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# Not a Cinematic Hair Out of Place: Examinations in Identity (Transformation) as Evidenced through Haircuts in The Crying Game

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Examinations of Identity (Transformation) as
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**BY**

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**Bachelors – English**
**Bachelors – Economics**

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts**
**Comparative Literature & Cultural Studies**

The University of New Mexico
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## Abstract

This thesis asks a question: Can transformations *to* a cinematic character's hair be indicative of a *realignment* or *shifting* of that character's identity? As an attempt to answer this question, I introduce three new concepts: the Opaque Movement (OM), the Transparent Violent Moment (TVM), and the Transparent Moderate Moment (TMM). All of these concepts revolve around the treatment and appearance of a character's hair within a film. In this examination, I establish a theoretical foundation for cinematic haircutting and apply the three concepts to several films. I ground the discussion in a thorough examination of *The Crying Game* by Neil Jordan. The 1992 film contains four haircuts or hair transformations and through analysis of the central characters before and after their haircuts, I utilize the concepts above. This thesis illustrates that in cinema, not a cinematic hair is out of place, a choice in hairstyle, haircut or hair transformation isn't *merely*, or *just*, an example of fashion or cultural trend. In film, hair is a marker of cinematic, cultural and identity formation.

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## Preface

I have combination hair: see, parts of my hair are kinky, parts are curly, parts are wavy, parts are brown, parts are gray, parts are straight, and parts are not so straight. I use various shampoos and conditioners to tame, condition, control, stabilize, or manipulate the hair; however, despite the amount and type of product I use, there are always several strands that refuse to bend to my will; they continue to present themselves in their own manner. A fascination for my own hair and my desire to seek its like sparked an interest in identity realignment or shifting as seen through changes to cinematic hair. With that in mind, the examination of this topic took root many, many years before I became conscious of my body or my identity in this world. As a young man, I would sit in front of the television or movie screen or stand in the check-out line of the supermarket and unconsciously digest the media presented to me. Slowly, I began to see less and less of my self in these media and started to wonder where it was that I belonged. It wasn't simply a secondary status or a lack of positive images in the media that I began to notice. Rather, it was a veritable lack of ethnic representation that I faced; and in many instances, continue to face altogether. Perhaps it was because I was positioned on the outside as an Other – a body on the margins of accepted society and thought – that I began to notice some cracks in the representation of the self in media. It wasn't until much later, as I began to cultivate a critical eye, that I was afforded some language to articulate my perceptions. Despite this language, a conscious effort on my part has to be engaged to sidestep the pitfalls of media identification. It was with this attitude, as a germinating seed, in the crevices of my grey matter that my thesis concerning identity positioning and creation as seen in haircuts or transformations to a cinematic image was birthed.

# Examinations of Identity (Transformation) as Evidenced through Haircuts in *The Crying Game*

...if you'll just like me.
The color of your hair.
Judy, please. It can't matter to you.
If I let you change me, will that do it?
If I do what you tell me...
...will you love me?
Yes.
- Yes. - All right.
All right, then, I'll do it. I don't care anymore about me.

from Vertigo (1958)

*You should really do something about your hair*

## Introduction

Playing against type in the 1958 Hitchcock thriller *Vertigo*, Jimmy Stewart portrayed a desperate man, confused and psychologically tormented in his search for a woman. Within this tale of obsession lies a tale of identity— a story about seeing identity, finding identity, losing identity, and transforming identity. *Vertigo* is a film about the fluidity of identity. At the center of this film are four identities playing, searching, finding, losing, and becoming *meaning* all within the image of one body: Kim Novak portrays Madeline, Judy, and Judy playing Madeline. The movement in-between these identities is a process of psychological pain as the character of Scottie suffers psychological torture as he wages psychological warfare against the various identities contained within the image of Kim Novak. Integral to this movement between identities are the changing hairstyles assigned to the various characters Novak portrays. From the upswept blond hairstyle of Madeline, to the flowing red tresses of Judy, back to the blond up-do of Judy playing Madeline, Novak's hair serves as the identifying characteristic linking the identity of these distinct identities to the body. The struggle to play, present and capture an identity that possesses a certain hairstyle is central to the narrative and the motivations behind the actions and behaviors of the characters in the film. In light of these transforming identities, I ask the question: Why is the appearance of a given hairstyle, specifically, a haircut or a transformation to hair an important field of study?

In answer to this inquiry, it is clear that transformations to hair represent moments when the identity position of a character shifts, or is realigned. As seen in *Vertigo*, the process of becoming a given identity occurs subtly from the beginning of the narrative to the last scenes of the film. However, the moments in-between these identity positions occur when the character's hairstyle changes from one style to the next. As the epigraph at the top of this thesis indicates, hair matters in the struggle to produce or project the hairstyle needed to identify the character.

The war in words between Judy and Scottie to make a change *to* her hair shows the aspects of psychological warfare and torture. The desire to change, the desire to be wanted, the desire to make, and the willingness to lose and surrender become apparent in this identity-making process. While Scottie says, "It can't matter to you" it matters to me and to the field of cinema and cultural studies. Hair serves a purpose: it points to gender, it points to sex, it points to race, it points to sexuality, it points to self. Hair isn't *merely*, or *just*, an example of fashion or a cultural trend, it is a marker of identity formation.

This thesis develops three new concepts dealing with how to read and analyze a haircut or transformation to hair. Color, perm, tint, trims, shaving, and styling can be analyzed in film.[i] The concepts I introduce include: the **Opaque Movement (OM)**, the **Transparent Violent Moment (TVM)** and the **Transparent Moderate Moment (TMM)**. I will posit that the two moments, TVM and TMM, can only occur within the Opaque Movement of the narrative, and that all of the concepts revolve around the transformation of a character's hair within a film. The Opaque Movement finds it's theoretical conception in the first part of my discussion – the gendering, sexing, and consumption of hair. The Moments will be tied to the cutting of hair and the ability to read the new identity position via the narrative or personal history (the in-betweeness of identity accessed via suture). The ability to analyze the Opaque Movement and to distinguish between the two Moments will be examined throughout and worked through via a discussion of pain, torture and warfare as described by Elaine Scarry in The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.[ii]

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[i] Throughout this thesis, I will use the terms haircut or hair transformation interchangeably.

[ii] In her work, The Body In Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World, Scarry gives voice to the inexpressibility of pain. As she explores how pain eludes and deconstructs language she states, "[pain,] its resistance to language is not simply one of its incidental or accidental attributes but is essential to what it is" (6). At the heart of her theoretical postulation, Scarry is moving beyond the exploration of pain and is concerned with the nature of creation and how through creation man has produced its own decreation. For Scarry, the ultimate decreation of creation is the creation of nuclear war. Couching her exploration of creation/decreation through an examination of pain and its "shattering of language," Scarry explores the nature and inexpressibility of pain by examining the topic via those "who speak on behalf of those who are [in pain]": medical texts and contexts, "the publications of Amnesty International," the courtroom, and the "fifth and final source is art" (7-10). It is through art – film – that I hope to expand upon Scarry's theoretical conception and extend her examinations of physical war and torture to psychological war and torture between characters within a film as evidenced by a transformation to a character's hair. Given that I argue a haircut or

To ground this discussion I will be focusing on the 1992 film *The Crying Game* by Neil Jordan. The story centers on an IRA volunteer and black British soldier who forge a friendship while the soldier is being held hostage. After the death of the black soldier, the film turns into a love story between the volunteer and the soldier's "wife"[iii] who lives in England. After two characters, both presumed dead in the first half the film, re-emerge in London, the film turns yet again into an action film. Within this film there are four hair transformations. The analysis of these hair transformations and the subsequent realignments and shifting of identity positions help to explore the Transparent Moderate Moment, the Transparent Violent Moment, and their occurrence within the Opaque Movement. The characters that will be examined include Jody, the black British soldier; Fergus, the white IRA volunteer and presumed hero of the film; Jude, the white IRA volunteer who 'traps' Jody; and Dil, Jody's 'wife' in England.

Jody does not get a haircut in the film, however his presence in the narrative is a powerful ghostly image that haunts the second half of the film and serves as the power and motivation behind several of the haircuts. The characters that experience direct transformations to their hair and shifting of their identity positions include Fergus, Jude and Dil. Issues of race, gender and sexuality are central to the identity shifts of these characters. During my research I have found that issues of gender, sex, race, and sexuality are the most predominate themes involved in the shifting of identity positions for film characters; however, issues such as class, sophistication, acceptance, beauty, masculinity, femininity, and sameness are also present.[iv]

To develop the concepts above, I begin with a discussion of the racial distinctions and cultural perceptions towards hair before introducing a theoretical approach to cinematic haircutting outlined in this Introduction. In Chapter 1, *Setting the Rollers in Cinematic Hair*, I enrich the theoretical conceptualization as I move through an argument on how hair is gendered,

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hair transformation produces a realignment in the character's identity, a spectator's acceptance or resistance to the new character identity will also reflect a psychological example of war and torture depending upon the spectator's ability – consent – to accept or deny the new character position.

[iii] For a discussion of the *Soldier's Wife*, see Jane Giles The Crying Game. British Film Institute. BFI Publishing. London. 1997.

[iv] e.g. *Pretty Women, Little Mermaid, Fight Club, Taxi Driver, Clueless, Bringing Down the House.*

sexed, and sexualized by extension. I then use these discussions about hair to serve as a foundation for how spectators identify with a character through the visual consumption of images. Through visual consumption, I argue that images are posited into the consciousness of the spectator and aid in the positioning of the spectator against the image on the screen and inform the spectator's view of the character's identity before and after a transformation. I then talk about how the cutting of hair in film presents a moment in the film when the identity of the character is ruptured, changed, transformed, realigned, or shifted into a new position. I then propose that this new position will be read by the spectator based upon how and which images they have consumed. To understand the new identity position of the character, the spectator will first look at the visual history of the film for a referent; if there is no referent available, the spectator will enter the secondary source of imagery – personal history. This personal history is accessed through suture and resides in-between the spectator's position and the narrative. Throughout, I argue that the cutting of, or transformation to, hair in film shifts the character from one identity position to another. This movement from identity positions is the heart of my thesis: a transformation to a character's hair is indicative of realignment or shifting of the character's identity.

