Trans/Locatability: Performing Public Appearance in Locative Media

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ABSTRACT

The promises and perils of visibility dominate many contemporary conversations about transgender life; this essay considers the ways in which *locatability* works alongside visibility to regulate the sphere of public appearance, informing who can safely appear and in what spaces they can or cannot do so. The locative performance *Appear to Me* (2020), written by gender-expansive artist eppchez yo-sí yes for the Philadelphia company Swim Pony, shows how such performance can challenge dominant constructions of location that involve the violent displacement of marginalized populations, as well as locative technologies—such as the Global Positioning System—that help create and sustain these constructions. Through a smartphone app that uses GPS to trigger audio cues, *Appear to Me* guides listeners along the Delaware River Trail in South Philadelphia, where they encounter the voices of people displaced from the waterfront, including street queens, houseless queers, and the land's Indigenous Lenape inhabitants. I discuss how the performance both engages the politics of appearance on the textual level and performs new possibilities for appearance through its appropriation of GPS technology. In doing so, it enacts a trans epistemology of location I name *trans/locatability*: a multiply-emplaced, gender-expansive position of safety and solidarity that asserts the right of all bodies to appear in public without harm.

"Consent not to be a single site."
       –Legacy Russell, after Édouard Glissant[1]

INTRODUCTION

A voice of ambiguous gender insinuates itself into my ear as, phone in hand and earbuds in place, I step out of a shopping center parking lot and onto the Delaware River Trail to experience *Appear to Me* (2020), a locative audio performance written by gender-expansive artist eppchez yo-sí yes, and produced by Philadelphia company Swim Pony.[2] "Are you a wanderer?" the voice asks, broguishly. "A rrrroamer like me?"[3] This, it seems, is my self-appointed guide, a garrulous feral cat who informs me that in a previous incarnation they were the real-life Welsh poet and drifter W.H. Davies. Spurred on by Davies, I pass out of the shadow of a massive Walmart and

follow the river trail north, along a stretch of post-industrial waterfront dotted with a series of piers. Some of these are outfitted with tidy plantings, wide paths, safety rails, and brightly painted benches; others are apparently abandoned, their crumbling concrete and unpruned vegetation no doubt next in line for "revitalization." I quickly learn, however, that these sites are in fact a hub of community activity for those who move—or who have been compelled to move—beyond the city's normative modes of circulation. As I walk, other denizens of the piers add their voices to the performance's aural fabric: street queens and unhoused queers, a Black labor agitator, two Latinx cousins fishing for dinner, several of the land's indigenous Lenape inhabitants, all of them sharing with me their life-sustaining connections to the waterfront and to one another. In highlighting and celebrating the often extralegal placemaking practices of its characters, *Appear to Me* affirms a right to the city for those who have been displaced or rendered unwelcome, both historically and in the present.

As its title indicates, *Appear to Me* is particularly attuned to the role that visibility plays in processes of displacement. More precisely, the performance highlights the way that visibility is managed and apportioned through acts and regimes of violence that determine not just who can appear, but where they can safely do so. Following Judith Butler's theorization of the right to appear—the ability of a body to exist in public space without being met with violence—I suggest that *appearance* describes precisely the nexus of sight and site that the performance interrogates through its localized attention to Philadelphia's gentrifying waterfront.[4] The "sight" element of this dyad has been the subject of sustained scholarly and popular attention in recent years, particularly in the field of trans studies.[5] Work in this area has made clear that for trans and other marginalized populations, the liberal promise of visual recognition and representation often delivers not the presumed "equality" but a disciplinary and deadly violence. An under-discussed element of this conversation, however, is that the material dangers visibility can present for those who occupy a marginalized subject position are a consequence not solely of being seen, but also of being found, pinpointed, apprehended in physical space. Discussions of visibility, trans and otherwise, can therefore benefit from an approach that considers the ways in which visibility is imbricated with space, and particularly with location and the systems that enable it. How does locatability—the capacity to identify a body's particular, situated location—contribute to the project of identifying, subjectifying, and ultimately eliminating the Other? This question has not been taken up with the same thoroughness as its visual counterpart, leaving a gap in our understanding of how public appearance is regulated.

This essay addresses this gap through an analysis of the locative insights and interventions of *Appear to Me*. The performance both brings attention to the ways in which location and being located inform the politics of appearance, and performs an alternative mode of locatability that circumvents the normative, othering operations in which being located is often implicated.[6] I show how *Appear to Me*'s locative tactics challenge a normative paradigm—exemplified and upheld by the technical formulations of the Global Positioning System—that characterizes both location and the locatable subject as singular, legible, and trackable. Instead, the work performs a trans epistemology of location, which I name *trans/locatability*, that allows for the possibility of being located in more than one place at once. Such an understanding of location—and of transness—resists the territorialization of both space and selfhood, opening towards relations of solidarity and asserting the right of all bodies to appear in public without harm.

I open the essay with a discussion of two specific instances where *Appear to Me* engages the politics of public appearance on the textual level, in the dialogue spoken by its characters. In these moments, the performance highlights the roles that location and locatability play in the regulation and contestation of norms of appearance, particularly as they concern gender. In the following section, I move from the performance's text to an analysis of the digital architecture through which it performs location, the Global Positioning System. Through a close reading of Louis Althusser and Judith Butler, I first demonstrate that locatability is crucial to the process of subject formation; I then show how GPS's technical formulation of location interpellates subjects who are discrete, individual, and singular(ly gendered). The final section returns to *Appear to Me* to analyze the ways in which the performance reimagines the Global Positioning System as a tool for challenging the regulation of gendered subjectivity and public appearance. Thinking with queer and trans of color scholars including Jian Neo Chen, micha cárdenas, and Che Gossett, this section also outlines trans/locatability as a locative episteme characterized by multiplicity and relations of solidarity, relations which *Appear to Me* contingently actualizes in its performance of public appearance.

Before proceeding, I wish to briefly situate this essay's approach to *trans* within recent critical dialogue surrounding the history—and future—of trans studies as a field. Several trans scholars have argued persuasively that trans studies has overinvested in *trans* as a prefixal indicator of boundary-crossing—as in "transcorporeal" or "transmaterial"—that is dangerously abstracted and untethered from the matter of gender as lived. Such work, this argument goes, has dominated the field at the expense of much-needed attention to the vast diversity of lived experience among actual trans and gender-variant people.[7] At the same time, other trans scholars have affirmed the relationship between *trans* and movements of crossing, shifting, and unsettling, while keeping these valences firmly grounded in their analysis of specific trans lives.[8] This essay is accordingly invested in *trans* as a marker less of a coherent identity than of a transgression of sexed and gendered spatio-corporeal boundaries, while necessarily affirming that this transgression is practiced by particular people and results in particular lived experiences that should not be abstracted or generalized. Hence the stylization of *trans/locatability* rather than simply "translocatability"—the slash means to ensure that *trans* here is not a mere prefix subsumed into a broader conceptual apparatus, but an equal participant in a both/and relation. Trans/locatability expands and elaborates on, but does not exceed, exactly what it names: the locatability of trans people.

