

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# A "Post-Gay" Era? Media Gaystreaming, Homonormativity, and the Politics of LGBT Integration

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*Logo, a U.S. network that launched in 2005 as an explicitly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) channel, has been implementing a rebranding strategy that it labels gaystreaming. Drawing from Logo's internal documents and interviews with Logo staff, I situate the development, discourses, and effects of gaystreaming against LGBT content elsewhere, shifts toward multiplatform programming, and LGBT mainstreaming. Alongside industrial changes in media production, the goal of attracting heterosexual women, imagined to share particular affinities with gay men, has been the key to driving Logo toward taste- and style-based reality programming. Although Logo's Web sites currently offer broader content than the channel, overall gaystreaming has remarginalized queer subjects whom Logo's earlier programming partially addressed, comprising a homonormativity predicated on discourses of consumerism, progress, and integration.*

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When Logo began airing as MTV Networks' newest cable channel in July 2005, its first moments on air were a rapidly intercut collage of historical footage of gays and lesbians on U.S. television, followed by a 30-minute documentary called *The Evolution Will Be Televised*. A riff on soul artist Gil Scott-Heron's 1971 political protest song *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, the program located Logo's launch as a high point for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) media representation. In keeping with the tone set by *Evolution*, Logo produced or acquired a number of documentaries spotlighting different LGBT communities in its first year, along with running films and series with LGBT main characters. Five years later, the network's programming was headlined by *The A List*, a show following a group of well-off gay men in New York City that was one of several new reality series on Logo's Fall 2010 slate, though one of the few with a predominantly gay cast. The show garnered scathing reviews in both the mainstream press and the LGBT blogosphere, with

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Gawker sniping that it showcased the worst sort of "fame-hungry, attractive, horrible people you could have imagined" (Moylan, 2010, para. 1), but it was successful enough for Logo to both renew it and produce *The A List: Dallas* for 2011.

In an earlier discussion of Logo, Aslinger (2009) presented the network's genesis and development as illustrative of the post broadcast era, which has been characterized by targeting multiple niche audiences and content distribution across platforms (see Lotz, 2007). His examination of promotional discourses, programming strategies, and two Logo shows—*Noah's Arc* (2005–2006), a scripted dramedy about several gay Black men, and *Roundtrip Ticket*, a travel series—identified tensions between Logo's public commitments to inclusiveness and the ways its programming worked to "reinscribe class, race, and national hierarchies in queer cultures" (p. 108). Aslinger's account points to how issues around Logo's definition of itself were present from its inception, and my analysis here illustrates how the network has moved further away from serving a diverse LGBT viewership. *The A List: New York* and *The A List: Dallas* were both cancelled at the end of the 2011–2012 season, and while a couple of other reality series on Logo still feature gay stars, like *Pretty Hurts* (2011–present), following a gay cosmetic surgery nurse, more of them do not, with one of the newest being *Eden Wood's World* (2012–present), which follows a child beauty pageant star. These developments signal a key shift in content reflecting a strategy labeled internally by Logo as "gaystreaming," designed to draw in a larger general audience, particularly heterosexual women, and have occurred as gay and lesbian media, print and online, as well as bookstores and bars, have been shuttering in the United States (Buckley, 2008; Kunerth, 2007; Meitzler, 2010; Narlock, 2008). Thus, a consideration of gaystreaming highlights questions about the value and viability of LGBT-specific cultural spaces, and the extent to which the shrinking of such spaces marginalizes some LGBT subjects even as others are integrated into the mainstream.

At one level, the development of gaystreaming is attributable to the success of Logo's most highly rated program, *RuPaul's Drag Race*,<sup>1</sup> in which contestants compete for the title of best drag queen, as well as to the trajectory of another cable network, NBC Universal's Bravo, on which *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* was the first high-visibility success of Bravo's rebranding a couple of years before Logo's launch. While gaystreaming might seem to expand the possibilities for "LGBT interest" programming, it generally promotes a relatively narrow set of representations, however much Logo executives like to point to *RuPaul's Drag Race* as an exemplar of racial and sexual diversity. Besides more or less predictable commercial imperatives, gaystreaming has been spurred both by changes to conditions of television production that preceded Logo and by some integration of LGBT content and identities into mainstream American culture.

In the context of Logo's rebranding, "gaystreaming" is strikingly devoid of negative connotation, and currently encapsulates a range of related, but distinct meanings to do with going beyond what "gay content" traditionally connotes in terms of people or characters, storylines, and entire genres of entertainment. However, the notion of gaystreaming or the "gaystream" is not a singular one and

did not originate with Logo,<sup>2</sup> although Logo's formulation both draws on some of gaystream's earlier senses and imparts it with distinct connotations. In the 1990s, some conservative commentators used "Gaystream" derogatorily as a cover term for the gay community (Mulshine, 1994). In the last decade, "gaystream" resurfaced in a range of commentary critical of assimilationist directions in LGBT political movements, often counterposed to genuinely "queer" politics.<sup>3</sup> The disparity between Logo's senses of gaystreaming and those in which the concept of gay mainstreaming is problematic points to the network distancing itself from agendas that are critical of dominant commercial culture. Logo's use of a term incorporating the word "gay"—but not lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer—for its current programming directions also hints at the identities that will be foregrounded.

In examining the development, implementation, and discourses of gaystreaming on Logo's channels and Web sites, I interrogate network narratives about the relationships between media content, consumption, and political progress, and consider not only the normativity of Logo's programming with respect to the intersections of sexuality, gender, race, and class, but also the *homonormativity* (Duggan, 2002) that gaystreaming comprises at a moment when mainstream gay rights activism in the United States is pressing for further entry into dominant institutions.

Logo's launch and development occurs within a longer trajectory of LGBT content in American popular media, a history that has drawn various critiques. One major criticism points to deficiencies in recognizing sufficient diversity, particularly in the construction of a more unitary "gay community" than the range of lived queer realities and representations, a construction that largely excludes challenges to normative sexual expression and familial relationships (Avila-Saavedra, 2009; Battles & Hilton-Morrow, 2002; Dow, 2001; Fejes & Petrich, 1993; Gross, 2001). In terms of volume, there has certainly been an overall increase in LGBT storylines, characters, and personalities in the last two decades, though with some fluctuations over the last few years (e.g., see "Where We Are On TV, 2011–2012 Season," 2011). LGBT contestants and personalities are relatively common on reality programming, and the ascendance of that genre (e.g., see Madger, 2004; Raphael, 2004) has contributed to LGBT visibility. On network and basic cable, the recent numbers of LGBT regulars on scripted series, including *Grey's Anatomy* (ABC, 2005–present), *Modern Family* (ABC, 2009–present), *The Good Wife* (CBS, 2009–present), and an unprecedented number of teens on shows such as *Degrassi* (TeenNick, 2002–present), *Glee* (Fox, 2009–present), *Pretty Little Liars* (ABC Family, 2010–present), and *Skins* (MTV, 2011),<sup>4</sup> has drawn popular comment, although people of color and gender non-conformers are still underrepresented (e.g., Armstrong, 2011; Bendix, 2011).

