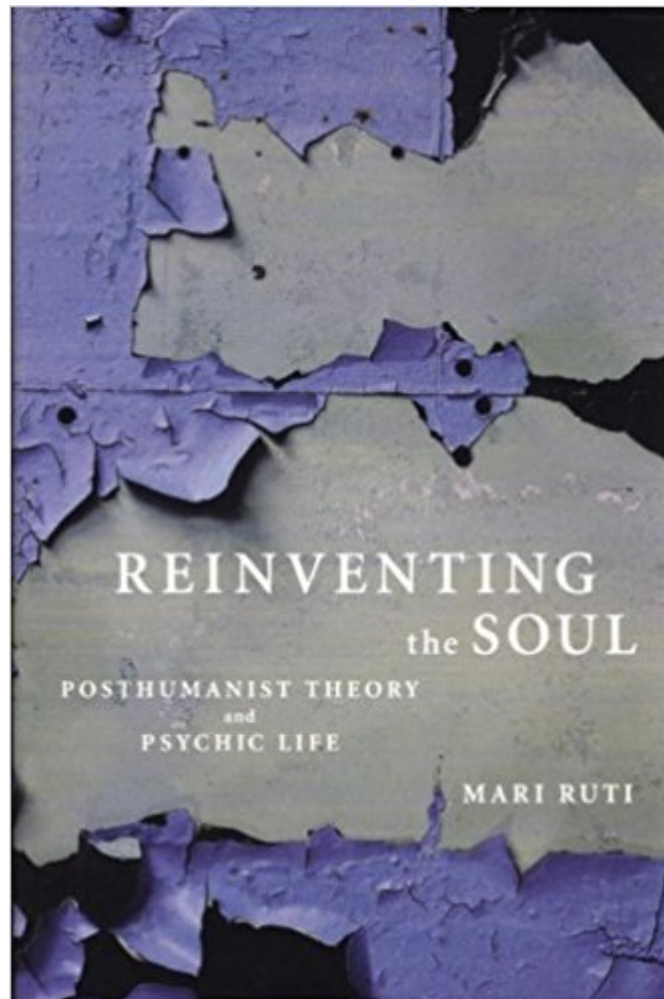


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Reinventing The Soul: Posthumanist Theory And Psychic Life



Synopsis

Essential reading for scholars and students in critical theory, psychoanalysis, and gender studies. How does the self care for itself in the posthumanist era? What psychic processes might allow the postmodern subject to find meaning and value in its life? Is it possible to delineate a theory of psychic potentiality that is compatible with poststructuralist models of fluid, decentered, and polyvalent subjectivity? *Reinventing the Soul* offers a new perspective on what it means to be a human being and to strive in the world despite the wounding effects of the socialization process. Drawing on the rich legacies of French poststructuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Ruti builds an affirmative alternative to the post-Foucaultian tendency to envision subjectivity as a function of hegemonic systems of power. She proposes that the subject's encounter with the world also necessarily activates the psyche's innovative potential. By focusing on matters of creative agency, imaginative empowerment, inner metamorphosis, and self-actualization, Ruti outlines some of the mechanisms by which the psyche manages not only to survive its lack, alienation, or suffering, but also to transform its abjection into an existentially livable reality. Central to Ruti's argument is the idea that human beings relate to the world in active rather than merely passive ways "as dynamic creators of meaning rather than as powerless dupes of disciplinary power."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mari Ruti's careful and fresh readings of Foucault, Lacan, and many other influential figures in psychoanalytic and posthumanist studies reveal something truly extraordinary, a viable

posthumanist soul. A welcome response to the tendency of recent post-structuralist theory to seem overly pessimistic about the possibility of change and agency for the individual subject, Ruti's book deftly deconstructs implicit binaries in much of the interpretations of the work of Lacan and Foucault, challenging the tendency to pit the subject's fundamental lack against a meaningful soul and to pit impermanent, decentered identity against existential meaningfulness. One of her greatest achievements in this book is to resurrect the passionate and ethical optimism of the original post-structuralist thinkers, reminding us that this theory can very powerfully reconfigure our ways of thinking, loving, and living in real and empirical ways so that we can achieve psychic well-being and a truly better world. This optimism may not be trendy or fashionable but it is inspiring. Highly recommended for any who have sympathized with the ideas of posthumanist theories but have yearned for these ideas to begin to pay constructive and affirmative dividends rather than continuing simply to deconstruct and take apart.

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