**Racial Distinctions and Cultural Perceptions towards Hair**

In his work Welcome to the Jungle, Kobena Mercer argues "hair is never a straightforward biological fact, because it is almost always groomed, prepared, cut, concealed and generally worked upon by human hands. Such practices socialize hair, making it the medium of significant statements about self and society. And the code of value that bonds them, or does not. In this way hair is merely a raw material, constantly processed by cultural practices which thus invest it with meaning and value" (100-101). In this way what is meant then by good hair versus bad hair? Is it textural quality? Is it the ability for hair to flow through space and fall into place? Is it the color? Or is it simply the perception that one's ability to run your fingers through the hair constitutes freedom and beauty? Or is it more naïve of me to say I want good hair in the hopes that I would,

in the words of Tracey Moore, a graduate student in California, 'get up and see that I had straight black hair that fell easily into place without pulling and brushing' (Byrd and Tharps 154). And if Moore is correct, then what are the racial implications of good or bad hair?

Mercer argues that skin is the determining factor for race identification and thus, in *The Crying Game*, as two of the main characters are black or ethnic, it may be the determining factor for assuming the sexual and racial similarity between Jody and Dil. As such, for spectators, the link in racial and sexual similarity is achieved in one telltale scene in the film: the *reveal*[v]; however I think the link between the two characters is made on the difference between their hair and that of the other characters. The difference between the characters of Jody and Dil from the other characters is tied to subjective standards of beauty that are associated with the hair type of a given people. To start, let me begin with a racist generalization about the similarity of pubic hair that is often consciously or unconsciously linked with hair of black people. This linkage is often found in the choice of words that are used to describe the different types of hair. The words often used to describe black people's hair are coarse, bushy, kinky, woolly, and wiry, and these are the same terms used to describe pubic hair. The interplay of these words evokes the image of both types of hair on the body of the black individual even though they are completely different biologically.

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[v] Jane Giles articulates how the importance of the reveal was integral to the marketing of the film. She states "*Today* warned that 'anyone who divulges the second plot twist of this handsome, terrifically acted movie deserves to share the fate of *Game's* most loathsome character' (Giles 48) [and from *The Orange County Register*] 'Just when you think you know where *The Crying Game* is going, it delights you by going someplace else…This movie is about overturning preconceptions – about people and movies.'" (Giles 48) The press embargo to prevent the *reveal* of Dil's preconceived gender directly points to a film about the public conceptions of identity and identity markers. By warning and threatening spectators with death, the press operates as a torturer, forcing the spectator to accept preconceived notions and beliefs of identity as shared, agreed upon, internalized, and consumed as a given natural order. The threat (embargo) reinforces the importance of the *reveal* as something shocking, something abhorrent, something unnatural, something that must be feared. To cause fear in a spectator is to inflict them with an acute psychological pain that 'is elicited by, rather than eliminated by, its object." (Scarry 356) It is important to acknowledge that the object in question is the penis and its presence on a woman. As will be clear, the 'fear-and-object' (Scarry 356) and the pain it causes Fergus and the spectator will be eliminated not only through the narrative act of cutting Dil's hair and '*man*ing' her gender, but by a spectatorial reference to an object external and internal to the narrative – the penis in absentia. For critics like hooks, Edge, and Hill among others, there must be a conscious need to obtain a referent of a penis, and more specifically a black man in possession of a penis (Jody – even though his penis is never seen only acknowledged) to dispel the objectless fear that is produced in the psyche from seeing the cinematic image of a woman with a penis.

According to forensic scientists Harding and Rogers, “pubic hair is generally coarser than scalp hair and shows uniformity among the majority of individuals of the same racial group” (48). These coarse “pubic hairs usually have a relatively wide, continuous medulla and this is presumably why they tend to be stiff and wiry” they continue (Harding and Rogers 48). This texture of pubic hair is more similar to underarm hair “in terms of their coarseness, medullation and twisting about their axis” than it is to the head of any one individual of a certain racial group (Harding and Rogers 49). Harding and Rogers state that the differences in racial hair profiles show that “Mongoloid hair is essentially straight (and coarser because of its large diameter), whereas Caucasian hairs are straight to wavy with a lot of variation, and Negroid hair is very curly….that is, in addition to the wool-like crimp of the Negro hairs” (48). And therein lies the crux of the situation: wool-like, coarse, and wiry. These racist terms have often been used within the black community to describe “bad” hair, a perception of black hair that took root during slavery in the early history of black America. Byrd and Tharps state “many White people went so far as to insist that Blacks didn’t have real hair, preferring to classify it in a derogatory manner as ‘wool’” (14). While DeGruy Leary says, “White slave owners sought to pathologize African features like dark skin and kinky hair to further demoralize the slaves, especially women” (Byrd and Tharps 14). These ideas were transmitted to the public through various visual representations that promoted the “long straight hair, with fine features” (Byrd and Tharps 14) as “good” hair and beautiful while black hair is “given attributes…often referred to by descriptions such as ‘woolly,’ ‘tough’ or, more to the point, just plain old ‘nigger hair’” (Mercer 101).

Such negative cultural perceptions towards hair can have significant implications regarding the representation of black individuals in film. For example, in most films currently, the predominant representation of black men is a short afro or bald. This depiction of close cropped hair or baldness can serve as a double identifier for the spectator: 1) the black man shall possess close cropped hair, his nappy hair in check and out of view, thus delimiting the appearance or presence of his blackness. Spellers explains results from her qualitative examination of African

American hair politics and remarks “that nappy Black hair is undervalued in American popular culture to the extent that many Black [men/women] feel the need to fix, press, extend, or cover their nappy hair because they have been convinced it is not naturally beautiful. In fact, nappy hair is punctuated by what she calls the ‘kink factor,’ which represents a bodily discourse concerning heritage and identity, but, perhaps most of all, if maintained and exposed, self-love” (Jackson II 52); and 2) a responsible man in society will have hair that is maintained close to the scalp in a style that best fits his ethnomasculine social group. Tim Edwards explains in his study of fashion, masculinity and culture that in “performing a productive role at the office, men were, and still are, required simultaneously to consume the appropriate attire, namely the right style of suit and tie, or to adopt certain lifestyles or take part in appropriate leisure activities, particularly in terms of [masculine construction]” (Edwards 96-97). I would add to this argument, the man must sport an ‘appropriate’ hair style.

Who is to say though what is appropriate? What makes one style of hair more appropriate than another? Why do we script our bodies in a manner that someone outside ourselves deems appropriate to our social identity? In his study of the black male body in culture, Randall Jackson II explains “the primary objective of scripture as a process within current popular cultural media is to constitute the *utopic* American self in an effort to minimize the other, thus being consistent with what it means to be a centralized, rather than a marginalized being” (55). Jackson feels “the decision to make a change is a choice often deemed inappropriate because it does not comply with their assigned corporeal inscription, which is predicated on the premise that all rules and guidelines are to be defined by the dominant culture, and any violation of this agreement will be viewed as an intended infraction and subsequently penalized” (55). Therefore, to get a haircut, an individual must consider the implications of changing their hairstyle so as to not challenge the cultural boundaries of appropriateness or acceptance, lest they find themselves outcast to the margins of society.

Fear of being penalized or cast out of culture could explain why currently long flowing hair is often viewed on female members of society, while men are often viewed as more responsible and masculine if their hair is kept short. Deviations from these styles trouble people who want to classify and label the body with a specific nomenclature. For example, women who choose to cut their hair short must be cautious of being named man, manish, lesbian, or sickly.

Although, to combat these connotations, Grant McCracken argues in his study of hair, "women with short hair or a pixie-style cut can be also viewed as feminine without being fussy. It lets a woman declare her sexuality without provoking the 'woof' response that sometimes greets long blond hair" (150-151). Now with this in mind, it would appear that the image of woman could be depicted with a short or possibly even bald head of hair. However several problems arise from this. Films that depict women with this sassy, waifish short hair – *Roman Holiday*, *Cabaret*, *Sabrina* – feminize the body with either makeup or clothing choice so as to not confuse the spectator with an image of gender that might blur the lines into a sex that can be read as male or a sexuality that reads lesbianism. Short hair, like going bald, is generally the domain of men, so women who cross this boundary of gender identity must have their femininity expressed in other ways. In the film *Waiting to Exhale*, the character Bernadette undergoes a radical transformation when she cuts off all her hair and emerges with a pixie style. The old Bernadette is a repressed housewife who has sacrificed her identity for that of her husband; the new Bernadette is sassy, independent, carefree, and in pursuit of her own desires and sexuality. She still remains feminine and does not enter the masculine realm of short hair. This is crucial because unlike some of their white counterparts, black women are unable, as of yet, though there have been some notable exceptions (models Roshumba and Alec Wek), to shave their heads and go completely bald. Why? "Maybe guys think that touching a Black woman's hair with a natural would be like touching a man's head," Charline Cannon, a marketing manager in the California Bay Area who keeps her hair in a short natural, theorizes (Byrd and Tharps 158).

When Jill Nelson shaved off most of her hair in 1996, she wrote in her autobiography, 'Most Black men's eyes skip over me rapidly, distastefully, as if they do not care to see someone who looks like me' (Byrd and Tharps 158). Monisha Lincoln adds, "Although I love the easy care and upkeep, I feel infinitely less sexy and womanly with short hair" (Byrd and Tharps 157). Lincoln's feelings of being less than sexual, less than feminine, is a common attitude shared by many other woman and men who feel threatened by a woman who is saying with her bald head or boy cut hairstyle: "Look, other women need their hair to make them beautiful. Not me" (McCracken 176). McCracken continues to say that women who protest this attitude may say, "If this is the way you feel about your femaleness, what are you saying about my femaleness? And who are you to comment on how I see myself as a woman?" (177) While the logic for men on this subject may be summed up with this: "Women wear hair to please us. If they cut off their hair, it must be because they don't want to please us, and this can only mean that they are gay" (McCracken 178).

As I indicated before, women aren't the only individuals subject to cultural constructions of identity. Edwards says, "Images of masculinity are variously and, on occasions, contradictorily interpreted, yet one factor which remains constant is the assertion that these representations *construct* masculinity as part of a dynamic process of interpretation and implication" (Edwards 43). Edwards has indicated images of white, middle-class and heterosexual masculinity are therefore hegemonic whilst those of black, working-class or homosexual masculinity are subordinate. In addition, the hegemonic and subordinate are mutually reinforcing of each other. Therefore, what we are often considering when looking at images or representations of masculinity are not solely the overt images or representations themselves, but the complex and covert conceptions of masculinity upon which they are premised. Edwards says, "more importantly still, there is also the complex process of the interpretation of the viewer-viewee relationship, and most perspectives upon representations of masculinity and men's fashion attempt to explore and develop this relationship" (44). With attitudes like this, images of gender,

sexuality, and race are continually reinforced by the style of hair a character sports in a film. A given hairstyle is not arbitrary; its visual depiction in a film is coded with a specific message that delivers to the spectator a specific opinion and impression on gender, sex, sexuality, and race.