In recent years, commercial networks have explicitly targeted gay and lesbian viewers in a manner parallel to the media industry's pitches toward other niche audiences (Freitas, 2007; Fuller, 2010). As the broadcast viewership that the big three networks were able to draw became increasingly fragmented by the greatly expanded offerings of cable, it became economically appealing to direct programming to

smaller audience segments via narrowcasting. However, LGBT content was not simply aimed at LGBT viewers, but also at particular segments of the straight audience. The rebranding of NBC Universal's Bravo from a high arts channel to its current incarnation built upon the association of gay men with style and the cachet of such gay-inflected taste in order to draw heterosexual women (Sender, 2007), along with the gay male audience the network already enjoyed (Rachel Smith, former Bravo development executive, personal communication, April 1, 2010). As Sender (2007) described, Bravo was "dualcasting," seeking to capture what it termed the "affluencers" (Dominus, 2008): well-off consumers both eager to keep apprised of the newest lifestyle trends and influential among their peers.

"Affluencers" are akin to a psychographic consumer identity constructed by network marketers that Becker (2006) called the "slumpys"—Socially Liberal Urban-Minded Professionals—who are drawn to programming that is hip and edgy, including by virtue of its gay and lesbian content. Becker situated the rise of gay-themed content on primetime television shows in the 1990s such as *Friends* (NBC, 1994–2004), *NYPD Blue* (ABC, 1993–2005), *Seinfeld* (NBC, 1989–1998), and *Roseanne* (ABC, 1988–1997) alongside other cultural and economic trends in the United States, including processes of urban renewal that attracted cohorts of affluent, predominantly White and politically progressive residents who were obvious targets for commercial media. While the move away from LGBT invisibility and demonization during this time was not simplistically regressive, Becker argued that the normalcy of gayness was stressed at the expense of queer identities and practices that would seriously challenge existing social and economic structures.

Subscription cable channels have been the source of programs pushing the envelope the furthest, including shows such as *Queer as Folk* (Showtime, 2000–2005) and *The L Word* (Showtime, 2004–2009) centered on multiple LGBT characters, as well as other scripted series that feature or have featured more than one LGBT regular, such as HBO's *Six Feet Under* (2001–2005) and *True Blood* (2008–present), and *Nurse Jackie* (2009–present) and *The United States of Tara* (2009–2011) on Showtime. Nevertheless, even the greater amount of airtime and narrative complexity here do not escape an orientation toward gender-conforming behaviors, normative family structures, and consumption and middle-class taste cultures. Chambers (2006) critiqued *The L Word* for privileging heterosexual desires and narrative conventions, even as lesbian sex was featured regularly. In an analysis of *Queer as Folk*, Peters (2011) found that middle-class White male viewers who were either gay or questioning were most likely to find personal resonances with the characters and communities depicted, in contrast to viewers from other demographic groups.

Being on a tier above the most common cable package, Logo occupies an intermediate status between basic and premium cable in terms of pricing. Still, as a channel under the MTV Networks umbrella, Logo remains advertising-supported, although its newness and smaller size have until recently given it space for programming decisions not driven entirely by ratings considerations. However, on January 1, 2010, Nielsen started including Logo in its television ratings, and it is no coincidence that

gaystreaming, the planning of which was initiated in 2008, began to be implemented in the second half of 2009 and was more fully in place the following year, since ratings would provide a clearer picture of how many viewers Logo's advertisers were reaching (Marc Leonard, Senior Vice President of Multiplatform Programming, Logo, personal communication, July 30, 2010).

Logo had appeared to be centering LGBT characters and narratives in an unprecedented way when it launched as a 24/7 cable channel, intentionally distinguishing itself from Regent Media's Here!TV by eschewing programming with "adult" sexual content, and seeking an audience in a way comparable to, for example, BET. Just as depictions of Black experience on commercial television do not focus primarily on racism, one key goal of gaystreaming, according to Chris Willey, Logo's head of East Coast Development and Original Programming (personal communication, July 21, 2009), is a shift toward lighter fare, versus narratives about coming out and homophobia. There is undoubted value in not associating LGBT identity only with struggle, even if the point of view is sympathetic. Yet gaystreaming does not simply balance the scales so that Logo is not what Marc Leonard, who had previously worked at Comedy Central, jokingly labeled "the Tragedy Channel" in its earlier days (Chris Willey, personal communication, July 21, 2009).

In this article, I avoid "gay" as a cover term for identities besides those of gay men, and use "LGBT" to refer to the spectrum of non heterosexual communities, actual or imagined. Also, although "queer" has often been used in a broader way (e.g., see Cohen, 1997; de Lauretis, 1994), I reserve this term for those instances where I or other commentators have in mind approaches that intentionally destabilize received identities and seek to disrupt dominant ideologies and practices. I do so in order to preserve the political charge of "queer," including work that locates sexuality within intersections of gender, race, and nation, and their regulation by dominant structures. Ferguson's (2003) queer of color critique, for example, has interrogated how discourses in canonical sociology and other disciplines have adhered to heterosexual, patriarchal norms in considering African American identities and belonging, and his analysis examined how multiple axes of inequality, including race and sexuality, are critical to producing different forms of subjectivity under liberal capitalism:

The variety of [non-heteronormative] racial formations . . . articulates different racialized, gendered, and eroticized contradictions to the citizen-ideal of the state and the liberatory promise of capital. In doing so, they identify the ways in which race, gender, and sexuality intersect within capitalist political economies and shape the conditions of capital's existence. (p. 17)

Previous critiques about LGBT representation in American popular media have been heavily based on examining texts. While I offer a brief overview of Logo's channel and Web site content, my article draws on a combination of Logo's internal documents and interviews with Logo staff and contributors,<sup>5</sup> enabling me to identify links between the network's program content and the discourses associated with

the development and implementation of gaystreaming. Such data, not generally discussed in accounts of LGBT media production, provide insight into how Logo executives make programming decisions as key cultural gatekeepers, as well as how they imagine LGBT communities and contemporary culture more broadly.