THE POLITICS OF APPEARANCE: VISIBILITY AND LOCATABILITY

Through two testimonies of gender-based violence, *Appear to Me* shows the question of visibility to be inextricably bound up with location, together constituting the grounds for the politics of appearance. In each testimony, a gender-variant individual is forcibly denied the right to appear, an act that serves as an enforcement of spatialized gender and sexual norms. Offered back-to-back near the beginning of the performance, these testimonies demonstrate the normative force of locatability and the stakes of being located for trans and gender-variant individuals and communities. They thereby lay the groundwork for understanding the intervention performed by *Appear to Me*'s trans epistemology of location.

Other than the feline Davies, one of the first voices to catch the listener's ear in *Appear to Me* is that of a "gender-unconcerned" (as yes's script has it) queen named Estée. Estée (or S.T. — "I do

got that Sweet Tooth") introduced herself as I stepped onto one of the waterfront's most manicured pier-parks, Pier 68, which features a cheerful blue color scheme, an artificial lawn, and wavy, whimsically-striped benches. Taking a seat on one of these, amidst families and couples out enjoying the September sun, I listened to Estée as she passionately affirmed the pier's history—and ongoing present—as a queer cruising space:

> I'm still here, ain't I? Even since they tore up all the nature and painted everything blue and white to make some kind of respectable park for respectable people… Don't you think for a minute that there ain't still plenty of action on pier 68. Sure, now the hotels take queer money too. But I'll stand by this: the sex is better outside.[9]

Estée makes personal for the listener the ongoing process of gentrification that is reshaping Philadelphia's waterfront. Emptied out by deindustrialization and isolated from the rest of the city by the construction of an interstate highway in the 1970s, the disused piers came to be seen by city officials as unsightly, derelict spaces in need of revitalization.[10] In the last several decades, redevelopment has arrived in the form of carefully landscaped parks, jogging trails, food markets and eateries, and other commercial and recreational spaces; most of these are managed by a privately funded nonprofit, the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation. Such spaces are organized by what journalist Michael Friedrich has identified as a logic of late-capitalist rehabilitation, "aestheticizing the labor of the past even as they support a gentrified future."[11] (An announcement of the Pier 68 park's opening notes approvingly that those wave-shaped benches were "inspired by the mustaches worn by Philadelphia sailors from the 19th century.")[12] In this paradigm, developers and their allies in government seize control of the spaces vacated by the collapse of industry, transforming what could—and sometimes have already, as in the case of Estée's cruising grounds—become genuinely public spaces into elite playgrounds.

This process inevitably leads to increased surveillance, policing, and harassment of low-income and houseless people, people of color, and (especially if lacking the protective signifiers of whiteness or wealth) those who are disabled and/or gender-non-conforming, all of whom are perceived as threats to the sanitized social order that the newly developed space seeks to institute.[13] While she doesn't provide details, Estée makes clear that she has had unpleasant encounters with the police: "The whole dang world—the powers that be—decided any glimpse of my sacred hyde [sic] would be too potent a stimulus for the masses. That's why the pigs even give a damn about us."[14] Estée's words reveal the complex nature of her relationship to visibility. She knows that "the powers that be" need her and her community to remain out of visible public life, as "any glimpse" of her non-conforming gender presentation and/or sexual practices poses a "too potent" threat to the maintenance of a cisheteropatriarchal order wrapped up in whiteness. (Estée's voice is provided by Black performer Tony Moaton, suggesting that her race may play a role in her targeting as well.) The state's demand for her invisibility, however, paradoxically renders her *hyper*visible to its repressive enforcers—the "pigs" who most certainly "give a damn" about her presence on Pier 68. Estée is subjected to the violence of hypervisibility not just because of who she is, but because of *where* she is: in a specific location that is being reimagined as a space of and for "the masses," or, we might say, the public.

In order to keep Estée and all that she is separate from a normative(ly gendered) construction of "the public," she cannot appear—that is, be seen to be located—in a "public" space. As Butler points out in their discussion of the right to appear, phrases like "the public" and "the people" are

performative; in being spoken (or written, or otherwise discursively formulated), they demarcate who is included and who is excluded from the very group they name.[15] Space, as Butler goes on to argue, is a crucial site where the constitutive norms of publicness are performed and, in being performed, contested. Estée's appearance in a space that is being claimed for "the public" performs her claim to a public existence—that is, any existence at all. The *here* of her defiant "I'm still here, ain't I?" encompasses both the specific site of Pier 68 and her very life itself.

After Estée bid me on my way, I stepped off the pier and back onto the main trail, where Davies's voice rejoined me. "I feel for some reason compelled to share with you of all people a secret which I kept my whole human life," the cat announced. "It's the kind of thing that hides in plain sight."[16] As I walked, they began by describing a memorable encounter from their human life:

> Once, on a ship where I was crew, a woman was discovered dressed in men's clothes. She was attempting to pass herself off for a sailor. She was suspected of the deception and stripped to reveal womanly features. It was a terrible ordeal for her and she was handed over to the authorities at the next port.[17]

Borrowing this tale from the real-life Davies's autobiography, yes's script once again emphasizes the violent policing of gender-variant bodies—this time not only by "the authorities," but by ordinary citizens, in this case the unfortunate sailor's own shipmates. Like Estée, the offending sailor is rendered hypervisible, here in cruelly spectacular fashion: they are stripped in order to "reveal" the supposed truth of their body to the eyes of the men on board. And like Estée, this imposed visibility is directly tied to the matter of location and to the stakes of appearance. By emplacing themself in the male-gendered space of the ship, a person that the human Davies and his fellow sailors can only understand as a woman makes a claim regarding their ability to appear publicly *as male*. In order for the norm that gender is dictated strictly by anatomy to be upheld, this person must therefore be expelled from the location in and through which they claim otherwise. They are "handed over to the authorities" in order to reaffirm the ship as a space where only certain kinds of bodies can and do appear.

