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Queer Complicity and the Colonial Anti-Pastoral

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This essay extends Jasbir Puar's critique of the myth of transgressive queerness to Elizabeth Bishop's treatment of colonial settings in order to consider new ways to understand queer complicity with systems of oppression. Reading Bishop, I address queerness and colonialism through a third term, the natural world as represented in pastoral and antipastoral literature—specifically, in her poems "Brazil, January 1, 1502" (1960) and "Crusoe in England" (1971). The pastoral tradition in Western literature, typically imagined as the idyllic portrayal of the natural world, has a long association with colonization and dispossession, and these poems candidly announce their speakers' complicity in the colonial project. However, this is not a conclusion but a starting point; indeed, we might regard the poems as working through an assemblage of settler homonationalism, queer resistance, and the politics of the pastoral. They wrestle with where to locate queerness, for each poem describes a speaker implicated in the colonial domination of Indigenous people who is also intimately connected to them through queer identification or desire. I attend to two antipastoral types, the ironic pastoral and the dystopian antipastoral, before turning to the poems' engagement of a more conventional pastoral mode, the postlapsarian. Ultimately "Brazil" and "Crusoe" show the ways the antipastoral may fail to escape the orbit of the pastoral, yielding to the temporal force of a genre profoundly oriented toward the past, much as the poems' speakers fail to surmount colonial ideology.

Jasbir Puar's important work on homonationalism has shaped recent efforts to theorize queer complicity. "Rather than emphasizing the resistant or oppositional," she writes, "I seek to exhume the *convivial* relations between queerness and militarism, securitization, war, terrorism, [and] surveillance technologies."[1] For Puar, the myth that queerness is always transgressive ensures that "individual agency is legible only as resistance to norms rather than complicity with them."[2] Thus we must *at once* acknowledge that, as Pedro Paulo Gomes Pereira writes, "colonial difference and the logic of coloniality act through a construction of what is human at the expense of women, Black people, and queer bodies" *and* know that not all queer bodies are equally dehumanized by colonial ideology. In fact, some queer subjects may be complicit with settler colonialism, just as they may profit from or fail to resist white supremacy, capitalism, or misogyny.[3] This seemingly obvious reality is remarkably hard to keep in view, for doing so means abiding with discomfort, both the discomfort of responsibility and that of uncertainty, ambivalence, and contradiction. In pursuing that uncertain path, this reading furthers efforts within the environmental humanities to trace the ways in which the "natural" environment is socially constructed—including its structuration by literary forms such as the pastoral—and how these formations are, in turn, implicated in questions of Indigenous survival in the face of colonization, particularly in the global South.

In this essay I want to extend Puar's critique of the myth of transgressive queerness to Elizabeth Bishop's treatment of colonized landscapes and people in order to tarry longer with that discomfort and consider new ways to understand queer complicity. In extending Puar's discussion of colonial and decolonial issues, I not only enter the territory that Scott Lauria Morgensen calls "settler homonationalism," but also take up his challenge to examine the ways in which the presuppositions of queer theory may be derived from settler colonialism.[4] That too is a story of queer complicity. Reading Bishop, I want to address queerness and colonialism through a third term, the natural world as represented in pastoral and antipastoral literature—specifically, in her poems "Brazil, January 1, 1502" (1960) and "Crusoe in England" (1971).[5] Both poems politicize the relation of queerness to nature, but in terms of settler colonialism, not environmentalism.[6] The pastoral tradition in Western literature, typically imagined as the idyllic portrayal of the natural world and rustic life, has a long association with colonization and dispossession.[7] Lawrence Buell contends that "pastoralism afforded one of the constituent images of America and other 'new found lands' as colonies and subsequently as new nations. It has expressed the colonizer's dream and the colonist's sense of emerging reality."[8] Bishop's "Brazil" and "Crusoe" take up this theme: the former portrays the Portuguese conquistadors' arrival at the place they would name Rio de Janeiro and the latter reinvents Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, a white man shipwrecked

on an island after departing from Brazil. The poems candidly announce their speakers' complicity in the colonial project. "Brazil" begins with "Nature greets our eyes / exactly as she must have greeted" those of the conquistadors; "Crusoe" ends as an elegy, when we learn that "Friday, my dear Friday, died of measles"—one of the European diseases that decimated Indigenous populations in the Americas.

