Tekijä: Rantonen, Eila
Nimeke: A game of chess : race, gender and nation in Neil Jordan's The crying game


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In order to understand contemporary racism and the postcolonial situation we have to explore the ideas of national boundaries and national belonging. Moreover, the discourses of nation and race are saturated with gendered connotations. For instance, Anne McClintock has asserted that nationalism is radically constitutive of people's identities through social contests that are frequently violent and always gendered. Nationalisms are dangerous in the sense that they represent relations with the technologies of violence.\footnote{In fact, in cultural analysis it is often forgotten that race, nation and gender are not just additive to one another. They do not just provide metaphors and images for each other but work together and develop in each other's crucible, as Ania Loomba has stated.} The Crying Game (UK, 1992) raises in a challenging way the critical issue of how the myriad dynamics of race, nation and gender come together. The film, written and directed by Neil Jordan, deals with the Troubles in Northern Ireland by combining the genres of thriller and a love story. Although the director, Jordan, is Irish, the film was produced in Britain like many films centering on the Northern Irish conflict.

The film's language of war directs attention to national boundaries. In its depiction of national violence and blackness in relation to Irishness and Britishness, The Crying Game reflects the contemporary neocolonial and postcolonial situation in Britain and Northern Ireland. In fact, Ireland has been Britain's oldest colony. Although today both Eire and Northern Ireland may also be defined as postcolonial regions, for the IRA and for many Catholic nationalists in Eire and Northern Ireland, the British are still considered to be occupiers. For them there may be nothing "post" about British colonialism at all.

As a political-thriller The Crying Game deals with the kidnapping of a black British soldier, Jody, by the IRA. The protagonist, the IRA fighter Fergus shares Jody's wait for his execution. However, Jody finally dies by accident in an attack on the IRA's hideout in Armagh. Fergus escapes to London, where he meets Jody's former girlfriend, the black nightclub singer and hairdresser, Dil. The romance plot centers on the portrayal of Fergus's ambiguous relationship with Dil. Briefly put, Fergus falls in love with Dil, who happens to be transsexual. The narrative reaches its climax in a scene where Dil's biological identity is revealed to Fergus. Fergus is at first shocked and disgusted but then continues with their relationship. The IRA continues to pursue Fergus and tries to force him to participate in a terrorist attack. Finally, Fergus manages to avoid doing so and survives with the help of Dil, who kills the malevolent IRA terrorist, Jude.

Significantly, Jordan's choice of two British blacks to play the main roles in the film makes, for instance, the "Troubles" and nationalism a more complex issue than if it were reduced solely to a British or Irish question. Moreover, in an interview Neil Jordan has noted that black British soldiers were the first people of colour most Irish had ever seen.\footnote{The question of national identity becomes more complex since Jody, the agent of British military power, is black and originally from a former British colony, Antigua. This creates a paradoxical situation where}
both the IRA fighter Fergus and the black Briton Jody share a common colonial past. This helps to shape an "imagined community" between them in the course of the narration, where the binary relationship between colonizer/colonized becomes blurred. The film clearly shows that neither the "colonizer" nor the "colonized" are homogeneous categories since Jody represents both the colonizer and the colonized.

In addition, *The Crying Game* intertwines the problematics of race and colonialism because both the Irish and the blacks have been racialized in British colonial history. Celts have been classified as an inferior "dark" and violent race. Especially, since Carlyle, the Irish have been referred to as "white niggers". This representation of Irishness as a violent and barbarous "race" still haunts British filmic interpretations of the Northern Irish question.\(^5\)

**Is Race Less Relevant than Gender?**

In what ways are "The Troubles" converted into the problematics of gender conflict? With its theme of transsexuality, *The Crying Game* has been said to demonstrate vividly the ideas of gendered identities as performance and non-fixed positions such as those emphasized in recent feminist and queer theories. The cross-dressing links the film with the debate around gender-blending. Consequently, *The Crying Game* received critical acclaim for its postmodern way of treating the fluid identities of gender. At the same time, most European and American critical reviews of *The Crying Game* did not discuss race or suggest that the film was able to trespass the issue of "race". Similarly, the same kind of denial of "race" was repeated in the Finnish reception of the film. In fact, in his interviews Jordan has also avoided talk about 'race' since he always refers to the black heroine, the transsexual Dil, solely as a woman instead of as a "black woman".\(^6\) In this Jordan apparently wants to transcend fixed definitions of 'race' as well as the hetero-biased categories of "femininity" and "masculinity".

