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YEATS'S QUEER DRAMATURGIES: OSCAR WILDE, NARCISSUS, AND MELANCHOLY MASCULINITIES IN CALVARY

Zsuzsanna Balázs

“Have you noticed that the Greek androgynous statue is always the woman in man, never the man in woman? It was made for men who loved men first.”

—W. B. Yeats (*L* 875)

David Cregan has called Frank McGuinness the first Irish playwright to apply a distinctively queer dramaturgical epistemology in his plays.¹ Yet it is less often acknowledged that Yeats's drama also took significant steps towards creating space for an anti-normative and anti-authoritarian queer dramaturgy, and thus intervened in normative constructs of sexuality and gender, indirectly joining the sexual liberation and women's emancipation movements of his time. This was predominantly the result of his collaborations with and inspirations from transgressive artists such as Florence Farr, Michio Itō, Sarah Bernhardt, Vaslav Nijinsky, and Loïe Fuller, as well as his manifold transcultural inspirations which defied sexual polarization and hyper-masculinity in favor of more illicit forms of *eros* and a gender-bending body ideal. These inspirations included the occult, ancient Greece, ancient India and Tantric philosophy, the Noh theater, the great New Women artists of the time, Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry, Sergei Diaghilev's anti-(hetero)normative ballet movement,² London's queer activism of the 1890s,³ and Oscar Wilde, on whom I will focus in this study.

I will argue that Yeats's drama, which is often seen as an anti-democratic and elitist space, is also able to foster a space of inclusion and visibility for people treated by the patriarchal state as invisible (no)bodies, who defy conventional categorizations. This includes powerful women who disrupt conventional notions of motherhood and marriage, but also effeminate men, dancers, actresses, gay people, and people with any sign of difference or excessive, recalcitrant temperaments. Judith Butler calls such unrecognized subjectivities ungrievable lives, which cannot be recognized as injured or lost by the mainstream political frameworks which guide society's interpretation of the world.⁴ Yet Yeats's drama has the potential to open up the frameworks of recognition for marginalized subjectivities by representing their lives as grievable, by sympathizing with their pain, and by making visible the structures of insult and violence that aim to hurt them. This is a means of claiming political recognition and participation for unrecognized lives and stories, and deconstructing heterosexuality and masculinity as the main presumptive frameworks.

So far, the transgressive and anti-normative aspects of Yeats's works have been addressed mainly by Elizabeth Cullingford, Susan Cannon Harris, Alexandra Poulain, Ben Levitas, Cassandra Laity, and Jason Edwards from various angles, and I wish to join their discussions here. I aim to highlight the often-muted queer sensibilities in *Calvary* (1920) in the context of Yeats's public sympathy for Wilde. I wish to open up this play for new contemporary interpretations and demonstrate how it can resonate with ideas proposed by contemporary queer theorists, mainly with Judith Halberstam's and Leo Bersani's ideas of failure, betrayal, male bonding, and death drive, Didier Eribon's ideas of solitude and melancholy, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's thoughts on performativity and the closet.

I begin with a discussion of the queer aesthetic of Yeats's theater and his feminist and queer networks, which is followed by a section on Wilde, Christ, and Narcissus. The final section addresses the queer dramaturgical strategies in *Calvary*. I mainly discuss representations of queer subjectivities here, but I also embrace a more expansive notion of queer as strangeness and "as a force of disruption"⁵ which is able to reveal the anxieties repressed in the normative world.

YEATS'S QUEER AESTHETIC

Due to Yeats's position as a white, male, middle-class Protestant citizen of the British Empire and his controversial responses to the rise of authoritarian politics, Yeats and his works could be seen as representatives of the dominant literary tradition and the mainstream patriarchal political discourse, as Cullingford has explained.⁶ Even in his position as an Irish nationalist, Yeats was expected to represent tradition and masculinity. Hence, most readings and productions of Yeats's plays tend to stress only the normative and heteronormative aspects of his dramaturgy, even though his plays, especially the later ones, abound in transgressive characters and anti-normative masculinities and femininities. Cullingford also pointed out, using Hélène Cixous's words, that Yeats was one of those artists who frequently "let something different from tradition get through."⁷

Portraying sexual dissidence and illicit desires was part of this endeavor. Cullingford identified two main types of transgression in Yeats's poetry: the woman in man, "and the more socially transgressive man in woman."⁸ This is true for Yeats's plays as well, where the characters displaying sexual dissidence are usually dancers associated with the wind or the waves. Both the waves and the wind represent potential, dissidence, movement, fluidity, plasticity, and the wavering of identity—a state of ungraspability—all of which inherently resist homogenizing efforts.⁹ An example of this is Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*,

where the queer young girl, while seducing Mary Bruin, describes their kind as the ones who ride the winds and run on the waves.

Transgressive women are usually associated with the wind in Yeats's works, and thus also with the fierce, shape-changing women of the Sidhe and the figure of Salomé. The transgressive and effeminate male characters, on the other hand, are usually connected to the waves (represented, for instance, by male dancers in *Fighting the Waves*) and sometimes to the wind as well. In his introduction to *Fighting the Waves*, Yeats describes the changing philosophy of Europe in which man has become "a swimmer, or rather the waves themselves" (VPL 569). In his notes to "The Hosting of the Sidhe" (1893), Yeats also draws the connection between Salomé, the Sidhe, and the wind: "Sidhe is also Gaelic for wind, and certainly the Sidhe have much to do with the wind. They journey in whirling wind, the winds that were called the dance of the daughters of Herodias in the Middle Ages" (VP 800).

In her book *Irish Drama and the Other Revolutions* (2017), Susan Harris stresses that the emerging Irish aesthetic in the 1890s was already remarkably queer. Irish playwrights, including Yeats, began to dramatize the embodiment of sexual and social politics thanks to the influence of London's queer socialism, Shelley's radical *eros*, and the independent, educated New Women of the time.¹⁰ Harris's book is also very enlightening because it gives justice to Florence Farr's political and social importance as a queer woman and as "an English feminist turned actress"¹¹ whose contribution to avant-garde drama is much more significant than it has been accounted for. Besides Farr¹², Yeats's New Women influences included Sarah Bernhardt,¹³ Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Eleonora Duse, and the dancers Isadora Duncan and Loïe Fuller, who were all powerful figures in the performing arts and encouraged ways of being other than the dominant modes.

The rich relationship between queerness and modern Irish drama is well established, but it is less often acknowledged how Yeats's theater contributed to and, in fact, inaugurated this queer aesthetic with the performance of his play *The Land of Heart's Desire* in 1894, in the milieu of London's turn-of-the-century queer activism. Harris explains that Yeats's play was staged as part of the season of avant-garde drama organized by Farr in the Avenue Theatre along with John Todhunter's *A Comedy of Sighs*. Despite London's very active queer socialist atmosphere, both Yeats's and Todhunter's plays failed because of their portrayal of transgressive women.¹⁴ More specifically, *The Land of Heart's Desire* displays the desire between a young girl (fairy child) and an older, newly wed woman named Mary Bruin. It includes some moments of intimate physical touch between the two characters, hence Harris called the play "unambiguously queer-positive and feminist."¹⁵ More importantly, both Yeats's and Todhunter's plays fused the "two fundamental anxieties evoked by the New Woman: the

fear that she would reject motherhood, and the fear that she would reject heterosexuality.¹⁶ The representation of lesbian desire is still very limited in Irish theater, but it needs to be highlighted that Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire* and Todhunter's *A Comedy of Sighs* were the first Irish plays which staged desire between women that was encoded in the framework of the supernatural, which could "obscure the more troubling aspects of female desire."¹⁷

In "The Catastrophe," Yeats mentions that Wilde overwhelmed him with compliments after the first performance of *The Land of Heart's Desire* (Au 287), encouraging him to follow this transgressive path in his art despite the huge failure of the plays and G. B. Shaw's vicious reaction—not only to the two plays but to Farr's androgynous, "sexless" stage presence. Shaw described Farr in her role in Todhunter's play as "a nightmare, a Medusa, a cold, loathly, terrifying, grey, callous, sexless devil."¹⁸ As Harris explains, Yeats also felt resentment about the success of Shaw's play *Arms and the Man* in 1894, and saw it as the victory of a pugilistic masculinity,¹⁹ because Shaw rewrote it to stress masculinity after the failure of Yeats's and Todhunter's plays: "To save himself from similar punishment, Shaw revised *Arms and the Man* and replaced Farr with a more gender-conforming actress."²⁰ Yet Harris's discussion makes it clear that Farr made a very significant contribution to making Yeats's drama more inclusive of a wide range of gender and sexual possibilities. What is more, the founding of the Irish Literary Theatre in 1897, after Yeats's negative experience with London audiences, "was, in part, Yeats's attempt to continue Farr's experiment in a more hospitable environment."²¹

Creating such a theatrical aesthetic and drawing inspiration from these artists was an important political statement in itself, in the context of emerging authoritarian and totalitarian nationalist political ideologies which built on the concepts of respectability and normalcy, refused ambiguity in every field of life, and looked at dancers and actresses with growing suspicion and scorn.²² It was important within the Irish political context as well, in which Republican soldiers and Black and Tans (the early manifestations of fascism) broke into houses during the Irish War of Independence and humiliated women by shaving their heads.²³ In addition, W. T. Cosgrave's Free State Ireland drew heavily on the Italian fascist model and engaged in censorship,²⁴ while in the 1930s Éamon de Valera's Ireland consolidated its regressive sexual politics.²⁵