But while Bishop's poems admit their speakers' complicity with settler colonialism, that is not a conclusion but a starting point; indeed, we might regard the poems as working through an assemblage of settler homonationalism, queer resistance, and the politics of the pastoral. They wrestle with where to locate queerness—aligned with the colonizer or with Indigenous people and the natural world? Each poem depicts a speaker implicated in the colonial domination of Indigenous people who is also intimately connected to these people through queer identification or desire.[9] In "Brazil," the speaker attempts to identify with the Indigenous women who flee from the Portuguese men into the protection of the jungle. Identification gives way to desire in "Crusoe": with its remarks on Friday's "pretty body" and elegaic closure, the poem hints at a homosexual desire potent enough to turn a wasteland into a garden (166). But for Bishop, the natural world is always mediated by culture; the colonized landscape is no Arcadia. David Shuttleton warns against the uncritical embrace of queer pastoral fantasies: "Pastoral may be a homoerotic genre, but it nevertheless constructs identities within existing, often exploitative, hierarchies of social class, gender and ethnicity."[10] Turning to Bishop, I am mindful of Cameron Clark's work on the queer anti-pastoral, with its invitation to "deidealize," and Jean-Thomas Tremblay's similar call to "depastoralize, not only nature, but also queerness."[11] Bishop's poems "deidealize" and "depastoralize" nature from within the pastoral, as a literary form that contains its other, the antipastoral. Leo Marx divides the "sentimental pastoral," a simple celebration of idealized nature, from the "complex pastoral" or "anti-pastoral," animated by a "counterforce" that insists on realism, dispossession, even violence.[12] Reading Bishop, I will attend to two antipastoral types, the ironic pastoral and the dystopian antipastoral, before turning to the poems' engagement of a more conventional—and in this case, colonial—pastoral mode, the postlapsarian.[13] At each stage we see an intricate and fluid resistance-complicity complex. As such, "Brazil" and "Crusoe" show the ways the antipastoral may fail to escape the orbit of the pastoral, yielding to the temporal force of a genre profoundly oriented toward the past, much as the poems' speakers fail to surmount colonial ideology.

Some Versions of Antipastoral

In 1983, Adrienne Rich suggested that that due to her "experience of outsiderhood, closely—though not exclusively—linked with the essential outsiderhood of a lesbian

identity," Bishop's "outsider's eye enables [her] to perceive other kinds of outsiders and to identify, or try to identify, with them."[14] There is some truth in the statement; Bishop's writing is politically aware, and she does seek to identify with those who are subject to different kinds of hegemonic violence. Forty years later, however, we are less likely to formulate these relations as an analogy between outsiders, in part because analogies obscure connections among movements and obstruct intersectional thinking. Miranda Joseph, for example, asserts they produce an "isolation of the objects in their own domains."[15] Conversely, this structure also does not recognize the possibility of conflict *among* "outsiders," those supposedly analogous terms, nor does it account for the many ways in which one might be at once an outsider and an insider. Thus queerness can never uncritically assume an allegiance with other forms of dispossession. And indeed, the opening lines of "Brazil, January 1, 1502" announce the speaker's implication in the position of the Portuguese colonizers who appear later in the poem: "Januaries, Nature greets our eyes / exactly as she must have greeted theirs" (91).[16] Against this complicity in settler colonialism the poem sets an ironic anti-pastoralism, attuned to what Buell calls the "internal contradictions" inherent in the pastoral, the "crosscurrents that keep any example from seeming pure."[17] The meticulously observed pastoral landscape is, by the end of the poem, radically de-idealized by the fact of European invasion. The opening stanza depicts the visual profusion of a verdant landscape:

> monster ferns
> in silver-grey relief,
> and flowers, too, like giant water lilies
> up in the air—up, rather, in the leaves— (91)

This is pastoral as blason, enumerating the elements of scenic beauty. However, the poem has ironized its own project from the start. In the first line, the capital N of "Nature greets" signals that the landscape is already personified, already freighted with metaphor. "Nature" can never be trusted, for there is no "Nature" that precedes "our eyes." Indeed, the opposition of nature to culture is itself unnatural. Walter Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh call this "the invention of *nature* and the degradation of life" through the imposition of a distinction foreign to Indigenous people.[18] And that binarism inevitably informs Bishop's speaker's attempt to forge an identification with what the poem presents as the natural world of the Indigene.