However, the avoidance of the racial issue in the reception of *The Crying Game* seems paradoxical since the film brings race and nation very close together. As the two main characters in the film are black, which is unusual in Irish (or European) films, we might ask why the critics have been colourblind. Does it imply that 'race' as a category is irrelevant in the interpretation of this film? In fact, many commentators on race have called attention to the fact that "whiteness" is a privileged and invisible position which allows whites to behave as though race does not matter. Or does *The Crying Game* genuinely embrace the pluralization of black identities?

In my interpretation of the film's identity politics, I will combine feminist criticism with the postcolonial analysis of racial and national identities. In particular I have found the readings by bell hooks, Claire Pajaczkowska, Katrina Irving and Kristin Handler very illuminating. However, many readings of the film have not studied the relations of representations more closely.\(^7\) This often happens in contemporary cultural criticism, which easily concentrates on one identity instead of looking at the interplay of identities. Although the African American bell hooks, for instance, reads sharply the racist and sexist representations in the film, her analysis of Irish or British nationalism remains less developed. In contrast, the Irish critic Katrina Irving analyses the interlinkings of gender and British and Irish national identities, but only briefly refers to the issue of black identity in the film. By this I want to illustrate how the racial, gender and national identities operate *simultaneously* in the narration of the film.
In the Western imaginary blacks are persistently attributed with hypersexuality. Thus it is often sexuality which forms a major arena for the articulation of racism. At the very least, sexuality is the realm where notions of otherness and the exotic are often conflated. For instance, Abdul JanMohamed talks of "racialized sexuality", where the deployment of sexuality intersects with the deployment of race. Inevitably, my analysis of the 'racialized sexuality' and the contesting subject positions of the film can be characterized as a political reading of the film's national allegories. In fact, the political connotations cannot be avoided in the cultural analysis if one agrees with the definitions of "gender", "nation" and "race" as politically, socially and culturally constructed categories.

**Race and Nationality: Black British**

Especially in his films *The Crying Game* and *Mona Lisa* (UK, 1986) Jordan vigorously deconstructs the idea of homogeneous Irish and British national identity with the portrayal of black British people, which makes the idea of "Britishness" strange. To be both black and British was for a long time thought in racist ideology to be an impossible compound identity.

Why then has Jordan chosen two British blacks instead of "white" British to embody the narratives of political violence, sexuality, love and friendship? In postcolonial theories it has been stated that in colonialist discourse the native subject is "commodified" into a stereotyped object and used as a "resource" for colonialist fiction. Can this kind of commodification be detected in the *The Crying Game*? At least bell hooks has claimed: "In keeping with a colonizing mindset, with racial stereotypes, the bodies of black men and women become the location, the playing field, where white men work out their conflicts around freedom, their longing for transcendence".

The black British soldier Jody's and the cross-dresser Dil's national difference is visibly demonstrated in their body. Furthermore, their diasporic identities represent much of the experience of 'postcoloniality'. S/he and Jody both represent the black diaspora in Britain. On the other hand, Dil's relationship to her/his national identity remains a mystery in the story. Also in this sense, Dil is the hybrid unknown at the film's center.

Furthermore, "black Britishness", as represented by Jody and Dil illustrates the "third position" that Bhabha has described as the postcolonial condition, where the division between colonizer and colonized are blurred. In fact, black Britishness describes the situation of the "same but not exactly the same" since Englishness and Britishness are traditionally understood as racially white. For instance, Jody as an agent of British military power can be said to represent mimicry's "ironic compromise": almost the same, but not white. This posits a disruption or even a threat to the (neo)colonial system. On the other hand, it is difficult to see Jody as an example of postcolonial resistance, since Jody mimics the "colonizer" in its most ultimate form, as he has wanted to become a representative of British imperial military power.

Does the film claim through the figure of Jody that the Britain that the IRA is fighting against is no longer the same Britain that used to be the enemy of the IRA? Present-day Britain is multicultural state consisting, for instance, of various ethnic groups, refugees and migrants from the former British colonies. On the other hand, although Britain is a multi-cultural state, it is still a long way from being a multi-racial or multi-cultural nation. Nevertheless, it is no
longer the same homogenous nation, or even state, that the Irish have for so long struggled to gain independence from. The situation is grotesque from the point of the IRA, as the whole idea of the "enemy" becomes blurred and hazy, when it can longer be conceived of as white British. It is impossible to face! The result may be, as in *The Crying Game*, that individuals of the former colonial subject nation are fighting against each other.

