This special issue stages an encounter between surveillance studies and queer studies to reconsider the stakes of queerness in relation to monitoring, classification, and control. In doing so, we seek to expand the ways in which gender and sexuality intersect with other marginalized identity categories within the dominant logics of surveillance. For us, “queer surveillance” names the power dynamic through which queerness is actualized as the necessary difference that adjudicates the bounds between normative and non-normative modes of embodiment, risk, and disposability. Ultimately, by assembling the range of articles in this issue, we hope to open lines of inquiry for future scholarship that traces the braided affiliations and antagonisms encompassed in the concept of queer surveillance. We also keep sight of the possibility of transforming current logics of state security and global power to magnify minoritarian life.

The kinship between surveillance and queerness is far from new. Psychoanalytic accounts in queer studies have emphasized the dimensions of desire, exhibitionism, and voyeurism that ground queer constructions of gender and sexuality within surveillance optics (e.g., Edelman 1994; McGrath 2004). Frequently, queer scholars have also turned to Michel Foucault to understand the role that surveillance plays in producing the body through discourses of gender and sexuality. According to Foucault (1978), biopower occasioned the body as a site of surveillance in order to assure the proliferation of life at the populational scale. As monitored in the school, prison, home, and hospital, sexuality was one technique by which states manufactured systems of behaviors and social relations to channel the pleasures, energies, and sensations of the body into birth rates, reproductive guidelines, and matrimonial customs. Aberrations from these strict statutes were labeled perverse and given over to new classificatory taxonomies. It is here that Foucault offers his famous account of the invention of the homosexual as a species from the deviant act of sodomy.

Theories of queerness in surveillance studies have tended to follow Foucault’s lead to take stock of the ways that surveillance renders bodies as sexual and gendered subjects through complex mechanisms of power (Koskela 2002; Campbell 2005; Phillips and Cunningham 2007; Ball et al. 2009; Conrad 2009a, 2009b; Coronés and Hardy 2009; Walby 2009; Koskela 2012; Abu-Laban 2015; Dubrofsky and Magnet 2015; van der Meulen and Heynen 2016). By and large, such studies have theorized the intersections of queerness and surveillance as a problem of “normalization.” Surveillance sorts populations through processes of identification and classification to control access to resources and information (Lyon 2003). As Foucault (2003: 85) made clear, the categories within systems of classification are constituted by statistical averages, or norms, against which bodies, identities, and populations are evaluated. Such norms determine class membership based on one’s proximity to the optimal model. Deviations from the norm can be framed as dangerous to state functions and corporate initiatives.

As an earlier Surveillance & Society issue (2009, vol. 6, no. 4) on gender and sexuality argued (Ball et al. 2009), non-normative gender and sexual identities disturb the norms in the dominant material, discursive,
and symbolic logics of surveillance systems. Central to the workings of surveillance is the presumption of “normative notions of embodiment” that demand transparency from the body for meaning-making and intervention (van der Meulen and Heynen 2016: 19). Queer identities are opaque to such systems insofar as supposedly improper configurations of gender, sex, and sexuality conceal the body and render it a threatening inconsistency. As Kathryn Conrad (2009b: 380) wrote in that issue, “Surveillance techniques, themselves so intimately tied to information systems, put normative pressure on non-normative bodies and practices, such as those of queer and genderqueer subjects.” For example, biometric technologies like face scanners are calibrated upon binary assumptions of gender embodiment and compulsory heterosexuality (Keyes 2018). People who do not conform to dominant conventions of gendered grooming and dress are computed as “biometric system failures” (Magnet 2011: 48) that must be corrected by conforming to the discursive constructs in the software. Undoubtedly, surveillance has long been hostile to queer and trans identities in seeking to control deviation.