In the following sections, I outline the development of gaystreaming at Logo, and then consider the discourses surrounding the network's gaystream strategy and the implications of gaystream programming for LGBT and non-LGBT audiences. Drawing on queer theorists such as Duggan (2002) and Puar (2007), I relate gaystreaming to more recent critiques of how the integration of certain non heterosexual identities is tied to queer marginalizations elsewhere. Like Aslinger (2009), I contest a "progress narrative of technological evolution" (p. 109) in discussing the importance of new technologies to Logo, but I also suggest that online media, while not free from commercial considerations and pressures, continue to offer possibilities for other sites and forms of LGBT cultural production.

### Gaystream planning and implementation

In its first couple of years, Logo was pleased to discover that straight women were watching programming that had been targeted to a gay audience, especially the stop-animation comedy, *Rick and Steve: The Happiest Gay Couple in All the World* (2007–2009), and *Noah's Arc* (2005–2006), a drama centered on gay African American men (Chris Willey, personal communication, July 9, 2009). Such an audience alignment of gay men with straight women had been noted earlier by rival cable network Bravo, a grouping significant enough to merit a label by that network as its "Wills and Graces" viewers (Dominus, 2008). In the same vein, banking on this affinity is a key element of gaystreaming at Logo, with a combination of real life circumstances and representational tropes pertaining to the development of media content.

Straight women, particularly those who are well-off, may interact with gay men who provide service as hair stylists, decorators, wedding planners, and so forth or enjoy friendships around shared interests that are traditionally gendered more feminine than masculine, including beauty and fashion, design, and popular culture; this is the core of unscripted programming centered on style and "living the good life," which shows such as *The A List* exemplify. In that vein, the pairing of straight women with gay men also hinges on a trope of taking pleasure in consumption. The media and advertising industries have long seen heterosexual women as important and influential consumers (de Grazia, 1996), while cultural agents involved in the construction of a gay market in the United States have generally assumed that gay men rather than lesbians would be substantial spenders (Sender, 2004). In scripted programming, there is a strong strand depicting gay men and straight women as friends—the titular characters of *Will and Grace* (NBC, 1998–2006), for example, and relationships in movies such as *The Next Best Thing* (Schlesinger, 2000). In addition, the attractiveness of gay male relationships to many straight women has

been well chronicled in fan studies (Bacon-Smith, 1992; Jenkins, 1992), and may be part of the reason why straight women were watching *Rick and Steve* and *Noah's Arc*.

Table 1 shows the gaystream categories and subcategories, categories that were identified as *not* gaystream, and examples of each as identified in Logo's internal documents. The gaystream subcategories, along with the non gaystream categories, were named in one document ("Gaystream or Not?," 2009) and the four major gaystream categories in another one ("Organizing Principles," 2009). I have listed the gaystream subcategories under the major categories, with a few subcategories that did not fit into a major category listed separately. Although the documents do not describe it explicitly this way, in various respects the four major gaystream categories all have to do with being "outside the box" in some fashion, even as some of these contrasts to the mainstream are familiar. Discovery/Next Big Thing has to do with what is not yet well-known; OMFG/Jaw Dropping describes material sufficiently outrageous or spectacular to inspire the titled reaction, even if such reactions are conventionally expected by the particular genre, such as comedy; Unconventional/Innovative references people or programs that challenge conventional norms, especially around gender; and Beat The Odds/Underdog includes female characters who defy the expectations of their gender to "kick ass," as well as the category of "Outsiders." I will return to the significance of the gaystream/not gaystream distinctions when I consider the discourses of gaystream strategy, but it is clear that the majority of the genres or representations deemed not to be gaystream, such as "Hyper-Masculine/Violent Sports" and "Objectified Women," are familiar for their predominance on mainstream commercial media, and are most obviously associated with a heterosexual masculinity that is imagined as less intellectually discerning ("Super-Broad Comedy") or politically sophisticated ("Hyper-Nationalism") when compared to the gaystream categories.

### Gaystreaming on Logo's channel

The implementation of gaystreaming has occurred somewhat differently on Logo's television channel in comparison to its Web sites. A new slogan that did not name any identity categories, "Fierce TV," was adopted on the channel, referencing a certain kind of modeling stance or posturing often encouraged on shows like *RuPaul's Drag Race*. For programming, gaystream strategy informed the acquisition of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (WB 1997–2001, UPN 2001–2003), and the airing of *Reno 911!* and *The Sarah Silverman Program* after their first plays on MTV Network's Comedy Central (2003–2009 and 2007–2010, respectively). *Buffy* had one lesbian main character, Willow, while, *Reno 911!*, a parody of police reality shows such as Fox's *COPS*, and *The Sarah Silverman Program*, a comedy series, both had one main gay male character (Lt. Dangle and Brian Spukowski, respectively). These shows began playing on Logo and LogoTV.com in Fall 2009, and Logo experienced an immediate ratings bump, with *Buffy* in particular attracting the younger viewers that Logo was seeking (Marc Leonard, personal communication, July 9, 2009). However, none of the three programs are "gay" or "lesbian" shows like *Queer As Folk* (Showtime,

**Table 1** Logo's Gaystream Categories, Subcategories, and Examples

Major category	Subcategory	Examples
Discovery/Next Big Thing "Programming that keeps you in the loop about the next big artist, film, film maker, travel destination, and anything in pop culture that matters. So you can impress your friends." OMFG/Jaw-Dropping "The litmus test is simple, if our jaws drop at least once every seven minutes the show passes muster. We'll also accept continuous exclamations of 'Oh no, no, no they didn't', and watching through your fingers with your chin on your knees."	Fashion	Project Runway
Unconventional/Innovative "In a perfect world everybody would be this interesting. Meet the innovators, the magic makers, and the oddballs who make life interesting for the rest of us. We wish we were them but since we're not we have to settle for watching every minute of these shows."	Outrageous Camp Spectacle	Joan Rivers, <i>Real Housewives Showgirls</i> , <i>Starship Troopers Moulin Rouge</i> , Sacha Baron Cohen
Beat the Odds/Underdog "Even the most fabulous of us have a profound respect for the outsider, and the less of a chance they have the more we love em."	Celebration of The Individual Sensitive Guys People Who Seem Like Drag Queens Even Though They're Not Social Studies  Girls Who Kick Ass Outsiders	Adam Lambert Paul Rudd, <i>Noah's Arc</i> Grace Jones, Janice Dickinson <i>Mad Men</i>  <i>Buffy</i> , the <i>Alien</i> movies <i>Edward Scissorhands</i> , <i>X-Men</i>