The poem's second line, "Exactly as it must have greeted theirs" achieves irony through hyperbole. "Exactly" is patently false unless it's meant non-literally—that is,

inexactly or ironically—since the precise coincidence of two gazes is impossible. (It is later grimly ironic that the conquistadors undertake their mission of sexual assault "Directly after Mass" [92].) That ironic attitude toward the colonial gaze leads to a possibility of identification with the Indigenous women. Bishop's last stanza literalizes the trope of conquest as rape, as the Portuguese

> . . . ripped away into the hanging fabric,
> each out to catch an Indian for himself—
> those maddening little women who kept calling,
> calling to each other (or had the birds waked up?)
> and retreating, always retreating, behind it. (92)

In these lines, the two-dimensional visual field of the jungle as tapestry gains a third dimension, making nature an actor in the narrative of conquest—obstructing, suffering injury, surviving. In doing so it divides the men from the women, invaders from Indigenes. For the speaker the question becomes: whose side are you on? The operations of analogy set nature and the Indigenous women against the culture and technology of the Christians "in creaking armor" as two potential points of identification for the speaker (92).[19] We can understand the speaker's relation to the former as queer because "Brazil" recognizes sexual violence as fundamental to both settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, and the ideology of imperialism as inextricable from, while never identical to, that of heterosexism. For women, the refusal of heteronormative demands is always understood as queer, much as Indigenous sexualities and kinship bonds, especially those that refuse domination and assimilation, have often been depicted as deviant.[20] This is not to say that the women "are" lesbians any more than the speaker "is" homosexual (or even gendered); rather, as in "Crusoe," queerness is relational, inherent in a fantasy of female survival beyond the specter of heteronormative and colonial coercion.

In "Brazil," the basis of this latent identification is song: in addition to the speaker, the poem offers two voices, each figured as musical. The Portuguese are "humming perhaps / *L'Homme armé* or some such tune," while the women are "calling, / calling to each other" in voices that recall birdsong: "or had the birds waked up?" (92).[21] Although the men omit the words, we are meant to recall the verse: "fear the armed man."[22] The meaning of the women's song remains inaccessible, yet as birdlike "calling," their voices offer Bishop a very different model for her own lyric. If poetry is always a kind of song, here the speaker finds the possibility of a better voice than that of "*L'Homme armé*" (92). Yet this attempt at identification with the Indigenous women, enabled by the shift from a register of sight to hearing, is compromised by the ways in which

identification itself involves appropriation and incorporation. At best, Bishop is subject to what Saidiya Hartman calls the white observer's "precariousness of empathy," and at worst, "the violence of identification."[23] Indeed, as Diana Fuss explains, "read psychoanalytically, *every* identification involves a degree of symbolic violence," and with it, "a certain element of colonization."[24] The pastoral mode comes with its own history of appropriation, clear in the shepherds and maidens who inhabit its most traditional landscape. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin note, the pastoral tradition of "speaking through" a rural figure constitutes a kind of ventriloquism.[25] The calls of the Indigenous women may represent the utterance of real subjects, but their meaning is obscured; similarly, in Bishop's "Crusoe" Friday is entirely silent. To Gayatri Spivak's famous question "*can the subaltern speak?*" pastoral conventions would answer: no.[26]

If "Brazil" deploys the ironies of pastoral against itself, "Crusoe" introduces an antipastoral dystopia whose nature is as grotesque as it was resplendent in "Brazil." An endless rain falls on "miserable, small volcanoes . . . dead as ash-heaps," looking "naked and leaden, with their heads blown off" (163). The fauna are no better: the island reeks of "goat and guano" and the "questioning shrieks, the equivocal replies" of the gulls torment Crusoe (164). This is a world of "nightmares" in which the eyes of a goat, confronted, "expressed nothing, or a little malice" (165). Either nature has no "design," as Robert Frost wrote, or its design is sinister.[27] But nature is nonetheless a central concern of the poem, again a character in its own right. Bishop signals her engagement with the pastoral tradition when her pointed reference to Wordsworth ("They flash upon that inward eye," 164) places "Crusoe" in conversation with the Romantics. As Bonnie Costello observes, she casts Crusoe as the iconic pastoral shepherd, complete with goats and Pan-pipe, despite the island's "distinctly antipastoral" setting.[28] In this regard, it's worth comparing Bishop's Crusoe to Defoe's. While *Robinson Crusoe* is by no means dystopian, it is also far from an idyll, invested instead in the protagonist's systemization of industry and extraction of resources from "his" island. Bishop's "Crusoe" represents a substantial revision of a text whose distasteful aspects she at least partly recognized. In a 1977 interview, she said "I reread the book and discovered how really awful *Robinson Crusoe* was, which I hadn't realized . . . I had forgotten it was so moral. All that Christianity. So I think I wanted to re-see it with all that left out."[29] Her Crusoe, accordingly, is godless, absent-minded, and sporadic about his "island industries" (164), but he cannot "leave out" his paratexual origin. Defoe's Crusoe is shipwrecked on the way to purchase enslaved Africans for Brazilian plantations; he was recruited by other plantation owners, he says, "to manage the Trading Part upon the Coast of *Guinea* . . . And they offer'd me that I should have my equal Share of the *Negroes.*"[30] We may not care to class Bishop's whimsical, depressive Crusoe with the