Over the past few decades the need to reshape Irish national identity in a more pluralist direction has become increasingly evident. By demonstrating the constructed nature of "Englishness", Jordan also indicates the futility of the IRA's violence, which is premised on an essentialist nationalist ideology. According to Katrina Irving, Jordan seems in this film to simplify the question of Irish nationalism. She claims that Jordan, as many critics of nationalist identity, continues to write about internal difference and does not genuinely analyse the minority positions and resistance in Northern Ireland. I would add that British nationalism is not dealt with at all in this film, which is typical of the filmic portrayals of the Northern Irish Troubles.

### Race, Violence and National Conflict

According to Henry Louis Gates, "race" is a dangerous trope which has become a trope of ultimate, irreducible difference between cultures, linguistic groups, or adherents of specific belief systems which often have fundamentally opposed economic interests. Keeping this in mind, 'race' can be considered a dangerous trope in the filmic allegories of national conflicts, such as the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

War is a crucial process in clarifying the issue of national membership. It defines in an instant the scope and the status of the national community, as Paul Gilroy claims. For instance, in 1990, just before *The Crying Game* was released, the imagery of the nation at war was visible everywhere in Britain, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Britain, and the memory of World War II was reawakened to serve some political purposes. According to Gilroy, the imagery of war derives a great deal of its power from representing Britain as a homogenous community. Furthermore, the analogy of war has extensively employed black immigrants as a designation of alien presence. Actually, the word 'immigrant' became synonymous with the word 'black' in Britain during the 1970s. In similar vein, Irish immigrants as potential IRA terrorists have also represented a threat, 'the enemy within', in British society. It has been emphasized, too, that in the 'metaphysics of Britishness' a new racism lies in the capacity to link discourses of patriotism, xenophobia, militarism, gender difference and nationalism into a series of statements on 'race', as Paul Gilroy has described.

Furthermore, the Irish anti-colonial nationalism represented by the IRA fighters refers to the old form of patriotism, which emphasizes nationally absolute lines, demanding violent resistance. This idea is criticized in Jordan's film, where anti-colonial nationalism is placed in a critical light by contradicting its scars with personal identity in Fergus's figure. According to Gilroy, blacks are excluded from the national community and "authentic" forms of Englishness because their cultures have obstructed the acquisition of the special hallmark of a true patriotism: the willingness to lay down one's life for one's country. Their complexion becomes a form of symbolic treason. Ironically, the idea of the professional soldier also blurs the 'purest' idea of patriotism as a willingness to assume martyrdom. In fact, Jody does not fight for his original
home-country, Antigua. Instead, he fights for money. It is not his national invocation but his class status that has made him join the British army. Consequently, Jody is not willing to die for Britain at the hands of the IRA. The film demonstrates vividly how naive the national sentiments and the motifs for the fighting can be both for the IRA soldier and for the British soldier sent to Northern Ireland. This is demonstrated by Jody’s and Fergus’s dialogue: "Jody: What do you believe in? Fergus: That you guys shouldn’t be here." On the other hand Jody tells Fergus that he has himself been wondering what his role in the conflict has been: "What the fuck I am doing here."

Moreover, the film can be located within the British and American conventional representations of Irishness and the Troubles. As previously mentioned, in the British mythology and political rhetoric there has existed a long tradition of portraying the Irish race as an inferior race, since the Irish have been referred to as "white niggers", "savages" and the "wild Irish". The same racializing and nationalistic rhetoric can be detected in British films dealing with the Northern question. 'The Troubles" have been interpreted in British films, for instance, as the result of the violent Irish national character, epitomized in the IRA terrorists.19

National sports have traditionally been powerful symbols of patriotic sentiments and national identity. They can even be seen as 'tamed' versions of national struggles. Fergus and Jody also talk in the IRA’s hideout about the British and Irish national sports, cricket and hurling. Jody in particular is proud of himself as a fast bowler. Cricket is an international marker of Englishness. On the other hand, hurling is a traditional marker of Irishness. For instance, British or Protestant players have not been accepted in hurling teams in Northern Ireland. In The Crying Game cricket becomes a central symbol in the film when we are shown montages of Jody bowling a ball on a cricket pitch in his white clothing. In fact, the status of cricket reflects postcolonial irony. Today cricket can also be described, as Jody does, "as the black man’s game", since cricket is very popular in the Commonwealth. England, for instance has often been beaten by the West Indies team.20