Table 1 Continued

Major category	Subcategory	Examples
Additional subcategories	Mean Girls	<i>Popular, Heathers</i>
	Divas	Whitney Houston, Lady Gaga
	Guys Confident in Their Sexuality	Brad Pitt, Jake Gyllenhaal
	Sexy	<i>Spartacus</i> (Starz series)
	Smart Stuff	<i>Arrested Development, The Daily Show with John Stewart</i>
Not Gaystream	Hyper-Masculine/Violent Sports	football, wrestling
	Super-Broad Comedy	Jay Leno, <i>Two and A Half Men</i>
	Down Home	country music, <i>Touched By An Angel</i>
	Objectified Women	hip hop videos, <i>Maxim</i>
	Jingoism/Hyper-Nationalism	<i>Walker: Texas Ranger</i> , Sarah Palin
	Too Gay Niche	<i>The Big Gay Sketch Show</i> season 1, <i>Coming Out Stories</i>

2000–2005) or *The L Word* (Showtime, 2004–2009). As programming executive Marc Leonard explained:

I think originally when we launched a show, we were looking for something that had gay content front and center. I think in the future, a show like *Six Feet Under* would work very well for us. . . . [It's] about a group of people, and one of them is gay, and that's fine. (Marc Leonard, personal communication, July 9, 2009)

Conversely, the first season of Logo-produced *Big Gay Sketch Show* had been cited in "Gaystream Or Not?" as an example of being "too gay niche" and hence not sufficiently intelligible to straight viewers, and even though writers for the show had endeavored to avoid too many LGBT in-jokes by Season 2 (Dennis Hensley, AfterElton contributor, personal communication, September 3, 2009), Logo opted not to renew the series after it wrapped its third season in 2010.

Besides *The A List*, *Eden Wood's World*, and *Pretty Hurts*, which I mentioned earlier, Logo's post gaystream original programming has been characterized by several other reality series that deal with style. In *The Arrangement* (2010), a mixture of contestants, the majority of whom were gay men or straight women, competed in flower arranging. *Setup Squad* (2011–present) features professional dating advisors, some of whom are lesbian or gay, assisting clients in dating; the pilot paired a straight female advisor with a gay man looking for his first date, and a gay advisor with a woman looking for Mr. Right. For the 2012 season, as Ciriaco (2012) observed, Logo's entire slate of new programs, which includes additional reality series about subjects such as canine makeovers (*Design My Dog*), pop culture scandals (*Scandalicious*), and a straight wealthy "Mafia princess" (*Wiseguys*), does not include a single series with gay or lesbian leads. These shows have replaced scripted programming such as the animated comedy *Rick and Steve* (2007–2009) and *Jeffery & Cole Casserole* (2009–2010), a sketch comedy series, which in turn had lightened Logo's fare compared to the documentary programming on *Real Momentum* (2005–2007) and *365gay News* (2005–2009).

Currently, Logo remains committed to attracting LGBT media consumers, and parts of its gaystream programming come across as inclusive in ways that organizations like GLAAD find consistently praiseworthy; on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, for example, the host is a queer African American man who oversees a competition of contestants transgressing gender expression. At the same time, *RuPaul* also provides Logo with a convenient go-to program for its diversity quotient, even as the shift to gaystreaming means that programming with people of color has decreased. The cast of the original *A List* series was almost entirely White—the exception was a Brazilian man<sup>6</sup>—while *Noah's Arc* is not currently in production.

### Gaystreaming on Logo's Web sites

Although it is currently available in over 40 million U.S. homes ("LOGOonline Today," n.d., p. 1), the inaccessibility of Logo to a majority of the American television audience has been a key consideration for Logo's online strategy, on top of the

industry shift toward multiplatform programming (Jenkins, 2006) and the increasing prominence of social media for television (Petersen, 2010). While site content tends to remain separate from the channel in terms of program development, there have been the occasional web-to-channel crossovers: the comedy series *Jeffrey and Cole Casserole* was first streamed on Youtube (as "VGL (Very Good Looking) Gay Boys") by Jeffery Self and Cole Escola before it was picked up by Logo and aired for two seasons on the channel (2009–2010). Logo has also shown interest in acquiring another web series, *In Between Men*, for streaming online (Christian, 2011a). Aslinger (2009) noted that, unique among MTV's networks, Logo "was born in the digital moment" (p. 110), and hence, from the start, digital distribution was central to the network. Furthermore, delivering content via online sites and mobile telephony meant that Logo needed to deal less with resistance from television providers who might balk at carrying a gay-identified network. As Kristin Frank, formerly the Senior Vice President of Multiplatform Distribution and Marketing at Logo, put it diplomatically in recalling her efforts to secure cable distribution, "you're dealing with businesspeople across the entire company, you can expect that there'll be some controversy and some- some issues with people and how they feel about the product, so we tried to take away from that and make it all about the business" (personal communication, July 31, 2009).

The main Logo-originated site is LogoTV.com (formerly LOGOonline.com). Pre-gaystreaming, its byline was "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender TV Shows & Specials," but is now "RuPaul's Drag Race, Eden's World Full Episodes, Reality TV Shows," and the site is no longer explicitly identified as LGBT on its home page. The front page also formerly had links to "the Click List" for music, which allowed site visitors to vote for "Indie, pop, rock, and hip-hop music videos (with gay leanings, of course!)," and the Click List for short LGBT films, the most popular of which would then make a weekly Top 10 list posted at the site, but both of these were phased out in 2011. NewNowNext.com, a Web site that comprises Logo's NewNowNext brand of channel and online programming, has long had a mix of content that editor and contributor John Polly associated with gaystreaming. As its catchy alliterative name suggests, it aims to cover what is or is about to become cool, hence fitting into the Discovery/Next Big Thing gaystream category. Its byline began in 2006 as "Gay Pop Culture, News and Clues Served Fresh Daily." In October 2011, NewNowNext was revamped with a broader focus, absorbing the Ask An Expert section from newly defunct sister site 365gay and changing its byline to "Beyond Trends."

In addition to network-originated sites, Logo acquired several independent Web sites in 2006–2007. This has allowed the network to continue targeting specific segments of the LGBT community even as its channel programming seeks out a broader viewership, but some changes propelled by gaystreaming have also been implemented recently at Logo's sites, with the exception of DowneLink, a social networking and dating Web site that remains essentially unchanged content-wise.