Bearing witness to this distressing event evidently had an effect on Davies, the present incarnation of whom has more on their mind:

> My manhood was never questioned in this way. I was the roughest kind of boy and grew into a short yet strong man– still, my whiskers never grew. My features were somewhat softer and rounder than my peers, and I can't help wondering: if I were ever to have been stripped and my maleness judged thusly, I'm not sure I'd have passed such a test. I made sure to be cremated.[18]

Reading between the lines of Davies's account, *Appear to Me* slyly extrapolates a speculative imaginary of the self-policing that witnessing violence can produce in others. By "ma[king] sure to be cremated," yes suggests, Davies may have been acting to preserve the opacity of a sexually indeterminate body, protecting his posthumous reputation from the brutal consequences of visibility that he once witnessed aboard ship. He was trying, that is, to avoid being clocked.

Colloquially, to be clocked is to be recognized as trans or gender-variant; bound up with the idea of passing, clocking describes being made visible while one is trying not to be, or perhaps even being made visible in and through the act of trying not to be. As Eric A. Stanley has elaborated,

however, clocking is more than a purely visual operation; it is an exercise of power that entails and enacts "the ability to name the Other out of existence."[19] To verbally call attention to a person's gender trespass, Stanley suggests, is not only to announce that trespass—*you shouldn't be here*—but to invoke its consequences. As Davies's shipmate found out, it is all too often extremely dangerous to be clocked; clocking makes public that which had survived by not being so. Like the demarcation of "public" itself, clocking can thus be considered another performative mode of regulating the sphere of appearance. It names, and makes locatable in the naming, that which was previously (in Davies's words) hiding in plain sight.

The two testimonies discussed here—Estée's and Davies's—make clear that the ability to determine, and then control, a subject's location is key to the maintenance of gendered norms via the regulation of public appearance. In these encounters, locatability operates at the level of the human eye: the "pigs" in the park and the crew on the ship locate their respective gender offenders by sight. Evolving technology, however, has made possible more sophisticated locative tools; radar, for one, and more recently the Global Positioning System, which determines location via signals sent between satellites orbiting the earth and terrestrial receivers. Today, GPS provides the infrastructure for most locative media, and consequently for locative artworks as well. *Appear to Me*, for instance, is experienced via a smartphone app which triggers audio cues according to the user's position in space as determined by their phone's GPS receiver, enabling the content of the performance to respond to their location in real time. Accordingly, a full understanding of how the performance navigates the politics of appearance requires consideration not only of how appearance is engaged on a narrative/textual level in yes's script, as discussed in the preceding section, but how appearance is actively performed *by* the work through its reliance on GPS. To prepare for this discussion, the ensuing section takes a brief detour away from the performance to analyze the locative operations of GPS in greater detail.

GPS: GENDER POSITIONING SYSTEM

Appear to Me makes clear the stakes of being located for marginalized communities, but the effects of locatability in fact precede its real-world enactment by any particular human agent(s). Being located, I suggest, is a necessary condition of subjectivity, making possible the capacity for an individual to be identified as such. Locative technologies therefore participate in the process of subject formation by discursively constituting the location from which that subjectivity emerges. The Global Positioning System's particular formulation of location interpellates a subject who is singularly, computably positioned, one who is verifiably *in place*—a stable subjectivity challenged by the shifting multiplicity of gender-variant embodiment. GPS ultimately fails to secure a precisely locatable, locatably gendered, subject, making possible *Appear to Me*'s appropriation of the technology to intervene in the very regime of locatability it institutes.

A close reading of one of the most influential theoretical accounts of subjectivity, Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation, reveals the centrality of location and locatability to the process of subject formation. In Althusser's oft-cited illustration of this operation, an individual turns around in response to a policeman's call of "hey, you there!"[20] In recognizing that "it is really [them] who is being hailed"—that is, that they are a distinct and distinguishable entity being addressed as such—and responding accordingly, that individual becomes a subject, specifically a subject of the power that hails them.[21] If we look closely, location is right "there" in Althusser's illustration of the hail: the *you* is coupled with a *there*, which it requires in order to be

identified and thereby identify itself. (We might say that *there*—when not elided completely by the common practice of citing Althusser's hail simply as "hey you"—is hiding in plain sight.) Locatability is thus a clearly stated, yet largely unacknowledged, condition of possibility for Althusserian subjectivity itself. The relationship between locatability and subjectivity is further clarified by Judith Butler, who—although among the many scholars who drops the putatively inessential "there" from Althusser's "hey you"—glosses interpellation in locative terms. The interpellated subject, Butler writes, "attains a certain order of social existence, in being *transferred* from *an outer region* of indifferent, questionable, or impossible being to the discursive or social *domain* of the subject" (emphasis added).[22] To be a subject, this spatialized formulation makes clear, is to inhabit a legible realm of being—to occupy, or be made to occupy, an identifiable location.

It follows, then, that the means by which that location is determined itself has an interpellative effect, constituting a particular kind of subject; we might think of a given locative technology as playing the role of the cop in Althusser's illustration. Philosopher Brian Holmes makes just such an argument regarding GPS, critiquing the technology along ideological lines. Given that GPS was originally built by and for the United States military, Holmes argues that the system's digital call and response interpellates its users as subjects of U.S. global imperialism.[23] While Holmes's work valuably situates GPS as part of the ideological apparatus which created (and still maintains) its infrastructure, I am here less interested in the system's geopolitical implications than its epistemic ones—its effect on our understanding of location. GPS outputs location as a set of mathematical coordinates; each string of numbers corresponds to a unique and particular position on the surface of the earth. GPS can be considered a performative technology, in that it discursively produces the location it specifies through its own technical formulation of that location—a formulation that is mathematically precise and utterly singular. GPS, in short, performs location as always computable, indeed compulsorily computable, and interpellates its users accordingly.

The interpellative operations of GPS install a subjectivity characterized by computability, more specifically by the technically-mandated impossibility of such incomputable states as in-between-ness, uncertainty, and multiplicity. This technicity positions GPS as a technology of performance in the sense proposed by theorist Jon McKenzie. McKenzie has argued that performance, as a historically specific mode of power that co-evolved with digital computation and the shift towards an information economy, is characterized by the technical demand for efficacy, efficiency, and/or effectiveness—the challenge to "perform – or else."[24] GPS is indeed efficient, in that its numerical output provides no unnecessary context or extra information; effective, in that its technical system by and large functions as intended; and efficacious, in that it makes possible all kinds of practical applications that achieve concrete effects in the world. GPS is thus performative in McKenzie's sense as well, demanding and constructing a subject who meets its own performance standards—one who fulfills a function, one who computes, one who performs according to expectations (or else). To be locatable by GPS is to be singularly, identifiably, process-ably sited, to be efficiently and efficaciously *in place*.