"hard," predatory Christians in "Brazil," who consider Indigenous people available for subjection and exploitation, but that is distinctly the Crusoe of Defoe's novel.[31]

As she reimagines his character, Bishop does channel the queer affective register of Defoe's fiction. Speaking of Friday, the original Crusoe recalls that "the three Years we liv'd there together [were] perfectly and compleatly [sic] happy"; he records the loss of his wife in a pallid clause ("my wife dying") but suffers "inexpressible grief" when Friday is killed in the novel's sequel.[32] True, Bishop's Crusoe remains a colonizer in his attachment to Friday. His affectionate language is patronizing (his "poor boy" recalls Defoe's "I began really to love the Creature") but his lament on Friday's death is also the poem's most moving statement of same-sex love: "Friday, my dear Friday."[33] In the closing lines we understand that colonization killed Friday–worse, the love of the colonizer killed him when it transported him to a land of biological perils.[34] Without him, Crusoe finds England barren: we realize only in retrospect—as Crusoe himself does—that his sojourn on the island was more vital than it seemed. With his arrival, nature suddenly becomes benign: "He'd pet the baby goats sometimes, / and race with them, or carry one around. / —Pretty to watch; he had a pretty body" (166). It is telling that of the mere eight lines devoted to Friday on the island, two are about the goats, for which Crusoe formerly had no kind words, and another three address another kind of fecundity: "If only he had been a woman! / I wanted to propagate my kind, / and so did he, I think" (165). It's a joke, of course, that they cannot procreate like the goats, but it also signals for Crusoe a new acquiescence to the processes of the "natural" world.

This sounds like a familiar mythology: the Native has a special intimacy with the land, which he extends to the colonial newcomer. Given Crusoe's unreliable narration, however, we might also consider his halting account of Friday not only as reconstructed but also to some degree fantasmatic. His real love constructs the entire world around Friday as unreal, not merely in the moment but most keenly in retrospect. Only this can explain how, by the end of the poem, Crusoe can wax nostalgic for a place he considered intolerable. This is more than the unavoidable falsification of memory, for his longing fixates on his island artifacts— knife, flute, umbrella. They surely represent the island metonymically, but the psychic work they perform is different. Crusoe complains that the knife, which once "lived," has lost its "living soul" and "won't look at me at all"; of the various objects, he asks "How can anyone want such things?" (166). As most of these things went unmentioned earlier in the poem—we never saw their magical properties or meaning—Crusoe's cathexis on them must be a displacement of his love for Friday. It is not that the knife really ever "looked at him," but that its inability to do so signals the inadequacy of what remains compared to the enormity of what was lost. These lines ostensibly not "about" Friday convey the almost literally unspeakable joy

Friday afforded. They inform Crusoe's ability to recall the island as a dystopian world of wrecked nature and, at the same time, the site of authentic life.