Take, for example, the red-headed bombshell of *Gilda*, Rita Hayworth. Early in her career, Margarita Cansino starred in several Mexican films before being turned into the image of American beauty and femininity – Rita Hayworth. William Anthony Nericcio states in his work, Tex{t}-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the "Mexican" in America that it was "Rita's offensive-for-some hairline…[that resulted in] her transformation into a more semiotically palatable Hollywood commodity" (90). It was this desire to have good hair, that Rita's hair and body were transformed physically into the acceptable image of beauty. After all, as Nericcio argues so rightfully, it isn't "just hair, it [is] a studio asset, a valuable piece of property" (91-92). As shown, the differences and perceptions towards hair and its link to race are tied to the perception and differences in beauty. Therefore, in this especially, hair is foregrounded as an integral component to the identity of the character. Each style, each color choice, each hair strand is meant to convey an image and attitudes of femininity and masculinity in relation to the other. Like Rita Hayworth, the hairstyles of Kim Novak in *Vertigo* and each character in *The Crying Game* are not arbitrary in their construction or representation; hair is styled with an intended purpose to reflect culturally defined identities and attitudes. This lack of arbitrariness is evident in all films, because in cinema, image is everything; not even a cinematic hair is out of place.

## A theory of the *cinematic* haircut

Given the importance of hair to studios and its ability to transmit attitudes regarding culture, to depict a change in hairstyle within a film is not an arbitrary action. To show a haircut must mean something is about to revealed or uncovered; it must represent a moment of importance in the reading of culture and the formation of identity. The decision to show a character undergoing a

hair transformation is purposeful and often results in a hairstyle that reinforces the boundaries of identity that are advocated by culture at any given period in time. However, the haircut and the resulting image can trouble, rupture and disrupt the culture in which it was produced. As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, I propose three concepts that can be used when reading and interpreting a haircut in a movie: the **Transparent Moderate Moment**, the **Transparent Violent Moment**, and their occurrence within the **Opaque Movement**. The following still images from *The Crying Game* will serve as the centerpiece of the discussion for now; while the clips are from a specific film they can be read as examples of still images from any film in which a haircut is depicted.

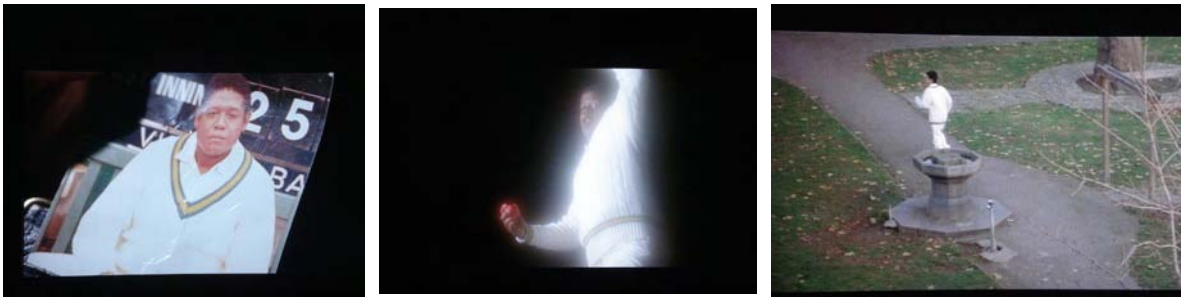

**Figure 1:** Still Images from *The Crying Game:* a. Photograph of Jody in cricket whites, b. Still image of dream-like (ghostly image) of Jody tossing a ball, c. Still image of Dil in crickets whites (something new, something that nobody recognizes) running

To begin, what becomes apparent in the stills is a striking absence – an absence that should not be mistaken for a *lack* of something, but rather should be read as a two-fold absence – body and movement. In the first picture, we see a still of a photograph of a black man in cricket whites. In the second picture, we see a still of black man in the same outfit. In the third picture, we see a still of something that nobody recognizes in a similar outfit. Further, a noticeable difference between the stills is the first picture is a still of a photograph from the film, while the last two pictures are stills of characters in motion.

When examining the stills, an apparent difference between the first and second stills and the third still image is the fit of the clothes. The body contained by and beneath the clothes does

not occupy the same amount of space beneath the fabric. The absence of body mass distinctly shows that the third still image cannot be mistaken for the first or second still image despite the similarity in clothing. Ignoring this noticeable characteristic is to ignore the presence of a different body beneath the clothes. One may ask, how is it ignoring it, they look alike? If that is the assertion, what is it that makes the two similar? The skin tone is different and the manner in which the body occupies the clothes is different. A possible similarity can be achieved however through the hairstyle as both bodies sport a short natural afro. And yet even the style itself is different, as the image of something that nobody recognizes has more curls, more flyaway tendrils than the afro on the other body. It is as if through the hair, the image is attempting to stretch itself beyond the body: possibly trying to reach a previous state in which the hair pushed past the limits of the frame. If we are to concede that the two images are similar because of hairstyle, the absence of body mass should become more apparent and negate their similarity as the drape of the clothing indicates a body of demure or delicate stature.

As I indicated before, the absence is more than the material absence of the body mass as evidenced by the ill-fitting clothes. The absence is also the lack of movement from all the images. In all three instances the bodies of the characters are frozen. Of course, frozen is a relative term here. In Still (a), frozen refers to a body posed, staged for a snapshot, a singular moment in time. The posture, the gaze, the manner of the body in the photograph is positioned in a manner that asks the viewer to "look at me sit for a moment and pose for this photograph." This still recalls the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe's *X Portfolio* that David Marriot examines in his study of incorporation of the image (photograph) through the eyes. Marriott argues in his work On Black Men that the camera operates like the eye of the individual and bites the image (photograph) for visual incorporation and consumption. Once incorporated the consumed image becomes part of the person viewing the image. In agreement with Marriott on this point, I contend that the movie camera operates like the eyes of the spectators and bites reality and allows spectators to consume images of bodies in motion. Therefore, frozen for the other two still

images is a pausing in the action, a single capture of a body in motion. The arm swing and the head turn are but momentary pauses as if the body were frozen mid-action. The manner in which the body is captured asks the viewer to "look at me in motion for the camera." In motion, the movement of the body within the clothes through the space on-screen is different. The absence of the movement becomes apparent in a still image or a photograph; yet absence is forgotten, displaced, rendered opaque within the medium of film as the spectator sees, consumes and naturalizes the image of the body in motion.

Capturing movement, action by the bodies in motion, is inherent to cinema. Consuming movement enables the spectator of cinema to imagine the reality of the images before them. Image representations of bodies in motion reflect a possible reality. Identification with this possible reality through the visual incorporation of bodies in motion (moving images) is a significant characteristic of the **Opaque Movement** of cinema. As such, all films that contain image representations of humans both static (e.g. a photograph, billboard, magazine cover, and paintings to name a few) and in motion (e.g. characters participating within the narrative of the film) are contained within the Opaque Movement. However, identification with an image on the screen should not lead to a conclusion that *identity* for either the character or the spectator viewing the film has been achieved. For as Homi Bhabha has indicated in his theorization of identity in a post-colonial era, the *process of identification*, or more specifically, *identity formation* is a combination of three factors: "First: to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus….Second: the very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a space of splitting….Finally, the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image." (63-64). Therefore, viewing the Opaque Movement of cinema can result in the identification with an image on-screen, however *identity* is not inclusive of that identificatory process alone. For identity to be approached, there must be a moment of calling into being, a production or creation,

a transformation of the character, an assumption of the newly created image of identity, and all of this will occur at a moment of splitting. In cinema, that moment of splitting is the haircut or hair transformation. In her discussion of the disembodiment of hair, Janice Miller concurs with the significance of a haircut when she states, “hair cutting is a moment of both physical and symbolic alteration, becoming a temporal marker of a particular moment which ‘embodies materialized time’.” (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 185) Therefore, the haircut or hair transformation signifies the *moment* in which the tension between demand and desire to call into being or the transformation of the subject has occurred, or is occurring, within the Opaque Movement of film. Yet the possibility of *identity* existing, forming, becoming, can only occur when the subject has been transformed through a haircut or a transformation to their hair, and the production of that identity as pre-given or self-fulfilled is assumed.

The affirmation process of a pre-given or self-fulfilled identity is directly tied to the tension between the demand and the desire of the subject and/or a secondary character and/or the willingness for the spectator to affirm and assume the identity of the image. At this point, tension, demand, and desire take significant import in the discussion. Tension alludes to thoughts and feelings of stretching, straining, suspense, intensity, elasticity, force, excitement, anxiety, and pressure between individuals, groups, nations, or the self. Demand alludes to thoughts and feelings of authority, force, requirements, wanting, urgency, desire, power, and summoning between individuals, groups, nations, or the self. Desire alludes to thoughts and feelings of wanting, asking, wishing, craving, requesting, thirsting, yearning, reaching, (un)worthiness, wistfulness, and longing between individuals, groups, nations, or the self. All these allusions, among many other words and concepts associated with these three initial terms, implicate a sense of movement and emotional ambiguity. This emotional ambiguity escapes tangibility, and yet, each of these allusions can be allayed in some manner by the introduction of some external object that is causing the straining, stretching, wanting, urgency, wishing and yearning and so on. Beyond the aforementioned terms and located within the language of “between individuals,

groups, nations, or the self" are the ideas of struggle, confrontation, negotiation, wrestling, beliefs, and imagining. Other terms located within the term "between" are ideas of warfare, torture, and consent. In her work The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World, Elaine Scarry theorizes the intangibility, inexpressibility and the language-destructive capacity of pain. Why is the idea of pain important to this argument at this point? As can be evidenced in the myriad use of terms above, the attributes "*of pain*" as described by Scarry are evoked when she states that, "the deeply problematic character of this language, its inherent instability, arises precisely because it permits a break in the identification of the referent and thus a misidentification of the thing to which the attributes belong. While the advantage of the sign is its proximity to the body, its disadvantage is the ease with which it can then be spatially separated from the body" (17).