And yet, non-normativity within surveillance systems is not simply a matter of non-normative gender expressions and sexual orientations but includes a wider range of social determinants like race, class, religious affiliation, age, disability, citizenship status, and occupation. For instance, biometric technologies attest to the ways in which the failure to perceive non-normative gender and sexuality is modulated by racialized optics. As Simone Browne (2015: 109) contends, biometric technologies exercise racialized power in the process of “digital epidermalization,” wherein the subject’s body is forced to reveal a truth about one’s identity. Face, iris, and fingerprint scanning all articulate a “scene of exchange between imaging and seeing as” (Raengo 2013: 10), an epistemological conduit that blackness has historically been made to perform to provide proof of the reported contiguity between corporeal surface and genetic makeup. The ability for biometric systems to read gender through bodily markers—to demand the body reveal its inner truth within fixed social taxonomies—is cast through racialized norms inherited from histories of colonization.

In framing this issue around the term “queer surveillance,” our ambition is to locate queerness in relation to an expanded field of norms that are increasingly operative in the twenty-first century. To be clear, this is not to disregard gender and sexuality as two important coordinates through which queerness is articulated in surveillance systems. Rather, by adopting an intersectional analysis, we might tend to the ways in which the queered subject is “constructed and contained by multiple practices of categorization and regulation that systematically marginalize and oppress those subjects thereby defined as deviant and ‘other’ ” (Cohen 1997: 438–39). In locating queerness across surveillance contexts, we similarly ask how norms change depending on the demands of state, corporate, and multinational interests for both disciplinary subjection and biopolitical regulation (Spade and Willse 2016). What would it mean to understand queerness as the threshold of surveillance when framed by national security, mass incarceration, police brutality, immigration regulation, and medical practices and bracketed by the ideologies of neoliberalism, American exceptionalism, settler colonialism, transphobia, anti-blackness, and Islamophobia? What norms are operative in these contexts, and how is queerness produced as the necessary difference that justifies state-sponsored racism, extrajudicial violence, and colonial exploitation?

In their work on queer surveillance, David Phillips and Carolyn Cunningham (2007) acknowledged the frictions that emerge when thinking through its two constitutive terms together. In their estimation, queer surveillance helps illuminate how identity is always caught up in competing modes of politicized production:

Queer studies can offer surveillance studies a new historical and theoretical perspective on the social consequences of surveillance practices, leading, at least, to better questions, and avoiding the typical dead ends and faux-paradoxes of the privacy policy discourse: “rights of individual” vs. “needs of society,” or “privacy” vs. “safety and security.” Conversely, surveillance studies can offer queer studies an understanding of the legal, technical, and economic infrastructures mediating new forms of identity practices.
Together, they offer a framework for the political analysis of infrastructures of identity and visibility. (38)

In conceptualizing queer surveillance, we concur with Phillips and Cunningham’s appraisal of the productive tensions that emerge in linking these two terms. However, we want to extend their analysis by remaining attentive to the differential modes by which queerness is elaborated and experienced as a function of changing racial, gendered, and sexual norms. Late twentieth- and twenty-first-century social movements—including the black freedom struggle and immigrant, diasporic, and decolonizing struggles—brought into relief the way in which sexuality “amends” (Reddy 2011: 16) race and global formations. This dynamic calcifies under the neoliberal security state through appeals to proper citizenship, of which gay marriage is perhaps the most opposite case. Moreover, the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the September 11 attacks accelerated the ascendants of American empire, neocolonialism, and racial capitalism on the global stage, inaugurating heightened forms of exploitation and dispossession under the banner of a militant US heteropatriarchy.

In contrast to earlier meditations on queer politics, American queer studies of the twenty-first century has attended to such shifts in global power to posit the inoperability of queer as an necessarily oppositional political praxis. According to David Eng, Jack Halberstam, and José Muñoz (2005: 1), the task of queer studies in this new sociopolitical terrain is to insist “on a broadened consideration of the late-twentieth-century global crises that have configured historical relations among political economies, the geopolitics of war and terror, and national manifestations of sexual, racial, and gendered hierarchies.” Concepts like homonormativity (Duggan 2002), homonationalism (Puar 2007), queer liberalism (Eng 2010), settler homonationalism (Morgensen 2011), and transnormativity (Johnson 2016) index the way in which particular gay, lesbian, and trans subjects willing to comply with normative mandates of American exceptionalism—marriage, custody, inheritance, military service—gain access to rights of citizenship withheld from those who are excluded from dominant heteropatriarchal institutions. Within the neoliberal political economy, consumption and domesticity are key sites in which queerness emerges as a regulatory mechanism in control societies.