The Postlapsarian Pastoral

"Brazil" and "Crusoe" are further complicated by their recapitulation of a key pastoral form, the postlapsarian. Pastoral is commonly associated with nostalgia for bygone places and times; Nicole Seymour says that it "idealizes a long-gone, pristine nature."[35] We know that Eden is a key trope for nature at its most idealized. The story of Genesis is the first pastoral in the Judeo-Christian tradition; William Empson's landmark 1935 book on the pastoral includes a chapter on *Paradise Lost*.[36] Indeed, Jessie Herrada Nance describes the typical pastoral as "a golden world or Eden that humanity loses access to after a fall from grace."[37] In this regard, it's significant that both "Brazil" and "Crusoe" allude to the Genesis narrative. As the first lines of the former indicate, there is no unspoiled nature, only acculturated Nature.[38] Within that space we find a moral judgement on the serpent in the garden: "five sooty dragons" designating "Sin," "hell-green flames" of moss (91), and sex, figured by the female lizard, "her wicked tail straight up and over / red as a red-hot wire" (92)—all interpretations overlain on the natural world by the invading Christians. "Crusoe" presents its speaker as a parodic Adam, unsure about the work of naming and terrified by dreams of more islands which task him with "registering their flora, / their fauna, their geography" (165). And surely Crusoe's loneliness evokes Adam: "the same odd sun / rose from the sea, / and there was one of it and one of me" (163). Genesis 2:18 reads, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him [a] help meet." Each poem elaborates the notion of a fall, an expulsion from the garden, in their orientation toward the past. Of course "Crusoe," as an elegy, is about the loss of a person, but also about the loss of a place and what that place afforded—enjoyment, vitality, "meaning" (166). Only through its postlapsarian close do we know that, even in this dystopian anti-pastoral, a lost paradise once existed. For its part, "Brazil" addresses a historic event with a postlapsarian attitude, unable to imagine Brazil before the conquest but recognizing that historic rupture as a trauma from which there is no return. We have only the retroactive construction of a thing (a queer intimacy, a call like a song, a dear companion, an island, a tapestried landscape) that is defined by its loss. In the postlapsarian narrative it is always already too late.

This narrative has troubling implications in the colonial context because a postlapsarian approach to secular history confers an appearance of inevitability. For settler colonialism this can mean representation, by the non-Native subject, of Indigenous peoples and cultures as lost when they in fact survive, and of that loss

as fatefully ordained, not intentionally orchestrated and contingent, avoidable. In a critique of heteronormative historiography, Jonathan Goldberg notes the way in which the "epidemic narrative"—like the death of Bishop's Friday and innumerable other Native people of the Americas from European diseases—effaces power and "removes moral explanation entirely, replacing it with a supposedly neutral, natural—indeed, biological—explanation."[39] What is natural can then be understood as both blameless and ineluctable. Consider William Cullen Bryant's 1832 poem "The Prairies." He portrays a pastoral landscape devoid of human life, in which divine will has determined the disappearance first of the mound builders and after them, of the "red man," who has "sought a wilder hunting-ground" in the West.[40]

> Thus change the forms of being. Thus arise
> Races of living things, glorious in strength,
> And perish, as the quickening breath of God
> Fills them, or is withdrawn . . .

The verdant prairies await the arrival of white settlers, to whom they will yield their riches: "Thus change the forms of being," as one "race" organically replaces another. There can then be no question of responsibility for these colonists, for the erasure of Native people has already occurred and was divinely ordained. Yet Bryant is writing just two years after President Andrew Jackson signed the 1830 Indian Removal Act, which began the process in which the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Muscogee, Seminole, and Choctaw people were forcibly moved from the southeast to what would become Oklahoma, with many deaths along the Trail of Tears.

The myth of the "vanishing Indian," exemplified by "The Prairies," takes on special resonance in the postlapsarian pastoral. Tracing this trope, which she terms the "extinction theme," Jean M. O'Brien enumerates the psychic work it performed for non-Native Americans: "they needed to have Indians disappear in order to justify colonialism, absolve themselves of wrongdoing and guilt, and place Indians firmly and safely in the past."[41] The ideology of temporal afterwardness obviates the continuing process of settler colonialism. Building on Patrick Wolfe's understanding of settler colonialism as a "structure not an event," J. Kēhaulani Kauanui explains that "understanding settler colonialism as a structure exposes the fact that colonialism cannot be relegated to the past."[42] On this matter both "Brazil" and "Crusoe" have a temporal problem: their postlapsarianism further enables the narrative that consigns Indigenous people to the past. In travel writing, including Bishop's, Jeffrey Gray argues that "origins appear at the moment of their obliteration, that is at the moment one