Such a locatable subjectivity is challenged by trans and gender-non-conforming embodiments, as we have seen in *Appear to Me*'s testimonies of gender-variant people encountering McKenzie's "or else"—the violence with which they/we are compelled to perform according to gendered locative norms. We could frame the humiliation meted out to Davies's trespassing shipmate, for instance, as a locative interpellation; a transfer, to return to Butler's terms, from a "region of…

questionable or impossible [gendered] being" to the clearly defined "domain of the subject" of normative gender. The demand for compulsory locatability is also a demand for a certain kind of gender: legible, standardizable, unquestionable. As micha cárdenas points out, citing the Latin American paradigm of gender-non-conformity known as *travesti*, the "ability to shift between genders challenges the Western conception of identity, where one must have a single, static body and gender."[25] Trans embodiments like the *travesti*—or, for that matter, the transsexual, whose body is anything but static—confound computation within a system that is built on the exclusion or rejection of multiplicity. This failure to compute, to perform according to standards, is a problem for the state (in the case of the U.S., the same state that developed GPS). Toby Beauchamp, in his study of the mutual implication of trans bodies and U.S. surveillance practices, argues that the U.S. state's suspicion of trans and gender-non-conforming people is less about transgender identification per se than it is about the failure to perform good citizenship—specifically, the citizen's technically and administratively locatable singularity.[26] Gender-non-conformity comes to stand in for a threatening alterity, for "the subject that cannot be correct"—or, to put it back in spatial terms, the subject who is out of place.[27] GPS thus attempts to locate, emplace, and perform each user as a particular kind of subject: a subject with a singular and unchanging identity, which includes a singular and unchanging gender. Efficiently and efficaciously, GPS fixes each of us—with what digital mapping applications aptly term a pin—on the map of gender's territory.

Efficient and efficacious this system may be—but is it really effective? After all, most of us experience GPS positioning as only a rough estimate. According to the system's official U.S. government information website, "GPS-enabled smartphones are typically accurate to within a 4.9 m (16 ft.) radius under open sky," and even less accurate in the presence of obstacles such as buildings and trees—hardly a case of infallible digital determinism.[28] On the other hand, the same page goes on to state that higher-end receivers "can enable real-time positioning within a few centimeters, and long-term measurements at the millimeter level," which is to say that the system's satellite infrastructure is in fact entirely capable of greater precision, with final accuracy being determined only on the user end. (I will note here that the webpage nests all this information under the heading "Performance.") And yet, regardless of whether the margin of error is measured in meters, centi- or even millimeters, there will always be a gap. What interests me is not exactly this technical gap itself, but the discursive gap it produces: the lack of correspondence between the system's formulation of location as a mathematically precise output, and the actual terrestrial location of the receiver. Here is yet another sense in which GPS is performative. As scholars from Shoshana Felman to Jacques Derrida to Butler have affirmed, the performative can never simply and solely enact its own "discursive command;" it necessarily remains open to, and indeed may actualize, other meanings and interpretations in excess of that which it intends to signify.[29] The failure of GPS to guarantee a one-to-one correspondence between an actual person's position on the planet and a string of numbers is precisely the failure of the performative to guarantee meaning. As Felman writes of the performative, "what [GPS] promises is precisely the untenable:" an always-already locatable (and locatably gendered) subject.[30]

Just as a given subject is always in excess of its interpellation by the performative hail of the Global Positioning System, so too are the uses to which the system is put—such as geolocative art. Early critiques suggested that the infrastructural politics of GPS rendered any creative applications inherently compromised, that artistic merit and aesthetic appeal only served to mask

the system's "insidious potential" and our complicity in it.[31] Many scholars have subsequently reminded us, however, that criticality can materialize from within a hegemonic matrix.[32] I add to these voices by asserting that the violent regime of normative(ly gendered) locatability can be resisted or reworked through the use of its own tools, GPS foremost among them, actualizing the excessive and potentially subversive possibilities of its own performative operations. In the next section, I return to *Appear to Me* to show how the performance works within the gaps, the necessarily failed performatives of GPS, in order to intervene in the system's constitution of locatable subjectivity and the corresponding regulation of public appearance on the Philadelphia waterfront.

PERFORMING TRANS/LOCATABILITY

Appear to Me's locative interventions occur on multiple levels. First, as we have seen, eppchez yo-sí yes's script highlights those who contest the remaking of the Philadelphia waterfront as a supposedly "public space" that strictly delimits who is included in its public, those who locate themselves there in spite of the forces of gentrification and colonization which have attempted to disappear them from the piers. That script is then activated and emplaced by the performance's smartphone app—which, relying as it does on the Global Positioning System, arguably reiterates the very locative norms the script critiques. However, *Appear to Me*'s approach to GPS ultimately reinforces (rather than undermines) the locative challenges performed by its characters and their real-life counterparts, deploying a variety of tactics that open up the possible meanings and applications of GPS. These tactics affirm that locatability is not always coextensive with the regimes of surveillance and physical violence discussed in this essay's first section, nor the singular(ly gendered) subjectivity that violence seeks to enforce. Instead, *Appear to Me* suggests that locatability might be experienced as what I am calling *trans/locatability*, a means of understanding both space and selfhood as multiplicitous and constructed by relations of solidarity. Through the operations of vocalizing, stitching, and cruising, *Appear to Me* performs trans/locatability as a reality in the contested space of the Philadelphia waterfront. While this performance does not solve the problem of public appearance beyond its own bounded spacetime, it suggests that trans and other marginalized communities have survived—and can continue to do so—by finding ways to appear to one another.

Vocalizing

One of the most crucial means by which *Appear to Me* interrupts the violence of normative locatability is through its centering of the voice, rather than the visible body. The performance incorporates no visual content beyond what the listener-performer sees as they walk. (I use "listener-performer" rather than "audience member," or even just "listener," to highlight the role that this person plays in activating the performance's meaning; I elaborate on this role below.) Instead, it relies purely on binaural audio to convey the voices and experiences of its characters— audio that is emplaced along the waterfront through geolocative technology built on GPS. This formal choice decouples locatability from the visibility that, as Estée and Davies's testimonies affirm, is its usual companion in the regulation of public appearance. yes's script itself acknowledges the relative protection that the audio form provides: "Can you see us?" a Lenape child out fishing with her father asks the listener with curiosity towards the end of the performance. After a moment, she concludes, "no, I don't think they can, papa"—to which he responds, in Lenape, "Thank goodness."[33] While the voices of the land's Indigenous inhabitants,

along with those of street queens, unhoused folks, and union workers, ring loud and clear throughout the performance, their bodies are nowhere to be seen, allowing them to elude visual capture and its associated violence.