Key here is the conceit that queerness is not simply consigned to discrete formations of non-heterosexual identities, but rather cuts across racialized, gendered, and sexual difference to name the way that relational privilege only accrues to some populations. Drawing from women of color feminisms and queer of color critique, Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick Ferguson (2011) consider how differences among racial groupings are modulated by gender and sexuality. They write, “Contemporary regimes of power naturalize brutal racialized, gendered, and sexualized violence, labor exploitation, and the rendering of subjects as redundant and disposable by creating new, nominally nonracialized categories of privilege and stigma, or, in other words, valuation and devaluation” (17). In this way, queerness becomes a technique of contemporary biopolitical regulation.

The implication of such discourses on queerness for surveillance studies are many and assume various textures across specific sites of securitization. These include the carceral archipelago, immigration control, public welfare, the medical–industrial complex, policing, gentrification, resource extraction in the Global South, exploitation of indigenous lands, genetic engineering, and social media. Indeed, systems of power have always drafted laws that arrange people via norms that intersect across social axes to produce populations along differential vulnerabilities to political violence and economic exploitation. Torin Monahan (2016: 202) conceives of this process through the term “marginalizing surveillance” to index how inequalities cut across racialized, gendered, and classed experiences to produce abject subjectivities. In each case, surveillance systems administer risk and security by delimiting which populations are socially illegible and thus, excluded from political belonging.

While not always mapping onto LGBTQ+ identities, such categories of abjection reveal how non-normativity, and thus attendant affects of risk and threat, is allocated across the social body by determining one’s proximity to certain symbolic markers of “regeneration” (Puar 2007: 35–36), including health, vitality,
fertility, and market virility. The ability to perform legibility to surveillance by appealing to these signifiers of capital aptitude is rewarded with increased mobility and access to resources. Populations that are unable to do so are demoted to a less-than-human status and met with incarceration and deportation. While LGBTQ+ persons are certainly subject to the normalizing tendencies of power, they can sometimes benefit from surveillance processes insofar as their appeals to dominant standards of US citizenship, whiteness, compulsory heterosexuality, and able-bodiedness displace abjection. As a technique of necropolitical governance (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2014; Mbembe 2019), queerness in this formulation is less a means of disrupting surveillance than an index of how securitization “produces racialized, gendered, and sexual difference as a proximity to suffering, subjection, and death” (Dillon 2018: 15).

In tracing the biopolitical and necropolitical contours of queer surveillance, our main claim is that queerness neither preexists surveillance as a stable identity formation nor neatly maps onto non-normative gender expressions and sexualities. We remain committed to the notion that queerness is neither identitarian (the surveillance of stable LGBTQ+ identities) nor anti-identitarian (queerness as resistant to the identities that surveillance systems construct). Instead, queerness is produced within surveillant processes as its very condition of possibility. Queerness is an animating difference without a fixed referent—a site of non-normative disruption that accrues to different bodies at different times and in different contexts to name the boundary between security and disposability. As such, queer surveillance gestures toward the spatial and temporal contingency of identity formations that hegemonic structures of visibility, acceptability, and legality continually make and unmake. Attending to the queerness of surveillance demands a vigilance to the ways in which norms mutate across sites of control and how different intersections of queer and trans identity can be rendered threatening or secure in relation to certain abject Others.