discovers they are lost. Pastoral is the generic example of this cultural irony: it marks the loss of what it celebrates."[43] In the context of settler colonialism, the postlapsarian pastoral can enable retrospective tropes like the extinction theme. What, after all, is the "vanishing Indian" myth but a narrative that "marks the loss of what it celebrates," pivoting on an ephemeral moment in which the present becomes the past? Both Friday and the Indigenous women of Brazil are lost by the end of "Brazil" and "Crusoe," but in a sense they are also never really present—or rather, their presence is predicated on their incipient, ongoing, and obligatory disappearance. This is clear in "Brazil," where not only do we hear voices that may or may not be voices, but we are also conjured to see women whom we cannot see (they are hidden from us, as from the Portuguese, by the jungle's "hanging fabric") at the instant of their vanishing. Caught in the temporal paradox of the postlapsarian pastoral, "Brazil" and "Crusoe" are documents of a fateful afterwardness. The Indigene is always gone; the landscape is always colonized. These are "postcolonial" poems in that the false historicity of the "post" displaces the reality of the ongoing present. Their speakers' direct admission of complicity is abrogated by a backward-facing temporality that absolves colonial subjects of responsibility in the future.

If in "Brazil" and "Crusoe" Bishop can articulate the value of Indigeneity and nature only under erasure, what of queerness? What of the tenuous possibility of queer identification or desire *within but against* colonial complicity? Since both poems attempt to equate nature, Indigeneity, and queerness, when Indigenous figures are subsumed by the postlapsarian inevitability of the extinction myth, is queerness is subsumed as well? Since queerness in these poems is relational, not identitarian, the answer is yes. And this is the final turn of the complicity-resistance complex, the reason for the poems' quite different affective registers. Neither resembles Byrant's "The Prairies," whose speaker looks hopefully toward a bright future for white settlers. Instead, "Brazil" holds an ironic distance, even from its horrific conclusion. "Crusoe in England," however, merges the extinction theme with the affective register of the postlapsarian—elegy, nostalgia, regret. Terry Gifford locates in colonial pastorals "the masking and displacing of environmental pillage and political conquest by nostalgic valuations of the very spaces and biosystems that are being destroyed."[44] Nostalgia, that is, can be the accomplice of aggression. Brian W. Dippie observes that in the United States, "the Indian in the act of vanishing before civilized progress elicited a full range of emotional responses—sympathy, regret, sadness, despair."[45] These emotional responses, many typical of the pastoral literary tradition and more keenly of the postlapsarian pastoral, do not have to be false to be complicit in the colonial project. The speaker of "Crusoe" expresses the real pain of queer bereavement; the poem can

be a profoundly moving elegy. But the pathos of the colonizer, even when genuine, is itself a form of complicity.[46]

This is why, as Puar argues, we cannot assume that queerness always means transgression or opposes the dispossession of other "outsiders." Morgensen argues that for queers, no less than everyone else, "Settler colonialism is naturalized whenever conquest or displacement of Native peoples is ignored or appears necessary or complete."[47] And resisting that naturalization of colonial subjection, even when prioritized in a queer world view, may yet fail. Reading Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Melville, Mark Rifkin considers the possibility and limitations of "something like a queer solidarity with Indigenous self-determination." He proposes that rather than solely deeming these white authors oppressors, we should acknowledge that "their forms of opposition depend on taking for granted the conceptions of place, politics, and personhood normalized in the settler-state's engagement with indigenous peoples."[48] It is tempting to think that "opposition" and "solidarity" can exist in spite of such "conceptions." Reading Bishop shows how important it is not to overstate that possibility.[49] How can anyone resist colonialism from within colonial ideology—from within settler homonationalism? But is there any place outside it from which a non-Native queer author might try to speak? Complicity and resistance are co-extensive, and like the pastoral form, their dialogue with one another mythologizes and ironizes by turns. We might recall the "scaling-ladder vines" in Bishop's "Brazil" whose alternating leaves signal "one leaf yes and one leaf no" (91); thinking through queer complicity requires just such a theory of precarious ambivalence.

Notes

[1] Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2007): xiv. Paur, of course, builds on the notion of homonormativity; see Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon, 2003): xx.

[2] Puar, 23.