AfterEllen, which Logo acquired in 2006, has never been fully devoted to only lesbian content, although the reasons for this were not the same as Logo's current gaystream strategy. When AfterEllen first started a regular "Best Lesbianish Day Ever" feature in 2007, site founder Sarah Warn recalled that they invariably included a lot of material on straight women, since there was not enough content on lesbian and bisexual women to fill a daily column (personal communication, October 27, 2009). The site routinely covers actors who have previously portrayed lesbian or bisexual women, including projects where they are playing straight characters; shows or films depicting relationships that viewers enjoy reading as lesbian on a subtextual level and/or that feature strong female characters, such as *Rizzoli & Isles* (TNT, 2010–present) or a film like *Alice in Wonderland* (2010); and the subsequent endeavors of women who have previously taken on roles of lesbian interest, such as Kristen Bell, star of *Veronica Mars* (CW, 2004–2007). Claudia Gorelick, Logo's Vice President of Strategy and Operations, commented that AfterEllen was an important spur toward gaystreaming at Logo more broadly:

AfterEllen, they kind of started this, in the fact that they don't just report on gay and lesbian things; they'll report on *America's Next Top Model* with lesbian lens. And then some of the people that will reply are straight women, as well. I mean, it doesn't happen all the time, but there is the breakdown of, "Okay, we are only allowed to talk about lesbian topics, lesbian people." (Claudia Gorelick, personal communication, June 8, 2009)

Sarah Warn noted that there is much more material for AfterEllen's brother site AfterElton to cover in terms of gay men in the media and popular culture, so it did not start off gaystream in the same way that AfterEllen did (personal communication, October 27, 2009). However, its current scope is still gaystream, in that not all of the content is about explicitly gay/bisexual men or characters, but includes material that may still be appealing to site readers. As AfterElton contributing writer Anthony Langford noted, the site covers shows like *Supernatural* (WB/CW, 2005–present) and *Merlin* (NBC/SyFy, 2008–2011), since "there are two really hot guys on the show who have this really close intense relationship, so the homoeroticism type of stuff is there" (personal communication, March 11, 2010).

In keeping with both comments by Logo executives that younger people are more reticent to claim labels and the goal of gaystreaming to expand the appeal of Logo's content, the taglines of AfterEllen and AfterElton have been changed to drop explicit references to sexual identities; they are now both "the pop culture site that plays for your team," replacing "news, reviews, & commentary on lesbian and bisexual women" and "news, reviews, & commentary gay and bisexual men," respectively.

A news site, 365gay, acquired by Logo in 2006, was not gaystream in the same way, and always had more than sufficient material to cover. However, in 2010, it also started adding gaystream content, including articles about fashionable footwear and the best luggage under "Living," although the bulk of that section remained concerned with topics such as being out at one's child's school or going on an

LGBT-friendly vacation. The Living section was removed in November 2010, with topics previously covered there moved to other sections such as Ask the Expert, which included coverage of areas such as travel and relationships. The continuing implementation of gaystreaming in 2011 led to the demise of the entire site in September, with editor-in-chief Jennifer Vanasco announcing tersely on the site that "Logo has shifted its online strategy and so the site is closing and I am moving on to other things." Without 365gay, Logo no longer has any outlets devoted to coverage of content traditionally considered "news," that is, events and issues with particular economic, political, or social significance. While AfterEllen and AfterElton have recently begun incorporating articles in such areas, their primary focus remains entertainment and pop culture. Thus, while under Logo 365gay managed for several years to escape the fate of various other LGBT news sites (see Badash, 2011; Browning, 2011), its closure highlights the site's eventual vulnerability to corporate-level dictates.

In the next section, I consider the major discourses that have shaped gaystreaming, and discuss how changes in LGBT identity, culture, and politics have been conceptualized in ways that emphasize integration into dominant institutions, including the nation-state, while downplaying ongoing political struggle and inequality.

### **The discourses of gaystream development at Logo**

Several Logo interviewees noted that LGBT people are increasingly integrated within mainstream society, indirectly referencing multiple processes of decriminalization, depathologization, and destigmatization vis-à-vis the legal, medical, and political status of LGBT-identified individuals in the last three decades. It is in this sociopolitical context that Logo has been shifting its programming, and at one level, gaystreaming is itself a signifier of gains for LGBT media and viewers. That there is sufficient LGBT-centric content to set aside in favor of programs with one or two LGBT characters, that LGBT individuals routinely appear on a whole slew of unscripted programming as "real people," and that an unprecedented number of scripted shows have LGBT regulars comprise a notable contrast to a time when mining the subtext and reading against the grain were the major methods for extracting queer representations and narratives from mainstream texts (e.g., see Doty, 1993). In addition, some of Logo's viewers may feel that gaystream content better reflects their lives and is what they prefer to watch: fluffier, more entertaining stories rather than chronicles about coming out or earnest pitches for acceptance. However, the generally upbeat comments about gaystreaming reveal problematic conceptualizations of both who LGBT viewers are and the extent of social and political progress, when compared to the lived realities of LGBTQ people. More broadly, the discourses around gaystreaming also feed into constructions of homonormativity that are enabled by the concomitant marginalization of other queer bodies and practices.

One persistent theme was that gays and lesbians no longer cluster together in isolated "ghettoes." Marc Leonard commented that "the gay audience . . . [is] moving back into the suburbs, they're raising families, their best friends are straight,

they're close with their families, they have lots of straight coworkers who know that they're gay and they're okay with that" (personal communication, May 21, 2009). Lisa Sherman, Logo's Executive Vice President and General Manager of Logo, characterized the outcome of this as Logo's audience seeking media content that mirrors their integration into the general populace:

Gays aren't just living in the ghettos anymore, and I think that gay and straight people share more integrated lives. And so you're starting to see more of that both on Logo, where we're inviting gays and lesbians and their friends and families, who just like good entertainment, to come and watch. (Lisa Sherman, Out Trailblazers in Media panel, New York City, April 1, 2010)

However, the idea of the "gay ghetto" is itself a construct that imagines LGBT people as clustered in urban settings, when many have always lived and continue to live outside cities (e.g., see Gray, 2009; Herring, 2010; Tongson, 2011). In fact, an examination of Logo's gaystream categories points to the production of a desired viewership that is urbane and educated, akin to Becker's (2006) "slumpy" class, particularly as they were contrasted with a list of non gaystream examples that—with the exception of "Too Gay Niche"—are conventionally associated with straight males. Young men (18–34 years old) in particular, who are both relatively difficult to reach and likely to spend, have been highly coveted by advertisers and hence networks (e.g., see Mayer, 2008; Rose, 2004), so to some extent, Logo's strategy places it alongside other cable networks such as Bravo and Oxygen for whom female viewers are a major target. At the same time, taken together, the non gaystream categories draw on tropes of men in lower socioeconomic classes and/or those with conservative political positions. There is a stereotype in mainstream American culture of White working class males as unintelligent and culturally unsophisticated, or, as Butsch (1995) called the depictions of such characters on situation comedies, "buffoons" (p. 404). The Objectified Women category taps another characteristic attributed to working class men as more likely to hold sexist attitudes or be intolerant of difference, with the latter also a common thread between the Down Home and Jingoism/Hyper-Nationalism categories. Such attributions threaten to collapse rural and working class spaces into an undesirable hinterland of conservatism, sexism, homophobia, and racism, obscuring the reality that regressive politics are by no means absent from elite urban spaces as well.