Toby Beauchamp’s (2019) recent monograph Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices is exemplary here in delineating how queerness is produced as an exceptional status within surveillance practices. In line with a subjectless critique of trans identity (Stryker 2006), Beauchamp asserts that post-9/11 security protocols are less concerned with identifying a particular class of people who identify as transgender. Instead, they are more invested in producing figures of gendered deviance to justify the continued mobilization of surveillance technologies for racist, xenophobic, and classist economies of value. Examining bathroom laws, airport security, and identification documents, Beauchamp (2019: 77) observes how markers of non-normativity are not “fixed, ahistorical, or easily read markers of deviance” but are rather “active interpretations that … can shift according to context.” Ultimately, Beauchamp contests that “gender nonconformity cannot be an inherently resistant foil to the workings of surveillance” (140) insofar as trans persons may be cited as aberrant or acceptable based on their proximity to abject Others that haunt sites of surveillance—in particular, the Muslim terrorist and the undocumented immigrant.

Laying bare the threshold between the normative and the non-normative, queerness is mobilized as a particular mechanism of surveillant control that enables the calling forth of populations as stable, coherent, and secure configurations against the threatening Other that escapes logics of capture. Put differently, we contend that surveillance is enumerative of queerness. In mathematics and computer science, an enumerative function or algorithm is one that produces a complete, ordered set of solutions to a problem. However, enumeration, particularly with respect to the sorting processes of surveillance systems, is not so much concerned with accounting for items, identities, or behaviors that already exist. As a biopolitical technique, “the enumerative process in fact has the capacity to create what it purports only to name, causing new kinds of people to appear on the social map” (Currah and Stryker 2015: 2)—or perhaps to disappear. Transgressions are simultaneously produced and then incorporated in hegemonic schema to secure the viability of normative categories. In terms offered by Kara Keeling (2019: 88), queerness makes possible such epistemological categories of the social; it is the “condition of possibility for sociality as we know it.” As that which exceeds the limits of surveillant optics, yet nonetheless structures classification schema, queerness “anchors social orderings as their negative” (17). Queerness is simultaneously produced and resolved as an internally consistent dynamic of the norms operative within tracking, sorting, and classification.
In the post-9/11 moment, the enumerative function of surveillance is exacerbated by the operative logics of global telecommunications and military planning. This is exceedingly apparent within the warped temporalities of preemption. Preemptive strategies have been at the forefront in twenty-first-century surveillance, military, and intelligence programs in the US safety state—an agenda of public policy and cultural production centered upon information and communication management to prevent unknown dangers. In preemptive control, feelings of fear, suspicion, and insecurity convert potential futures into a material causality of the present. As a biopolitical strategy, preemption manages a population that has yet to emerge, one that only materializes in the actualization of threat most often consigned to racial, religious, and ethnic minorities. In this sense, preemption is “ontologically productive” (Massumi 2015: 15) insofar as it brings into being forms of life, behaviors, and affects that are future potentialities. As an enumerative process, preemption is a self-satisfying diagram of power that literally produces that which it seeks to control.

In the calculus of preemptive enumeration, queerness stabilizes the actualization of the expanded present. Big data surveillance programs are telling in this regard. In the compulsion to preempt futural threats, federal and corporate interests collect as much information as possible. Mark Andrejevic and Kelly Gates (2014: 190) observe as much when they argue that “there is no functional distinction between targets and non-targets (suspects and non-suspects) when it comes to data collection: information about both groups is needed to excavate the salient differences between them.” Not simply located within particular individuals or events, threat is produced from the field of futural potential when algorithmic systems isolate non-normative patterns across disparate datasets. Of course, non-normativity often accrues to those populations that elude quantitative legibility—particularly those who are racialized, poor, gender non-conforming, immigrant, young, and religious minorities. Such populations are aggressively surveilled to smooth over “the unmeasurable uncertainty of this statistical undercommons” (Bahng 2018: 5)—to fill in gaps in the database. At once a product of and exceptional to hegemonic classification schema, queerness is a necessary feature of preemptive calculation that names the non-normative drives buttressing speculative instrumentalization.

To summarize the stakes of the term “queer surveillance” and the complex lines of relation that enumeration sustains, we suggest three propositions to guide future research in the field. They are not meant to be comprehensive, but rather suggestive of the questions, methods, and practices that might inform a queer reading of surveillant logics. We recognize that different political projects might require alternative coordinates by which to map the energies and contradictions of queer surveillance in demanding material and symbolic forms of justice. We thus invite revisions and challenges that grasp the mutable ways by which surveillance systems differentially allocate security, risk, and death—now and in the future.

