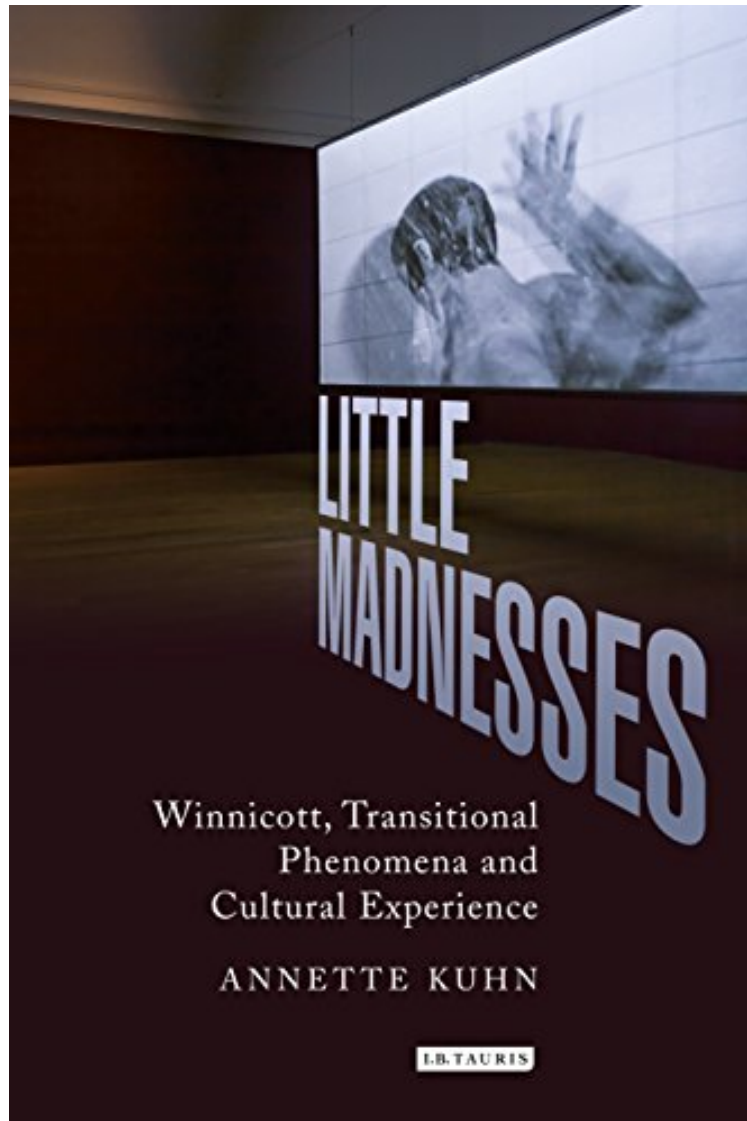


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(International Library of Cultural Studies)

Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience (International Library of Cultural Studies)

From I.B.Tauris

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From I.B.Tauris : Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience (International Library of Cultural Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience (International Library of Cultural Studies):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy CustomerHelpful readings by major artists and