This queer aesthetic was predominantly the result of Yeats's pervasive, rich queer and feminist networks, which included dancers, activists, suffragists, New Women, poets, and other artists from whom he drew much inspiration—both directly and indirectly—and who shaped his drama in considerable ways. Besides Wilde, Farr, and Bernhardt, these cultural networks included, most notably, his lesbian friends Edith Shakleton Heald, Hilda Matheson, and Lady Dorothy Wellesley, but also the artists Aubrey Beardsley and Edmund Dulac, Gate Theatre

dramatists Micheál MacLiammóir, Hilton Edwards, Lennox Robinson,²⁶ and Madame Bannard-Cogley—also known as Toto, who (with Edwards and MacLiammóir) organized cabaret performances in Dublin. Michael Patrick Lapointe has also pointed out that Yeats expressed his concerns about the anguish he sensed in his colleague Edward Martyn. He felt sympathy for the desires Martyn had to repress and the vicissitudes he had to endure because of social pressure and because of his own conservative views and religious caution, which Yeats referred to in *The Cat and the Moon* too.²⁷ The women of the Irish Revolution should also be mentioned here, many of whom were lesbians. Yeats's friendship with Constance Markievicz and Eva Gore-Booth is well known, but few have emphasized Gore-Booth's role as the founder of Ireland's first feminist periodical *Urania* in 1916, which published the works of lesbian artists and whose articles stressed that sex is only an accident.²⁸ Ninette de Valois and Michio Itō brought Sergei Diaghilev's anti-(hetero)normative ballet movement to Yeats's attention; Diaghilev deliberately countered the classical ballet (*ballet blanc*) tradition by working with effeminate dancers like Vaslav Nijinsky and tall, boyish dancers like Ida Rubinstein, whose body and movements were labelled as unwomanly and disproportionate by most critics.²⁹ More precisely, Itō's art had been shaped by Nijinsky's performances before Itō began his collaboration with Yeats on *At the Hawk's Well*, in which Itō played the Hawk-Woman.³⁰

In *The Death of Cuchulain*, Yeats also expresses his disagreement with the classical ballet tradition, which strengthens idealized notions of femininity and portrays women as fragile and weak: "I spit upon the dancers painted by Degas. I spit upon their short bodices, their stiff stays, their toes whereon they spin like peg-tops, above all upon the chambermaid face" (VPL 1052). Yeats was also influenced by two Italian avant-garde playwrights, Luigi Pirandello and Gabriele D'Annunzio, who had controversial affiliations with fascism, yet whose plays featured the most powerful New Women of the time and provided a scathing criticism of the sexual/gender polarization, the desexualization of bodies, and patriarchal rule that constituted some of the main pillars of fascist rule.³¹

Even though Yeats's turn to the drama was originally a search for what he called "more of manful energy" (VP 849), his experimentation with dramatic form and multiple identities, and his use of non-linear, more and more fluid, and anti-mimetic dramaturgical structures also allowed for a dramaturgy that resisted repressive and exclusive normative frames. As Cormac O'Brien explains, the fragmented dramaturgical strategies which characterize anti-realism "disavow realist narrative drama in favor of free-flowing theatrical form"³² and are able to challenge "the very concept of norms, and systems of theatrical and social normalizing,"³³ "the queerer the form, the queerer the possibilities for masculine identities."³⁴

Yeats gradually moved towards dance and movement-based plays featuring more and more physical touch, embodiment/disembodiment processes, spectral characters, strangers and strangeness, as well as dream elements, all of which challenge the patriarchal authority and mastery of language and discourse. This is especially true for the figure of the male dancer, as dance itself has always represented the threat of the feminine and the erotic for patriarchal, anti-erotic societies which fear the power of *eros*.³⁵ As Gabriele Brandstetter explains, “[a]round the turn of the century, the body-image of dance reflected contemporary patterns of femininity that were (largely) based on two key models: the model of ancient Greece and the model of the exotic.”³⁶ It is not by accident that experimental avant-garde theater was regarded as a constant threat to political power because of its tendency to break away from normative sexuality and tradition, creating queer alliances and thus a conspiracy against the status quo. Harris has also pointed out that the sexual liberation movement held “that freedom from the heterosexual family unit was inseparable from freedom from economic oppression and political tyranny.”³⁷

What is queer in Yeats is often not immediately graspable, comprehensible, or visible: “The thing, the ‘queer’ is what emerges among, across, and between,”³⁸ and “it is how the elements rub, collide, and comingle.”³⁹ James Flannery also stated that Yeats was in many ways a twenty-first century writer, whose plays try to convey many vital messages through text and dramaturgy—yet most of them remain entrapped or hidden in the dramatic text and in subtext, which the audience cannot see and often cannot understand.⁴⁰ Dissident and transgressive spectacle in Yeats’s plays often takes place offstage, described by other characters, but once they are depicted, the plays’ queer potential can also increase. Yeats’s plays include several moments when the audience can be queerly moved because the spectacle, dance, or image transgresses traditional borders of authority, language, and representation, which feel like “a queerly transitory suspension of the regular rules of society.”⁴¹

Totalizing and homogenizing systems—such as patriarchy, imperialism, (ultra)nationalism, and heteronormativity—see difference, disorder, and ambiguity as their major enemies. They build on concepts of unified national identity, security, compulsory heterosexuality, traditional family values, politics of hope and optimism, moral and sexual prudery, hierarchy, clear separation of gender roles, virility, female modesty, respectability, segregation, and classification of people into transparent categories. Yeats’s drama, however, is queer because it reveals the destructive mechanism of these systems by representing the tension between the oppressive normative discourse and the non-normative subjectivities it tries to silence. Yeats’s plays abound in obscurity, disunity, ambiguity, and fluidity of meaning. They portray a constant shifting between identities, inversion of gender roles and heroism, various forms of failure,

non-hierarchical characterizations, and potent hybrid and shape-changing bodies—like the Sidhe and bird-women, and bodies separated from their voices. They also display explicit expressions of eroticism, solitude as a form of protest, sexually ambiguous diction, same-sex and other illicit desires, powerful women, strong feminist voices, and characters who disobey patriarchal figures and refuse categorization. This way, Yeats's drama gave visibility to subjectivities and subcultures that the normative discourse wanted to hide from the public eye and thus engaged contemporary debates about the feminist, gender non-conforming New Woman, and homosexuality. This tension between the queer and the normative, the authoritarian and the recalcitrant is also the main reason why Yeats's plays can be queered, and his portrayal of the pressure that the normative discourse puts on stigmatized individuals is what makes his drama so relevant for queer and feminist research today.

In Yeats's plays, the pressure sometimes comes from the representative of the state (like in *The King's Threshold*, *The Player Queen* and *The King of the Great Clock Tower*) or family members (like in *The Land of Heart's Desire*), but more frequently from a family patriarch or some other, often invisible, patriarchal figure (as in *Calvary* and *The Cat and the Moon*). Yet the oppressive performative utterances of the normative characters are countered with another set of performative speech acts and gestures coming from the characters who are perceived as strange and disruptive. What is more, as Yeats himself acknowledged, New Women actresses like Farr were perceived by bourgeois nationalist audiences as insults on public morality and were proximate to violence against the state and the nation. He described *The Shadowy Waters* as "a wild mystical thing carefully arranged to be an insult to the regular theatre goer who is hated by both of us. All the plays [Florence Farr] is arranging for are studied insults. Next year she might go to Dublin as all her playwrights by a curious chance are Irish" (L 384).

I also contend that the queer moments of Yeats's drama are not restricted to explicitly articulated same-sex desire. Queer moments also include unfulfilled spiritual, emotional, or physical yearning for members of the same sex or some other unavailable love; more expanded notions of female/male friendship and love; sexually ambiguous diction, bodily discomfort, and sense of displacement as symptoms of unarticulated desires; and forces of disruption that are also sources of attraction. Most of these appear in various forms in *The Land of Heart's Desire*, *The Countess Cathleen*, *The Dreaming of the Bones*, *Calvary*, *The Cat and the Moon*, *The Resurrection*, *A Full Moon in March*, and *The King of the Great Clock Tower* as well. Yeats's plays often portray attraction between "womanly" men and "manly" women. This is a returning pattern in the Cuchulain plays and *A Full Moon in March* and characterizes Yeats's own desires as well. He also inverts traditional notions of heroism by replacing male heroes

with female heroes (as in *Deirdre* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer*), portraying women who turn their diminishment into power and oppress the oppressor (as Decima in *The Player Queen*), or representing heroes who leave hyper-masculinity behind and opt for a non-competitive, more tender masculine identity (as Christ in *Calvary*, or Cuchulain in *The Death of Cuchulain* and in the poem “Cuchulain Comforted”). Sinn Féin’s unsigned review of an Edward Martyn play from 1912 nicely illustrates contemporary reactions to such inverted gender representations: “We tire ... of Mr. Martyn’s weak men and strong women ... Martyn can do large things in drama, and does not do them because he lets a little devil compounded of perversity and sentimentality run away with him.”⁴²

There is also a lot of nonverbal discursive hiatus in Yeats’s play texts, which can provide opportunity for a queer ambiguity, especially the dance scenes which have the potential to disturb the patriarchal authority of language. Some of these dramaturgical strategies are mentioned in recent essay collections, such as *Queer Dance* (2015) and *Queer Dramaturgies* (2016), as the main components of contemporary queer performance, but these works can also help us see where Yeats’s plays can lead queer. It should also be emphasized that a theatre which takes pleasure in escaping enclosure and fixed meaning, moving between multiple identities, layers of reality, and closeted identities and desires, is also a queer theatre that disrupts social and theatrical norms. Hence, I believe that a more comprehensive queer re-evaluation of Yeats’s drama is in order now.