Within the Opaque Movement, identity can be assumed as given, though this given assumption is based on the acceptance of historical preconceptions ascribed to the image. As such, it is as if the words utilized for characterization (nomenclature such as black, white, hispanic, asian, gay, straight, lesbian, transgender, queer, and transvestite among many others) and the concepts of identity (race, gender, sex, sexuality, and body) overlap and co-exist as one. In this case, language or nomenclature is advantageously linked or sutured to the body as if the *sign* black man (word) *means* black man (body). Though Scarry is talking about language associated with the concept of pain, it stands to reason that the character of nomenclature such as black man is also unstable and thus can lead to a misidentification of the thing (body) that is attributed with said nomenclature. For example, watching a film with bodies in motion, the spectator bites and consumes representations through their eyes and incorporates images with prescribed nomenclature such as black male, white female, straight woman, gay asian, or queer lesbian and assumes that nomenclature *belongs* to the *identity* of the image. Spectators who may or may not be aware of the *process of identification* with the image on the screen naturalize this process of identification with cinematic images. However for *identity* to occur, a crisis, an event,

a rupture, a moment (a place of splitting) must be introduced, or interrupt, the perceived natural movement of the narrative (identification process). To reiterate, that moment is a point in the narrative when a haircut or hair transformation occurs or becomes apparent to the spectator (and other characters within the narrative). At the moment of a haircut or a transformation to hair, the *sign* is spatially separated from the body: given the instability of language, misidentification of the new image can occur if *identification of the referent* does not belong to the pre-given or self-fulfilled identity that was created in the moment of the haircut or hair transformation.

The moments within the Opaque Movement at which point the i*dentification of the referent* within the *process of identification* occur are called the **Transparent Violent Moment** and the **Transparent Moderate Moment**. Within these moments, warfare and/or torture will occur between individuals, groups, nations, or the self as the *tension between demand and desire* to identify the sign and locate its proximity to the body arises. The context upon which to name and to identify the image can only be obtained by consuming the image in motion throughout the Opaque Movement; however, consumption of the image of the body in motion is but one aspect of the identification process. As stated before, within the Opaque Movement, nomenclature and concept are perceived as one, the sign is proximally located with the body. However upon the occurrence of either the Transparent Violent Moment or the Transparent Moderate Moment, which may occur in a brief or extended sequence on-screen, or off-screen, the movement of the narrative is troubled, ruptured, and becomes apparent in both its stasis and fluidity.

Staying with the film stills from *The Crying Game*, words are required for the identification process. In the film stills and the movie, words characterize the contents of the frame – white sweater with green and yellow neckline, white pants, a shade of brown skin tone, natural hair. Collectively, one could name the image – Jody in his cricket whites, Dil in Jody's cricket whites, or two colored individuals in their cricket whites. Yet how do those names approach the *identity* of either image? When a film is viewed statically, as in the film stills, absences become apparent. It is as if the negative space on the page between the images were the

frames on a filmstrip: the negative space opening up the spatial distance in-between name (sign) and image (body). During the course of the narrative, the Transparent Moderate Moment and the Transparent Violent Moment operate like a moment of stasis when the spatial distance in-between name, image and concept is exposed. Closing the gap in-between name, image and concept is achieved only by locating a referent within the narrative. Locating a referent within the narrative sutures the gaps between name, image and concept. Kaja Silverman adds a robust way of understanding Marriott's concept of incorporation and devoration with her theoretical concept of suture that argues for a method of understanding how the subject or the individual emerges within discourse. To combine Marriott, Bhabha, Miller, and Silverman within the Opaque Movement, spectators visually consume, devour and incorporate within their consciousness a catalogue of referents; at the moment of the haircut – TVM or TMM, the individual receiving a haircut becomes the signifier of a new identity and the signified of a previous identity. Thus, the individual post-haircut can signify a new identity that is either pre-given or self-fulfilled. Suture allows the spectator to search the narrative for a referent, a *signified* character that will allow for the gap in identification to close. As seen in the film stills, suture is obtained by naming or identifying the images as Jody in cricket whites, Dil in Jody's cricket whites, or for the traditional critic/spectator of the film—black men in cricket whites. At the point of a haircut, locating a referent produces discomfort on the part of the spectator. The pain that could be attributed to the irritation produced by subconsciously needing to locate a referent within the narrative for like-for-like comparison can be either moderate or violent, at best. A component of the Transparent Moderate Moment is a subconscious locating of a referent within the narrative that affirms the prescribed nomenclature attributed to the body and reduces the possibility of misidentification because the spatial distance between the sign and the body as a result of the haircut does not challenge the preconceived notions of identification.

*The deeply problematic character of this language* just uttered should become apparent quickly in that the locating of a referent within the narrative is also a component of the

Transparent Violent Moment. A distinction that can delineate between the two (and once uttered the *deeply problematic character of this language* should also become apparent) occurs when a hair transformation or haircut results in an image whose referent cannot be located within the narrative but must be identified apart from the film. The need to locate a referent apart from the narrative increases the spatial distance between the sign and the body and thus a more significant amount of pain is inflicted upon the spectator who must search their subconscious or consciousness for a referent that sutures the gap and returns the name, image and concept into a single image of identification. Given the common need to locate a referent within the narrative post-haircut, a more apropos and cleaner component of the Transparent Violent Moment is that the amount of hair being cut, or the type of transformation undergone, will be significant. Specifically, long and/or medium-length hair will be cut short or shaved and/or hair will be colored or dyed a noticeably different shade. Given these significant changes to the hair, the greater the distance between sign and body, and therefore the greater chance for *misidentification of the thing to which the attributes belong*.

Misidentification can occur given that the characters within the narrative will refer to the newly created image as X, while X may or may not refer to itself as X, and the spectator may or may not agree with identifying X as X. In *The Crying Game*, Dil is transformed at the hands of Fergus. Her haircut produces a rupture in the narrative because multiple names are used in the identification process: “Gotta make you a man,” “You’re trying to make look like him.” “No, I’m turning you into something new,” “that thing,” “it,” “sick bitch,” and “I hardly recognize myself anymore.” Clearly there is no agreed upon name upon which to call the image post-haircut: clothes and hair recall Jody, Fergus calls her Dil, Dil refers to Dil in third person, Jude refers to her as the “sick bitch,” and critics refer to her as a black man, a transvestite, a woman with a penis, or a woman. As the complexity in naming indicates, misidentification of the image can occur because what someone imagines can be radically different than another individual whether they are part of the same culture or not. In his conceptualization of Monster Theory, Jeffrey

Jerome Cohen theorizes the monster as a conceptual mechanism to understand the culture that produces or creates the monster it fears. For Cohen, the monster is a mixed category, for it "resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition, demanding instead a 'system' allowing polyphony, mixed response (difference in sameness, repulsion in attraction), and resistance to integration" (7). With Cohen's theorization, the image produced post-haircut can lead to a misidentification because "any kind of alterity can be inscribed across (constructed through) the monstrous body, but for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual" (7). In short, reading the body that emerges from either the Transparent Moderate Moment or the Transparent Violent Moment can challenge the politics of identity that have been culturally defined and accepted as norm. Reading the new image is a navigation and interpretation of the Opaque Movement of the film by witnessing the haircut at the time of either *Moment* and deducing the "demand' or "desire" that the resulting image is to represent or identify.

Reading *identity* occurs with the haircut. At the moment of the haircut, the individual – the *generic embodied imaginer* – performing the haircut shares a dual function with the spectator – also the generic embodied imaginer – for as Scarry says, "the making of an artifact is a social act, for the object (whether an art work or instead an object of everyday use) is intended as something that will both enter into and itself elicit human responsiveness" (175). It is the interplay and movement between the images on the screen as they name and identify the altered object (image getting the haircut) and the spectator as they name and identify the image on the screen and their subsequent identification with or against the altered object, that *identity* is formed. Two distinctions can be made between the two types of imaginers defined by Scarry as "the same generic embodied imaginer capable of picturing, making present, an absent friend, is also capable of inventing both the idea and the materialized form of the telegraph, as well as devising the specific message, 'Come home at once,' as he is also capable of inventing many other mechanisms for transforming the condition of the absence into presence, the telephone,

train, airplane, [hairstyle, body], all of which originate as the imagination's object" (163-164) as follows:

First, on-screen, the cutter/individual performing the transformation is 'making present' – 'maning,' 'womaning,' 'transing,' 'sexing,' 'raceing' or 'othering,' the object (person whose hair is being cut) in a visible, active, participatory capacity. If the haircut occurs off-screen, the act of making present can be assumed to be the artifact upon whose body the act was conferred; however, intentionality of the making does not lie with the artifact created automatically. The spectator reading the made artifact (image/body) must deduce the 'specific message.' For example, dialogue such as: you should cut your hair, you need a makeover, I need a change, this isn't your real hair, and so on, voiced by the generic embodied imaginer which may or may not be the body upon which the haircut was performed points to the intentionality of the making.

The distinction between the two types of on-screen generic embodied imaginers or haircutters is determined via consent as defined between war and torture. Consent distinguishes between warfare and torture and *is always the production of an image of identity* and *the transformation of the subject in assuming that image* (Bhabha 63-64). To be 'maned,' 'womaned,' 'transed,' or 'othered' is to be transformed into the presence of the generic embodied imaginer's imagined object. Scarry's use of the gerund "imagining' is rooted in the gerunds 'maning,' 'womaning,' 'transing,' 'raceing,' or 'othering' the imagined object. When an individual decides to cut the hair of another individual or her own hair, he is operating under and within the imagined and realized artifacts of civilization that are tied to the desired sexed/gendered body that is being imagined (*transforming the condition of absence into presence*). For example, in the case of Fergus and Dil, Fergus is transforming Dil into something new, and yet, the artifacts of civilization that he is basing his transformation upon are based upon an absent friend – Jody – that is constituted out of whatever attributes are used to name his body in the first place – short afro, black, cricket whites, man, heterosexual, unseen penis, dominate, ghostly, haunting, homosocial, and so forth.