This strategy also serves to cultivate relations of solidarity between the listener-performer and those to whom they listen, as it allows the listener-performer to avoid unwittingly reinscribing visual violence with their own gaze. Walking in the city has often been associated with the problematic figure of the *flaneur*, who puts into motion a patriarchal gaze that is also bound up with the racialized and classed privileges of mobility.[34] Rather than reenact this gaze by privileging visuality, *Appear to Me* performs walking as an act of listening-with. Since the performance's audio is triggered by the listener's position, the voices of those who make their lives along the river are only audible if the listener-performer moves through space with them. The listener-performer experiencing (and activating) *Appear to Me* is re-oriented through sound, the geography of the city shifting as they walk alongside those who, if visible, might have been forcibly prevented from walking there at all. At the same time, the performance includes several moments that allow the pier denizens to reassert their space. "Really? You need to be disturbing the bedroom? Head on back to the trail now," I was admonished at one point after following a squatter named Ralph too far down one brush-covered pier.[35] Here, listening-with meant recognizing my status as an intruder or interloper, my own enactment of a thoughtlessly privileged *flanerie*—a recognition I could not have arrived at purely through visual perception. "Just know where youse are is all," Ralph's voice reminded me. "Whose home youse in."[36]

Appear to Me's vocal strategies are further amplified by the centrality of specifically trans vocality within the performance. Bearing in mind Holly Patch and Tomke König's assertion that "there is no ontological trans* voice,"[37] I nonetheless venture that the complexity of corporeal, social, and psychological factors that bear on trans experience often manifests in a particularly un-particular vocal resonance: a mélange of timbres, a quality Jian Neo Chen beautifully describes as a "heterogeneous texture."[38] Discussing the discomfort trans voices can create within the cisheteropatriarchy, Chen writes: "If the voice of the Western subject is thought to communicate an unmediated self-presence … trans voices, or trans voice practices, are so often the targets of regulation because they are perceived to be at odds with their gender embodiment, presentation, and/or identity."[39] Trans voices—as the aural expression of trans embodiment—can be multitudinous, challenging orders based on stability, separation, and easy identification. In *Appear to Me*, the preeminent voice is that of the cat Davies—or rather, of writer/performer yes, who voices Davies and whose own trans voice thereby becomes the conduit for a figure who transgresses boundaries of sex, gender, species, and temporality as surely as those between public and privatized space. Refusing to cohere into the singular, bounded identity of the gender-normative, GPS-locatable subject, yes/Davies's "heterogeneously textured" voice articulates a body that cannot be confined or displaced.

By asking GPS to be the carrier of these voices, *Appear to Me* begins to short-circuit the system's performance of locatability and subjectivity. The performance standard of GPS can easily be aligned with the project of visibility: by identifying singular individual subjects, it makes them trackable and targetable. Cops see humans and computers "see" numerical strings, but the end result—as applications of GPS from military drone strikes to data-driven policing make clear—is all too often the same: displacement, banishment, conquest, control over the sphere of appearance.[40] In *Appear to Me*, rather than making visible, GPS functions to make audible,

enabling a version of appearance less fraught with violence than that which depends on visibility.[41] In turn, that which appears undermines GPS's installment of a locatable subjectivity: the voices of subjects that are not properly in place, not performing according to standards, voices that refuse singularity and ask for solidarity. Through its tactics of vocality, the performance shifts GPS-enabled locatability towards trans/locatability: an affirmation that the meaning of a given location is never entirely fixable, not exhaustively determinable, but can always resonate otherwise—and that those resonances can be found by those who need to hear them.

Stitching

A further challenge to normative locatability is posed by the performance's deployment of *the stitch,* a tactic of connecting across difference that allows *Appear to Me* to enact its commitment to solidarity. Here I follow micha cárdenas's theorization of the stitch as a trans of color poetic operation; for cárdenas, following the decolonial writings of Édouard Glissant, poetics "refer to the choices involved in turning thought into action." Trans of color poetics, then, are material offerings which "open possibilities of life for trans people of color" through specific types of action, what cárdenas calls poetic operations.[42] One such operation is the stitch: informed by the act of sewing as well as by the various surgeries that some trans people may receive, cárdenas's stitch is an operation that brings its participants into a new, co-constitutive relation, forging connection between supposedly separate entities and thereby "undoing the illusion of separateness that Western ontologies have enforced."[43] This function of "undoing the illusion of separateness" makes the stitch a particularly effective tactic for reorienting locatability away from its normative, GPS-constituted expressions and towards the possibilities of trans/locatability.

The stitch allows the performance to address a potential complication in its deployment of GPS technology. While the GPS-assisted audio successfully emplaces the voices of the pier denizens without leaving them open to violence, another body remains visible and identifiable: that of the listener-performer, whose smartphone is acting as the receiver for the GPS signal. Even as *Appear to Me* allows the vulnerable populations whose voices it amplifies to elude capture and displacement by remaining unseen, the actual users of its digital app—who might well themselves be members of any of those same populations—remain visible. They can be seen clearly by other humans as they walk the waterfront and are also visible to any entities or agencies that might track them via the same GPS signal used by the performance. Further, they are interpellated into the Global Positioning System's atomized subjecthood as their receiver responds to the system's "hey you there," as discussed in this essay's second section. It might be argued, then, that *Appear to Me*'s use of GPS, despite the possibilities of the vocal tactics analyzed above, simply shifts the potential risks of appearance onto its listener-performers. Thinking with cárdenas's stitch, however, enables us to understand the performance's shifting of risk as precisely one of its trans/locative tactics. As cárdenas notes, the stitch is an operation not entirely free from violence or pain—consider the skin pricked or penetrated by a needle—but such violence can be (as the word operation itself suggests) a generative step towards healing.