The Gate and Druid Theatres recognized and demonstrated some of these potentialities of Yeats’s plays in performance: the character of Aleel in *The Countess Cathleen* was first played by Farr, but in its 1953 production, Micheál MacLiammóir took on the role: he was wearing heavy makeup and his lips were painted, recalling drag performance and also the spectacle of the male Dionysian dancers of *The Resurrection* (1931), who are dressed up as women and whose lips are painted vermilion. In 1987, Garry Hynes also directed Sophocles’s *Oedipus* in Yeats’s version in the Druid Lane Theater in Galway, and in this production, Oedipus King of Thebes was played by Marie Mullen, resulting in a similar drag spectacle.⁴³ Besides MacLiammóir and Hynes, Yukio Mishima, a gay Japanese poet and playwright, also recognized the queer potential of Yeats’s plays. Mishima translated many of Yeats’s Noh plays into Japanese and admired their aesthetic pessimism.⁴⁴ Mishima applied this aesthetic pessimism in his own Noh plays as well, in his descriptions of the painful beauty of Saint Sebastian’s pierced, naked body which bears affinities with the melancholy figure of Christ in Yeats’s *Calvary*. Interestingly, it was this spectacle that raised Mishima’s first same-sex desire, as described in his *Confessions of a Mask* (1949): “It is not pain that hovers about his straining chest, his tense abdomen, his slightly contorted hips, but some flicker of melancholy pleasure like music.”⁴⁵

In the following two sections, I illustrate how the use of the unhappy Lazarus motif and the implicit references to Narcissus in *Calvary* work to provide a discourse of legitimation for gay masculinities and same-sex love.⁴⁶ My focus is on melancholy, self-doubting masculinities and dramaturgies of exclusion and inclusion, for as Didier Eribon explains, any representation of an effeminate or melancholy/contemplative man implies “male homosexuality—all of them—even when one knows this has no basis in reality”⁴⁷ and “[a]nytime one speaks of homosexuality, then, it can only be heard as an attempt to affirm it, to flaunt it, it can only be seen as a provocative gesture or a militant act.”⁴⁸ Halberstam also stresses that signs of effeminacy (including contemplative, solitary, and melancholy men) have always been condemned by masculine societies as a threat to the politics of virility and as a betrayal of patriarchal fraternity.⁴⁹ While male bonding and homoerotic fraternity can be more easily worked into patriarchal social structures and narratives, the real threat is the refusal of these bonds—rejecting masculine mastery and choosing solitude instead, settling for a “non-suicidal disappearance of the subject,”⁵⁰ as the unhappy Lazarus aims to achieve in Yeats’s *Calvary*.

I also find it striking that Yeats’s plays defy conventional capitalist notions of success and heroism, deploying various processes of unbecoming, undoing social relations, disruption, confusion, failure, absence, silence, solitude, forgetting, unknowing, sorrow, dissidence, negativity, and refusal. Halberstam discusses these forms of negativity in relation to shadow or counterintuitive feminism, which arises from queer, postcolonial, and black feminisms and stresses that this kind of aesthetic pessimism is able to counter imperialist and nationalist projects of hope, which do not tolerate sorrow and negativity and which enforce happiness and optimism.⁵¹ Halberstam stresses that connecting queerness to death drive and failure works “to propose a relentless form of negativity in place of the forward-looking, reproductive, and heteronormative politics of hope that animates all too many political projects.”⁵² In fact, Yeats also claimed that he positioned himself against the mainstream political discourse to instead represent defeated, marginalized voices: “Why must I think the victorious cause the better? [...] I am satisfied [...] to find but drama. I prefer that the defeated cause should be more vividly described than that which has the advertisement of victory” (*VPL* 935). This aesthetic pessimism is not about nihilism, but about tracing the struggles of alternative ways of life, turning away from the restrictive normative ways to find and propose alternatives to traditional notions of authority, desire, social relations, and heroism. Halberstam calls this low theory⁵³ and compares it to Antonio Gramsci’s counterhegemony, which is the circulation of another, competing set of ideas to change society, or, in other words, it is “a detour en route to something else.”⁵⁴

**“SOME BOY OF FINE TEMPERAMENT:”
OSCAR WILDE, NARCISSUS, AND CHRIST AS COUNTER-HEROES**

One of the means of defying the (hetero)normative discourse is the creation of counter-heroes through a performance of effeminacy as authority, which appears both in Yeats's plays and in his writings about Wilde. In *A Vision*, Yeats mentions Wilde in Phase 19, along with the equally transgressive figures of Gabriele D'Annunzio, Lord Byron, and a certain actress (possibly referring to the great New Women actresses of his time). This is the phase of the disunity of being, where “the being is compelled to live in a fragment of itself and to dramatize the fragment” (AVB 110). Yeats claims that these people's thoughts express an exciting personality which is “always an open attack; or a sudden emphasis, an extravagance, or an impassioned declamation of some general idea, which is a more veiled attack” (AVB 111). Yeats's comment on Wilde is also striking: “I find in Wilde, too, something pretty, feminine, and insincere, derived from his admiration for writers of the 17th and earlier phases, and much that is violent, arbitrary and insolent, derived from his desire to escape” (AVB 112). Here the disunity of being and the extravagant personality are not necessarily negative. This phase and the people belonging to it seem to signify the performative turn, which is able to attack the discourse through a counter-performance of excess and difference. In fact, as Cullingford put it, Yeats too “had considerable trouble becoming a man”⁵⁵ and his sexual identity was indefinite; “[w]omen who loved women also loved Yeats.”⁵⁶

As Eribon explains, Wilde's “name quickly became the symbol both of gay culture and of the repression it inevitably calls down on itself whenever it goes too far in the direction of making itself public.”⁵⁷ Jason Edwards also holds that “Wilde's death in 1900 made Yeats more determined to use his work as a vehicle to increase public sympathy for homosexual men,”⁵⁸ mostly on behalf of Wilde and Roger Casement. For instance, in 1901, in his review of John Eglington's *Two Essays on the Remnant*, Yeats seizes the occasion to criticize the Irish state for airbrushing people like Wilde from the frameworks of recognition (CW10 53–59). Edwards also refers to an unpublished letter of Yeats written to John Quinn in 1914, in which Yeats expresses his sympathy for “the generation of the green carnation,” a flower which became symbolic of Wilde and homosexual recognition.⁵⁹ In “The Catastrophe,” Yeats also describes how his contemporaries responded to Wilde's arrest and lamented that “[t]he World is getting more manly!” (Au 284).

As to Greek mythology, Eribon highlights the use of Greek love and ancient Greece in literature, which have long been seen as “a locus of legitimation for loves between members of the same sex,”⁶⁰ and allowed gay people “to provide

themselves with a set of references that justified what Christian culture, social prejudices, and even the law condemned to silence.”⁶¹ David M. Halperin also believes that references to classical Greece and Greek love have become equal to references to same-sex love.⁶² Yeats refers to this in a letter to Lady Dorothy Wellesley in 1936:

Your lines have the magnificent swing of your boyish body. I wish I could be a girl of nineteen for certain hours that I might feel it even more acutely. [...] Have you noticed that the Greek androgynous statue is always the woman in man, never the man in woman? It was made for men who loved men first (*L* 875).

Yeats also associated Greek sculpture with power, movement, and dance: “Those riders upon the Parthenon had all the world’s power in their moving bodies and in a movement that seemed, so were the hearts of man and beast set upon it, that of a dance” (*AVB* 201). Moreover, Yeats’s first experience of Farr’s powerful queer stage presence in Todhunter’s *A Sicilian Idyll* (1890) was also in a Greek context, as she played “a brazen Hellenistic New Woman with a hint of lesbianism.”⁶³ As Laity explains, Yeats was fascinated with her grace and power, with her boyish beauty, and described her as “Greek and arrogant.”⁶⁴ In fact, the use of Greek, Roman, and Celtic mythologies along with Oriental themes and biblical frameworks in literature and theater have always been able to represent repressed subcultures and forbidden desires in code, thanks to their mainstream cultural position.