**Queer Surveillance Necessitates an Expansive View of Control, Power, and Violence.**

In sorting populations for security and profit, surveillance technologies splinter the complexities of lived experience into “measurable types” (Cheney-Lippold 2017) of algorithmic governance. As such, surveillance systems typically ignore how identities are fashioned and embodied across a much larger constellation of social forces. Encountering the queerness of surveillance thus demands an intersectional analysis that challenges “ideologies of discreteness” (Ferguson 2004: 4) and considers how populations are sorted into the valued and valueless across sites of power. Queer surveillance further cannot be thought apart from the historical formations of racialized terror, colonialism, and capitalism. How might the enumeration of marginalized populations under regimes of American exceptionalism and neoliberalism intersect with the ways in which US military and corporate investments produce non-normative distinctions across global, transnational, and colonial contexts? How might we think together the surveillance practices employed in prisons, the medical–industrial complex, low-income housing, schools, social media, indigenous settlements, or border security? Queerness here emerges as a way to hold together the “strange affinities” (Hong and Ferguson 2011) that surge through nonequivalent formations of surveillance to better assess how norms continually modulate and transform within material processes to articulate racial, gendered, sexual, and classed differences.
**Queer Surveillance Refracts the Critical Positions from which Surveillance is Encountered, Imagined, and Endured.**

Surveillance is unevenly distributed and experienced. No one vantage point can adequately capture the heterogeneous range of relations that are fostered within surveillance systems. In order to approach the fractured and contradictory ways that queerness is elaborated in control systems, scholars might look askance at the normative axes mapped by surveillance within advanced neoliberalism, heteropatriarchal militarism, the security state, carceral capitalism, and global resource extraction. As Muñoz (2009: 22) proposes, perhaps we might “strain our vision and force it to see otherwise, beyond the limited vista of the here and now.” Such a “queer optic” (Gopinath 2018: 174) is better equipped to dwell within the disorienting spaces and temporalities that often attend queered positions under surveillance regimes. To access such perspectives, surveillance studies must begin to incorporate scholarship that can speak to the incommensurable ways that communities and individuals experience systems of control. This would include, but is not limited to, queer, trans, post-colonial, black, indigenous, feminist, diasporic, crip, posthumanist, and anti-racist scholarship. Such fields of study have long theorized the dynamics of surveillance from subjugated positions and thus can offer alternative archives for surveillance studies.

While exemplary in many ways for contouring the dynamics of queer surveillance, the scholarship in this issue highlights the risk of universalism within surveillance studies. Readers will note that almost all of the contributors engage queerness within the context of contemporary American politics and culture. As editors, we recognize the limitations of our issue and take responsibility for any exclusions that result from this collection. We hope that the gaps and oversights that emerge from this issue generatively invite avenues for future scholarship.

In addition, we acknowledge that queerness is a contested term for articulating the related and distinct ways that LGB, non-binary, and trans people move about the world and form political communities. Trans scholars have noted that the received wisdom of queer and feminist theory has fallen short of adequately describing the specificities of trans experience (Stone 1991; Prosser 1998; Namaste 2000; Stryker 2004; Halley 2006; Keegan 2018). Queer studies has long sought to deconstruct the normalized parameters of the gender binary to make room for alternative kinds of erotic attachments and intimacies. However, such investments often proscribe trans identity as either subversive or conformist to uphold the radical sexual politics of queer movements. Moreover, by willfully misrecognizing gender for sexuality, some strands of queer studies have cast trans phenomena as an even queerer symbol of sexual revolt to prove the untenability of heteronormative social systems.