Appear to Me's locative audio app functions as a technology of stitching, creating solidarity between its users and the people for whom the performance's characters stand in, in addition to the trans and queer artists of color who lend the project their voices. Because the app provides access to the performance's audio only when the user is actually within the space of the river walk, it ensures that the user cannot simply consume the pier denizens' stories at will, as is

convenient. Users cannot enact yet another form of displacement by removing these testimonies, these voices, from their physical site(s). Instead, those who wish to hear these voices must move their own bodies into the contested space of the waterfront, turn on their location services, and activate the app—thereby making themselves both physically and digitally visible, but also enabling the voices highlighted by the performance to be heard within a space that may not otherwise be entirely safe for them. The listener-performer offers, in essence, a body that can serve as a proxy for other bodies potentially more vulnerable than themselves. They assume the risks of interpellation and tracking that using GPS necessarily entails, as well as—to differing degrees depending on their own body's perceived location on the map of racialized and gendered territory—the material physical risks always associated with being a body appearing in public space. These risks constitute the violence of this particular stitch, but the result is, perhaps, a relation of solidarity where none previously existed.

In utilizing GPS as the means of enacting its stitch, *Appear to Me* further intervenes in the system's usual operations and in the understanding of location and locatability they institute. The body that serves as a proxy is a body that is necessarily multiple: an "individual" user is revealed as a polyvocal assemblage of perspectives, genders, and other-than-subjectivities.[44] This assemblage is held together, indeed made possible, by a "single" set of GPS coordinates, a singular communication between satellite and receiver; the system's supposed guarantee of exact, trackable, discretely located selfhood bursts open with possibility. Further, any "one" voice might be distributed across multiple receivers at the same time, if multiple users walk along the river experiencing the performance simultaneously. This distribution ensures that Estée, for instance, not only remains on the pier, but does so as expansively as possible—her defiant "I'm still here" amplified, reverberating, by several signals at once as it fractures the would-be solidity of Pier 68's new paint-polished façade. Trans/locatability takes shape once again as an affirmation of multiplicity and solidarity, an understanding of site and self as ongoing, mutable, unguaranteeable projects of interconnection with/in difference.

Cruising

A final locative intervention is perhaps best introduced with a brief account of my own first experience of *Appear to Me*. After arriving at the shopping-center-adjacent trailhead, armed with the performance's app but unsure exactly where to begin, I spent a good five to ten minutes pacing up and down the trail and around the parking lot, hoping to locate myself in whatever unknown spatial field would successfully trigger the performance's opening sound cue. My restless ambling, though doubtless appearing aimless to an observer making a beeline for the Walmart, was in fact quite deliberate: I was trying to position myself in a particular place, in a particular way, a purpose invisible to passers-by but hopefully legible to the app's code as it interfaced with the GPS signal. I was trying to catch the code's attention—signaling electronically that I was there by desire, not chance, waiting for the moment it received that signal and initiated a connection. I *wanted* to be picked up; I was, in fact, cruising the GPS.

To invoke cruising is to suggest the possibility of a more playful, reciprocal relationship between user and GPS than this essay has thus far offered. The act of cruising—of looking for anonymous, usually queer, sex in a public place—shows that the attempt to locate the non-normative is not exclusively the purview of the police, the state, or any institution or individual invested in the maintenance of those norms. Locating others who share our non-conforming orientations (sexual

and otherwise) is in fact vital to our own survival: it enables the forging of bonds, the building of shared life-worlds within and alongside the very spaces that are otherwise hostile to our particular expressions of life. Cruising is a locative act that affirms that the public in *public space* cannot be foreclosed—that despite its violent regulation, the sphere of appearance never excludes all possibilities, or persons, from a given space. (This otherwise-activating potential, as Estée reminds us, is precisely why the cops cracked down on queer sexual activity, and even gender presentations they *associate* with sexual activity, in their attempt to guarantee the redeveloped waterfront's sanitized performance of "the public.") To stage the Global Positioning System's call-and-response as a mutually desired cruising, rather than as an unwilled interpellation, is to assert that the system might, despite its military origins and its technical architecture, be utilized to facilitate encounters between those who wish to find each other without being found.

Furthermore, through GPS, *Appear to Me*'s listener-performers might be said to be cruising those to whose voices the performance provides (one mode of) access. To open the performance's app, no less than Grindr or Tinder or any other location-based dating app, is to engage and acknowledge desire: desire for the connections that the stitch makes possible. Che Gossett writes: "As queer and/or trans people of color, already dispossessed, we yearn to be with one another; our search and seeking is a be-longing, an ontological cruising."[45] Following José Esteban Muñoz's seminal *Cruising Utopia*, I read Gossett's "ontological cruising" as a futurity-oriented search for the profound pleasure of locating one's self as multiple and relational at the most fundamental level of being.[46] Along with stitching, then, cruising might be considered another of *Appear to Me*'s trans of color locative tactics. Using the performance's digital interface as a cruising app, trans and people of color (and other communities in solidarity) might find each other, and ourselves, to be places of multiple orga(ni)sms, in the face of the systems which seek to prevent us from locating ourselves in, or as, such a place. GPS, if we ask it to, might help us to understand ourselves as trans/locatable—to assert, in the words of Legacy Russell that serve as this essay's epigraph, that we "consent not to be a single site."

Built on the individualizing infrastructure of GPS, *Appear to Me* takes the coordinates that would pin us down and uses them to open us up instead. The performance ensures that we understand our location as more than simply the mathematical coordinates *x,y,z*, or even the state-approved "Delaware River Trail." No, we are also—at once precisely and expansively—on Lenape land, in Ralph's bedroom, and inside a sanctuary for feral cats, not to mention an incubator for labor activism and a refuge for sexual pleasure. In the face of regimes of stability and singularity, the performance insists on simultaneity and multiplicity. The historical W.H. Davies once hopped freight trains across the United States; following in his footsteps, *Appear to Me*'s (trans)feline Davies and their waterfront compatriots hitch a ride on the GPS signal in order to show that the infrastructures of capital and state power can be hijacked to institute an alternative mode of locatability—a trans/locatability via which we are able to locate ourselves not as discrete individuals, but as inseparably bound up with those with whom we share space.

