

upon Agamben's (1998) discussion of the concentration camp, she argues that colonialism and slavery constitute the first materializations of the 'camp' where racialized, gendered, and class-based conceptualizations of citizenship determined who deserved to live and who stood in the way of 'modernity' and 'progress.' This analysis forms the basis of the main assertions in the book related to racialized feminicide.

Through her discussion of the heteropatriarchal system imposed during the conquest and its implications for current 'gender-sexuality relations' in Guatemala, Martínez Salazar coins the term 'racialized feminicide.' To explore this concept, she implements a decolonial analysis of the everyday lives and experiences of Mayan women as interlocked with mechanisms of power. This complex analytical assemblage provides an innovative approach to theorizing on how racism has been linked to genocidal policies, discourses, and practices. She argues that heteropatriarchal nationalist depictions of Mayan women lead to their exclusion as 'non-citizens' and serve to justify the often deadly violence that has been wielded against women and girls since the arrival of the Spanish to the present day.

By arguing that racialized feminicide has deep racist, heterosexist, and misogynist roots, she poignantly rejects the assertion made by some international human rights groups and some academics that the genocide that took place in Guatemala was not directed toward Indigenous people because of racism but because they were considered to be subversives. In order to demonstrate that genocide is indeed part of racist state policy, she draws attention to over 500 years of systematic discrimination and violence doled out against the Indigenous population and the ways in which they have been depicted as

threats to the nation-building agenda.

Martínez Salazar's work points to the possibility of providing a space, through academic research, for the marginalized and excluded voices of Guatemala's past and present. By including life histories, poetry and music of resilience and struggle, along with extensive quotes from Guatemalan activists and the family members of those who were tortured, disappeared, and murdered, the author directly contributes to the decolonial process of 'rehumaniz[ing]' those whom state and corporate forces seek to erase.

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## GAGA FEMINISM: SEX, GENDER, AND THE END OF NORMAL

J. Jack Halberstam  
Boston: Beacon Press, 2012

#### REVIEWED BY DANIELLE COOPER

Drawing inspiration from Lady Gaga, the American pop singer famous for such over-the-top costumes and performances as arriving at the Grammys in a gigantic see-through egg, J. Jack Halberstam's *Gaga Feminism* is intended to be a "fun-user-friendly, and quasi-academic hand-book for a new feminism." Halberstam's "new", or, "gaga" approach to feminism most notably embraces excess, mon-strosity, and most importantly, the phony or unreal. Halberstam argues that the phony or unreal is necessary in our era of "Occupy" movements, economic collapse, and rapidly changing gender and sexual relations. Although new," Halberstam that gaga feminism draws on a non-linear tradition of "anarchist" feminism that includes: Shulamith Firestone, Judith Levine, and Gayle Rubin. And for those who dislike or are disinterested in Lady Gaga, fear not: Halberstam positions Lady Gaga as a launching point for a much broader discussion. Analysis of the figure Lady Gaga herself is, somewhat surprisingly, almost entirely absent from the book. In doing so, *Gaga Feminism* mainly achieves its aim to be an accessible and widely appealing read. The book, however—and the book's underlying feminist approach—ultimately lacks that provocative quality its namesake Lady Gaga.

*Gaga Feminism* in addition to providing a manifesto for gaga feminism also discusses recent issues and phenomena pertaining to sexuality gender that are relevant to Halberstam's

emerging gaga feminist approach. As gaga feminism is more “speculative” than prescriptive, the book focuses more on potential forms for social and political transformation as opposed to ends, including: embracing childishness, resisting the traditional marriage models (including gay marriage), and creating new approaches to family and kinship. In order to make these arguments, Halberstam utilizes a cultural archive that consists of recent romantic comedies and, similar to their other recent book *The Queer Art of Failure*, children’s movies and television. Halberstam also draws on personal experiences, both within the academy and from their private life including their role as a parent.

As intended, *Gaga Feminism* is a quick, light read, perhaps best described as guilty pleasure beach reading for the queer theory inclined. The book is commendable for broaching “of the moment” issues in less clichéd ways, for example, finding meaning behind the Lady Gaga phenomena as opposed to dismissing her as a Madonna derivative, or, acknowledging the long-term and far-reaching implications of Occupy and related movements instead of pronouncing them short-lived and inconsequential. Although many of arguments are not highly original (indeed, many are identical to those made in their previous book), do have a talent for weaving recent theoretical trends into a clear and cohesive narrative. Halberstam also brings an enthusiasm and positivity to their writing that is often absent in queer and feminist theory.

The promise of gaga feminism, however, often feels disingenuous the book focus on what gaga feminism is or what it can be without demonstrating what gaga feminism can do. If Halberstam structured their book this way intentionally as a reflection of their “quasi-academic” aims, they

have not given their readers enough credit. The book is a quick read, but it is also not as accessible as intended because Halberstam often relies on anecdotal evidence from academia (including extended descriptions of two conferences and a veiled critique of an unnamed anthropologist) that would lack relevance for those reading from outside the academy. The high degree in content-overlap from their last book, however, makes the book less compelling for those within the academy who are already familiar with Halberstam’s work. As a result, *Gaga Feminism* is largely a fun read, but it is definitely not a “must read” unless you haven’t read anything else by Halberstam recently and need a quick refresher.

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## **COLD WAR COMFORTS: CANADIAN WOMEN, CHILD SAFETY, AND GLOBAL INSECURITY**

Tarah Brookfield  
Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University  
Press, 2012

**REVIEWED BY CARALEE  
DAIGLE HAU**

*Cold War Comforts* is an engaging study of Canadian women’s domestic and international activism in the early Cold War period. Brookfield successfully argues that between the end of

the Second World War and the Vietnam War, Canadian women utilized the twin concepts of maternalism (as either literal or symbolic mothers) and internationalism to engage with the policy-making process surrounding children’s safety and welfare. In the early post-Second World War years, Cold War tensions created an urgent sense that women needed to prepare for a potential nuclear war, through civil defence and potentially investing in a home fallout shelter. *Cold War Comforts* examines how, as the nature of the conflict altered and the realities of a potential nuclear conflict became clearer, women’s activism shifted from wanting to protect their families from the effects of nuclear war, to demanding, through disarmament and peace activism, that war never happen. In her study, Brookfield divides the subject into two parts: domestic and international, and examines Canadian women’s involvement in the United Nations, through such organizations as the United Nations Association and UNICEF, foster parenting plans, activism during the Vietnam War, and international adoption. Brookfield convincingly maintains that their responsibilities and roles as mothers and Canadian citizens spurred these women on and made it possible for them to engage with child safety.

Although this study is thoroughly researched and well-executed, there are two relatively minor issues with which Brookfield might have engaged in more depth. In chapter two she uses some American-made civil defence materials, such as *Duck and Cover* featuring Bert the Turtle, to demonstrate Canadians’ engagement with civil defence planning. However, there is little discussion of how American-made materials were used in Canada, nor does she distinguish in a meaningful way between Canadian and American materials. While this may seem a minor issue, her main argument circles around how Cana-