Moreover, the depiction of violence can be situated in a racist context. Claire Pajaczkowska claims in her critique of Mona Lisa that its main character, the (white) George, is surrounded by violence, and is always associated with the visual presence of black people within the camera frame and composition.21 A similar logic also operates in The Crying Game, where Jody represents the violent presence of the British army although he does not act aggressively. Furthermore, it can be emphasized that it is finally Dil who shoots Jude. In contrast, although Fergus is a trained IRA terrorist, he avoids violence. In this, Fergus is akin to suffering Christ-figures typical of films portraying the futility of the IRA’s violence. Religious differences are often a metaphor for racial, cultural and ethnic differences. However, in The Crying Game the religious identities are hardly referred to except in an ironical light. For instance, the IRA fighter Jude tries to force Fergus back into the IRA by shouting at him "Keep the Faith", which in this context suggests solidarity with the IRA’s cause, not religious devotion.

In the following I will look more closely at the complex power network Unking the related representations of femininity and masculinity and sexual minorities with racist imagery.
Sexual Minorities, Racial Stereotypes and Gender Power

What function does the portrayal of sexual minorities and the theme of cross-dressing serve in the narrative? The transvestite, as a signifier of "gender undecidability" has been said to represent the "third sex", which provokes crises in other binarisms operative within a culture or text.\(^{22}\) As a liminal figure, Dil is many times marginalized as black British, as a Woman and as a transsexual.

It is a well-known fact that black people are conventionally sexualized in Hollywood films. As a matter of fact, black actors have said that it is easier for them to represent sexual minorities in films than for white actors. The reason for this seems to be that because black people are already marginalized and sexualized, it does not matter if it takes more radical or "deviant" forms. Thus Jordan seems to utilize the same formula since he favors black actors in the roles of sexual minorities.

Both in *The Crying Game* and in his earlier film, *Mona Lisa*, it is black characters that represent sexual minorities, since Dil is transsexual, Jody bisexual, and the black prostitute, Simone, in *Mona Lisa* is lesbian. Instead, the white protagonists Fergus in *The Crying Game* and George in *Mona Lisa* do not concretely cross the "heterosexual" borderline, although especially Fergus is depicted as uncertain of this. With this kind of operations and comparisons white heterosexual identities are sustained as normal and privileged at the narrative level. On the other hand, the discourse of homosexuality is not immediately accessible by a heterosexual audience. This is reflected, for instance, in the names Dil and Jody, which have been used for both men and women.\(^ {23}\)

In spite of the homosexual discourse embedded in the narrative, sexual minorities are also saturated by stereotypes. According to Claire Pajaczkowska, all forms of perversion are represented in *Mona Lisa* and are associated with drug dependency, and the combination of uncontrolled or deviant sexuality with pathological dependency is signified by Simone's blackness.\(^ {24}\) The same scenario has been noted by Irving when she claims that in the penultimate scenes of *The Crying Game* Dil's representation increasingly draws on stereotypes of the doomed homosexual (her alcoholism, violence, and mental instability are stressed).\(^ {25}\) Thus Dil changes towards the end of the narration into a pathetic queen, hysterical, clingy and self-destructive, who drinks and swallows pills, storming, weeping and begging Fergus not to go. In the final episodes of the film Dil is eager to do anything for her man. She is even willing to kill, as hooks argues.\(^ {26}\) In this, Dil embodies the emotionally unstable, hysterical person who has been traditionally associated in Western thinking with the irrationality of women, sexual minorities and colonized and racialized people.

Although critical of violence and sympathetic to sexual minorities, *The Crying Game* paradoxically also reinforces the idea of the "killing" lesbian or the murderous and revengeful homosexual popular in many Hollywood films. Although Dil is portrayed as kind and non-aggressive, s/he finally becomes an agent of the violence. Moreover, Dil's character reflects the binary logic of racism which constructs the black subject as the noble savage and violent avenger.\(^ {27}\) In the film it is suggested that Dil's anger derives from her jealousy of Jude's 'real' female characteristics with which she has attracted and trapped both Jody and Fergus. Finally, we cannot overlook bell hooks's wry notions of the reactionary messages in the film:
Crudely put, it suggests that transvestites hate and want to destroy "real" women; that straight white men are even willing to vomit up their homophobia and enter a relationship with a black man to get that down-home service only a black female can give; that real homosexual men are brutes who batter.  