Yeats’s admiration for ancient Greek drama through his readings of Friedrich Nietzsche and his use of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy in his plays is well known,⁶⁵ yet his interest in ancient Greece also included the myth of Narcissus.⁶⁶ Hedwig Schwall has written about Yeats’s frequent use of the story of Narcissus and the nymph Echo in his poems to articulate the Poet-Muse relationship,⁶⁷ yet I believe that the same-sex aspects of the Narcissus story also feature in Yeats’s works, especially because the effeminate Narcissus staring at his own image was associated with Oscar Wilde at the time. Thomas Nast created a caricature of Wilde-as-Narcissus, and Wilde himself wrote a tale about Narcissus entitled “The Disciple,” in which the pool admits that he was also in love with Narcissus, as he saw his own image and beauty reflected in Narcissus’s loving eyes. Wilde also often compared Lord Alfred Douglas to Narcissus and Hyacinth. In a letter to Robert Ross, Wilde writes: “He is quite like narcissus—so white and gold. [...] Bosie is so tired: he lies like a hyacinth on the sofa, and I worship him.”⁶⁸ Another important link here is Nijinsky’s famous 1911 performance of Narcissus in Paris, in Mikhail Fokine’s ballet *Narcisse*, which encouraged same-sex love and effeminacy. Nijinsky’s relationship with Diaghilev, the founder of the *Ballets Russes* movement, furthered the connection between Nijinsky, Narcissus, and homosexuality.⁶⁹

Yeats, in his introductions to *Fighting the Waves* and *The Resurrection*, makes recurring references to a new type of love that is yet to be acknowledged and which “neither hate nor despair can destroy” (VPL 571); he also refers to the imminence of an age which includes, not excludes. Yeats seems to advocate for tolerance and acceptance here, stressing the importance of making rejected forms of life recognizable: “[o]ur civilization was about to reverse itself, or some new civilization about to be born from all that our age had rejected” (VPL 932) and “[p]erhaps we shall learn to accept even innumerable lives with happy humility” (VPL 935). Ben Levitas has also implied that, in fact, Yeats’s attempt to create the theater’s anti-self was also an attempt to create an anti-normative theater: a theater that is “more sensitive to an instinct of alienation, a dissentient unease adrift in consensus.”⁷⁰ Levitas demonstrates this in Yeats’s *The Land of Heart’s Desire*, where “‘the stranger’ [the fairy child who seduces the newly wed Mary Bruin] is also a ‘strangeness’: the unfamiliar, or de-familiarising, form that intrudes into the house of realist narrative and carries with it the power to disrupt the normative materialism of domesticity.”⁷¹

Yeats also identified himself with a female dancer, Herodiade, and described himself as someone who, in his effort to create an art that goes against accepted sureties and norms, is dancing alone in her luminous circles: “I am certain that there was something in myself compelling me to attempt creation of an art as separate from everything heterogenous and casual, from all character and circumstances, as some Herodiade of our theatre, dancing seemingly alone in her narrow moving luminous circle” (*Au* 247). This image can also recall Fuller’s famously transgressive Serpentine/Butterfly dances; she played Salomé as well as Herodiade, and Yeats mentions her in “Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen,” as her fluid movements seemed to “whirl out new right and wrong” (*VP* 430).

More pressingly, in “At Stratford-on-Avon” (1901), Yeats expressed his sympathy for young effeminate boys who prefer contemplation to physical activity, and condemned the toxic performance of hyper-masculinity. Yeats compares Shakespeare’s Richard II and Henry V and sides with Richard II, who had always been looked upon as a sentimental, melancholy, and weak king. He warns against the idealization of the hypermasculine Henry V, who was so good at performing power, and had a “a resounding rhetoric that move[d] men” (*E&I* 108). Although Richard II was expected to lead with “rough energy” (*E&I* 106), he had “nothing to give but some contemplative virtue” (*E&I* 106). Yeats continues that Shakespeare scholars:

took the same delight in abasing Richard II that school-boys do in persecuting some boy of fine temperament, who has weak muscles and a distaste for

school game. And they had the admiration for Henry that school-boys have for the sailor or soldier hero of a romance in some boys' papers. (*E&I* 104)

Yeats concludes that Shakespeare did not celebrate such hypermasculine heroes, but presented them with tragic irony. According to Edwards, Yeats in his defense of Richard II “eulogised Wilde,”⁷² as Richard “shared Wilde’s tragic destiny in being born in a masculine age antithetical to his own tender personality.”⁷³

Eribon explains the peculiar relation between gay men and art, and how this contemplative inner life can become a transformative energy, using an example from Marcel Proust’s *Cities of the Plain* (*Sodome et Gomorrhe*), in which Proust evokes a young boy mocked by the other boys, because he “walks alone for hours on the beach, sitting on boulders and questioning the blue sea with a melancholy eye, an eye already full of worry and persistence.”⁷⁴ In his essays about Wilde, Yeats associates Wilde’s life experience with insult and melancholy, and connects Wilde to Christ as well as to a Lazarus-like figure who cries because Christ healed him.⁷⁵ When everyone urged Wilde to run away from the insults, Yeats praised Wilde’s strength in not running away: “he has resolved to stay to face it, to stand the music like Christ” (*Au* 288). Yeats also associates Wilde’s name with performativity and to the Greeks, and compares his storytelling style to Homer’s and to “a dance [Yeats] once saw in a great house” (*Au* 133). Wilde also identified himself with the figure of Christ in *De Profundis* (1897), in which he mentions Christ’s name more than sixty times and sees him as a contemplative artist and writer like himself.⁷⁶

After detailing how Wilde had been trussed up, dragged up and down, been “hooted in the streets of various towns” (*Au* 132), and scorned by newspapers, Yeats mentions Wilde’s obsession with a tale about Christ, which made a lasting impact on Yeats’s imagination as well:

One day he began, “I have been inventing a Christian heresy,” and he told a detailed story, in the style of some early Father, of how Christ recovered after the Crucifixion, and escaping from the tomb, lived on for many years, the one man upon earth who knew the falsehood of Christianity (*Au* 136).

In the “The Catastrophe,” Yeats yet again mentions Wilde’s tale about Christ, which seemed to reflect Wilde’s difficulties as a gay man, and which Wilde repeated to himself when he was in deep melancholy. In this story, Christ meets three people who are unhappy because he healed them. Christ’s meeting with an old man grasped Yeats’s attention the most: “At last in the middle of the city He saw an old man crouching, weeping upon the ground, and when He asked

why he wept, the old man answered, ‘Lord, I was dead and You raised me into life, what else can I do but weep?’” (*Au* 286).

In his introduction to Wilde’s *The Happy Prince*, Yeats recalls this tale once again and claims that it “adds something new to the imagination of the world” (*CW6* 150). Here Yeats more explicitly connects Wilde’s life experience and melancholy with that of the weeping old man who tells Christ, “Lord, I was dead and you raised me into life, what else can I do but weep?” (*CW6* 150). This line is important as it can also describe the difficult life of people who face a precarious existence and stigma, people whom the heteronormative world either wants to exclude or “heal”—including them in its repressive, homogenizing narrative only to mark them as deviant, strange, emotional, and overly melancholy. It also implies that melancholy is part of this stigmatized life, which can cast a dark shadow even on the moments of greatest triumph, as Eribon also points out: “This ‘melancholy’ arises from the unending, unfinishable mourning of the loss homosexuality causes to homosexuals, that is to say, the loss of heterosexual ways of life, ways that are refused and rejected (or that you are obliged to reject because they reject you).”⁷⁷

Thomas Carlyle’s name should also be mentioned in this context. Carlyle’s book on heroism asserted that authority was strictly masculine; history was about great men, and greatness entailed a combination of aesthetic leadership and segregation. Hence, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* (1840) became a major point of reference for Fascist and nationalist visualities.⁷⁸ Carlyle was a major influence on Standish O’Grady and even on Wilde, but as Geraldine Higgins points out, Yeats was never really interested in Carlyle “except to disparage his prose style.”⁷⁹ Wilde built on Carlyle’s ideas on the hero, but only to challenge them by posing as an effeminate hero which “created a clear sense of gender and sexual difference.”⁸⁰ As Mirzoeff explains, this was a countervisual claim to autonomy, staged against Carlyle’s reality: “If his being Irish could not be posed as Heroic aristocracy because of his perceived embodied difference, Wilde repositioned it as a form of Heroic resistance to tyranny that nonetheless endorsed the continuance of a decentralized British empire.”⁸¹ For Mirzoeff, this countervisual claim is always performative, always goes against the masculine authority of visibility, and represents trans, queer, and feminist projects: it “is the means by which one tries to make sense of the unreality created by the visibility of authority while at the same time proposing a real alternative.”⁸²

Yeats also made a countervisual claim for Wilde: at a time when everyone saw Wilde as the exact opposite of a man of action, Yeats detailed Wilde’s tenderness and kindness, claiming that he “considered him essentially a man of action, [...] and [Wilde] would have been more important as a soldier or politician; and [Yeats] was certain that, guilty or not guilty, he would prove himself

a man” (*Au* 285). Here Yeats deconstructs the normative and gendered views of manliness, heroism, and authority as the opposite of tenderness, kindness, and effeminacy. This is similar to the example Mirzoeff uses in his book about Sojourner Truth, who presented herself as a hero of the US abolitionist movement that also “challenged the gendering of heroism as inevitably masculine.”⁸³ Yeats also recalls that Wilde created a counter-hero of himself through his performance of effeminacy as authority: “I had met a man who had found him in a barber’s shop in Venice, and heard him explain, ‘I am having my hair curled that I may resemble Nero’” (*Au* 285–86).

