

# A World of Fragile Things: Psychoanalysis and the Art of Living (SUNY series in Psychoanalysis and Culture)

Mari Ruti

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Psychoanalytic perspective on what Western philosophers from Socrates to Foucault have called "the art of living."

How are our lives meaningful? What is the relationship of loss to creativity? How can we best engage and overcome our suffering? From Socrates to Foucault, Western philosophers have sought to define "the art of living"—the complex craft of human existence that elicits our thoughtful participation, and the idea that even though death escapes our control, life is not something that simply happens to us in a passive manner but is instead a process that invites our active and lively engagement. A World of Fragile Things offers a distinctly psychoanalytic perspective on "the art of living," one that focuses on ongoing and ever-evolving processes of self-fashioning rather than defining a fixed and unitary sense of self. With a compelling blend of philosophical insight and psychoanalytic acumen, Mari Ruti asks experts and readers alike to probe the complexities of human existence, offering a contemporary outlook on some of the most enduring questions of Western thought.

"...[a] splendid book ... In exploring such subtending themes as the relation of loss to creativity and the meaning of love, fantasy, and character development, Ruti stands in the tradition of humanist writers who have bridged the disciplinary gaps between philosophy, psychotherapy, and the human sciences." — *CHOICE* 

"Ruti's bracing postmodernist sensibility is well ballasted by genuine open-mindedness and even a refreshing dash of humanism. Her eloquent argument that 'psychoanalysis teaches us to make a virtue of contingency' should be heeded not only by scholars of literature and philosophy but also by practicing clinicians." — Peter L. Rudnytsky, coeditor of *Psychoanalysis and Narrative Medicine* 

"Passionate, persuasive, ambitious and caring—Ruti cogently bridges ontological issues into psychoanalytic thought." — Ellen McCallum, author of *Object Lessons: How to Do Things with Fetishism* 



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