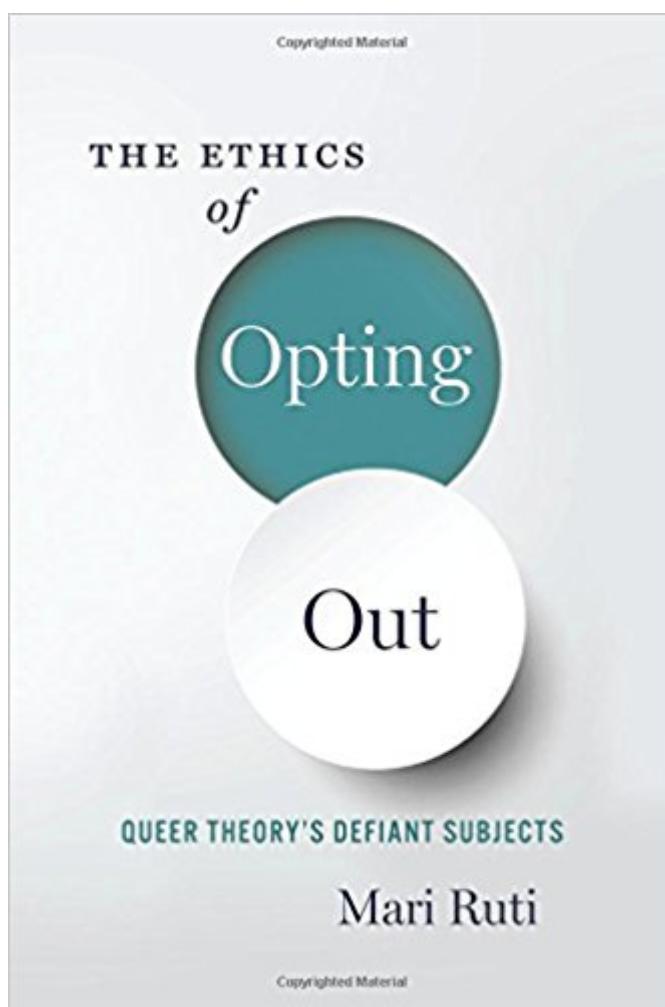


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The Ethics Of Opting Out: Queer Theory's Defiant Subjects



Synopsis

In *The Ethics of Opting Out*, Mari Ruti provides an accessible yet theoretically rigorous account of the ideological divisions that have animated queer theory during the last decade, paying particular attention to the field's rejection of dominant neoliberal narratives of success, cheerfulness, and self-actualization. More specifically, she focuses on queer negativity in the work of Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, and Lynne Huffer, and on the rhetoric of bad feelings found in the work of Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, David Eng, Heather Love, and José Muñoz. Ruti highlights the ways in which queer theory's desire to opt out of normative society rewrites ethical theory and practice in genuinely innovative ways at the same time as she resists turning antinormativity into a new norm. This wide-ranging and thoughtful book maps the parameters of contemporary queer theory in order to rethink the foundational assumptions of the field.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The *Ethics of Opting Out* grapples with the debates about utopia and negativity that have engaged queer critics for over a decade. Rather than simply taking sides, Mari Ruti works through the theoretical underpinnings of these positions, providing clear explanations and useful correctives along the way. By joining Lacanian fidelity to desire with the impulse to repair, Ruti points the way toward a queer ethics that is antinormative without being antisocial. (Heather Love, Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania) The *Ethics of Opting Out* makes an unprecedented and unparalleled intervention into the field of queer theory. Ruti brings her profound

expertise in both Lacanian theory and Foucauldian thought to the project, and it enables her to write a book that transcends the division that has hitherto defined the field. This is required reading not only for queer theorists but for anyone concerned with the question of ethics today. (Todd McGowan, associate professor of English, the University of Vermont) This is an amazing book for its comprehensively critical and masterly treatment of the field of queer studies. Butler's relational anti-Lacanian ethics as well as Edelman's Lacanian anti-relationalism come in for equally vigorous criticism. Instead Ruti makes a pitch for a new Lacanian relational ethics of, if not love for, then at least living with the inhuman awkwardness of your neighbor. (Henry Krips, Andrew W. Mellon All-Claremont Chair of Humanities and Professor of Cultural Studies at Claremont Graduate University)

Mari Ruti offers a comprehensive overview of the current state of queer theory, including debates about affect theory, subjectivity, negativity, defiance, agency, and bad feelings. She gives an accessible yet theoretically rigorous account of the political divisions that have animated the field in the last decade. In particular, Ruti argues that contemporary efforts by queer theorists to grapple with negativity and bad feelings challenge our society's normative understanding of the good life and have the potential to transform ethical theory and practice.

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