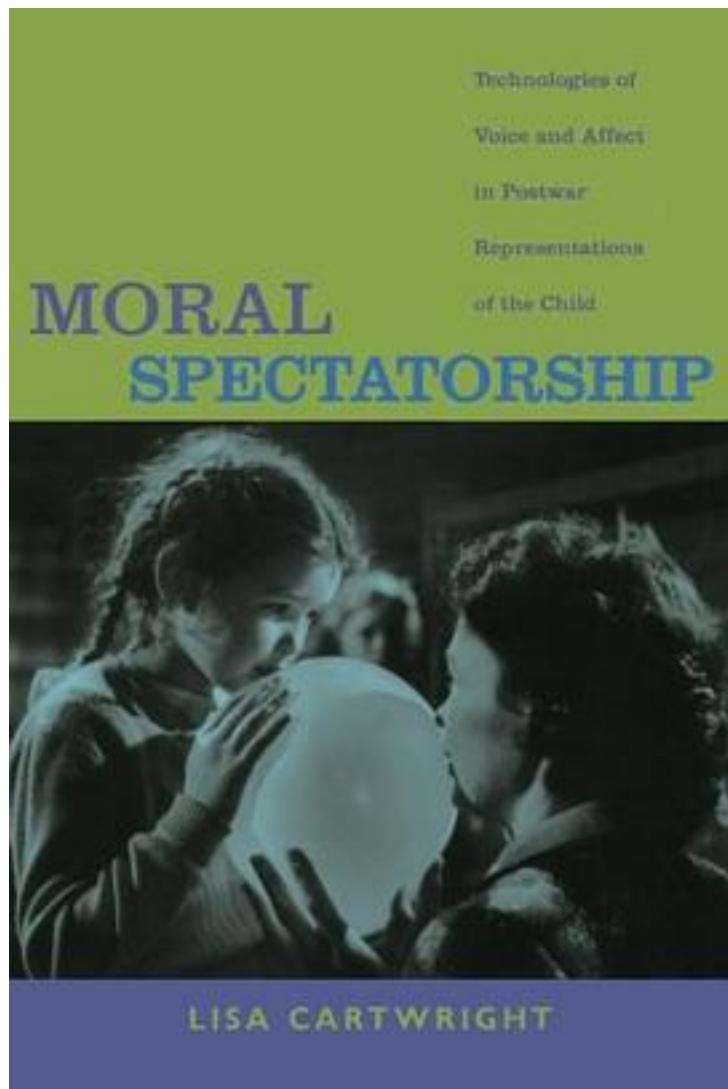


Moral Spectatorship



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In "Moral Spectatorship", Lisa Cartwright rethinks the politics of spectatorship in film studies. At the same time, she offers a new theory of the human subject that takes into account affective relationships and technologies that facilitate human agency. Seeking to expand concepts of representation beyond the visual, Cartwright develops her theory through interpretations of two contexts in which adult caregivers help bring children to voice. She considers mid-twentieth-century social-problem melodramas about deaf and nonverbal girls and young women, including "Johnny Belinda", "Thursday's Children", "The Miracle Worker", and "Children of a Lesser God". Cartwright also analyzes the controversies surrounding facilitated communication, a technological practice in which caregivers help children with communication disorders achieve "voice" through writing facilitated by computers. This practice has inspired contempt among many professional and lay people who charge that the facilitator can manipulate the child's speech. For more than two decades, film theory has been dominated by a model of identification tacitly based on the idea of feeling what the other feels or of imagining oneself to be the other. Cartwright argues that the custodial relationships underlying both the melodramas and facilitated speech involve a different kind of identification, which she calls "empathetic." In empathetic identification, the subject does not necessarily feel the other's feelings or imagine him or herself in the other's place; rather he or she recognizes and enables the otherness of the other. Building on the theories of affect developed by the French psychoanalyst Andre Green and the American cognitive psychologist Silvan Tomkins, Cartwright develops a theory of spectatorship based on empathetic identification.

作者介绍:

目录:

[Moral Spectatorship_下载链接1](#)

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