**“TAKE BUT HIS LOVE AWAY:”
QUEER LOVE AND CLOSETEDNESS IN CALVARY**

Calvary is usually interpreted in the context of the Easter Rising, and in fact it offers several layers of meaning. Here my focus is on the relationship between the male characters of the play, in light of Wilde’s legacy. *Calvary* features an emotionally loaded quarrel and breakup between Christ, who appears to represent patriarchal authority, and the disillusioned Lazarus and Judas. The two rebel against Christ’s and his invisible Father’s authoritative efforts, which are introduced by the image of a contemplative white heron staring at himself, refusing to act in any way. Yeats’s subtle allusions to Narcissus, and his focus on the eroticism of male friendships through the story of the raising of Lazarus in the subtext, can serve to legitimize the discourse about the strong emotional bond and love between men, as this episode of the Gospel of John (Jn 11–12) highlights the profound love and friendship between Christ and Lazarus. The crowd tells Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill,”⁸⁴ as a result of which he stays two days longer in the place where he is. This episode also shows the figure of Christ in great despair, weeping because of the possibility of losing the man he loves so much, and when the crowd sees him weeping, they exclaim, “See how he loved him!”⁸⁵

The choice of Christ’s figure as the central character could serve to stress the themes of *eros*, anti-authoritarianism, and melancholy masculinities in the play. According to the song of Isaiah, he was “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him.”⁸⁶ Christ was also seen by Wilde as “the supreme romantic type”⁸⁷ thanks to his imaginative nature and romantic temperament, and he had “all the colour-elements of life: mystery, strangeness, pathos, suggestion, ecstasy, love.”⁸⁸ After Flannery’s production of *Calvary* in 1965, MacLiammóir also paid a tribute to Yeats by claiming that he was a “free mind dealing with the greatest and most romantic figure in the world.”⁸⁹ For Wilde, Christ was also against laws and was inherently anti-authoritarian: “He would not hear of life being

sacrificed to any system of thought or morals.”⁹⁰ Portraying Lazarus as an unhappy rebel who turns against patriarchal authority—similar to Sylvia Plath’s “Lady Lazarus”—could further reinforce the play’s anti-authoritarianism and queer aesthetic.

Calvary was written in 1920 and published in 1921, but it was never performed during Yeats’s lifetime. The various productions of the play after Yeats’s death have never explicitly built on the queer sensibilities of the play, yet I believe *Calvary* can convey important messages about queerness today, once the more muted aspects of the play are highlighted. These include the physical touch between same-sex characters, the non-hierarchical characterization, and the rejection of unifying, homogenizing narratives and physical force in favor of contemplation. O’Brien includes in his description of queer dramaturgical strategies the questioning of fixed ideas of manhood, symbolic scenography, meta-commentary, and a sense of masculinity entrapped in the wrong body or the self-doubting, sometimes unhappy masculinities,⁹¹ all of which feature in *Calvary*. There is also a palpable tension between voices of exclusion and voices of inclusion in this play. On the one hand, it features a vocabulary of exclusion and insult along with a performance of hypermasculine authority, which work to ban emancipatory efforts; on the other hand, recalcitrant temperaments, self-consolation, self-sufficiency, and solitude are performed by the excluded characters to claim emancipation, visibility, and voice for themselves.

Calvary challenges our expectations; with every line, speech, and action it disrupts, changes, and fragments the linearity and orthodoxy of the biblical narrative to convey messages about the fluidity of performances of power, masculinity, and difference. Yeats goes against tradition here in many different ways, which is discussed in detail by Alexandra Poulain in *Irish Drama, Modernity and the Passion Play*. Poulain argues that in *Calvary*, Yeats distances himself from the traditional ritual of the Passion and neutralizes its performative efficiency; he also forces the Passion narrative into the alien theatrical form of the Noh, which it also challenges.⁹² Her analysis outlines the two major readings of the characters: one that reads Judas, Lazarus, the Roman soldiers, and the white heron as marginalized figures, who do not wish to ask anything from Christ and who claim freedom from the totalizing narrative of the Rising. At the same time, Christ can also be read as the marginalized character who cannot identify with the narrative of the Rising and the physical force it promotes.⁹³

But the play inevitably invites another reading as well, in which Lazarus, Judas, Christ, and the white heron belong to the same marginalized category, as against the totalizing force of Christ’s Father, the mocking crowd, and soldiers, who represent the world which operates with the semblance of inclusion, only to exclude those who do not wish to belong to its totalizing narrative. Poulain

also argues that Yeats rewrote the Easter Rising as an ironic Passion play in *Calvary* to show that the rebels' sacrifice "fails to include the whole nation within a single emancipatory narrative."⁹⁴ Yet the play's ambivalence and complexity, as well its implicit links to Wilde and Narcissus, make a space for a queer reading as well. *Calvary* clearly points out how the system fails to include certain stories and individuals in its main discourse—but by stressing this lack of inclusion and the structures of exclusion, it also fosters a narrative of recognition for those who feel stigmatized, questioning the masculine Carlylian and normative views of heroism. Radio Eireann scriptwriter Warren O'Connell also claimed that he saw the play as a "hymn of freedom of which Sartre or Beckett would have approved."⁹⁵

But *Calvary* is also a hymn of dissidence and solitude, and in fact, the refusal of inclusion and assimilation constitutes a seminal part of its queer dramaturgy. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed explains that "[h]eteronormativity functions as a form of public comfort by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape."⁹⁶ She calls this heterosexualization, which generates a feeling of discomfort and displacement in queer subjects whose bodies cannot sink into this space.⁹⁷ *Calvary* is full of male bodies perceiving such feelings of discomfort: the resurrected Lazarus who is longing for death and solitude, Christ standing completely vulnerable and exposed to the mocking crowd, and the famished heron who cannot fulfil his "conventional" duty to take action and eat. Ahmed's main argument is that the maintenance of this feeling of discomfort is an indispensable part of rejecting the homogenizing efforts, violence, and traps of heteronormativity, which either explicitly refuse queer subjects or want to assimilate them and create homonormativity.⁹⁸ Queer subjects reject normative ways of life because those norms reject them; therefore their resistance operates as a necessary shield and a counterattack.

Calvary can also be interpreted as a drama about closetedness, where the explicit expression of the word "love" to describe the relationship between men has performative power. I do not suggest that these characters should be read as ones with a queer subjectivity, but the play attempts to legitimize male lightness, tenderness, and expressions of affection between men. For Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "closetedness itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence [...] in relation to the discourse that surrounds and differentially constitutes it."⁹⁹ Thus whenever the word love is used to describe the relationship between two men it becomes a performative act, which can also function as a claim for the right to look: "The right to look is not about seeing. It begins at a personal level with the look into someone's eyes to express friendship, solidarity, or love. [...] The right to look claims autonomy, not individualism or voyeurism, but the claim to a political subjectivity and collectivity."¹⁰⁰ This

subjectivity can arrange the visible and the sayable, and in this play the expression of love between men becomes visible and sayable through the framework of the Lazarus-Christ and Judas-Christ relationships. Wilde also refers to the Lazarus-Christ and Judas-Christ bonds in his *Ballad of Reading Gaol*:

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,
 In silence let him lie:
 No need to waste the foolish tear,
 Or heave the windy sigh:
 The man had killed the thing he loved,
 And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,
 By all let this be heard,
 Some do it with a bitter look,
 Some with a flattering word,
 The coward does it with a kiss,
 The brave man with a sword!¹⁰¹

The quarrel between Christ, Lazarus, and Judas is introduced by the image of a passive, contemplative white heron that should be fishing in the stream. Yet the heron is not able to do anything but stare at his own reflection, “upon the glittering image of a heron” (VPL 781), and eventually dies because he is so dumbfounded by his own image that he forgets to eat and drowns in the water. It is usually this white heron that causes confusion for the audience and the readers, as the heron is the key symbol of the play, and thus the play’s meaning depends on how we interpret the heron’s role. This is an image which does not immediately make sense, which is one of the play’s queer dramaturgical elements. If we consider the more hidden same-sex references and moments of the play, this heron could be read as a Narcissus-like figure, which not only implies self-love but love of the same sex, especially because neither the heron nor Narcissus were aware that they were fascinated with their own reflections.¹⁰²

According to Ovid, a young boy named Ameinias fell in love with Narcissus, who did nothing but scorn the nymphs and the company of young people. Thus Ameinias cursed him, saying “May he himself fall in love with another, as we have done with him! May he too be unable to gain his loved one!”¹⁰³ In fact, what we call narcissism today is better characterized by Narcissus before he fell in love with his own reflection, when he still mocked people for their feelings and desires for him. Once he fell in love with his reflection (not knowing it was his own image), the other became more important to him than his own self, representing the absolute collapse of self-centered, arrogant narcissism.

Ovid's description of Narcissus features similar keywords to the ones we find in Yeats's play: dream, contemplation, whiteness, and motionlessness. And the solution to this complicated desire is death, transformation, and then re-birth as a flower. Ovid writes:

[w]hile [Narcissus] sought to quench his thirst, another thirst grew in him, and as he drank, he was enchanted by the beautiful reflection that he saw. He fell in love with an insubstantial hope, mistaking a mere shadow for a real body. Spellbound by his own self, he remained there motionless, with fixed gaze, like a statue carved from Parian marble. As he lay on the bank, he gazed at the twin stars that were his eyes, at his flowing locks, worthy of Bacchus or Apollo, his smooth cheeks, his ivory neck, his lovely face where a rosy flush stained the snowy whiteness of his complexion, admiring all the features for which he himself was admired.¹⁰⁴

Like Narcissus, the white heron in *Calvary* is also

“Motionless under the moon-beam,
Up to his feathers in the stream;
Although fish leap, the white heron
Shivers in a dumbfounded dream.
[...]
Although half famished he'll not dare
Dip or do anything but stare
Upon the glittering image of a heron,
That now is lost and now is there.
[...]
But that the full is shortly gone
And after that is crescent moon,
It's certain that the moon-crazed heron
Would be but fishes' diet soon. (VPL 780–81)