Logo network staff were explicit in not assuming all LGBT people fall into one camp and all straight people in another with respect to their tastes for media content, and noted that Logo has aimed to address different segments within its targeted audience. Yet what the gaystream categories draw on are intersections of class, gender, sexuality, and race that, in associating gay sensibility with a discerning taste for content and themes outside the box, subordinate a particular configuration of nonurban, working class identity. Although Logo has produced or aired programs with working class characters such as the drama *Sordid Lives: The Series* (2008) or documentary programs on *Real Momentum* (2005–2007) about rural gays and

lesbians, the language and implementation of gaystreaming has (re)marginalized these LGBT identities, particularly in the larger context of how denigrated sexuality and class subjectivities often stand for each other in mainstream televisual depictions (Henderson, 2001, 2007). Also, as Gray (2009) noted, queer rural youth have tended to find LGBT representations on television, whether "*Baywatch*'s campy queer subtexts or *Queer as Folk* and *Will and Grace*'s out and proud gay and lesbian characters" (p. 121), less useful than those available at various online sites.

Another key thread in Logo staff comments pointed to a shift away from traditional labels of sexuality. Marketing executive Claudia Gorelick suggested that we may be in a "post-gay" era, so that "anyone who's investing in gay and lesbian" must reconsider their long-term strategies as traditional segregations along the lines of sexual identity break down (personal communication, June 8, 2009). Ghaziani (2011) traced the origins of the "post-gay" term to journalists in the 1990s, including a 1998 *Newsweek* article (Collard, 1998) that identified a sea change for LGBT life and politics. Characterizing the shift as involving "the acceptance of a segment of gays and lesbians who are gender conforming, middle class, upwardly mobile" (p. 104), Ghaziani discussed how LGBT activists have addressed tensions between emphasizing sameness versus difference or assimilation versus diversity, including how college organizations historically devoted to LGBT students and issues have been increasingly foregoing names that contain terms such as "gay," "lesbian," or "queer." Yet while members of the millennial generation may indeed be less inclined to own the old labels than their predecessors, the slide into post gay rhetoric fails to acknowledge that greater fluidity in sexual and gender expression plays out in uneven ways. Even if homophobia is on the decline in mainstream American society, a significant portion of people continue to reject anything outside of normative heterosexuality regardless of how individuals choose to label or not label themselves, as attested by hate crimes and gender/sexuality-based school bullying and taunting (e.g., see Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2009). Furthermore, a trend of rejecting labels can further encumber those terms with stigma, as well as obscure important differences and inequalities within LGBT communities (e.g., Edwards, 1998; Jeffreys, 2003). In pursuing a programming direction that downplays explicit labels of sexual identity, therefore, Logo is implicated in processes that are not simply or simplistically progressive, and the sense that labels are not necessary is frequently a mark of relative privilege, as scholars have noted about White eagerness for "color-blindness" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

Furthermore, deployments of "post-" discourses obscure continuing inequalities and injustice along the very axes that are purported to be no longer relevant, by pointing to the limited gains of some segments of a subordinated group. Hence, claims about being in a post feminist era are typically premised on the inroads made in domains such as professional employment and political participation by disproportionately White, middle and upper-class women—Hillary Clinton, for example—without addressing institutional racism and other structural barriers (e.g., Gill, 2007; Vavrus, 2002). On a partially comparable note, Obama's Democratic

nomination and successful election as president drew commentary from a broad spectrum that America was in a post race era; yet, as Ono (2010) argued, post racial discourses valorize "anyone can make it" narratives that hold up the achievements of individuals as evidence that racism is merely historical, no longer a barrier for contemporary America. Not all Logo executives referred explicitly to being in a post gay era, but collectively, there was a decided de-emphasis of the struggles of being queer. Thus, Leonard commented that "the younger set" is not interested in programming such as *Queer As Folk* that continually suggested that "Being gay is hard" (personal communication, July 9, 2009). However, the aligning of gay identity or "sensibilities" with style and taste on the competitive reality shows that are becoming Logo's cornerstone foreground individual success and talent in ways that discourage attention to structural conditions of inequality.

Channel programming at Logo now spotlights gays and lesbians whose best contributions to society are as good consumers and tastemakers, and as Sender (2004) has discussed, promoting a particular form of gayness constructed "within dominant conventions of an essentialized sexuality marked by privilege and good taste" (p. 236) produces forms of distinction that tend not to be recognized as such (Bourdieu, 1984). Thus, making content palatable to a broader, non-LGBT audience via gaystreaming feeds the marginalization of sexual and gender expression outside the "charmed circle" (Rubin, 1984): the well-groomed, urban gay man or entertainingly flamboyant queen (and his female counterparts, lipstick and fitness lesbians), who threaten to crowd out other forms of queer identity and bodies that had a better shot at being seen on Logo pre-gaystreaming, even if they have never enjoyed equal exposure.

Furthermore, as Cohen (2003) chronicled, in post-World War II America, activities in the realm of consumption became articulated as a primary form of public participation, tying consumerism to gendered, raced, and classed identities in discourses around patriotism and nation-building. Aslinger (2009) noted that during the time of its launch, Logo trotted out stereotypes of gays as affluent and brand-loyal consumers, and this remains true; former Logo executive Kristin Frank's comments that the network's audience "indexes higher in income, indexes higher in education, indexes higher in discretionary spending, indexes higher in loyalty" (personal communication, July 31, 2009) were typical of other interviewees. Hence, the ways that gaystreaming reinforces the trope of the good gay (especially male) consumer also enmeshes certain LGBT subjects more closely with dominant forms of national identity.

