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Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America (Intersections)

Mary L. Gray

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Winner of the 2009 Ruth Benedict Prize for Outstanding Monograph from the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

Winner of the 2010 Distinguished Book Award from the American Sociological Association, Sociology of Sexualities Section

Winner of the 2010 Congress Inaugural Qualitative Inquiry Book Award Honorable Mention

From Wal-Mart drag parties to renegade Homemaker's Clubs, *Out in the Country* offers an unprecedented contemporary account of the lives of today's rural queer youth. Mary L. Gray maps out the experiences of young people living in small towns across rural Kentucky and along its desolate Appalachian borders, providing a fascinating and often surprising look at the contours of gay life beyond the big city. Gray illustrates that, against a backdrop of an increasingly impoverished and privatized rural America, LGBT youth and their allies visibly—and often vibrantly—work the boundaries of the public spaces available to them, whether in their high schools, public libraries, town hall meetings, churches, or through websites. This important book shows that, in addition to the spaces of Main Street, rural LGBT youth explore and carve out online spaces to fashion their emerging queer identities. Their triumphs and travails defy clear distinctions often drawn between online and offline experiences of identity, fundamentally redefining our understanding of the term 'queer visibility' and its political stakes. Gray combines ethnographic insight with incisive cultural critique, engaging with some of the biggest issues facing both queer studies and media scholarship. *Out in the Country* is a timely and groundbreaking study of sexuality and gender, new media, youth culture, and the meaning of identity and social movements in a digital age.

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