The meta-commentary on the white heron provided by the three Musicians serves to express a discourse of exclusion, and also to challenge that discourse. One of the key phrases in *Calvary* is the repetition of “God has not died for the white heron” (VPL 780) three times at the beginning of the play and “God has not appeared to the birds” (VPL 787) at the end, after the crucifixion. Both lines are uttered by the Second Musician, and the birds are constantly associated with the three male characters in the play. The First and Third Musicians speak for Christ, the heron, Judas, and Lazarus, creating for them a countervisual claim to autonomy which refuses segregation and categorization, and which claims the right to existence.¹⁰⁵ The Second Musician, however, seems to represent the world which defines itself only by excluding others, like heteronormativity

and patriarchy. Thus, the function of this repetitive phrase is to exclude the solitary white heron, the birds, Judas, and Lazarus from the realm of normalcy, here represented by the invisible Father figure. It operates with the performative power of insult, whose aim is to mark the consciousness of those whom it excludes. The repeated phrase represents the visuality of authority which separates, segregates, classifies whom it visualizes, counters desire, and refuses all emancipatory efforts.¹⁰⁶

When Lazarus and then Judas appear in the play, both terrify the crowds and represent the appearance of strangeness which has no place in the normative narrative—and the crowd turns and flees from this strangeness. In his notes to *Calvary*, Yeats also connects the solitary, contemplative birds to the subjective age which includes the individual, as opposed to the objective one which oppresses and excludes them: “such lonely birds as the heron, hawk, eagle, and swan, are the natural symbols of subjectivity, especially when floating upon the wind alone or alighting upon some pool or river” (VPL 789). The song for the folding and unfolding of the cloth at the end of the play continues this solitary bird imagery. The Second Musician insists on excluding these birds by claiming that “God has not appeared to the birds” (VPL 787), but the First and Third Musicians celebrate the lonely birds who have chosen their part and who are content with their savage hearts. The First Musician then portrays two swans flying next to each other, which in the context of the play’s theme of strong male friendships, appears like an image of same-sex alliance: “why do they fling / White wing out white wing? / What can a swan need but a swan?” (VPL 788).

The reference to birds also carries a queer undertone today, since in literature and the arts birds are often used as synonyms for queer people, effeminate gay men, and forbidden desires, as in Yeats’s *The Land of Heart’s Desire* or in Tennessee Williams’s *Orpheus Descending*.¹⁰⁷ Yeats’s famous collaborator Edmund Dulac’s painting, *Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon as Medieval Saints* (1920), is also a good example of the fusion of bird symbolism, Christianity, and queer undertones, as the saints are holding a kingfisher and a peacock feather in their hands. Interestingly, Julian Carter in *Queer Dance* mentions bird-women and swans as symbols of queer resistance and queer becoming, as “feathers do not lend themselves to conventional argumentative trajectories.”¹⁰⁸

Just like Narcissus, Christ becomes both the violator and the victim in this play, as he seems to represent patriarchal authority and wants to seem “all-powerful” (VPL 784). But masculinity is entrapped in the wrong body here, as Christ fails to perform the role of conventional patriarchal authority. Poulain claims that Christ’s “own power, a mere extension of his autocratic Father’s, is the power of the Word with which he handles his creatures like mere puppets.”¹⁰⁹ Christ tries to explain his authoritarianism with statements like “[m]y Father put all men into my hands” (VPL 784) and “I do my Father’s will”

(VPL 783). Instead of physical force, he uses emotional arguments to impose his power on Lazarus and Judas and make them feel uncomfortable, emphasizing how generous he has been to them; therefore they should never complain. This is like the “self-authorizing of authority”¹¹⁰ which makes certain forms of violence and insult appear legal and benign.

Yet Christ is also contemplative, vulnerable, and self-doubting; before his quarrel with Lazarus, he “dreams His passion through” (VPL 781) and “[h]e stands amid a mocking crowd, / Heavily breathing” (VPL 781). He is presented as someone who is the opposite of conventional images of masculinity, as “[h]e climbs up hither but as a dreamer climbs” (VPL 781) and he “wears away His strength” (VPL 781). Poulain claims that Christ’s figure also challenges the traditional Noh structure, in which Christ should be the *shite* (the one who acts). Yet here he is the passive *waki* instead, who fulfils the role of spectator: “he is the passive, visionary dreamer who conjures the shadows of the past onto the stage and hears their grievances.”¹¹¹ The words “mockery,” “mock,” and “mockers” are mentioned only with reference to Christ, who must endure this derision to obey his Father. Lazarus points this out, indicating that Christ is performing a role that was forced on him: when Christ defends himself “I do my Father’s will,” (VPL 783), Lazarus reproaches him “[a]nd not your own” (VPL 783). This resonates with Mario Mieli’s idea that stigmatized and oppressed subjectivities sometimes internalize the figure of the oppressor in order to resist and reject centuries of victimhood,¹¹² which is in fact similar not only to what Christ and Lazarus do in the play, but also to Wilde’s wish to resemble Nero, and pose as a Carlylian hero only to subvert these conventional power images.

Christ experiences exclusion and mockery because he is different: he sings as First Musician, “O, but the mockers’ cry / Makes my heart afraid, / As though a flute of bone / Taken from a heron’s thigh, / A heron crazed by the moon, / Were cleverly, softly played” (VPL 781–82) The fact that these characters can be read as both antagonists and protagonists also contributes to the non-hierarchical, more dialectical dramaturgical structure which is part of the play’s queer dramaturgy. The crowd’s mocking reaction to Lazarus, Judas, and Christ positions all three characters in a lower dramaturgical position as the embodiments of strangeness and disruption. Yet Yeats gives voice to the stories and grievances of all three of them, so that we can understand why Lazarus and Judas have to turn away from Christ, while at the same time sympathizing with Christ’s pain.

Christ’s grievance is that he feels betrayed by the two men with whom he shared a strong emotional bond, and who abandon him here because of his performance of patriarchal authority. This is very similar to Narcissus’s tragedy, who cried out at his own image: “Whoever you are, come out to me! Oh boy beyond compare, why do you elude me? Where do you go, when I try to reach you? [...] Where are you fleeing? Cruel creature, stay, do not desert the one

who loves you!”¹¹³ Leo Bersani argues that homosexuality is often seen by the normative discourse as congenial to betrayal, which is manifested in refusing to identify with other men as a group.¹¹⁴ This is a kind of strangely heroic act of unbecoming that refuses to surrender to a higher phallic order, which is an interesting idea to consider in the context of the Lazarus-Christ and Judas-Christ relationships in the play.

Lazarus’s grievance is that Christ “dragged [him] to the light” (*VPL* 782) despite his will to lay dead in “an old mountain cavern” (*VPL* 782). Lazarus laments that Christ “disturb[ed] that corner / Where [he] had thought [he] might lie safe for ever” (*VPL* 783), and he also suggests that their fate is the same, in that both are travelling towards death.

Lazarus. You took my death, give me your death instead.
Christ. I gave you life.
Lazarus. But death is what I ask.
 Alive I never could escape your love,
 And when I sickened towards my death I thought,
 ‘I’ll to the desert, or chuckle in a corner,
 Mere ghost, a solitary thing.’ I died
 And saw no more until I saw you stand
 In the opening of the tomb; ‘Come out!’ you called;
 You dragged me to the light as boys drag out
 A rabbit when they have dug its hole away;
 And now with all the shouting at your heels
 You travel towards the death I am denied. (*VPL* 782–83)

The way Lazarus describes Christ’s “benign” violence here is evocative of the ways discourse forces queer people to talk about their sexuality, to escape from the safety of the closet only to categorize them as abnormal and prove the healthiness of normalcy, which Foucault calls the “formidable trap”¹¹⁵ of discourse. This is how power wants to hide itself beneath the mask of tolerance. Foucault also asserts that “power in the West is what displays itself the most, and thus hides itself the best.”¹¹⁶ Dragging Lazarus to the light was an act of visualizing him despite his will, and as Mirzoeff explains, this kind of visualization is “part of the labor of being analyzed.”¹¹⁷ But Lazarus refuses this action and demands a way for himself to find safety and solitude again among solitary birds; he commands Christ to take his controlling eyes off him.

After Flannery’s production of *Calvary*, an audience member asked MacLiammóir why he thought Lazarus was so unhappy about being brought back from the dead, and MacLiammóir answered with a question: “Madam, wouldn’t you?”¹¹⁸ This was similar to Oscar Wilde’s tale in which the old man

turned to Christ: “Lord, I was dead and you raised me into life, what else can I do but weep?” (CW6 150)

The above quarrel between Christ and Lazarus also illustrates one of the main queer aesthetic elements of the play, namely, the combination of and tension between the death drive (*Thanatos*) and the life drive (*eros*).¹¹⁹ The connection between the death drive and queer aesthetics is well established, but Gordon Elliot Walker associates the combination of life and death instincts with queer aesthetics in his study of Jean Cocteau’s Orpheus trilogy, in which Cocteau dramatized the meeting of Orpheus and Narcissus and created the character of Orpheus Narcissus, who exists at the intersection between desire and death. As Herbert Marcuse explains in *Eros and Civilization*, Narcissus is usually seen as representing contemplation, beauty, and death drive—like Lazarus, who is not afraid of death, the only thing for which he asks—while the Orphic Eros masters death through liberation.