Seductive and Nurturing Black Women

The narrative suspense in both *The Crying Game* and *Mona Lisa* revolves around the Mystery of the Black woman's sexuality, represented by Dil and Simone. Black feminist critics have emphasised that the category of Woman is represented in Western culture mainly as white, while the category of blacks often really means "black men". Consequently, this makes Dil's and Simone's position in *The Crying Game* and *Mona Lisa* unique since they both make the experience of black woman more accessible and visible in the filmic representation.

As the black woman occupies a position which is difficult to imagine within current paradigms, an even more deterritorialized position is occupied by the black lesbian (Simone in *Mona Lisa*) and the black transsexual (Dil), who posit a threat to the stability of sexual and gender identities. The transsexual represents the "third" sex and the "third position", which in *The Crying Game* is emblematized by another nonfixed position, the mixed race person, the mulatto.  

Dil passes as woman and almost as white, too. It is important to note that the theme of "passing" (meaning the position of mulatta in between white and black culture) has also been adapted to transsexuality. Similarly, transsexual can be characterized by the term "passing", in-between feminine and masculine cultures.

Although the mixed-race heroine Dil seems on the surface level of the narration to be a radical character, bell hooks reminds us that "tragic mulatto" persona is also a conventional hypersexualized stereotype of the black woman in Hollywood films. The "tragic mulatta" conveys the impossibility of interracial relations, since they are typically described as tragic in Hollywood films, as hooks states. This plot structure can also be detected in *The Crying Game* and *Mona Lisa*. Although the white heterosexual male figures in these films, Fergus and George, fall in love with black women, their relationship is portrayed as either impossible or almost impossible. On the other hand, Fergus's and Dil's fascinating relationship also refers to the possibility of two kinds of readings: either as a warning against inter-racial and non-heterosexual love or as a vigorous defence of inter-racial and queer love.

Traditionally, the roles offered to black women in Hollywood films have been prostitutes and singers in night clubs, as in *The Crying Game* and *Mona Lisa*, bell hooks claims that Dil is partly a hypersexualized cliché of a black woman, which represents the idea: "scratch the surface of any black woman's sexuality and you find a ho—someone who is sexually available". hooks states that the dangerous exoticism and erotic appeal represented by black woman is presented in the film as so thrilling and intense that the white males lose all will to resist and they can even forget their sexual preference. hooks also notes that Dil shifts from the role of "ho to that of nurturing mammy" by becoming Fergus's little wife towards the end of the film. Then s/he is no longer the same independent and sharp-tongued woman as presented at the beginning of the story. Instead, she has become a nurturing black wife or servant to Fergus. This links the portrayal of Dil with the Hollywood tradition of depicting black women as servants and nurturing...
The White Woman as an Emblem of Terrorism

The portrayal of women in *The Crying Game* contains essentialist aspects, as some feminist critics have pointed out. They have emphasized that the IRA terrorist Jude, the sole "real" woman in the film, is depicted as a pathologically violent woman. In the United States the debate about the film coincided with the debate over whether gay men and women should be allowed to serve in the U.S. military. Here, we have both a bisexual Jody as a representative of British army and a militant woman, Jude, as an IRA activist. Even their names mirror each other as twins.

The most potent symbols of national culture and national fantasy play upon and with the connections between women and nations. For instance, Irish nationalist ideology is often centered on female icons and mother-figures. Similarly, in *The Crying Game* the "femme fatale" myth is intertwined with the myth of the nation as mother. In Jordan's version, Jude comes to epitomize the essentialist bad mother, the devouring and vengeful "Mother Eire", which has been conventionally represented in the Irish mythology as a cause of men's violent acts and war. In Jordan's interpretation, the sadistic Jude becomes a parodic inversion of the idealized woman in the Irish nationalist ideology represented by Kathleenni Houlihan and the Madonna. The biblical resonances of Jude's name may also imply that the nationalist myth is treacherous and in vain, since Jude shares the name of the patron saint of lost causes. Feminist critics claim that this film reinforces the idea that the only good woman is finally a transsexual man, who replaces the sadistic woman. The narrative solution is the execution of Jude.