scholars on the significance of Winnicott for contemporary artistic practice. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Adaptive Inspiration to all of Us By Dr. Laurence Raw It is not often that I can consider a book game-changing in terms of impact. This is certainly true of Annette Kuhn's edited collection *Little Madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena, and Cultural Experience* (I. B. Tauris, 2014). Drawing on the theories of the psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott, the contributors look at different ways in which individuals make use of the experience of watching movies, attending art galleries, or viewing installations to make sense of their lives. I have referred in previous posts to the effect that Winnicott has had on my own thinking. This collection reinforces the idea of the ways in which we create "third spaces," using transitional objects (such as films) that help us redefine the relationship between the psyche and the environment. In such spaces we are both "me and not me"; in other words, we can reconsider our previous behavioral constructions while exploring the potential to create new possibilities. This "third space" is potentially limitless; there are no boundaries other than those that we choose to impose on ourselves. This model is especially appropriate to fan cultures, where aficionados of particular movies (e.g. *Star Wars*, *Blade Runner*) not only construct their lives according to the characters and their actions, but rewrite the movies in their own way, publishing their work online or in discussion-groups. Kuhn's anthology not only looks at movies as transitional objects, but also shows how cinema buildings fulfill similar functions, especially in the mid-twentieth century. At that time movie-goers went on a regular basis to local cinemas, not just to see movies, but to savor the behavioral rituals associated with the event — meeting their potential spouses, dressing up, enjoying the double feature, and so on. When the massive picture-palaces opened, with their carved interiors, plush seats and elegantly uniformed staff, this sense of occasion was increased: movie-goers could forget the humdrum realities of their quotidian lives and enter dream-worlds offering illusions of gentility. Other transitional objects explored in the collection include sounds. This is a suggestive concept, reminding me of my own life, in which my daily ritual of "me-time," where I sit down in peace and read a book, is inevitably accompanied by classical music in the background. The sound of the music is associated subconsciously with relaxation, allowing my mind to wander wherever it wishes, and to reflect on my past and the way it can determine my future. Put more simply, the sound of classical music becomes the catalyst by which I can learn how to adapt to changing situations. The collection also invites us to question the distinction between "fiction" and "reality" by showing how fictions — as represented in movies or other cultural products — offer alternatives to readers and/or viewers, giving them the chance to reconsider or redefine their lives. The text becomes the means by which they learn how to adapt to changing situations, and thereby determine future actions. Storytelling assumes a highly powerful function; by submitting to the alternative reality (perhaps a more appropriate term than "fiction") of the tale, we learn how to redefine our own realities; we reflect on past experiences and use such reflections to determine our futures. Storytelling stimulates creativity in everyone's consciousness, so long as they appreciate the value of transitional objects. Kuhn's collection is a highly democratic work in this respect. The collection also emphasizes the importance of "de-differentiation." This is a suggestive notion: if we all understand the power of transitional objects, we can appreciate the value of the transformative processes associated with them. Such moments encourage us to set aside our notions of social, gender, ethnic and racial difference and understand how every human being is capable of enjoying them. All of us can learn how to contemplate and reflect on our lives if we are given the time and space to do so. This conclusion should be understood by everyone involved in the pedagogic profession — educators, learners, administrators. It suggests that "learning" has little or nothing to do with factual acquisition, but only occurs when individuals are stimulated to do so. They need to be creatively stimulated, so that they learn how to create their own spaces and identify their own transitional objects. This process involves a considerable amount of *laissez-faire*; rather than telling people what to think and how to think, educators and administrators should be prepared to listen to their learners and learn from them. Winnicott talked a lot about the ways in which infants learn from their mothers; Kuhn's collection suggests that this is a two-way process in which mothers (and other figures of responsibility) should learn from their infants. The collection contains so much to reflect on and learn from, it needs to be reread more than once. I congratulate Kuhn on her efforts. 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One Star By Jane Brennan stupid, don't waste your money

"Little madnesses" are our most deeply felt enthusiasms, investments and attachments in the sphere of culture. The term was coined by the child psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, whose work on transitional phenomena grew out of his naming of the transitional object, and extended into preliminary explorations of the crucial role played by cultural experience in a life that feels satisfying. In our socially and culturally sanctioned little madnesses, everyone can find relief from the burden of having to maintain a clear boundary between inner and outer worlds, fantasy and reality, because it is in the space between them that we can find the enthusiasms and passions that excite our creative imaginations. This idea offers intriguing pathways towards understanding how we can engage effectively with the world at a public, social level without setting aside our inner lives, our emotions and our most deeply felt attachments. In *Little Madnesses*, writers, artists, scholars and experts in a range of fields and disciplines explore the idea of transitional phenomena and consider its potential to extend and deepen our understanding of cultural

experience in mental and social life, focusing on the importance of space, place and boundaries in cultural experience; on how we can negotiate media use and cultural identity; and on the aesthetic and creative aspects of cultural experience. Topics covered include cult films, computer use, installation art, trips to the cinema, museums and galleries, the agony and ecstasy of making art and the significance of life stage in cultural experience.

This book offers several delights in its combination of psychoanalytic, cultural and artistic perspectives. (Therapy Today) About the Author Annette Kuhn is Senior Professorial Fellow in Film Studies at Queen Mary University of London, a longstanding co-editor of the journal *Screen*, and a Fellow of the British Academy. Her books include *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (1995 and 2002); *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (I.B.Tauris, 2002); *Ratcatcher* (2008); and (with Guy Westwell) *The Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies* (2012).