Yet, as Walker demonstrates, this also works the other way round, with Narcissus representing the life drive and Orpheus standing for the death drive, travelling constantly towards death. This interchangeability demonstrates the coexistence of the two instincts in these figures; just like Yeats in *Calvary*, Jean Cocteau combines these two instincts in the character of Orpheus Narcissus to generate a queer aesthetic.¹²⁰ Marcuse also asserts:

“[t]he classical tradition associates Orpheus with the introduction of homosexuality. Like Narcissus, he rejects the normal Eros, not for an ascetic ideal, but for a fuller Eros. Like Narcissus, he protests against the repressive order of procreative sexuality. The Orphic and Narcissistic Eros is to the end the negation of this order—the Great Refusal.¹²¹

Marcuse further details that both Orpheus and Narcissus are akin to Dionysus—who, in the Orphic mythology is also often identified with Narcissus—and represent aestheticism and contemplation. Thus, they become the exact antithesis of Prometheus, the voice which commands and who represents conventional masculinity and the performance principle, like the invisible Father/God figure in *Calvary*. Orpheus himself is akin to Narcissus, as according to Ovid’s description, he abstained from the love of women and offered his love to young and tender boys, as a result of which the Ciconian women mocked him and threw stones at him while he sang.

The quarrel between Judas and Christ in *Calvary* is introduced by the First Musician, who sings about the love between the two men: “Take but His love away, / Their love becomes a feather / Of eagle, swan or gull, / Or a drowned heron’s feather / Tossed hither and thither / Upon the bitter spray / And the moon at the full” (VPL 784). Even though this passage could refer

to the love of God, its dramaturgical position—it comes right after Lazarus leaves the stage and just before Judas appears—makes it an ambiguous reference that can also imply the profound love between Christ, Lazarus, and Judas. Judas also wants to break away from the patriarchal authority represented by Christ and his Father: “I have betrayed you / Because you seemed all powerful. [...] And is there not one man / In the wide world that is not in your power?” (VPL 784). Judas continues: “I could not bear to think you had but to whistle / And I must do; but after that I thought, / ‘Whatever man betrays Him will be free’; And life grew bearable again” (VPL 785). He kisses Christ, after which Christ is crucified, mocked, and danced around by Roman soldiers/gamblers. It is also worth mentioning that Yeats used the *eros* as a political weapon and the crucifixion was often equivalent to sexuality: in the Free State years, “Yeats constructed the erotic in opposition to the Catholic sexual ethic, and to censorship.”¹²² The Roman soldiers dancing around the crucified body of Christ also recall Yeats’s closing image of his essay “The Catastrophe,” in which harlots begin a mocking dance at the news of Wilde’s condemnation: “When the verdict was announced the harlots in the streets outside danced upon the pavement” (Au 291).

After these emotional quarrels and the recalcitrance of Lazarus and Judas, Christ’s reaction is not rage or violence, as would be expected from an oppressive patriarchal authority, but sadness and a painful renunciation of the love of his two companions. Instead of blaming Judas or Lazarus, Christ’s perception of his Father changes, and he seems to realize that it was his Father who betrayed him by forcing on him this performance of masculine authority. While lying on the cross surrounded by dancing men, he cries out: “My Father, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (VPL 787).

The Roman soldiers not only dance around him, but they talk about quarrels and friendship between men. They are holding hands, which is a spectacle of male same-sex alliance, and also an ironic commentary on the main action, which mocks and insults Christ because he was unable to settle the quarrels and keep the love of the two men: “In the dance / We quarrel for a while, but settle it / By throwing dice, and after that, being friends, / Join hand to hand and wheel about the cross” (VPL 787). The stage direction makes it clear that unlike Lazarus, Judas stays and helps place Christ’s body on the cross. Even though there are no details regarding the movements of the characters here, this scene must include some sort of physical contact between Christ’s body and Judas, followed by the dancing gamblers holding hands.

The Resurrection (1931) can also help us interpret Yeats’s *Calvary*; in this play, the figure of Christ appears as a strangeness disturbing the world of reason and science, represented by the Greek man. Here Christ is also associated with Dionysus and his worshippers, who consist of men dressed up as women,

dancing with one another in a trance: "What a spectacle! In Alexandria a few men paint their lips vermilion. They imitate women that they may attain in worship a woman's self-abandonment" (VPL 915). The appearance of Christ at the end of the play forces the Greek man to confront this strangeness by touching Christ's body. Clare Croft also emphasizes that queerness exists and arises very much from the realm of the affection of touch, and stresses the great power of the press of bodies in queer performance, which has a potential to teach new ways of looking.¹²³ The Greek man expects the body to be disembodied, but he suddenly feels Christ's body and screams. This is "the shock of a man of science" (VPL 98), but also a kind of male homosexual panic which "became the normal condition of male heterosexual entitlement."¹²⁴ In Flannery's production the dancers were placed onstage, and he claimed that male dancers performing an ecstatic dance in the moment when the Greek man touched Christ's breast reinforced the play's main action.¹²⁵

In *The Secret Rose* (1897) Yeats included a story, "The Crucifixion of the Outcast," which also resonates with the vicissitudes of Wilde's life after his incarceration for sodomy and gross indecency in 1895. This story appears like an early draft of *Calvary*. Yeats mentions in "The Catastrophe" that Wilde found this story "sublime, wonderful, wonderful" (Au 287). Its protagonist, Cumhal, is an artist, and Yeats's description of him evokes Wilde: a man with a thin brown hair and a pale face, who wore a short, parti-colored doublet and pointed shoes. Just as in *Calvary*, the crucifixion provides the framework here: it happens in Cumhal's mind's eye at the beginning of the story, and becomes reality at the end. Cumhal sees the crosses and thinks that "just such another vagabond like himself was hanged on one of them" (CWVP7 7). The traces of violence towards people like him suddenly causes him bodily discomfort, and he begins shivering and sweating at this vision. In his search for a place to sleep, he is exiled to a cold outbuilding; when he raises his voice against this condition, he is ignored. Nevertheless his response is not anger but art, and he begins singing.

The men of the town become enraged by the strange, effeminate singing man. They panic; fearing that his behavior will spread to the children, they decide to silence him. The crosses are full, which indicates a mass murder of people these men have found deviant in some way: "Then we must make another cross. If we do not make an end of him another will, for who can eat and sleep in peace when *men like him* are going about the world?" (CWVP7 13; my emphasis). When they are ready to crucify Cumhal, the townsmen continue to verbally humiliate him, making it clear that they are normal and respectable, while his kind is abnormal; they compare him to the wind. Cumhal, however, speaks in his own defense and expresses pride in being like the wind: "Friend," answered the glee man, 'my soul is indeed like the wind, and it blows me to

and fro, and up and down, a lid puts many things in my mind and out of my mind, and therefore am I called the Swift, Wild Horse” (CWVP7 15). The final image is very similar to that of *Calvary*: beggars, wolves, and birds surround him ready to tear his body apart, but he calls them outcasts too, and cries out at their betrayal just like Christ in *Calvary*: “Outcasts,’ he moaned, ‘have you also turned against the outcast?’” (CWVP7 19).

Calvary has been interpreted in different ways, but given the pervasive presence of Wilde’s influence in Yeats’s theater, the play also examines the repressive power and patriarchal authority of normalcy and insult on queer love. *Calvary* attempts to acknowledge the hurts and experiences of exclusion that stigmatized people have to endure, but it also demonstrates the transformative energies that this journey entails. If staged today at one of the gay theater festivals, Yeats’s *Calvary* would fit in perfectly, as many contemporary gay/queer theater productions build on biblical frameworks and Greek mythology to portray melancholy masculinities, thus challenging today’s homogenizing gay aesthetic which wants to create homonormativity and see happy gay people assimilated into heteronormative social structures. In its own historical context, *Calvary* was an unconventional play, featuring insecure, contemplative anti-Carlylian characters who embraced failure and difference at a time when the mainstream political and religious discourses condemned men who lived in sadness and showed too much tenderness.¹²⁶ Even today, a play like *Calvary* would be unusual as it displays a “move towards a fuller understating of the non-mainstream gay men who face the challenges of precarious existence, incumbent stigma and disability, and are yet politically involved,”¹²⁷ as O’Brien put it with regard to contemporary queer dramaturgies. Yeats’s drama is, therefore, able to call the normative frames into question and create countervisuality for those who are left outside, thus making visible lives that are “exceeding the normative conditions of recognizability.”¹²⁸

NOTES

1. David Cregan, “Coming Out: Frank McGuinness’s Dramaturgy and Queer Resistance,” *Irish University Review* 40, no. 1 (2010): 46.
2. See Judit Nényei, *Thought Outdanced: The Motif of Dancing in Yeats and Joyce* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2002) and Sylvia C. Ellis, *The Plays of W. B. Yeats: Yeats and the Dancer* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).
3. See Susan Cannon Harris, *Irish Drama and the Other Revolutions: Playwrights, Sexual Politics and the International Left, 1892–1964* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).
4. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), 1–3.
5. Clare Croft, “Introduction,” in *Queer Dance: Meanings and Makings*, ed. Clare Croft (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1–37, 2.

