

The Black Body in Ecstasy: Reading Race, Reading Pornography (Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies)

Jennifer Christine Nash

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In The Black Body in Ecstasy, Jennifer C. Nash rewrites black feminism's theory of representation. Her analysis moves beyond black feminism's preoccupation with injury and recovery to consider how racial fictions can create a space of agency and even pleasure for black female subjects. Nash's innovative readings of hardcore pornographic films from the 1970s and 1980s develop a new method of analyzing racialized pornography that focuses on black women's pleasures in blackness: delights in toying with and subverting blackness, moments of racialized excitement, deliberate enactments of hyperbolic blackness, and humorous performances of blackness that poke fun at the fantastical project of race. Drawing on feminist and queer theory, critical race theory, and media studies, Nash creates a new black feminist interpretative practice, one attentive to the messy contradictions—between delight and discomfort, between desire and degradation—at the heart of black pleasures.

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