Jude's ironic "masquerade in femininity", as she changes from blonde to a murderous dark-haired femme fatale, is used as a strategy in the service of terrorism. Thus Jude's performance and the film-noir image will gain another dimension than the recent theories of masquerade as a emancipatory play, which deconstructs and erases power-structures and interrogates the idea of femininity, theorized by, for instance, Mary Ann Doane, Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler.

In the feminist readings of the film, Jude's aggressivity has been interpreted as emblemizing a fantasy of phallic womanhood. As "deadlier than the male" Jude may represent Jordan's critique of the military system, which may make women at least as cruel as men. Although Jude is portrayed as a politically engaged woman, she is told by IRA cell members just to make tea and shut up. In this, the film also ironizes women's marginal position in the military and political activities.

Finally, I want to emphasize that Jude makes terrorism the scene of sexual seduction. In fact, the representation of the IRA's political activity solely as sexual sadism has been conventional both in Irish and British films. As John Hill has argued, especially in British thrillers the IRA is often depicted as consisting of a group of sexual sadists and frustrated homosexuals. In these interpretations of the conflict, other political dimensions and historical causes of the conflict are erased. In this kind of interpretation of the troubles sexual sadism is presented as a simplistic explanation of terrorism.
Black Men and White Men

It has been claimed that Dil represents the homosocial or homoerotic bond between Jody and Fergus. The classic homosocial triangle is presented in *The Crying Game* through the exchange of Dil's picture, where Dil becomes the point of convergence for men's desire. According to Kristin Handler, the film's refusal to slip from the homoerotic into the homosexual enjoins the border-policing function of heterosexuality, which naturalizes and reinforces sexual difference.40

Abdul JanMohamed emphasizes that the crucial mode in which racialized sexuality operates is the "feminization" or "infantilization" of the black man within a phallocentric system.41 It is important to note that in *The Crying Game* the black male body is primarily "feminized", as the black male characters in the film are transsexual (Dil) and bisexual (Jody). Furthermore, blacks are also infantilized. bell hooks claims that Jody is depicted as a childish "neoprimitive". Thus 'race' may explain his emotional outbursts. Although Jody is a trained soldier, he does not control his emotions. Instead, in his captivity he just laughs and cries like a child. This is confirmed by Neil Jordan when in an interview he explains that he wanted to represent Jody as childlike when he describes how that in this relationship Fergus "was like the mother." Thus Fergus acts as a surrogate mother or father to both Jody and Dil.42 Consequently, this is a typical example of the colonial relationship, where the colonized were thought to be of as children, in need of the patronizing and/or matronizing hand of the Europeans.

In his famous study *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon claims that in Western mythology the black man is oversexualized and turned into a penis. Clearly, in this film, hyperawareness is created of the black male body. This is done, for example, by the overpresence of black penises in contrast with the absence of white ones! For instance, Jody talks humorously about his penis ("It has served me well!") when Fergus helps him to urinate outside the IRA camp. Furthermore, Dil's sex is concretely unveiled to the audience. However, when Dil has oral sex with Fergus, Fergus's body remains veiled: we see only Fergus's face.

Conclusion: Racism and Resistance

Jordan's films are exceptional in the sense that they give a voice to black subjects and sexual minorities. In this sense, also Jordan's way of depicting negotiating sexual identities and "hybrid" characters, the black British soldier and the mixed race British transsexual can be seen as an act of resistance in the filmic representations. It also succeeds in its criticism of militarized masculinity and homophobia. On the other hand, this is done by evoking racist and gendered stereotyping.

In fact, in postcolonial theories resistance is not necessarily understood solely as an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it a simple negation or an exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, but the effect of an ambivalence produced900 within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses. Homi K. Bhabha, in particular, has emphasized the hybrid and negotiating elements in colonial structures and encounters. In Bhabha's view, stereotypes are a complex and contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as they are assertive. He describes the stereotype as an ambivalent text of production with its metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, overdetermination, guilt and aggressivity.43
Although the contradictory elements of the stereotypes should be noticed, I still see Bhabha’s broad definition of stereotype as almost inflatory. Instead, I want to emphasize that stereotypes continue to reinforce older cultural hierarchies and also construct new ones. One cannot force oneself to find resistance where there is none. As Ania Loomba puts it: "It should not be the case that we begin to measure our own radicalism mechanically in terms of our ability to find 'resistance' in any given text or historical situation." In this light, the enthusiastic reception of the film as a token of new pluralism can also be viewed as an overidealistic view of the film’s emancipatory messages. Thus, in my criticism of the 'liberal' identity politics in The Crying Game I have wanted to locate the tensions over power and subjectivity included in a film that has become famous for its pluralistic refashioning of gender and its overcoming of racial and national prejudices. The Crying Game also demonstrates that even in the main roles the black characters, the women and the sexual minorities often remain rather 'flat' and saturated with stereotyping. Although The Crying Game has transgressive elements in its portrayal of fluid identities, it also demonstrates the fluidity of racist culture, which manifests itself in subtle forms.