The differences between queer and trans experience are more explicitly articulated by their relative subjection to surveillance optics. On one hand, queer studies typically understands gender and sexuality as the result of discursive relations that sustain normative power dynamics. Within this Foucauldian vein, non-normative sexuality and its erotic attachments continually escape vectors of surveillance, threatening to unravel the production of normative social relations. In contrast, trans people often must submit themselves to medical and legal surveillance to gain access to the material and symbolic space of gendered embodiment. Through the monitoring entailed in the diagnosis of gender identity disorder and the public inspection of one’s body for gendered deviance, “surveillance is built into the production of the very category of transgender” (Beauchamp 2014: 208). Indeed, for those who claim their queerness as commensurate with their sexual orientation, the politics of visibility takes a much different shape than for those whose gender identity is under constant scrutiny (Gossett, Stanley, and Burton 2017; Beauchamp 2019).

Perhaps then, as Lisa Jean Moore and C. Ray Borck suggest in their contribution to this issue, we might adopt a more expansive framework that considers the intersections of feminist, queer, and/or trans surveillance studies to account for the shared and incommensurable histories and experiences that attend the surveillance of queer, trans, and gender non-conforming communities. While we are sympathetic to this position, our commitment to the term “queer” is driven by a reading practice that disaggregates queerness from the appointment of non-normative genders and sexualities. Less the surveillance of LGBTQ+ subjects,
queer surveillance is an analytic that emphasizes how non-normativity is produced and administered across sites of power. This is not to ignore the specificity of queer and trans experiences under surveillance regimes but rather to consider how queer and trans lives are rendered secure or disposable when distilled through the nominalizations of surveillance systems.

**Queer Surveillance Points Us to the Messy and Clandestine Ways that Minoritarian Subjects Contest Sorting and Monitoring Systems.**

Surveillance is not total. Things spill out, escape, mutate. Despite their ability to accommodate disruptions, control diagrams contain leaks that enable new forms of life and modes of experience that cannot be reduced to protological mechanisms (Chun 2016: 52). We might also consider how queerness exceeds surveillance insofar as surveillance fails to fully reduce “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning” (Sedgwick 1993: 8) into fixed profiles. The identity categories ascribed to minority subjects are always at odds with their lived experiences. As such, queerness might be understood less as a way of demarcating a set of supposedly queer identities than as “a complex sign for decolonization and radical pleasure, intimacy, fugitivity, coalition, and utopian futures despite (and perhaps also because of) these conditions of violent subjection” (Kapadia 2019: 22). Encountering the queerness of surveillance means working toward the errant, promiscuous, and unanticipated affiliations and life-making practices typically foreclosed by the bio- and necropolitical management of sociability.

Queer and trans subjects have long found ways of contesting surveillance to extend their life chances. Everyday mutinous practices of opacity, transparency, passing, camouflage, duplicity, and code-switching all gesture toward the queer ways of abstracting identity to scramble state-sanctioned practices of computation and control (Getsy 2019). In refusing neat categorization into the biopolitical standards of social sorting, queer and trans subjects exhume an alterity that exceeds quantifiable standards. At the same time, such tactics bring into relief the ways in which visibility and invisibility do not so easily map out respectively onto complicity and resistance. Indeed, resistance might invite further control to clear away any invisibilities, while visibility can offer space for interrogating what it means to embody difference under hegemonic values of identification. Yet, what such queer strategies offer is a means by which to call into question the design and expanse of surveillance systems and how the imposition of norms is always incomplete.

**In This Issue**

The contributions to this issue explore the queer relationships that we might develop with the categories of race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, religion, and citizenship that circulate surveillance systems. Engaging discourses within the security state, the pharmaceutical industry, and algorithmic governance, the following articles understand queerness as an animating difference that is produced through the regulation of subjectivity, behavior, and identities.