Recently, some scholars have argued that the conditional gains of gays in the United States (and other Western states) constitute a new homonormativity predicated upon the production of subjects elsewhere who are subordinated along the axes of both nationality, sexuality, and religion. Puar (2007), for example, has theorized "homonationalism" as comprising recent projects of nation-state formation in the North that have begun deploying homonormative discourses alongside heteronormative ideals, while global South subjects experience often



violent and Islamophobic othering. She thus contextualized the victories claimed by the mainstream U.S. gay rights movement against the atrocities evidenced through the prison photos from the former U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Afghanistan, where, among other things, male inmates were posed in sexually submissive positions for their captors' gaze. Hence, at a moment when the West lays claim to rescuing Muslims from sexual backwardness, its agents are enacting an imperialist agenda that is racist, homophobic, and contradictory in its rhetoric about sexual tolerance and freedom. Critics of "pinkwashing" have also identified Israeli government efforts to promote Israel as a gay and lesbian travel destination as well as yoking together gay and nationalist identities as part of deliberate strategies to "conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians' human rights behind an image of modernity signified by Israeli gay life" (Schulman, 2011). In this vein, Ben Daniel (2011) discussed the thread linking state-produced publicity about gays and lesbians in the Israeli military, which is designed to appeal to U.S. gays, and San Francisco's identity as *the* queer city, with both constructed in part via a discourse of neoliberal cosmopolitanism.

Logo's programming would seem worlds removed from these discourses, yet it is one element of the recent inclusions of some LGBT subjects into dominant social institutions and economic circuits. This is not to tie gaystreaming and its architects to U.S. imperialism per se; in fact, the identification of "Jingoism/Hyper-Nationalism" as a *non-gaystream* category would seem to suggest otherwise. Yet it remains true that the discourses of integration and acceptance are silent on both the ways in which abject sexual identities continue to be produced in circumstances of incontrovertible oppression and the specifically U.S. context of Logo's genesis and development that makes gaystreaming possible at all.

In the final section, I highlight the differential outcomes of gaystreaming for LGBT viewers and the tensions of mainstream/subcultural encounters as some LGBT producers navigate working alongside rather than outside of commercial media. While major networks have solidified their presence online for several years now, new media still offer possibilities for LGBT content that does not conform to the dictates of gaystream programming.

### **Outcomes of gaystreaming and alternative streams**

The shift to gaystreaming, by definition, involves a decrease in the LGBT specificity of programming. Commenting on the mainstreaming of LGBT content in print, television, and film, Logo marketing executive Claudia Gorelick argued that "the need for niche is shrinking" (personal communication, June 8, 2009), a key consideration spurring Logo's recent rebranding strategies. Kristin Frank, a former senior marketing and distribution executive at Logo, likened the growth of commercial LGBT media to the development of hip-hop's popularity; where hip-hop used to be "an incredibly niched" entertainment genre, it now accommodates the interest of a much expanded spectrum of people (personal communication, July 31, 2009).

Given the demographic groups that gaystreaming now seeks to draw, one question is how the reduction in LGBT distinctiveness plays out in programming. Most obviously, the goal of attracting straight women may be at the expense of lesbians. Historically, lesbians have seldom been designated as desirable consumers in commercial culture, and gaystreaming continues to punctuate that narrative. Sender (2004) pithily described the way advertisers view lesbians as "neither fish or fowl"; essentially, neither quite like straight women nor gay men. The association of lesbian identity with an extreme version of anti materialist ecofeminism persists in the industry, as Dalila Ali Rajah, the producer of a lesbian video show *Cherry Bomb* formerly hosted on AfterEllen, noted:

Lesbian stereotypes are that we are rough; we're angry; we only like flannel; we like to wash our pads out in a stream on a rock; we wash our hair in the ocean. . . . If we like nature, we can just go pick an herb and wash our hair. There's nothing for somebody to sell us. (Dalila Ali Rajah, personal communication, April 8, 2010)

While there has been some shift in this position, particularly with the cultural prominence of Ellen Degeneres, Jane Lynch, and *The L Word*, the lesbian viewership has taken a backseat in Logo's channel rebranding (even as AfterEllen continues to be a key Web site for the network). Logo development executive Chris Willey pointed to *Queer as Folk*, which featured primarily gay male characters along with one lesbian couple, enjoying "a strong lesbian audience" as one reason why Logo need not necessarily continue programming specifically for lesbians the way it had in its earlier years with original series with predominantly lesbian casts of characters, such as *Exes and Ohs* (2007–2008)<sup>7</sup> and *Gimme Sugar* (2008) (personal communication, July 22, 2009).

Furthermore, while the rhetoric and realities of a larger tent have obvious attractiveness from both commercial and cultural perspectives, they raise the question of how the interests of LGBT identities and cultures might be compromised. Against the upbeat tone from network executives, Jay Vanasco, former editor-in-chief of news site 365gay, commented that, unlike gay print newspapers with a smaller (and presumably almost exclusively LGBT) readership, 365gay could no longer assume its readers share particular understandings about LGBT politics. Hence, the site had to devote more time and space explaining or justifying positions, and was generally unable to cover areas which fell outside the purview of breaking news on national-level interest topics:

I just felt like I stopped being able to explore issues that were more central just to gays and lesbians, and started having to do more, almost like advocate journalism.<sup>8</sup> . . . Because my main job is to keep people on top of the big gay news that's happening, I don't really have time to explore more fringe issues . . . if it's a choice between talking about whether New York is really going to get gay marriage or talking about the bear subculture, gay marriage is going to win. (Jay Vanasco, personal communication, June 9, 2009)

As queer scholars have noted, gay marriage is the homonormative issue par excellence, concerned as it is with accessing dominant structures and privileges.

In contrast, bear culture, which refers to a minority group within the LGBT community defined by their sexual practice, has a narrower readership interested in the topic beyond salaciousness, and touches on the edges of "proper" sexual identities. Although Vanasco did not attribute her inability to cover sexual subcultures to gaystreaming, it should be clear that the scope of what Vanasco identified for 365gay fits well with gaystream imperatives.

It is no surprise that networks like Logo are engaged in LGBT programming not primarily to advance the cause of "gay rights," but because it can prove profitable, in various configurations aimed at predominantly straight, LGBT, or mixed audiences. In reviewing the development of gay-themed cable television, Freitas (2007) discussed the limits of the commercial domain for progressive LGBT media, while Sender (2007) raised the question of whether commercial media will abandon gay-themed programming once "the novelty has worn off" (p. 316). Hence, it may be tempting to see gaystreaming not simply as an inevitable outcome of commercial media's interest in LGBT content, but as a formidable obstacle to queer cultural politics. Indeed, some scholars have condemned the emergence of both LGBT visibility and participation in the mainstream marketplace as coming at the expense of social justice agendas traditionally associated with queer political struggles, arguing that for queers to seek or embrace the mainstream necessarily entails the dissipation of meaningful challenges to capitalism and its associated inequities (Chasin, 2000).