6. Elizabeth Cullingford, *Gender and History in Yeats's Love Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 6.
7. Hélène Cixous, quoted in Cullingford, *Gender*, 20.
8. Cullingford, *Gender*, 269.
9. Isadora Duncan writes about the affinities between dance, the Greeks, freedom, and the movement of waves and the wind in *The Art of Dance* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1928).
10. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 19.
11. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 16.
12. See Cassandra Laity, "W. B. Yeats and Florence Farr: The Influence of the 'New Woman' Actress on Yeats's Changing Images of Women," *Modern Drama*, 28, no. 4 (1985): 620–37.
13. Bernhardt was famous for her provocative en travesti roles. Among many other characters, she played Pelléas in Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1904) in London, and Yeats was amazed by the spectacle of Bernhardt and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as lovers in that production. See Katherine Worth, *The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 39.
14. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 12.
15. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 50.
16. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 48.
17. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 48.
18. G. B. Shaw quoted in Harris, *Irish Drama*, 50.
19. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 53.
20. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 12.
21. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 54.
22. See George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: H. Fertig, 1985).
23. See Linda Connolly, "Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish Revolution," Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute Working Paper Series, No. 7 (2019) and Gemma Clarke, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
24. See Mark Phelan, "Irish Responses to Fascist Italy, 1919–1932" (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland Galway, 2013) and Caitríona Beaumont, "Women, citizenship, and Catholicism in the Irish free state, 1922/1948," *Women's History Review* 6, no. 4 (December 1997): 563–85.
25. For more details see Susan Cannon Harris, *Gender and Modern Irish Drama* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).
26. Colm Tóibín refers to the alleged homosexuality of Lennox Robinson and his close friendship with George and W. B. Yeats in Tóibín, *New Ways to Kill Your Mother: Writers and Their Families* (New York: Scribner, 2012), 69.
27. Quoted in Michael Patrick Lapointe, "Edward Martyn's Theatrical Hieratic Homoeroticism," In *Deviant Acts: Essays on Queer Performance*, ed. David Cregan, Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2009, 82.
28. See Sonja Tiernan, "Tabloid Sensationalism or Revolutionary Feminism?: The First-Wave Feminist Movement in an Irish Women's Periodical," *Irish Communication Review* 12, no. 1, (2010): 77–87.
29. See Jennifer L. Campbell, "Dancing Marines and Pumping Gasoline: Coded Queerness in Depression-Era American Ballet," in *Queer Dance: Meanings and Makings*, ed. Clare Croft (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 126–27. See also Peter Stoneley, *A Queer History of the Ballet* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

30. See Terri A. Mester, *Movement and Modernism: Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Williams, and Early Twentieth-Century Dance* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 73.
31. For Pirandello's and D'Annunzio's collaboration with New Women artists and their resulting feminist and queer theater see, for instance, Lucia Re's articles on D'Annunzio, "Eleonora Duse and Women: Performing Desire, Power and Knowledge," *Italian Studies* 70, no. 30 (2015): 347–63 and "D'Annunzio, Duse, Wilde, Bernhardt: il rapporto autore/attrice fra decadentismo e modernità," *MLN* 117, no. 1, Italian Issue (January 2002): 115–52, and also James Jason Hartford's discussion of D'Annunzio's *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* (1911) in *Sexuality, Iconography, and Fiction in French: Queering the Martyr*. Oxford, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. For Pirandello, see Daniela Bini, *Pirandello and His Muse: The Plays for Marta Abba* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998) and John Champagne, *Aesthetic Modernism and Masculinity in Fascist Italy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).
32. Cormac O'Brien, "Gay Masculinities in Performance: Towards a Queer Dramaturgy," *Irish Theatre International* 3 no. 1 (2014): 76.
33. O'Brien, "Gay Masculinities," 81.
34. O'Brien, "Gay Masculinities," 83.
35. Audre Lorde explains that anti-erotic, patriarchal societies fear the erotic and relegate it to the bedroom alone because the erotic helps recognise the power of one's own body and a joy which is not achieved with marriage or belief in God. Lorde, "The Power of the Erotic," in *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*, Penguin Modern 23 (London: Penguin Books, 2018), 13.
36. Gabriele Brandstetter, *Poetics of Dance: Body, Image, and Space in Historical Avant-gardes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 89.
37. Harris, *Irish Drama*, 4.
38. Croft, *Queer Dance*, 3.
39. Croft, *Queer Dance*, 7.
40. James W. Flannery, "Action and Reaction at the Dublin Theatre Festival," *Educational Theatre Journal* 19, no. 1 (March 1967): 80.
41. Alyson Campbell and Stephen Farrier, eds., *Queer Dramaturgies: International Perspectives on Where Performance Leads Queer* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 3.
42. Lapointe, "Edward Martyn's Theatrical Hieratic Homoeroticism," 76.
43. Photographs, reviews and other details of these performances are available in the digitized Gate Theatre Archive and Druid Archive of the National University of Ireland, Galway.
44. John K. Gillespie, "Beyond Byzantium: Aesthetic Pessimism in Mishima's Modern Noh Plays," *Monumenta Nipponica* 37, no.1 (Spring 1982): 29–39.
45. Yukio Mishima, *Confessions of a Mask*, transl. Meredith Weatherby (New Directions Publishing, 1958), 27.
46. Dider Eribon discusses the use of classical mythology and Oriental themes as a means of legitimizing the discourse about same-sex love in Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
47. Eribon, *Insult*, 71.
48. Eribon, *Insult*, 16.
49. Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 160.
50. Leo Bersani, quoted in Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 150.
51. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 106.
52. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 106.
53. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 15.
54. Stuart Hall quoted in Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 15.
55. Cullingford, *Gender*, 5.

56. Cullingford, *Gender*, 269.
57. Eribon, *Insult*, 145.
58. Jason Edwards, "'The Generation of the Green Carnation': Sexual Degeneration, The Representation of Male Homosexuality, and the Limits of Yeats's Sympathy," in *Modernist Sexualities*, eds. Hugh Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 45.
59. Edwards, "'The Generation of the Green Carnation,'" 54.
60. Eribon, *Insult*, 155.
61. Eribon, *Insult*, 156.
62. David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990).
63. Laity, "W. B. Yeats and Florence Farr," 622.
64. W. B. Yeats quoted in Laity, "W. B. Yeats and Florence Farr," 623.
65. See Susan Jones, "Nietzsche, Modernism, and Dance: Dionysian or Apollonian?" in *Literature, Modernism, and Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 44–70.
66. Brian Arkins discusses Yeats's use of Greek mythology in Arkins, *Builders of My Soul: Greek and Roman Themes in Yeats* (Savage, Md.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1990); see also Elizabeth Muller, "Defining Beauty: The Paterian Yeats," *International Yeats Studies* 2, no. 1 (November 2017): 24–45.
67. Hedwig Schwall, "Allegories of Writing: Figurations of Narcissus and Echo in W. B. Yeats's Work" in *Writing Modern Ireland*, ed. Catherine E. Paul (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 24.
68. Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, eds. Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), 526.
69. Mester, *Movement and Modernism*, 73.
70. Ben Levitas, "The Dancer and the Heart's Desire: W. B. Yeats and the Theatre of Modernity," *The Yeats Journal of Korea* 56 (2018): 112.
71. Levitas, "The Dancer and the Heart's Desire," 120.
72. Edwards, "'The Generation of the Green Carnation,'" 46
73. Edwards, "'The Generation of the Green Carnation,'" 40.
74. Marcel Proust quoted in Eribon, *Insult*, 30.
75. Yeats tended to associate effeminate men with the figure of Christ, and he made a comparison between Christ and the sexually transgressive Mohini Chatterjee as well, who was always described by men (including Wilde) as beautiful and attractive. See Rajbir Singh Judge, "Dusky Countenances: Ambivalent Bodies and Desires in the Theosophical Society," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 27, no. 2 (May 2018): 264–93.
76. Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis and Other Prison Writings*, ed. Colm Tóibín (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 122.
77. Eribon, *Insult*, 37.
78. See Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press, 2011), 17.
79. Geraldine Higgins, *Heroic Revivals from Carlyle to Yeats* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 12.
80. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 151.
81. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 152.
82. Nicholas Mirzoeff, "The Right to Look," *Critical Inquiry* 37, no. 3 (Spring 2011): 485.
83. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 147.
84. Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 167.
85. Coogan, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 168.

86. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 121.
87. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 125.
88. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 123.
89. Micheál MacLiammóir quoted in Flannery, "Action and Reaction," 72.
90. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 127.
91. O'Brien, "Gay Masculinities," 85–86.
92. Alexandra Poulain, *Irish Drama, Modernity and the Passion Play* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 56.
93. Poulain, *Irish Drama*, 54–55.
94. Poulain, *Irish Drama*, 61.
95. Quoted in Flannery, "Action and Reaction," 78.
96. Ahmed, 148.
97. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 148.
98. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 149.
99. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 3.
100. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 1.
101. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 232.
102. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (London: Routledge, 1956), 167.
103. Ovid, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, transl. Mary M. Innes (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1955), 92.
104. Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, 92.
105. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 4.
106. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 3.
107. George E. Haggerty, *Gay Histories and Cultures* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 516.
108. Julian B. Carter, "Chasing Feathers: Jérôme Bel, *Swan Lake*, and the Alternative Futures of Re-Enacted Dance," in *Queer Dance*, 109.
109. Poulain, *Irish Drama*, 58–59.
110. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 7.
111. Poulain, *Irish Drama*, 60.
112. Mario Mieli, *Elementi di critica omosessuale* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017), 131.
113. Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, 92–93.
114. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 151.
115. Michael Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings: 1977–1987*, transl. A. Sheridan, ed. L. D. Kritzman (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 114.
116. Foucault, *Politics*, 118.
117. Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 10.
118. Micheál MacLiammóir, quoted in Flannery, "Action and Reaction," 79.
119. Freud introduced these concepts in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).
120. Gordon Elliot Walker, "Jean Cocteau: Orpheus Narcissus" (MA thesis, Louisiana State University, 2015), 13.
121. Marcuse, *Eros*, 171.
122. Cullingford, *Gender*, 8.
123. Croft, *Queer Dance*, 14.
124. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 185.
125. Flannery, "Action and Reaction," 74.
126. Wilde, *De Profundis*, 107.
127. O'Brien, "Gay Masculinities," 85.
128. Butler, *Frames of War*, 4.