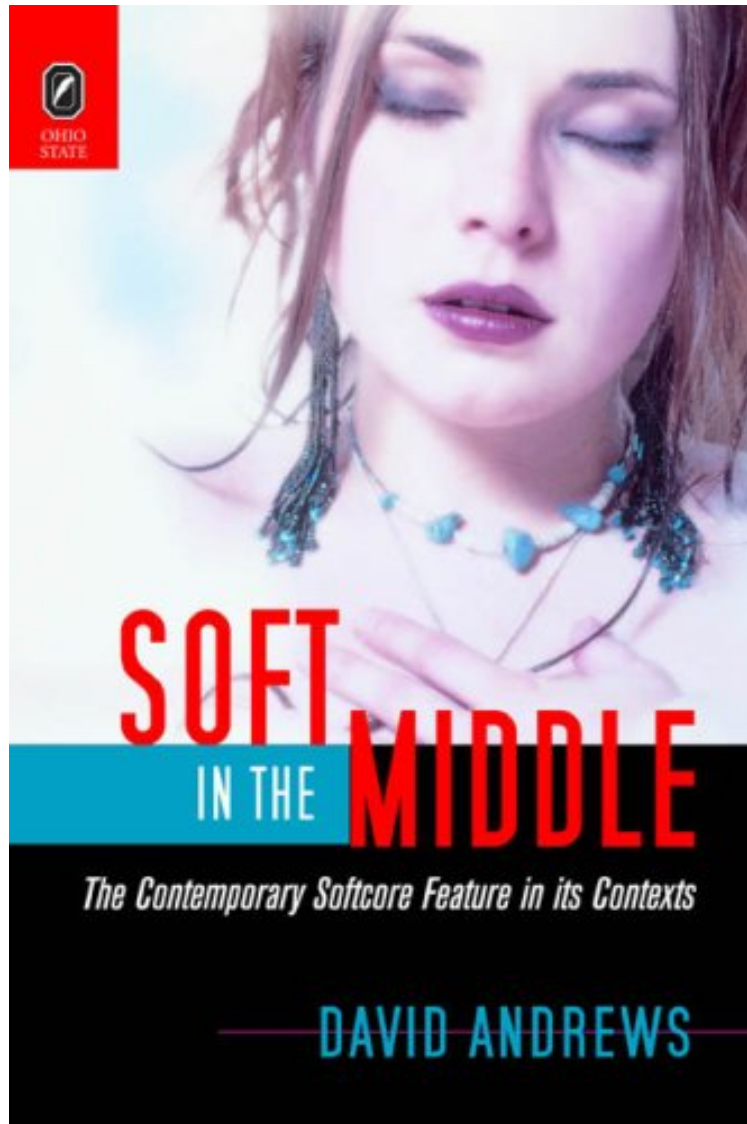


[Download] Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts

Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts

David Andrews

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#3504606 in Books Ohio State University Press 2006-09-08 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.26 x 1.01 x 6.40l, 1.33 #File Name: 0814210228334 pages | File size: 15.Mb

David Andrews : Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Soft in the Middle: The Contemporary Softcore Feature in Its Contexts:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Nuanced analysis of porn, feminism, and middle brow culture By Customer This is an excellent book on a strange subject -- soft core porn. I am hardly a porn aficionado but I found

this book fascinating due to Andrew's careful treatment of softcore. Too often, Andrews argues, softcore porn is seen as a 'watered down' version of hard core pornography. Against this view he points out that softcore has its own distinct aesthetic. The similarity between soft core and more 'high brow' forms of art then becomes a source of anxiety to high-brow (and especially feminist) critics. As a result the book is about more than just pornography -- it is about how American culture categorizes things as 'sophisticated' or 'smut' and it demonstrates just how complex the line between these two things is and how it has been drawn (and defended) in the US today. Now, to be honest, the book is an academic monograph -- it is not an easy-to-read pop piece. That said, Andrew's prose is easy to read by academic standards, with a wonderful economy of expression that conveys highly complex analysis in only slightly-complex prose. But what makes this book so great is not Andrew's analytical chops -- which, to be sure, he's got in spades -- but his stupendous erudition. His mastery of the genre -- the filmography lists hundreds of movies he has watched -- and his unparalleled knowledge of the history of pornography is truly astonishing. Like an entomologist who knows every detail of 'his species' or a Shakespeare scholar who can provide paragraphs of commentary for each line in Hamlet, Andrews simply appears to have achieved that rare feat: total knowledge of an entire genre. And this gives him the ability to understand and present the genre's relevance for our understanding of all forms of art and media. It is difficult to believe that something as... well.. _smutty_ as soft core pornography could have something to teach us about media and society in America, but that is exactly what David Andrews manages to convince us of in this tasty book on a tasteless topic. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Soft in the Middle By J. Amadon This book grabs you right away, just in seeing what the subject is. It is certainly something which I have never really thought about before, discussing soft porn and how it has been portrayed. Mr. Andrews keeps it interesting and makes you want to keep turning the pages.

As the first survey of its kind, *Soft in the Middle* positions the contemporary softcore feature as a middlebrow form of pornography. This genre of film and video has been produced by a complex and often elusive industry situated in the ambiguous "middle" regions between hardcore and Hollywood. In meticulous detail, *Soft in the Middle* demonstrates that softcore's under-the-radar success and pervasive cultural devaluation may be understood in terms of the "postfeminist" strategies employed by successive generations of producers and distributors, each intent on overcoming obstacles to the mainstream distribution of pornographic material. Softcore and its American precursors became more "feminized" and "female friendly" as their distribution widened, a process hastened in the 1980s by the industry's transition to private, non-theatrical modes of distribution and exhibition (e.g., home-video outlets and premium-cable networks like Cinemax). One of the byproducts of this development is that contemporary softcore has frequently resorted to what are arguably anti-male or "misandristic" attitudes and depictions. Clearly, the genre challenges traditional assumptions about pornography, including those held by feminists on both sides of "the porn debates." Drawing on original industrial research, extensive sampling, and wide-ranging scholarship, *Soft in the Middle* offers a nuanced look at a discreetly indecent genre whose central commodity has always been female nudity. The book examines the genre's history, describes its deflationary trajectory, and differentiates the reading patterns of its disparate audiences, including "cult" critics and feminist critics. Naturally, the book also considers the genre's formal and ideological conventions, surveying its most exemplary subgenres, styles, and motifs--and lavishing particular attention on its most influential studios, directors, and texts.

". . . Andrews ambitiously traces the entire tradition of softcore from the early days of the sexploitation film. His cultural range is also impressive, treating American as well as European films. The result is extremely informed and useful . . ." --Linda Williams, *Film Quarterly*