

# Sympathetic Sentiments: Affect, Emotion and Spectacle in the Modern World (The WISH List)

John Jervis



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*Sympathetic Sentiments* develops an innovative interdisciplinary framework to explore the implications of living in a culture of feeling that seems ill at ease with itself, one in which sentiments are frequently denounced for being sentimental and self-indulgent.

These tensions are traced back to the inheritance of the eighteenth century, enabling us to identify a distinctive 'spectacle of sympathy', in which sympathy entails public forms of expression whereby being on show is both a condition of the authenticity of such affects and of their capacity to be masked and simulated. This, John Jervis suggests, is at the root of a range of controversies central to modern life, art and culture, including contemporary debates around trauma and compassion fatigue. Connected to these debates is the issue of modern sensationalism, discussed here and elaborated in a companion volume: *Sensational Subjects: The Dramatization of Experience in the Modern World*, which is published simultaneously by Bloomsbury.

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