



# **Violence and the Pornographic Imaginary: The Politics of Sex, Gender, and Aggression in Hardcore Pornography (Routledge Research in Cultural and Media Studies)**

*Natalie Purcell*

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No cultural product reveals our collective fascination with sexual violence more candidly than popular heterosexual pornographies. They showcase scenes of intense sexual aggression and cruelty that are gendered in repetitive, patterned configurations—configurations that are designed to arouse. Purcell uses comparative critical analyses of popular pornographic movies to explore common fantasies of sexual violence and how they have changed over the past forty years. Adopting a thick descriptive approach, she moves beyond the mere observation and recording of instances of sexism and violence, elucidating the changing aesthetics, themes, and conventions of depicted sexual aggression and showing how they have emerged in specific socio-historical contexts. Purcell also draws from a range of industry publications and fan forums to examine the fabric and function of misogyny and violence in viewers' fantasies and everyday lives. By documenting how popular pornographies have changed over time, this study sheds new light the evolving desires and anxieties of the genre's growing U.S. audience.

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