CODA

As a mode of thinking location, trans/locatability asserts that it can be life-giving to be found, to locate and to be located—to appear to, and with, others. I have attempted to show how, by rerouting and rewriting the Global Positioning System's locative operations though the tactics of vocalizing, stitching, and cruising, *Appear to Me* instantiates trans/locatability along the

gentrifying Philadelphia waterfront. It does so contingently, its horizons limited to the spacetime within which it is experienced, and without guarantee; I do not claim that the performance unilaterally and permanently turns the waterfront into a space of safety for all people, much less that it solves the problem of public appearance writ large or offers a generalizable toolkit for confronting the violence that accompanies visibility and locatability for so many. Utopia, as Muñoz suggested, can only be cruised, never attained.[47] Nevertheless, *Appear to Me* shows that a locative otherwise, contingent though it may be, is possible. It shows that the performative operations of GPS, of policing institutional and individual, of clocking and of discursive formulations of "the public," can never fully determine what (or who) can take place in a particular location. These are violent operations, and violence has real effects every time and everywhere it occurs. And yet, any promise that the public appearance of trans people—of any population—can be controlled or eradicated, will be, every time and everywhere, untenable.

One of this essay's primary goals is to offer trans/locatability (and its characterizing features of multiplicity and solidarity) as a paradigm, a framework for thinking trans life. To extend or expand on the possible offerings or implications of trans/locatability is, ideally, not to dislocate the concept from the lived experiences of actual trans people (as I suggested in the introduction), but to use it to think through the reverberations of our presence in the world. Trans/locatability suggests, for instance, an understanding of *trans* as that which exceeds and thus destabilizes its assigned location, that which even if found can never be eradicated because it is always— simultaneously, impossibly, beautifully—somewhere else. A transness that is multiply, ineradicably located necessarily entails and describes a solidarity with others whose particular sitedness destabilizes the regime of normative Western location and locatability, such as (im)migrants and Indigenous peoples.[48] Affirming such solidarity as inherent within *trans* itself, indeed inseparable from it, might in turn affirm certain stakes for a term that, like "queer" and "fem(me)," is easily dislocated from political commitments that attend to the collective, used instead as a descriptor of a putatively individual, autonomous identity.[49]

Meanwhile, the right to appear remains regulated by systems and technologies that continue to mete out violence in their attempts (which are very real and deeply harmful, however incomplete they may be) to control who gets to live their lives in public—which is to say, who gets to live. The process of privatization and displacement on the Delaware River waterfront, and many places like it, marches forward. Globally, trans women of color are murdered with ghastly frequency, with 2021 reported to be the deadliest year on record; in the United States, as readers of this particular issue are likely aware, lawmakers across the country are attempting the eradication of trans life through an arsenal of increasingly alarming executive and legislative strategies. The urgent task, then, is to materialize at scale, and collectively, what Eric A. Stanley calls "opacity with representation."[50] *Appear to Me* and my reading of it suggest certain tactics to help us get there, but creative and intellectual interventions will only get us so far. As cárdenas clarifies in her discussion of the stitch, solidarity moves beyond the affect of empathy to include "a performative utterance, a commitment, or an action."[51] To walk with and within *Appear to Me*, is, as I have outlined, both a performance and an embodied performative utterance, but it is not yet a commitment. That remains for its listener-performers—as well as writers, and readers—to make.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ENDNOTES

1. Legacy Russell, *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto* (New York: Verso, 2020), 88.
2. *Appear to Me* is one of a suite of locative audio walks collectively titled *TrailOff*, a collaboration between Swim Pony and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council. Each walk takes place on a different trail around greater Philadelphia and is scripted by a different local writer. Focusing on narratives from artists and communities of color, the project as a whole brings attention to the ways in which large-scale sociopolitical processes (including colonization, immigration, and gentrification) shape the urban environment on the level of the local and the everyday. The walks can be experienced at any time through the *TrailOff* smartphone app, launched in fall 2020 and available for free download as of this writing. See the project's website: "TrailOff," accessed August 15, 2023, https://trailoff.com.
3. eppchez yo-sí yes, "Appear to Me" (unpublished manuscript, 2020), 3.
4. Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).
5. Katy Steinmetz's 2014 cover story for *Time* magazine, "The Transgender Tipping Point," (*Time*, May 29, 2014, https://time.com/135480/transgender-tipping-point) is commonly cited as a flash point for the trans visibility conversation. For an earlier discussion of visibility and representation, see Kara Keeling, "LOOKING FOR M—: Queer Temporality, Black Political Possibility, and Poetry from the Future," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 15, no. 4 (October 1, 2009): 565–82. Post-"Tipping Point," see first and foremost the indispensable anthology by Tourmaline, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton, eds., *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017).
6. Here I follow geographer David Pinder's discussion of locative artworks whose "performative effects…challeng[e] social-spatial imaginaries and [open] space for other ways of seeing, understanding, and orienting" (524-525). "Dis-Locative Arts: Mobile Media and the Politics of Global Positioning," *Continuum* 27, no. 4 (August 2013): 523-541.
7. See Andrea Long Chu and Emmett Harsin Drager, "After Trans Studies," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (February 2019): 103–116; Kadji Amin, "Whither Trans Studies? A Field at a Crossroads," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (February 2023): 54-58.
8. See for instance Aren Z. Aizura, *Mobile Subjects: Transnational Imaginaries of Gender Reassignment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); micha cárdenas, *Poetic Operations: Trans of Color Art in Digital Media* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022); Eva Hayward and Jami Weinstein, "Introduction: Tranimalities in the Age of Trans* Life," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (May 2015): 195-208; and Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2017).
9. yes, "Appear to Me," 9.

10. Stephen J. McGovern, "Evolving Visions of Waterfront Development in Postindustrial Philadelphia: The Formative Role of Elite Ideologies," *Journal of Planning History* 7, no. 4 (November 2008): 295–326.

11. Michael Friedrich, "How 'Landscape Urbanism' Is Making Gentrification Look like Fun," *Washington Post*, November 19, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/11/19/how-landscape-urbanism-is-making-gentrification-look-like-fun.

12. Angelly Carrión, "Hey, Philly: Pier 68 Park Is Now Open," *Philadelphia*, October 1, 2015, https://www.phillymag.com/property/2015/10/01/pier-68-philadelphia-2.

13. Katie Jo Black and Mallory Richards, "Eco-Gentrification and Who Benefits from Urban Green Amenities: NYC's High Line," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 204 (December 1, 2020); Friedrich, "Landscape Urbanism."

14. yes, "Appear to Me," 9.

15. Butler, *Performative Theory.*

16. yes, "Appear to Me," 11.

17. yes, "Appear to Me," 11.

18. yes, "Appear to Me," 11.

19. Eric A. Stanley, *Atmospheres of Violence: Structuring Antagonism and the Trans/Queer Ungovernable* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 86.

20. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 79–87.

21. Althusser, "Ideology," 86.

22. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* Routledge Classics edition (New York: Routledge, 2011), 82.