[3] Pedro Paulo Gomes Pereira, "Reflecting on Decolonial Queer," *GLQ* 25:3 (2019): 413. Jack Halberstam offers a case study of colonial complicity via Roger Casement and Michael Taussig in *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2020): 33–46. On the term "queer complicity," see Thomas Hendricks, "Queer Complicity in the Belgian Congo: Auto-biography and Racial Fetishism in Jef Geeraert's (Post)Colonial Novels," *Research in African Literatures* 45:1 (2014): 63–84.

[4] Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011): 2.

[5] Elizabeth Bishop, *The Complete Poems 1927–1979* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1979): 91–92 and 162–166. Further references to these poems will be cited parenthetically.

[6] While the pastoral can convey ecological messages, Bishop's poems better fit Lawrence Buell's description of nature as "an ideological theater for acting out desires that have very little to do with any bonding to nature as such." Similarly, I read the poems as a space for exploring queer fantasies about Indigeniety with little concern for material realities. See "American Pastoral Ideology Reappraised," *American Literary History* 1:1 (1989): 3.

[7] The tradition of reading the pastoral as political dates at least from William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1935). On colonial pastoralism, see Terry Gifford, "Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral, and Post-Pastoral," in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment*, ed. Louise Westling (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 23–25; Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2015): 99–123; and Jessie Herrada Nance, "'Civil Wildness': Colonial Landscapes in Philip Sidney's *New Arcadia*," *Studies in Philology* 116:2 (2019): 227–52.

[8] Buell, "American Pastoral Ideology," 21.

[9] I use identification and desire in their Freudian sense, except for acknowledging that they are not mutually exclusive and in the service of heteronormativity. As Diana Fuss writes—this is especially apt for "Brazil"—"What is identification if not a way to assume the desire of the other? And what is desire if not a means of becoming the other whom one wishes to have?" *Identification Papers: Readings on Psychoanalysis, Sexuality, and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995): 12.

[10] David Shuttleton, "The Queer Politics of Gay Pastoral," in Richard Phillips, Diane Watt, and David Shuttleton, *De-Centering Sexualities: Politics and Representations Beyond the Metropolis* (London: Routledge; 2000): 128. On male homosexuality and the pastoral, see also Bruce Boehrer, "'Lycidas': The Pastoral Elegy as Same-Sex Epithalamium," *PMLA* 117: 2 (2002): 222–36. There is no similar lesbian tradition, though the lesbian pastoral had appeared in U.S. literature by the late nine-teenth-century and informed twentieth-century lesbian culture.

[11] Cameron Clark, "Grief, Ecocritical Negativity, and the Queer Anti-Pastoral" *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 17.2 (2019): 220; and Jean-Thomas Tremblay, "On Queer Ecopoetics and the Natures We Cannot Disavow," https://www.dispatchespoetrywars.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Trembleyrev_subc.pdf [no date, no pagination].

[12] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964): 25. On the antipastoral, see Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford UP, 1973): 13–33; and Gifford, 17–30.

[13] Scholars note that forms of pastoral writing can have very different political potential in the hands of Indigenous writers; see, for example, Buell, "American Pastoral Ideology" 21; Shirley Lau Wong, "Country Bumpkin and Cosmopolitan: Some Versions of Postcolonial Pastoral," *The Global South* 7:2 (2013): 153–72.; and Jonathan Allison, "Patrick Kavanagh and Antipastoral," in The Cambridge Companion to Contemporary Irish Poetry, ed. Matthew Campbell (Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2003): 42–58.

[14] Adrienne Rich, "The Eye of the Outsider: On the Poetry of Elizabeth Bishop," *Boston Review*, (April 1983): 16.

[15] Miranda Joseph, "Family Affairs: The Discourse of Global/Localization," in *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*, ed. Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé, and Martin F. Manalansan IV (New York: New York University Press; 2002): 85.

[16] Among the many readers who note the speaker's awareness of co-location with the conquistadors, James Longen-bach astutely names this as a recognition of possible "complicity in the continuing imposition of those values"; *Modern*

Poetry after Modernism (New York; Oxford University Press, 1997): 30. See also Bethany Hicok, *Elizabeth Bishop's Brazil* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2016): 81.

[17] Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995): 31, 50. On the "ironic counter-pastoral," see Huggan and Tiffin, 105; on "ironical humility" in the pastoral, see Empson 210–13.

[18] Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC : Duke UP, 2018): 158–59.