Second, off-screen, the spectator witnesses the on-screen act of making (gendering/sexing/raceing) that occurs at the moment of the haircut. Through witnessing, the spectator visually incorporates the artifact made present and adds the object into their mind composed of referents of various artifacts of civilization. This statement reinforces Marriott's conception of incorporation through the eyes and stresses the importance of the Opaque Movement as a source of referents upon which the ability to identify can be determined. To clarify, Scarry states,

> Seeing is seeing of x, and the one who has made the "x" has entered into the interior of the other person's seeing, entered there in the object of perception. The objects of hearing, desire, hunger, touch, are not just passively grasped by the fixed intentional states: the objects themselves act on the state, sometimes initiating the state, sometimes modifying it, increasing, decreasing, or eliminating it. Thus when intentional objects come to include not just the rain, berries, stones, and the night but also bread, bowls, church steeples, and radiators, [transgenders, homosexuals, mixed race women and men of color, lesbians, monsters, or ghosts], there comes to be an ongoing interaction at the (once private) center of human sentience; for not only are the interior facts of sentience projected outward into the artifact in the moment of its making, but conversely those artifacts now enter the interior of other persons as the content of perception and emotion. Thus in the transformation of a weapon into a tool, everything is gained and nothing is lost. (Scarry 176)

Therefore, the more and disparate images of various types of bodies in motion that the generic embodied imaginer is able to consume, the greater the pool of referents the imaginer is able to draw from when making a new artifact of civilization from absence into presence. It should be apparent that in the filmmaking process the more and different artifacts of civilization that are used as a source of imagining the work of art (film) from the outset, the more and different types of artifacts of civilization that will be consumed. In turn, expanding the artifacts of civilization should expand the borders of culture within which the object (man, woman, transperson, other, monster, ghost) is made and allowed to operate as an individual with an *identity*. As can be deduced, this is important when it comes time to name the object made present.

Once the artifact made present (imagination's object) has been made, the generic embodied imaginer (cutter/spectator) names the object to alleviate the pain associated with the

objectless fear that afflicted the generic embodied imaginer in the first place, thus causing him to make the artifact present. Clearly the name of the imagined object created after the haircut need not be congruent between the generic embodied imaginers. Naming the resulting object is based upon the imaginer's known artifacts of civilization or cultural beliefs that inform and define the gendered/sexed/racialized identity of the object as essentialized/authenticated/performed/constructed. For as Scarry notes, "Almost never is the imagination 'imagined' without an object, though the Hebraic scriptures come very close to requiring that believers do just that, that they apprehend the capacity for creation devoid of any representable content" (164).

What is absent from this discussion so far should be apparent: the voice of the imagined object in determining the name of that which was made present, namely the self. Now it may seem that identification is obtained by seeing and consuming alone. For example in the stills we have been discussing, it is easy to say Still (a) is a photograph of Jody, Still (b) is an image of Jody, and Still (c) is an image of Dil dressed in Jody's clothing. Yet, there is an absence once again – sound, more specifically voice. The photograph does not speak. The still image does not speak either. It is the image of the body in motion or fluidity that is given voice and thus, the ability to name, to identify, and to conceptualize it that *identity* is also obtained. In the stills above, voice is only given to one of the images when viewed in motion within the film. For the spectator consuming the images above, a distinction must be made between identification of the image within the white space of the narrative, and identification of the image apart from the white space of the cinema.

The interplay between naming or identifying the image on-screen post haircut is complex, though I contend preference should be given to the individual – the body conferred – in the naming process. Though an incongruent desire to agree with or ignore the self-given identity is more than simply complicated. On-screen characters choose to name themselves, or are named by others, and in the naming an identity is established, fixed and unable to be altered as the

process of filmmaking is complete. The haircut opens the ability for the identity to be changed within the narrative. However, off-screen, characters are named and identified in a manner that best suits the spectators own identification process. The negotiation between on-screen and off-screen is complicated and lends credence to Avery F. Gordon's theoretical conception of *life is complicated* in her work Ghostly Matters: Hauntings and the Social Imagination. In her study of ghosts and hauntings, Gordon proposes a new method of reading culture, namely through the ghost and hauntings of the social imagination. Combined with her second theoretical postulation of *complex personhood*, Gordon moves between the past and the present to recognize that the dead, ghosts, and the distractions and distortions of hauntings have a profound affect on reality.

It is within Gordon's concepts of *life is complicated* and *complex personhood* that warfare, torture and consent return to the argument to voice their importance to the process of identification or identity formation. During the Transparent Moderate Moment (TMM) and the Transparent Violent Moment (TVM) warfare and torture are on display as the tension between demand and desire to make, to produce, to create the imaginer's object (pre-given or self-fulfilled identity) is realized. Scarry distinguishes between warfare and torture as follows: 1) In warfare, the individual consents to use their body in the confirmation process. In essence, the individuals engage in battle until a winner is able to confirm a pre-given identity upon the loser who consents to the beliefs of the other – assumes the pre-given identity. 2) On the other hand, in torture, consent to have the body used in the confirmation process is not exercised. In essence, individuals who are tortured do not consent to have their body transformed. In order to get the individual to assume the imaginer's object, destruction of the artifacts of civilization (man, woman, woman with a penis, transvestite, transgender, homosexual, heterosexual, female, femininity, nationality, as but a few examples) must be employed to break the individual and get them to consent to assuming the pre-given or self-fulfilled identity. Clearly consent in warfare and torture has "a gulf of meaning, intention, connotation, and tone [that] separates them" (Scarry 173).

In a film, characters engage in dialogue, banter, vocal interplay in order to establish their own voice and distinguish their identity apart from the other characters. Either before or after a haircut, characters will give voice to their assuming a pre-given or self-fulfilled identity. Consent is the willingness to undergo to the alteration or self-alteration that occurs at the moment of the haircut. In warfare, characters engage in battle until one concedes to the will and beliefs of the other: in torture, consent is not given and the will of the other is dismissed. As can be seen, on-screen characters will engage in warfare or torture between individuals, groups, nations, or the self. A distinction between consent in the two types of identity making and unmaking is the utilization of a weapon or tool in the transformation process. A weapon or tool (scissors, blade, knife, razors, perm solution, dye, and so on) can be seen as a benign form of creation (tool) or as a weapon in the deconstruction of an artifact of civilization as the weapon is brandished as a means of intentionally inflicting pain onto the other individual. As shown, Scarry is correct in stating that it is the intentionality of the artifact (weapon or tool) in the process of making that the movement between weapon and tool can be made.

Off-screen spectators and characters within the film will also engage in warfare and torture as spectators acknowledge the character voicing her own identity (warfare) or they ignore the character and wound, abuse, mishandle, or misrecognize the character via a tortuous need to self-identify. Gordon's concept of complex personhood is understood in this respect in that the interaction between spectators and character is a complication "between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching toward" (4).

In the chapters that follow, I will explore these conceptualizations further. As I indicated earlier, Chapter 1, *Setting the Rollers in Cinematic Hair*, further establishes the theoretical foundation for these concepts as I work through theorists Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray, David Marriott, Kaja Silverman, Homi Bhabha, and Elaine Scarry. Working through these theorists and

various films, I argue that hair points to gender, sex and sexuality of the character. It is in consuming these artifacts of civilization that a haircut produces a rupture in the identification process. For it is in, the negotiation between the tension of demand and desire to assume or confirm a pre-given or self-fulfilled that identity can be read or understood.

In Chapter 2, *Fergus – Performing the Heterosexual White Man,* I examine the character of Fergus to ask the question: What does it mean to perform the heterosexual white male. By examining Fergus throughout the Opaque Movement, I argue that his first haircut seen as the Transparent Violent Moment off-screen leads to his performance of white as defined by Winston Wheeler Dixon and Gwendolyn Audrey Foster. The second haircut that Fergus receives on-screen at the hands of Dil leads to his performance of heterosexuality as defined by Jonathan Katz, Diane Richardson, and Derek Neal.

In Chapter 3, *Jude – the* Only *Woman in the Game,* I examine the character of Jude by arguing that the critical animosity towards her character allows for an exploration of the rupture of language. By utilizing Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's study of monster theory, I argue that critical terms used to describe Jude as a monster or monstrous feminine open up the term and concept of *woman*: bodies who transgress culture and are marginalized at the borders of society as monsters explodes the concept of woman. As Jude is critically described as a monster or in possession of the monstrous feminine as defined by Barbara Creed, I question the possibility that the Transparent Violent Moment of Jude crosses racial and sexual barriers from white woman to a body at the margins that could include Dil and Jody within its monstrosity.

In the final chapter, *Dil — Something New in The Crying Game,* I examine *The Crying Game* from the perspective of a ghost story. Utilizing Avery F. Gordon's concept of complex personhood, I argue that Dil is a visual representation of something new, something that nobody recognizes. This conceptualization of her character argues that the Opaque Movement

with its catalogue of referents operates like a haunting of reality and allows for alternate readings of cinema and culture. As the concluding chapter, I weave concepts from previous chapters to show how the Transparent Violent Moment of Dil and the Transparent Moderate Moment of Fergus, of which she was an active participant, can only occur within the Opaque Movement. Overall, this chapter highlights why cinematic haircuts are central to understanding the politics of identity construction within cinema and culture.

## Chapter 1

Yet it deserves more attention, because long, short, curled or straight, powdered, dyed or natural (and in the case of this chapter, cut away from the body), hair itself is clearly loaded with meanings that are both part of and contribute to our understanding of the social body, and the culture in which it is formed. But, at the same time, disembodied, hair has a shadowy and complex relationship to this body and implicit within this is an unspoken understanding of hair's potential unruliness.

—Janice Miller, *Hair Without a Head: Disembodiment and the Uncanny*

To groom their hair, people have been willing to spend time, energy, and money, as well as endure lengthy and uncomfortable procedures. They have hunted down elusive reptiles and plants to obtain hair-care ingredients, plucked out masses of hair with clam shells, sat under hot machines wearing tightly metal rods, borne two-foot tall wigs on their heads, used chemicals that burned the scalp, and undergone surgical procedures, to name a few methods. People have washed, combed, brushed, cut, colored, arranged, and decorated their hair in countless ways, ranging from simple to quite elaborate. The resulting styles have reflected spiritual beliefs, as well as social, political, and historical events, as well as the materials and technology that were available for styling hair.