The limitation of the analysis of racism and sexism which I have presented here is that it concentrates on the victim status of the women and black characters and may overlook the strategies of resistance in the narration. However, I can also see that the problematic of desire as a deep ambivalence of identification is inspiringly dealt with in the film. This is illustrated by the myriad masquerade and mirroring strategies, where the characters represent different sorts of double characters as they keep on changing their appearances, and their clothing may mirror each other. These mirroring strategies and identity negotiations blur the 'pure' binarisms of white/black, female/male and make especially Fergus's 'self' and his relationship to the 'other' flexible.

For instance, when Fergus takes Jody's place as Dil's lover, he starts to resemble Jody. bell hooks claims that Fergus's way of consuming the black soldier's life story and then usurping his place in the affections of Dil reflects a romanticized image of the white colonizer moving into black territory, occupying it, and possessing it in a way that affirms his identity. Although hooks's provocative criticism cannot be overlooked, Fergus's strong identification with Jody may also be read as an expression of his utmost loyalty to a dead friend. As Fergus feels responsible for Jody's death, he seems to respect Jody's life so much that he wants to continue it by himself. I also disagree with the feminist critics who state that our gaze is framed in the film solely so that we identify with Fergus and gaze at Dil only through Fergus's eyes. Instead, the mirroring strategies and changing points of view in the narration cause the viewer to identify with other characters, too.

It is important to note that Jordan's film includes both anti-racist and racist elements as well as both anti-colonialist and colonialist discourses. For instance, The Crying Game demonstrates subtly how people react to national and racial stereotyping. Although the Irish and the Caribbeans share a common colonial past, this has not made the Irish people resistant to racism produced by colonialist thinking. Thus from Jody's perspective, the British and Irish form a homogenous European racial community based on White supremacy. This is brilliantly illustrated in the dialogue between Fergus and Jody, where the system of "racist" labelling is put in ironical perspective. For instance, Jody, who is very conscious of racism in Europe, remarks to his Irish captor ironically: "I got sent to the only place in the world they call you nigger to your
face". (He imitates a Belfast accent: "Go back to your banana tree, Nigger.") No use telling them I came from Tottenham". Furthermore, Jody refers to Fergus teasingly as "Paddy" (stereotype of whiskey-loving Irish man, Pat-the-lazy-Irishman, Mick). These ironical statements manage to create a momentary connection and solidarity between Jody and Fergus as both represent racialized and stereotyped minorities (Fergus as an Irish Catholic in Northern Ireland, Jody as a black in Britain) in their countries.

In his resistance to racist rhetoric, Fergus does not ignore Jody's humanity like the other IRA cell members, who constantly use racist namings. For instance, Jude describes Jody in sexual metaphor typically associated with the myths of the black male's sexual lust for white women. For the other IRA cell members Jody represents only a faceless "enemy". Consequently, they refuse to communicate with Jody. His status as an anonymous hostage is demonstrated by covering Jody's head with a bag, which Fergus nevertheless removes. According to John Hill, by these acts Fergus becomes an ethical subject. Consequently, his acts and his dialogue with his hostage symbolize the "politics of friendship" in a Derridean and Levinasian sense, who emphasize that the words "respond" and "responsibility" have the same root. Fergus's willingness to listen and his responses, "answering to the other," are in themselves a recognition of the responsibility people have towards each other, as Hill summarizes the ethical dimension of the scene.46

Although I find Hill's analysis of Jody's, Fergus's and Dils fascinating triangular friendship convincing, I also agree with feminist critics who have come to the conclusion that the most flexible character in the film is Fergus. According to Handler, Fergus becomes an amphibious (of a mixed or two-fold nature; from the Greek, "living a double life") ethical being while other characters become representative of essential "Natures".47 However, The Crying Game also includes some episodes where Jody and Dil are presented as active ethical subjects in contrast to Fergus, who remains a passive, hesitant and drifting character in situations demanding ethical choice and resistance.