In his article, Brian Schram tackles the stakes of queerness in relation to digital surveillance systems and big data analytics. Through an overview of radical feminist, psychoanalytic, and structuralist and post-structuralist conceptions of queerness throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Schram demonstrates the ways in which big data analytics have rendered queerness ineffectual on two counts. First, the sheer scope and granularity of big data analysis have invaded the most intimate scales of human experience, proscribing identities on an individual level. Second, the feed-forward processes of consumer analytics have stripped the agency once attributed to the desire that underpinned performative articulations of queer embodiment. Reconceiving José Muñoz’s conception of melancholia for the digital age, Schram identifies two modes of obfuscation—digital collectivization and cloning—that could introduce uncertainty and noise into big data archives.
Nicholas Clarkson explores how post-9/11 national security efforts affect trans embodiment. Employing assemblage theory, Clarkson takes stock of the ways that identity documentation protocol and biometric scanners articulate competing imaginaries of gendered deviance in identification documentation and airport security. Clarkson notes here an “incoherence” that becomes the very mechanism by which state racism enacts a caesura in the body politic. That incoherence delimits the trans persons who are legible to security efforts and those who are irredeemably opaque. Importantly, incoherence is productive of biopower and provides for a flexible management of trans bodies across security contexts. Filtered through racialized assumptions of gendered, sexed, and abled embodiment, trans persons are subject to a variegated regime of state violence—at times marked as secured and at times threatening—to justify the continued subjugation of immigrants and ethnic and religious minorities.

In their article, C. Ray Borck and Lisa Jean Moore argue that certain normalizing standards of gendered and sexed embodiment have begun to proliferate beyond the boundaries of the doctor’s office as internalized scripts of transmasculine identity. Their focus is on the use of pharmaceutical testosterone. Borrowing from Paul Preciado’s coinage of the Pill as the “edible panopticon,” Borck and Moore note the ways in which testosterone, an “injectable panopticon,” causes physical changes to bodies through regimented results that are saturated within discursive frameworks of heteronormativity and gender normativity. In order to track the movement of transnormative modes of masculinization from the medical community to the individual, they look toward the production and consumption of Trans T videos: YouTube videos that trans men produce to document their gender transitions through the use of testosterone. In identifying four genres of T videos—My First T Shot, Time Lapse, The Year in Review, What to Expect—Moore and Borck offer the term “DIY [do-it-yourself] surveillance” to flag the ways in which surveillance operates through a recursivity between producer and consumer that traffics in shared affective and behavioral modes of transmasculinity.

Next, Jason Orne and James Gall track the dynamics of queer surveillance through the prescription, distribution, and supervision of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). According to Orne and Gall, PrEP is a technology of biopower that creates new forms of sociality centered around biological conceptions of health and morality. They situate PrEP in a Foucauldian framework of biosexual citizenship and see the medication as imbricated in institutional and individual forms of surveillance that distribute risk and vitality across queer sexual cultures. Through interviews with urban queer men on PrEP across racial and class distinctions, Orne and Gall tease out a range of narratives that surround PrEP. In particular, they observe three forms of biomedical and interpersonal surveillance: converting, monitoring, and policing. In total, while PrEP has cleared way for major advancements in HIV prevention, it has simultaneously inaugurated a new set of norms that reinforce the stigmatization and policing of HIV-positive people and non-PrEP users.

Balbir Singh’s article comparatively and relationally analyzes how the hijab and turban have been tied to the racialization of Muslim and Sikh bodies. By parsing the manifestations of these material objects in visual culture, Singh identifies their racial, gendered, and queer dimensions. Namely, amid the Global Wars on Terror, the hijab and turban have become loci in contradictory discourses of religious freedom and US security imperatives. As such, they function as disruptive, non-normative, and socially disorganizing symbols. As Singh ultimately argues, the gendered and queer optics that shape imaginaries of the hijab and turban also structure the contemporary dynamics of targeting, Islamophobia, and empire.

Finally, Harris Kornstein employs queer, trans, and new media theories to discuss drag as a potent but under-recognized form of informational obfuscation. In addition, Kornstein elaborates on how the performance of drag identities on social media can destabilize hegemonic notions of authenticity, transparency, and privacy. By enacting campy and creative modes of identity exploration in digital spaces, performers introduce noise to platforms that rely on categorical identification and social sorting. For Kornstein, the tactics of drag suggest potentialities for queer and trans resistance and some methods for frustrating putatively omnipresent digital monitoring.
References