—Victoria Sherrow, *Encyclopedia of Hair: A Cultural History*

Let me start by asking why are we so consumed with certain hairstyles, certain looks, certain colors, textures, lengths, certain qualities of hair? Why is it that we gaze so intently into the mirror trying to make sure we are looking the way we want to be seen? Could it be that we are afraid. Not just afraid that we might lose it. No, that's why we have Rogaine and wigs; I mean afraid that we might be viewed as sick or unhealthy; that our lack of hair might indicate that we have been invaded, penetrated by something outside of us like a virus or a disease or that we have some bad genes or more simply, that we won't be considered beautiful. I believe that we are afraid that we won't be able to tell people who we are without our hair. Sure, our skin might say

that we are black or white or some shade in-between, but our hair, our hair says something else about us. I believe it tells people if we are a man or a woman. It speaks to our gender. Since we cannot confirm or deny the presence or absence of our gender through our clothes, we must have some other stand-in for gender – our hair. It's not as if we can walk around with our pants down around our ankles or our skirts hiked up in our underwear. No, you must use your hair. Our hair emerges from within us, so we must read hair as an external marker of our interiority, in this case – gender. Trouble arises when hair lengths and styles blur these gender lines; when the gendered body is unable to be read, confirmed, and denied. Dress, make-up, and jewelry are external: all can mislead. But hair, hair that emerges from within cannot be separated from the idea of body. It must be treated, contained, domesticated to improve our ability to fix the identity and identification of others and ourselves in the world. Our treatment of hair must conform to the conception of gender. To approach this further, let us look at the question of what is the gender that hair points to in any given body.

In her work, Gender Trouble, Judith Butler examines the issue of gender and asks what is gender? Butler argues that gender is created out of the individual's desire to reach the essence of gender: through essentializing the body one creates the very gender they are looking for and through the constant performance of gender over time the body itself internalizes the very gender it is performing. What is noticeable in her argument is that the biology of the body is absent: the body of the individual is neither male nor female it simply "is". Butler questions the interior component of performance arguing that the psychic interiority of the individual performing gender over time through sustainable acts needs further exploration. I hope this discussion adds to that theoretical discourse surrounding her argument, for if gender is attained through performance, I ask: What part of that psychic interiority "chooses" which acts to perform and which to exclude? The choice of performance should not be read as a conscious act on the part of the individual but as some hidden interiority of the self that cannot be reached easily as the body has been run through the discursive rollers of society and identification over time. However, the

interiority of the psyche *is* a component in the construction of the self as evidenced by the *choice* of performative gendered acts – whether those acts are performed publicly or privately. Thus the *choice* of performative acts contributes to the gender essentialized or the gender being sought by the individual, consciously or unconsciously. While I use the word *choice* at this moment, the meaning of the act of choosing carries a double meaning and is more directly tied to the term consent[vi] as described by Elaine Scarry in her work The Body in Pain: The Making an Unmaking of the World, and thus *choice* will become more apparent later in the discussion as we talk about the differences in consent at the time of a makeover moment – haircut or hair transformation.

For now, exactly how this relates to hair becomes apparent in the choice of hairstyle that an individual chooses to replicate when performing a specific gender. Is the hair worn long, short, corn rowed, braided, natural, straight, curly, sophisticated, professional? During my viewings and reviewing of various films, it became apparent to me that for any given character in a film, the image had a hairstyle that indicated either male or female. For example, Karyn Kusama's 2000 film *Girlfight* presents an overarching movement of hairstyles with gendered implications that are at times subtle and much more troubling to spectators and other characters. *Girlfight* tells the story of Diana Guzman, an angry tomboy who lives with her sensitive brother and oppressive father. Her mother has committed suicide and she feels like a prisoner of the Projects. A troubled student who gets into fights often and is thus on the edge of being expelled, Diana finds purpose for her life inside the boxing ring. This predominately male-dominated sport is thrown into turmoil as Diana finds her inner and outer strength training and fighting alongside the men. The film situates Diana in an environment that harbors preconceived notions of what is and what isn't a woman. In the movement of her character from the beginning frame to the last shot, she

[vi] Scarry describes consent as such: "in war, the persons whose bodies are used in the confirmation process have given their consent over this most radical use of the human body while in torture no such consent is exercised" (21). Further, Scarry states, "torture *begins* at precisely the point where the other [war] has left off: it starts by appropriating and deconstructing the artifacts that are the products of creation – wall, window, door, room, shelter, medicine, law, friend, country, [hairstyle], both as they exist in their material form and as the created contents of consciousness" (145).

navigates this space with a body that complicates and challenges the expectations of femininity and masculinity.

In one scene, a woman dressed in tight clothes with loose, flowing hair walks through a doorway and seconds later, Diana, dressed as a tomboy with her hair in cornrows walks out. This scene juxtaposes the expectations and representations of gender: long flowing hair on an image in feminine clothing against another image that implies masculine or possibly butch lesbian. This scene forces the spectator to question Diana's femininity and sexuality as depicted in hair choices as opposed to clothing. While the clothing on the "girl" is tight, Diana is seen in other parts of the film in tight clothes as are other male characters: in all instances, the body of the individual characters is covered, hidden, and interchangeable between the feminine image, the masculine image and Diana's image – the differences in body lies in the hairstyles. The interchangeability in clothing denies a distinction in gendered image – any body can wear any clothes. Clothing then hides the body, denies the sex of the body; it is as if, to extrapolate Luce Irigaray's argument in her work This Sex Which Is Not One, in clothes, the genitalia of the body "are simply absent, masked, sewn back up inside their 'crack'" (Conboy, Medina, Stanbury 251).

Working with Irigaray's argument regarding the depiction of the female body in Greek statuary, I contend that the naked body, regardless of 'gender,' is eroticized and unlike the cover up of marble on female statuary, clothing denies the horror of something to see in both bodies. By hiding the genitals of the body, clothing excludes the something to see of the body and with it hides the sexed representation of the body. If that is indeed the case, something else must stand in for the denied and excluded organs of the body. As I stated before, clothing can be interchangeable, so that something else is hair. Hair becomes the stand-in for sex; and it is the length of hair[vii] that society gives gender meaning. As Lola Young states in her reading of *The Crying Game*, "attitudes to sexual norms are anchored by the external evidence of gender offered

[vii] While women can indeed choose a short hairstyle, like the pixie as seen in films like *Roman Holiday* and *Waiting to Exhale*, clothing and make-up are used to reinforce the gender and sexuality of the character.

by clothing, hairstyle, physical bearing and so on" (Kirkham and Thumim 275). Therefore, hair (and hair length by extension) must stave off the implications that may arise from the innuendo that "certain sexual practices compel the question: what is woman, what is man?" (Butler xi).

Irigaray argues that the denial of female sexuality denies the female as a sex. She argues that women are commodities to be traded by men for sexual pleasure. For her, female sexuality is rooted in biological determinism and is interrupted by the presence of a penis between the two lips of the vagina and is no more than a prop in male fantasies. Irigaray states "Woman 'touches herself' all the time, and moreover no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact….This autoeroticism is disrupted by a violent break-in: the brutal separation of the two lips by a violating penis, an intrusion that distracts and deflects the woman from this 'self-caressing' she needs if she is not to incur the disappearance of her own pleasure in sexual relations" (Conboy, Medina, Stanbury 249). While she concedes that some women could gain pleasure from heterosexual sex, Irigaray argues for a political break from traditional Marxist notions of heterosexual commodity exchange and calls for the pleasure of homosexual or lesbian sex.

Within the context of *The Crying Game*, Irigaray's call for female sexual plurality should include the character of Dil as I argue that Dil is but an example of a "woman [who] has sex organs more or less everywhere. She finds pleasure almost anywhere. Even if we refrain from invoking the hystericization of her entire body, the geography of her pleasure is far more diversified, more multiple in its difference, more complex, more subtle, than is commonly imagined – in an imaginary rather too narrowly focused on sameness" (Conboy, Medina, Stanbury 252-253). Dil is a female no longer denying the secret of the feminine biological body, but instead is a female body that challenges the heterosexual, homosexual, and lesbian gendered notions of female genitalia by displaying its "'thickness' of that 'form,' the layering of its volume, its expansions and contradictions and even the spacing of the moments in which it produces itself as form" (Conboy, Medina, Stanbury 251). In her reading of the 'surface' of Dil's

body, Young agrees with this assertion by stating “In any case, according to normative perceptions rather than being a body ‘without organs’ Dil has an excess of organs” (Kirkham and Thumim 280). Thus, while Irigaray argues that some women “may find pleasure in that role, by proxy, even certain,” (Conboy, Medina, Stanbury 250) the acceptance of a female body with sex organs more or less everywhere, must include Dil as a representation of the female body expressing female sexuality, unless women fully embrace the role of a commodified sexual body containing the site for preferred (heterosexual) sexual penetration.

Returning to *Girlfight* and *The Crying Game*, a body with long hair troubles the expectations of the spectator who knows that the character of Diana is played by a biological female – Michelle Rodriguez; while upon re-viewing, the spectator knows the character of Dil is played by a biological male – Jaye Davidson. What are these cinematic images supposed to represent? Are the cinematic images female? Are they male? Are they bodies in transition? Or more aptly, aren’t these cinematic images of a woman fighting for individual expression of femaleness and sexual identity? Beyond *Girlfight* and *The Crying Game*, these questions apply to the 1997 film *GI Jane* and the character of Jordan. Like Dil, Jordan is a character whose body comes under examination after she has shaved her long flowing locks. In one telling scene, Jordan exclaims to a male character in the film, “suck my dick!” For spectators and characters within the narrative, the line may be read as sarcasm, however the film has indicated that Jordan’s female biology has been suspended with her menstruation ceasing and so her biology could have changed to male within the narrative post-haircut. In these films, the biology of the actors playing the characters informs the gender of the character more then the films themselves. In *The Crying Game*, the questions of Dil’s gender troubles are *just* “details baby, details.” While in *Girlfight* the film troubles the expectations of the spectator by presenting scenes and images that call into question society’s constructions and expectations of women. The following exchange between Diana and her father illustrates this: “Diana: Don’t front like I’m some sort of girly girl, cuz I’m not. Father: Would it hurt for you to wear a skirt every once in a while?” (Kusama)

The narrative never dresses Diana in a skirt, thus the film never takes an apparent stance on her gender one way or another. The subtle presentations of Diana in several scenes seem to present her in various hairstyles that would traditionally be associated with femaleness (long flowing hair) rather than maleness (cornrows). This binary depiction of her identity presents itself in one particular scene during a practice boxing session with her trainer. The image of Diana is depicted in front of a mirror that is split in half; on the top of the mirror we see the top of her head in cornrows, in the bottom half of the mirror is the lower half of her head with long flowing hair. This scene presents a body that could be male or female engaged in athletic training. Diana is shaping her body into something that is strong, confident, and capable of expressing itself in society. The film doesn't make it clear if this body is going to be male or female, but rather that it could be both and neither at the same time. This scene is implying that the perceptions society has regarding what is a female body and what is a male body are no longer apparent on biology alone. The image is an expression of repression and freedom combined; it is a reflection of the human body itself – a combination of masculine and feminine traits.

