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Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, And The End Of Normal (Queer Ideas/Queer Action)



Synopsis

A roadmap to sex and gender for the twenty-first century, using Lady Gaga as a symbol for a new kind of feminism. Why are so many women single, so many men resisting marriage, and so many gays and lesbians having babies? In *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal*, J. Jack Halberstam answers these questions while attempting to make sense of the tectonic cultural shifts that have transformed gender and sexual politics in the last few decades. This colorful landscape is populated by symbols and phenomena as varied as pregnant men, late-life lesbians, SpongeBob SquarePants, and queer families. So how do we understand the dissonance between these real lived experiences and the heteronormative narratives that dominate popular media? We can embrace the chaos! With equal parts edge and wit, Halberstam reveals how these symbolic ruptures open a critical space to embrace new ways of conceptualizing sex, love, and marriage. Using Lady Gaga as a symbol for a new era, Halberstam deftly unpacks what the pop superstar symbolizes, to whom and why. The result is a provocative manifesto of creative mayhem, a roadmap to sex and gender for the twenty-first century, that holds Lady Gaga as an exemplar of a new kind of feminism that privileges gender and sexual fluidity. Part handbook, part guidebook, and part sex manual, *Gaga Feminism* is the first book to take seriously the collapse of heterosexuality and find signposts in the wreckage to a new and different way of doing sex and gender.

Book Information

Series: Queer Ideas/Queer Action (Book 7)

Paperback: 184 pages

Publisher: Beacon Press (September 3, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807010979

ISBN-13: 978-0807010976

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (21 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #104,235 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > Philosophy #99 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Gay & Lesbian #188 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Women's Studies > Feminist Theory

Customer Reviews

Although I don't find it to have the same depth and fire as Halberstam's earlier volume, *Female Masculinity*, this is a fun and thoughtful look at how Lady Gaga's persona has impacted popular culture and what that means for people who want to expand the meaning of gender in our current cultural moment. The book is pretty firmly rooted in Halberstam's personal gender journey, which certainly affects how the theory progresses, but there is plenty of subversive potential in this text for people all over the spectrum of gender presentations. If you are looking for more emphasis on queerness, I would recommend Halberstam's other book, *In A Queer Time And Place*, over this one, but for pop culture commentators and Gaga's "Little Monsters," this is a great look at the emerging icon and how her public self can help us rethink gender and the boundaries that surround it. Definitely worth a read.

I only bought this book for a class, I would never have read it otherwise. The book certainly needs more editing as it is hard to tell where other people's thoughts end and Halberstam's begin. While Halberstam brings up some good points of gender in our culture, one should look elsewhere to learn about Feminism and Gender Norms.

This is an interesting read. I really enjoyed it until almost half-way through and felt that it went a bit gaga in a bad way in that I felt like it lost the plot a bit. Despite the conscious attempt to make the text accessible, which I appreciate, I would have liked a more polished argument. I'm also not sure that some of the ideas discussed are as revolutionary as they seem. Then again, I might just be a bit gaga-in-a-bad-way myself.

A quick read, and a fresh take on gender studies. I am not sure that everything Halberstam proposes is correct, but this work creates a lot of interesting discussion points, and in my opinion, that always makes for a great book.

a bit wishy washy and popular cultureish without the intellectualizing so a light read with too much fluff

This book is pedophilic apologism. Key parts of the quoted material: "Why presume that all sexual conduct between adults and children is unwanted by the child" and "[Levine] has pushed forward with another [version of feminism] that understands children as sexual, parents as erotic figures,

and sexuality itself as the pursuit of pleasure"and"when we really don't know or understand what children want or how they may feel about something, we could always do something wacky and crazy ... like asking them to let us know what feels good and what feels intrusive or wrong." (all from page 15)Additionally, the book has no concept of power relations or how to use feminist analysis in confronting systems of power. As the author says, "A gaga feminism does not need to know and name the political outcome of its efforts. More important is to identify the form that transformative struggle should take." (p 134) In this false feminist vision, listening to pop music and you-be-you outfits are more important than having a plan to confront power and seeing it through to the end.Please don't waste your time with this book. It's a dangerous and anti-feminist work.

I work in a bookstore and the ridiculousness of the title grabbed my attention so I read the thing over the span of a few lunch breaks. My response to consuming the work, other than being blown away by how petulantly unfocused Halverstam is, was pretty much just an internal repetition of "stop." Stop looking for beacons of feminism among a lineup of pop stars. Stop reaching to make a straight woman's unconventional fashion expression somehow a representative of "queer culture." Stop equating the existence of a female in public consciousness as an inherently feminist act. Stop letting men posture themselves as authorities on "pop feminism" to write such vapid, hollowly post modern, drivel.It's obvious the author projects the feminist "queer" icon they wish Gaga actually was onto her persona with little to nothing to back it up. "The American public's attitudes towards gender presentation and acceptance of the LGBT community are changing and Lady Gaga is popular- so obviously the two are connected! Have you even heard 'Born this Way'?" And that's understandable in some respects, they obviously have stakes invested, but none the less pathetic. This woman is not the nucleus of the intersection between feminism and queer politics in the mainstream, she's barely a blip on the radar. Lady Gaga postured as a feminist icon annoys me even as an idea detached from her personal politics (which are nonexistent what a shock), looking to pop stars as beacons of feminism not only depoliticizes the meaning of the word but you cannot be a capitalist feminist. These ideas are not congruent, not empowered. What a waste of a read and opportunity for introspection.

Great book. Easy and wonderful read! Definitely would recommend.

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