Although films are not meant to be manysided political commentaries, the avoidance of political analyses of the film that deal with the national allegories should also be paradoxical. For instance, the film succeeds in deconstructing the idea of 'authentic' Englishness as White through its black British characters. However, The Crying Game, like many Irish and British thrillers dealing with the Irish Troubles, concentrates on the depiction of the IRA. In The Crying Game there are hardly any references to the British political relationship to the Irish question.

The Crying Game portrays nationalism as a deadly game. British colonial rule in India was once described by Rudyard Kipling as a Great Game. The Great Game also signified the process in which the colonizers were fighting against each other and the colonized between themselves. Interestingly, the white British or Northern Irish Protestants are not represented in the film except in Dil's former boyfriend David, an aggressive white gay man who plays a marginal role in the film. The invisibility of Britishness or Northern Irish Protestants can also be read as signifying that the British and "Englishness" epitomize the "universal" invisible "norm" and anonymous power: still present but invisible. Is The Crying Game finally an allegory of a chess game where there are white and black soldiers, but the only queen left is white?
NOTES

5. In recent centuries the marginal nationalities in the Europe were considered as inferior race. Traditionally the
English have been described as a 'race' separable from the Scots, Welsh, and Irish, whose skin colour they share.
Britishness has also been seen to emerge as the sum of these cultures. See Paul Gilroy, There Ain't No Black in the
Union Jack (London: Hutchinson, 1987) 60; Jan Nederveen Pieterse, White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks
in Western Popular Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) 213-215; McClintock 52-53; see also the
6. bell hooks, "Seduction and Betrayal: The Crying Game Meets the Bodyguard" in Outlaw Culture: Resisting
7. Stuart Hall uses the terms 'relation of representations' and 'burden of representation' in his discussion of the
representations of racism and black imagery. See his "New Ethnicities" in "Race", Culture & Difference, ed. James
Domna C. Stanton (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992) 94. For instance, the analysis of racialized
sexuality demonstrates the limitations of Foucault's theories of the intersection of the discourses of sexuality and
power.
Literature" in "Race," Writing and Difference, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago
10. hooks 59.
13. Gilroy, There Ain't No Black 46.
Identities: Gender, Nation, and Immigration in Contemporary Europe, ed. Gisela Brinker-Gabler and Sidonie Smith
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) 295-297.
15. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Introduction: Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes" in "Race," Writing and
17. Gilroy, There Ain't No Black 43-47. Gilroy also sees the description of blacks as criminals a form of new
racism (see There Ain't No Black 92-100; Small Acts 24, 52-53).
20. See Gilroy, There Ain't No Black 71; Mikko Tuhkanen, "Minuuden pelät," Filmihullu 2/1994: 15; Susan
Stanford Friedman, "Beyond White and Other: Relationality and Narrative of Race in Feminist Discourse," Signs
21. Claire Pajaczkowska and Lola Young, "Racism, Representation, Psychoanalysis" in “Race”, Culture &

23. Dil may be a short form of Daffodil, which is associated with effeminate men, and Gauires (IRA group leader Maguire) means "transvestite". See Friedman 36.

24. Pajaczkowska and Young 206.

25. living 307.

26. hooks 60.

27. Hall 256.

28. hooks 61.

29. See also Mary Anne Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1991) 233-234. The theme of the tragic mulatta is treated in *Passing*, a novel by the African American Nella Larsen.

30. See also Tuhkanen 17.

31. hooks 56.

32. hooks 57.

33. hooks 57.

34. hooks 60.

35. Handler 31.

36. For instance, in Yeats's famous play *Kathleen ni Houlihan* (1910) Ireland is figured as both mother and the beloved. The Sean Bhean Bhocht, or poor old woman, for whom her sons sacrifice themselves, is transformed via this sacrifice into the beloved, a beautiful young girl, Kathleen ni Houlihan. This connection of woman and nation is also represented in the Catholic ideology with the Madonna figure (see Irving 302). Britannia has also often been represented as a young woman or an aged woman.

37. Irving 300-302; Handler 38; Friedman 36.

38. See Handler 37.


40. Handler 33-35.


42. See hooks 59.

43. Bhabha 70, 81-82.

44. Loomba 243-244.

45. hooks 59.


47. Handler 32.