In order to confront these images of femininity, the film presents several scenes that call into question the identity of Diana and thus force the spectator to begin questioning their own preconceived notions of how they internalize the images they watch in movies. One of these scenes has Diana sparing with a camera point of view opponent: Diana punches the camera, and in turn the spectator. This scene directly challenges the spectator to confront his own notions of Diana and gender identity. Another scene shows Diana running in cornrows and a ponytail to the sound of a voiceover saying, "Heat. What is heat then? The energy possessed by molecules in motion" (Kusama). Diana is a body in motion expressing her own self-generated sexual identity. Diana is a different, yet similar, representation of the female body, as is Dil. For both bodies, it is hair that is used to trouble and define the body. Like Jordan in *GI Jane*, it is in the cutting of Dil's hair that the body is realigned into a male-defined position.

While *Girlfight* presents a more apparent argument for how hair is used to express gender, all films like *The Crying Game* present images to the spectator that reaffirm the look of male or female; they are simply more subtle, more opaque in the commentary. Despite other scenes that attempt to depict Diana as feminine especially when she is with her boyfriend (a not so subtle need to reaffirm her heterosexuality), the spectator has already consumed an image of a body in between male and female, maybe a body in transition? The facets of identity that hair in cinema (gender, race, sexuality, etc.) presents are available for the spectator to accept or resist[viii]; however, regardless of the spectator's choice of interpretation, consumption of the image has already occurred. The gender-troubled body with no discernible hairstyle has rooted itself into the mind of the spectator. For the spectator, consumption has occurred through the biting of the images projected onto the screen with their eyes.

## The Visual Consumption of Hair: The Importance of the Cut

In his work entitled On Black Men, David Marriott works through the theory of incorporation by psychoanalyst Otto Fenichel to discuss how the camera "bites" reality. Navigating through a discussion of lynching photographs in the South, an examination of Robert Mapplethorpe's *X Portfolio*, specifically the photographs *Hooded Man* and *Man in a Polyester Suit*, and the personal photographs by Jeffrey Dahmer of his victims, Marriott explores what it means to visually consume and incorporate a photographic image through the eyes: "To incorporate, to eat, through the eyes; to want to look, and look again, in the name of appreciating and destroying, loving and hating" (27). By working with Marriott, it is my hope to contribute to his theoretical discussion of image consumption by adapting his theoretical framework to the looking at and incorporating of moving images. To establish his framework for incorporation,

[viii] In "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance," Manthia Diawara develops "the notion of the resisting spectator" (892) as a challenge to traditional notions of spectator identification that don't account for the black spectator viewing their like on screen. It is my goal to expound this conception of the resisting spectator to any spectator who resists identification with their cinematic representation on the screen, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, and so on. In their resistance, the spectator challenges the preconceptions and normative identifications associated with a given cinematic image and its like-for-like referent outside the narrative.

Marriott states:

> …what if looking is a form of incorporation, of taking something inside (this may be part of its anxiety?). Let's note that judgement [sic], for Freud (and in our context, this telling), is always a question of taking something into the mouth or spitting it out. An insight that the German psychoanalyst, Otto Fenichel, will develop in terms of incorporation, or devoration, by the eyes. 'When someone gazes intensely at an object', writes Fenichel at the beginning of his 'The scopophilic instinct and identification', first published in 1935, 'we say that he "devours it with his eyes," and there are many similar phrases' (Fenichel 1935: 373). The symbolic equation to look at = to devour, supports Fenichel's remarkable extension of Freud's theory of scopophilia: the drive to look at a sexual object. 'The eye', Fenichel writes, 'is conceived of as an organ that robs and bites' (ibid.: 395). It can even, in fantasy, give access to the interior of the body. Wanting to devour, to take something in via the eyes, can run parallel, in Fenichel's view, with the wish to destroy something by looking at it; 'or else', he writes 'the act of looking itself has already acquired the significance of a modified form of destruction' (ibid.: 377) (Marriott 25-27)

In this telling passage, Marriott establishes for himself a method of critically examining the effects of photographic image consumption. By looking at lynching photographs and Mapplethorpe's nudes, Marriott critiques the photographer and the spectator, both of whom, in the capturing and looking of an image open themselves up to dissection over the subject matter – the black body in death or artistic posture. By choosing these specific lines including the language of "destroy" and "destruction," Marriott presents an unobjective point of inquiry. His examination of the topic is from the point of view of a black man identifying with the body lynched, the body eroticized. He freely admits that his initial review of Mapplethorpe didn't allow for a space of the black spectator desiring the black body. I would ask then of his argument, shouldn't a space for desire of the black body by a black body not open up the possible space for the wanted destruction of the black body and the associated pleasure it produces in the white spectator not extend to the black spectator as well? For Marriott, the identification of the white spectator with the photographic image has racist overtones and does not allow for a space of objective incorporation. While I admit that racist pleasure is indeed present for some white spectators of lynching photographs, how is the possibility of self-hating pleasure by black spectators not examined, especially if shocking images produce a desire to look, and look again? Marriott states:

> The risk of looking at whatever a photographer like Mapplethorpe chooses to exhibit, then, is that you might see something you don't want to see; quite simply, you might be shocked, and he might fail to engage you in his aesthetic, even though you're prepared to look, and look again. The question is where does such (obsessive) looking leave you? What defence [sic] do you have against the disgust generated by an image made irredeemable by lack or excess? Against a failure in identification with, or aestheticisation [sic] of, a photograph [cinematic image – character]? The type of defence described by Fenichel, perhaps: a devouring scopophilia. Take it in so that you can control it, torment it, spit it out. But the image will leave its trace. (Marriott 28)

Visual engagement with film requires the seeing of characters, and in that process of viewing, spectators devour, consume and eat the image. The biting, the devouring, the desire to aestheticize or not, and the ability to identify with, or not, the cinematic image begins the moment the first character enters the narrative. In *The Crying Game*, the film opens with a tracking shot from right to left underneath a bridge near Laytown in County Meade. In the background a carnival fairground can be seen. While there are images of people moving along the shore, the indistinct appearance doesn't clue the spectator as to the types of people that are going to be represented in the narrative. From beneath the bridge, the film cuts to a close up of speakers that are projecting the previously non-diegetic music, thus suturing the music to the narrative. The camera then pulls back from the speakers and fills the screen with representations of various background characters at the fair/carnival. This shot then begins the **Opaque Movement** in *The Crying Game*.

In any film, the introduction of the first character, group of characters or character image, sets the foundation for the look of the film. With each visual bite of a scene, images are consumed and a catalogue of referents is posited into the recesses of the consciousness. Images with long, short, black, brown, and blond hair work in concert with clothing, makeup and skin color to establish the gender and racial construction of the film. Each of the characters enter the mind and leave a trace on the spectator's conscious mind; this trace, this referent, this ghostly image[ix] will

[ix] Upon his death, Jody becomes the immaterial motivations behind the haircuts. In the second half of the film, spectator's become aware of his physical absence and cognizant of his powerful presence as Fergus's dream man, the photographic image, the ghost haunting and informing the narrative. As Avery F. Gordon states in Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination, "If haunting describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities, the ghost is just the sign, or the

be referred to after a hair transformation has occurred in the narrative as a possible source of like for like comparisons. This process of establishing a gender, sexual and racial reference occurs from the moment the first character enters the narrative and moves through the film until the last character is shown on screen. For the spectator, visual consumption extends to all images captured in a scene – magazine covers, billboards, advertisements, background and secondary characters, everything within the scope of the frame, and sometimes beyond.

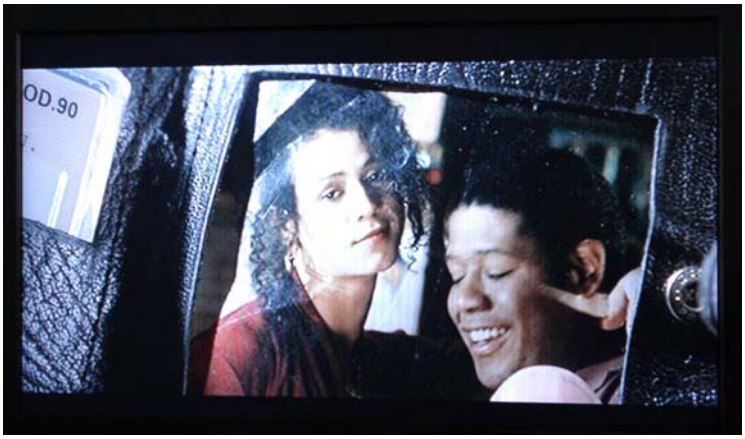


**Figure 2:** Still Image of Dil and Jody from *The Crying Game*

In one scene of *The Crying Game*, Fergus admires a picture of Dil and Jody together. In the photograph (see Figure 2), the hair on Dil pushes beyond the frame of the wallet. The massy and voluminous tendrils occupy a space beyond the narrative and allude to a bigness of character; it is a subtle way of saying you are consuming a lot of woman – she is more than this frame can contain, she is more than you can handle. Situated against a white background, her neck long and exposed reveals no indication of maleness. Juxtaposed against the minimal and contained short afro of Jody as it gets lost in the dark background, the femaleness of Dil is meant to be read in the length of her hair. The line down the middle of the photograph establishes a clear distinction between male and female. The presence of Fergus's thumb on the face of Jody alludes to the

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empirical evidence if you like, that tells you a haunting is taking place." Jody's "meddling" in the narrative affects Fergus and inspires his motivation to cut Dil's hair. In the mind of the spectator and the critic, Jody's haunting presence in the narrative acts upon their "taken-for-granted realities" and influences their personal histories as he becomes the narrative referent in their assertions that the characters of Jody and Dil are both black men because they both have short afros and a penis.

possibility that he wants to take his place in the male/female dynamic; and maybe not just replace but to become the body in the racially, gendered and sexual dynamic.[x] The line also establishes a distinction between black and ethnic as the intense lighting blows out the color from Dil's cheeks and whitewashes her into exoticism. These distinctions are ignored post-haircut as Fergus strives to materialize the Jody of his dreams and the Jody of a different photograph; they are ignored as Jody and Dil are forced into a sameness of identity – gender, race and sexuality when both are identified as black men – through a short afro. The distinctions are ignored because the film does not provide sufficient referents for which the spectator can determine like for like identification. With only a handful of characters of non-white complexion and ethnic hair texture in the film, misinterpretation or misrecognition of the character's gender, race and sexuality becomes clear.