However, in contrast to early Frankfurt school approaches to culture and politics (e.g., Adorno & Horkheimer, 1973), other critical scholarship has seen consumer culture as more than simply a realm where ordinary people are duped into producing their own subordination. As Sender (2004) argued, to see gay marketing as solely and inevitably "normalizing in intent and depoliticizing in effect" (p. 228) misses the dynamics between queer subcultures and the mainstream, including how each draws on the other materially and symbolically, the ways in which gay and lesbian cultural agents negotiate their sexual identities and their work, and the range of meanings that texts can have. Certainly, the critique of gaystreaming in this article should not be read as glossing over the nuances of subculture-mainstream relations (e.g., Frank, 1997; Thornton, 1996) or overlooking a plethora of work on how consumers interact with media in complex ways (Baym, 2000; Jenkins, 2006; Shefrin, 2004).

Furthermore, even within commercial media organizations, different cultural producers constantly negotiate and contest the interests and stakes of their work; thus, while gaystreaming is a network-wide strategy, it is applied unevenly across Logo's properties. Notably, although Logo's Web sites have not remained untouched by gaystream strategy, having such a stable of sites means that the network continues to target more audience segments within the LGBT community than it does via channel programming, particularly in offering material about lesbian and bisexual women on AfterEllen and, until recently, news and political commentary at 365gay. Logo has also hired a gay porn actor, Colby Keller, to host a sex advice video blog that streams at LogoTV but does not air on the channel (see Sire, 2011).

The ongoing acquisitions and mergers of formerly independent sites notwithstanding, the Internet remains a more hospitable medium than television for diverse material. In the last few years, several independent web series, some of which have had associations with commercial networks in one form or other, have enjoyed modest to moderate success despite deviating from gaystream content, often deriving support via crowdfunding sites such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo that allow cultural producers to seek financing from web users. *Anyone But Me*, produced, written, and directed by Susan Miller and Tina Cesa Ward in New York City, consisted of three seasons of webisodes about 5–15-minutes long, and featured a biracial relationship between two teenage girls, along with several supporting characters. Its first season aired in 2008 on Strike TV, a Web site for independent productions, and subsequently, the show streamed on a variety of other sites, including the show's own site, YouTube, Hulu, as well as being posted at AfterEllen. In addition, Patrik Ian Polk, the producer of *Noah's Arc*, which last aired on Logo in 2008, has been fundraising online to enable a third series for the show. Quincy LeNear and Deondray Gossett, whose show *DL Chronicles*, which like *Noah's Arc* was also centered on queer men of color, aired for only one season on Here!TV, have also been actively using Kickstarter and Indiegogo to pursue an additional season (Christian, 2012).

These web series are often quite normative in terms of their gravitation toward love and monogamy (Kohnen, 2012), as other forms of LGBT online media, such as fan-produced videos, can also be (Ng, 2008). However, independently produced web programs may also challenge mainstream discourses, as Christian (2011b) noted for *Real Girls Guide*, a series about queer women of color whose producers explicitly seek to intervene against *Sex and the City* as representative of how women approach relationships, romantic and otherwise. The fact that these series are sometimes partly funded by viewers seeking content unavailable on mainstream media may facilitate the producers pursuing narrative directions that a network such as Logo is increasingly unlikely to.

## Conclusion

Gaystreaming at Logo has emerged at a moment when, simultaneously, maintaining LGBT specificities seems unnecessary or undesirable to privileged cultural producers and queer political goals of destabilizing identity face a homonormative gay rights mainstream. Furthermore, even as Logo's definition of gaystream categories explicitly reject nationalistic orientations, the context for the development of gaystreaming and gaystreaming itself are elements in larger, transnational articulations of normative versus queered sexual subjectivities. In this article, I have highlighted the problematic implications of Logo's programming directions and gaystreaming discourses, given that both network and popular comment may direct these to be read as primarily indicative of political and cultural gains for LGBT communities. Logo's conceptualizations of shifts in the composition of its audience reveal the network's stakes in the diffusion of urban LGBT consumers into settings where they comprise mainstream

culture alongside straights, with a central goal of gaystreaming premised on the trope of gay male/straight female affinities for consumption and lifestyle interests. Without denying that such affinities exist in media consumption patterns or the character of real-life social networks, there are additional options for those invested in progressive alignments between straight and queer subjects.

Discussing how the mainstreaming of gays and lesbians, in the cultural domain and elsewhere, leaves those who continue to struggle on the margins, Vaid (1995) argued against a sole focus on integration, advocating instead for bringing heterosexual allies into a broad movement against violence and injustice. And in an assessment of queer politics, Cohen (1997) argued for alliances between groups that were not all marginalized by virtue of same-sex practice; in that vein, the absence from Logo’s programming of the “punks” and “welfare queens” that Cohen references—identities abject by gender, race, and class positions—does not prevent the production of other narratives of queer solidarity. Though unevenly visible, LGBT media production and consumption is occurring in a multitude of spaces, and the cultural field remains sufficiently heterogeneous to accommodate queer media production that neither embraces identity politics nor subscribes to post gay rhetoric. Even as various cultural agents negotiate their positions vis-à-vis organizations like Logo, it remains critical for producers and consumers invested in queer media content to animate such spaces with both capital and creative energies.

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## Notes

- 1 The show has aired for five seasons 2009–2013, and is renewed for a sixth. It also spawned *RuPaul’s Drag University*, (2010–present) featuring female contestants being guided to find their “inner diva.”
- 2 Fritscher (2000, para. 46) claimed to have coined the term “Gaystream,” contrasted with other subcultures such as the “Bearstream” and “Leatherstream,” for a 1997 account of gay bear culture.
- 3 For example, a queer activism Web site proclaimed that “We are committed to celebrating our queerest selves while resisting the devastating violence inherent in the consumer driven assimilationist gaystream” (Naughty North, 2007, header box).
- 4 *Degrassi* (produced in Canada) has had multiple LGBT characters, most recently Adam, who is transgender and Riley, a gay male character; *Glee* features two same-sex couples, Kurt and Blaine, and Brittany and Santana; Emily, a regular on *Pretty Little Liars*, has had relationships with several guest characters; and one of *Skins’* core characters, Tea, was a lesbian.

- 5 I interviewed 32 people associated with Logo's channel and Web sites, including 11 network staff. I am especially grateful to Marc Leonard, John Polly, and Chris Willey at Logo, with whom I spoke multiple times.
- 6 Also, *The A List: Dallas* featured one Black man as a main cast member.
- 7 After a 3-year delay, an eight-episode second season of *Exes and Ohs* aired on Logo June–August 2011.
- 8 Vanasco is referencing what is more commonly called "advocacy journalism," where the writer takes a clear side to persuade the reader, sometimes contrasted with "objective journalism" (e.g., see Niles, 2011; van Zoonen, 1998).

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