[19] "Brazil" is typically read as a poem centering on the trope of visual art, but it is equally a meditation on the function of figural language, with analogy as its central rhetorical mode. Jeffrey Gray argues that its structuring comparisons ("exactly as," "just so") make it an epic simile; *Mastery's End: Travel and Postwar American Poetry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005): 38.

[20] See, for example, Halberstam 7–9 and Rifkin 82. Indigenous cultures also have vital ways of understanding gender, sexuality, and kinship beyond cisgender heteronormativity, but Bishop's poem only characterizes Native women by what they refuse.

[21] Mel. E. Chen explains how colonial discourses, applying an "animacy hierarchy," dehumanize humans into animals—a trope that underscores the Native/nature vs. colonists/culture analogy; *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2012): 13–14. In "Brazil" the transformation of Native women into birds certainly dehumanizes, but at the same time suggests access to a sustaining *otherwise* and *elsewhere* outside colonial ontology.

[22] Lorrie Goldensohn, *Elizabeth Bishop: The Biography of a Poetry* (New York: Columbia UP, 1992): 203.

[23] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997): 4, 20.

[24] Fuss, 9.

[25] Huggan and Tiffin, 123.

[26] Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of a Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999): 269.

[27] Robert Frost, *The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Connery Lathem (New York: Henry Holt, 1969): 302.

[28] Bonnie Costello, *Elizabeth Bishop: Questions of Mastery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991): 209.

[29] Quoted in Lloyd Schwartz and Sybil P. Estess, *Elizabeth Bishop and her Art* (Ann Arbor, MI: U of Michigan P, 1983): 319.

[30] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. Michael Shinagel (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975): 32–33. On Defoe's Crusoe as enslaver, see also Fortuny, 83–84.

[31] Defoe's Crusoe is not particularly interested in women, but he notes approvingly that the Spaniards he left on "his" island later kidnapped and enslaved five Indigenous women, who were forced to bear "twenty young Children" (236–37).

[32] Defoe, 32. Hans Turley compares the two deaths in "The Sublimation of Desire to Apocalyptic Passion in Defoe's Crusoe Trilogy," in *Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature*, ed. Philip Holden and Richard J. Ruppel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003): 5, 10.

[33] Defoe, 166. On same-sex desire in "Crusoe," see Patricia Yaeger, "The Father's Breasts," in *Refiguring the Patriarchy*, eds. Yaeger and Beth Kowalski-Wallace, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1989): 3; Parker, 131–32; and McCabe, 200.

[34] On "Crusoe" and colonialism, see Bonnie Costello, "Elizabeth Bishop's Impersonal Personal," *American Literary History* 15:2 (2003): 352–55; and Fortuny, 83–85, 95–99.

[35] Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press; 2013): 156.

[36] Empson, 153–91.

[37] Nance, 231.

[38] On Edenic tropes in "Brazil," see Gray, 39, and Costello, *Questions of Mastery*, 144–45.

[39] Jonathan Goldberg, "The History That Will Be," *GLQ* 1:4 (1995): 394–95.

[40] As Brian W. Dippie notes, the myth of the mound builders being displaced by the present Native Americans was used to justify white assaults on the latter. *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1982): 17–18.

[41] Jean M. O'Brien, "'Vanishing' Indians in Nineteenth-Century New England: Local Historians' Erasure of Still-Present Indian People," in *New Perspectives on Native North America: Cultures, Histories, and Representations*, ed. Sergei Kan, Pauline Turner Strong, and Raymon Fogelson (Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 2006): 415.

[42] J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity," *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 5:1 (2016): [n. p.].

[43] Gray, 13.

[44] Gifford, 23.

[45] Dippie, 24.

[46] There is much more to be said about affect and queer complicity. See Pavan Kumar Malreddy, "Imperialist Shame and Indigenous Guilt: George Orwell's Writings on Burma," *European Journal of English Studies* 23:3 (2019): 311–325.

[47] Morgensen, 121.

[48] Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2014): xxi, xvii. Halberstam outlines a similar paradox with regard to what he terms "queer wildness," which "inherits this ambivalence that inheres to the mirror of colonial production—it always runs the risk of reproducing the terms it seeks to displace" (46).

[49] In a new book, Eric Strand develops this critique of Bishop and her more sanguine readers; he concludes that, "enabled by the privileges of American globalization, Bishop's sexual identity disengages from the progressive causes that we might want to link to it" (141). See *The Global Frontier: Postwar Travel in American Literature*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2023.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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