23. Brian Holmes, "Drifting Through the Grid: Psychogeography and Imperial Infrastructure," in *Dataesthetics Reader: How to Do Things with Data*, ed. Stephen Wright (Zagreb: Arkzin, 2006), 17–23.

24. Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001). McKenzie proposes performance as the historical heir to Foucauldian discipline; just as Foucault frames compulsory visibility as a crucial aspect of disciplinary power, my arguments here suggest that compulsory locatability plays a similar role in relation to McKenzian performance. While Foucault is invested in how discipline organizes and distributes bodies in space in order to produce visible individuals, he is deliberately unconcerned with the specifics of terrestrial location, specifying that discipline prefers the flexibility of the rank or the cell, "a location that does not give [subjects] a fixed position" but rather a relational one (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Vintage: New York, 1995 [1975]), 157). Katharine McKittrick's work on the historical geographies of Black women is more attuned to the nexus of power, visibility, and precise geographical location, a nexus she terms "the logic of visualization" (*Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006].) The logic of visualization, McKittrick writes, is an epistemic system within which "[a Black woman's] place and body are seen to be, and understood as, naturally subordinate to whiteness and masculinity; it also means that her seeable presence is crucial to [the white man's] sense of place" (40).

25. cárdenas, *Poetic Operations*, 6.

26. Toby Beauchamp, *Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019). The good citizen does not have multiple names or

gender identifications on record, for instance—a performance standard that can become an administrative and experiential nightmare for trans people.

27. Beauchamp, *Going Stealth*, 30.

28. United States Government, "GPS Accuracy," accessed August 15, 2023, https://www.gps.gov/systems/gps/performance/accuracy.

29. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 82; Shoshana Felman, *The Scandal of the Speaking Body*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003 [1983]); Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," in *Limited Inc.*, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1-23.

30. Felman, *Scandal of the Speaking Body*, 5. In relation to this discussion, see also Jasbir Puar, "'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess:' Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory," *philoSOPHIA* 2, no. 1 (2012): 49-66. Puar here writes, "Subject positioning on a grid is never self-coinciding" (50).

31. Holmes, "Drifting Through the Grid," 22.

32. David Pinder, for instance, has argued against the position that "the outcomes of engagement are determined in advance" when working with/in digital architectures ("Dis-Locative Arts," 529). Jason Farman has theorized what he calls "creative misuse," citing projects that deliberately use the U.S. military's GPS technology to critique that military's own operations ("Creative Misuse as Resistance: Surveillance, Mobile Technologies, and Locative Games," *Surveillance and Society* 12 (June 17, 2014): 377–88). And Legacy Russell, while acknowledging the dissonance of using platforms that actively harm marginalized bodies to articulate and advance those same bodies' political needs, proposes that "perhaps what these institutions—both online and off—require is not dismantling but rather mutiny in the form of strategic occupation" (*Glitch Feminism*, 25).

33. yes, "Appear to Me," 32.

34. Paradigmatically, the *flaneur* is one who gazes about with benevolent but impartial interest while strolling unnoticed through the urban environment; see Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). For feminist critiques highlighting the *flaneur*'s privileged embodiment, see (among many others) Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, "A Transmaterial Approach to Walking Methodologies: Embodiment, Affect, and a Sonic Art Performance," *Body & Society* 23, no. 4 (December 2017): 27–58; and Leslie Kern, *Feminist City* (New York: Verso, 2020).

35. yes, "Appear to Me," 23.

36. yes, "Appear to Me," 23.

37. Holly Patch and Tomke König, "Trans* Vocality: Lived Experience, Singing Bodies, and Joyful Politics," *Freiburger Zeitschrift Für Geschlechter Studien* 24, no. 1 (2018): 33.

38. Jian Neo Chen, *Trans Exploits: Trans of Color Cultures and Technologies in Movement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 140.

39. Chen, *Trans Exploits*, 139.

40. The grassroots community organization Stop LAPD Spying Coalition has done extensive research on the relationship between digital technology, policing, and displacement. See for instance their community report "Automating Banishment: The Surveillance and Policing of Looted Land" (2021).

41. I do not mean to suggest that listening cannot carry its own ethical risks. In some cases, the act of making audible—if unconsented to—can be a tactic of state and/or settler domination. See David Delgado Shorter and Kim TallBear, "An Introduction to Settler Science and the Ethics of Contact," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 45, no. 1 (2021): 1-7. In the context of *Appear to Me*, I maintain that the act of listening is mutual and consensual, thereby participating in a less fraught power relation than the visual.

42. cárdenas, *Poetic Operations*, 27-28.

43. cárdenas, *Poetic Operations*, 24.

44. See Puar, "Becoming-Intersectional," for deeper discussion of the possibilities of the assemblage to combat the interpellations of subjecthood.

45. Che Gossett, "Pulse, Beat, Rhythm, Cry: Orlando and the Queer and Trans Necropolitics of Loss and Mourning," Verso Books (blog), July 5, 2016, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2747-pulse-beat-rhythm-cry-orlando-and-the-queer-and-trans-necropolitics-of-loss-and-mourning.

46. José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

47. *Appear to Me*'s contingent, choreographic realization of trans/locatability hews closer to Anurima Banerji's theorization of the *paratopia* as "a space of performance which exists parallel to dominant culture" (347), a creative effort that provides or produces a kind of escape hatch from hegemony without necessarily achieving concrete or lasting disruptive effects. "Paratopias of Performance: The Choreographic Practices of Chandralekha," in *Planes of Composition: Dance, Theory, and the Global*, edited by André Lepecki and Jenn Joy (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2009): 346-371.

48. José Esteban Muñoz, for instance, writes that "the migrant status can be characterized by its need to move back and forth, to occupy at least two spaces at once… The very nature of this migrant drive wears down the coherency of borders." *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 32. On how Indigenous conceptions of place and space destabilize Western ontologies, see for instance Brian Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2019); and Vanessa Watts, "Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go on a European World Tour!)," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2, no. 1 (2013): 20–34.

49. On the way in which "queer" and queer activist politics have failed to account for real power differentials along the lines of race and class, see Cathy J. Cohen's seminal "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?," *GLQ* 3 (1997): 437-465; on the politics and trans genealogy of "fem," see Rosza Daniel Lang/Levitsky, "Our Own Words: Fem & Trans, Past & Future," *e-flux Journal* no. 117 (April 2021), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/117/387257/our-own-words-fem-trans-past-future.

50. Stanley, *Atmospheres of Violence*, 88.

51. cárdenas*, Poetic Operations*, 157.

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