In another scene meant to shock, engage, and challenge, spectators consume the reveal of Dil's character as a body in possession of a penis. In this scene Neil Jordan has exhibited an image that the spectator may not want to see. It is in the previous aestheticism of and desiring for Dil's presumed female body that the spectator is left with a feeling of disgust and a desire to look and look again. Further, the spectator gains an opportunity to control and torment the character, however they will not be able to spit out the image. While Marriott suggests that the spectator can spit out the image, he rightfully states the image will leave its trace upon the consciousness of the spectator; however, he does not sufficiently expound on the inherent inability for the mind to spit out the image. For once the image has been viewed, the mind will not purge itself of the image. Different than oral consumption, visual consumption will always be digested and internalized. While the image may disappear from the forefront of the spectator's memory, it will continue to haunt the viewer; the image will operate as a ghostly memory subjecting the spectator to think and rethink every decision, action, and body it encounters and has encountered. For Fergus, the

[x] Amy Zillax argues for the fluidity of race performance by arguing that in one moment in the film when Dil and Fergus are facing each other post-haircut, they are the same – mirror images of each other. Inherent in her argument, which she doesn't state openly, skin color is not relevant to the sameness of the two characters in this scene. They could both be black, white, or ethnic; regardless, they are the same.

inability to spit out the image of Dil's possession of a penis bends and twists his relationship with her momentarily until he is able to cut her hair and reposition her into a ghostly position of a once-seen body that he knows possessed a penis – Jody in his cricket whites. The cutting of Dil's long, feminine, massy hair allows Fergus to digest what he has seen and incorporate it into his consciousness only by transforming the body into a more palatable consumable.

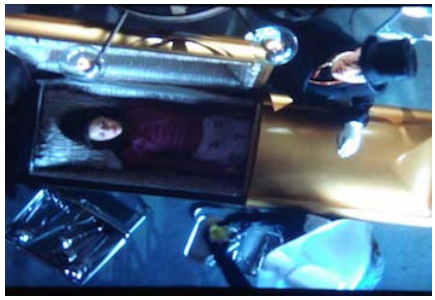
With the haircutting of Dil, it is as if Fergus has dissected Dil and created an image that he can devour without wanting to spit out. For spectators who viewed Mapplethorpe's photographs and for which I will extend freely to viewers of *The Crying Game*, Marriott states, "Looking at Mapplethorpe's work…was 'like undergoing surgery' (ibid,: II, 73). Like being cut open, and having something cut in or cut out" (24). While Marriott is talking about how spectators were having information cut out of them or cut into them at the sight of the photograph, I want to challenge and extend this thought of looking as a surgical process to the character of Dil at the moment of the haircut. For the character looking at herself in the mirror during the moment of the cut it was like undergoing surgery – being cut open, and having something cut in or cut out: exactly what was being cut in or cut out was her gender!

For Fergus to consume and devour – visually and sexually (the post-coital cigarette) – this new image, this new body before him, he needed to replicate and materialize the ghostly image that occupied his dreams and was frozen in a photograph. Fergus required a referent against which he could reposition both Dil and himself. This referent, Jody with a short afro in his cricket whites, occupied a space in the narrative that had been viewed and would be viewed again, and its acquisition in Fergus's and the spectator's consciousness would only be obtained through a reflection of the film narrative, of the images previously consumed and incorporated. Kaja Silverman provides a robust way of looking at this method of incorporation and devoration with her theoretical conception of suture: "the concept of suture attempts to account for the means by which the subject emerges within discourse" (Rosen 219).

Within the concept of suture, the spectator inserts himself into the symbolic register (the film) in the guise of a signifier (character identification), and in so doing, gains meaning at the expense of their own physical identity position. For the individual who identifies with a character in the film, the person feels that they are taking the place of the missing substance (interiority) of the image and filling it with their own personhood. This identification, this moment when the spectator identifies with the character, is when the process of suture is successful. With the concept of suture, Silverman establishes a cinematic model that is rooted in the interlocking shots of a film. She argues "Shot relationships are seen as the equivalent of syntactic ones in linguistic discourse, as the agency whereby meaning emerges and a subject-position is constructed for the viewer" (Rosen 220). For a film to attain meaning the relationships between shots must be seamless; for the spectator, the feeling of lack or absence at not seeing a portion of the film must be sufficiently sutured over so as to remain within the narrative. At the heart of this discussion is the importance of the cut between shots. Silverman argues "equally important to the cinematic organization are the operations of cutting and excluding…the cut guarantees that both the preceding and the subsequent shots will function as structuring absences to the present shot. These absences make possible a signifying ensemble, convert one shot into a signifier of the next one, and the signified of the preceding one" (Rosen 222). Given the importance of the cut to Silverman's argument, I want to extend the cut beyond the editing of film and state the haircut or transformation to hair is the visual narrative representation of the film cut or editing of film. The haircut itself not only slices away the character's hair and with it the current identity position, but it cuts the spectator's viewing of the film and makes them cognizant of the editing process. Following Silverman's thinking, the moment a character's hair is cut, the shot takes on significant importance as the character undergoing the makeover (haircut or hair transformation) becomes the signifier to a new identity and a signified of a previous identity.

The 1999 film *Jawbreaker* provides a stellar example of this suturing process and the importance of the cut in constructing the Transparent Violent Moment which points to the

death/rebirth of a character as a result of an extreme change in hairstyle. *Jawbreaker* tells the story of a group of friends who accidently kill a friend with a jawbreaker candy. When she overhears the friends discussing the murder, Fern Mayo is presented with an option: let the popular girls transform the meekly bookworm into the popular Vylette or don't. The moment of Fern's hair transformation becomes the signifying ensemble in the film. In the shot sequence, Fern with long brown hair is superimposed over Liz, with long brown hair, inside the coffin. Then Vylette is superimposed over the body with long brown hair in the coffin. Finally, the blonde image of Vylette rises, as if born, from the shampoo chair. The following figures depict the shot importance of this moment in the narrative.

a.  b. 

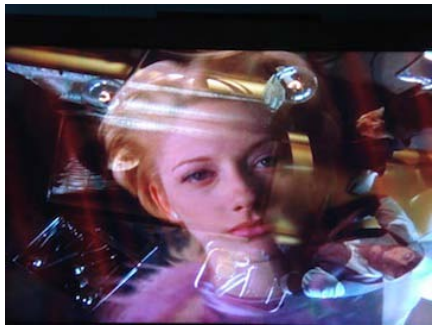
c.  d. 

**Figure 3:** Still Images from *Jawbreaker*: a. Liz Purr being laid to rest, b. Overlay of Fern whose long brown hair mimics Liz's conveys death of character identity, c. Overlay of Vylette follows previous shot to indicate birth of Vylette, d. Vylette being born in shampoo chair

With the cutting of hair, Fern as mousy bookworm is laid to rest and the new identity of Vylette is sutured into place. The new image – a short blonde bob – is visually similar to the character of Marci; maintaining a visual link with a previously established character provides a referent and grounds the new identity of Vylette within the narrative. The apparent presence of a referent

allows suture to reestablish itself with minimal disruption to the spectator. However, the presence of a referent (male-identified characters share a similar hairstyle) can trouble the spectator as indicated before when I described the character of Jordan in *GI Jane*. Another example of the Transparent Violent Moment and a female character that undergoes an extreme change is the character of Ripley in *Alien 3*. In the 1992 film, the character of Ripley crashes onto a penal colony. As a result of bug infestations, the character shaves off her locks. At this point in the narrative she is like for like similar to the male prisoners – dress and hair style. Unlike *Girlfight* which takes an opaque approach to Diana's gender or *GI Jane* which troubles Jordan's sex ("Suck my dick!), *Alien 3* seeks to reaffirm Ripley's sex as female – the film has the character engage in sexual relations with a fellow prisoner and impregnates her with an alien.

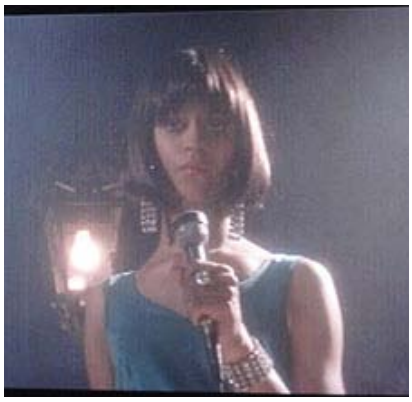
a.  b. 

**Figure 4:** Still Images from *The Crying Game:* Photograph of drag performer (a) in Metro bar with a dark bob serves as a referent for photograph of Jude (b) after getting her haircut during the Transparent Violent Moment.

In *The Crying Game*, Natasha Richardson's Jude also undergoes an extreme and violent hair transformation off-screen between the first half and second half of the film. Critics of Richardson's character indicate that the character is violent, aggressive and a scorpion.[xi] I would argue that the hostility directed towards the character is a result of her extreme hair change that shifts from blond to a severe red bob. Inherent to the hostility is anger over her elimination of the cinematic marker of beauty – the star image with long flowing locks, preferably blonde. For spectators, given the reveal of Dil's biological appearance as male, the extreme change in Jude

[xi] Handler, Hill, Edge, Backus and Doan, and Jordan himself as interviewed by Burke, among others.

troubles the spectator that has an unconscious referent in a drag performer. The similarity between Jude and the drag performer, shown in the previous images, haunts the spectators' consciousness as they begin to question the gender and race of the character. [xii]

The haircut opens up the consciousness of the spectator. The psychological wound produced by the haircut, forces the spectator to search, consciously or unconsciously through the narrative for a referent. The presence of a referent allows for suture to close the gap; however, in the search, given the spectators' awareness of identification with a character, an awareness of their own identity position becomes prescient. The search for the referent requires the spectator to move in-between the shots in the film, in-between the narrative, and ultimately in-between their own personal history to locate a referent upon which they can position their own identity against. Homi Bhabha states "It is always in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated: the phantasmic space of possession that no one subject can singly or fixedly occupy, and therefore permits the dream of the inversion of roles" (Bhabha 63). The haircut opens up a space in-between the character's identity position at the beginning of the film and after the haircut. The haircut, unlike the edit that suture closes, makes the spectator aware, makes them an active participant in the construction of the character's identity. The haircut is a realignment or shifting of the self, it forces a becoming of identity. The haircut is a reminder of the fluidity of identity.

[xii] At the beginning of the film, Jody attempts to slide his hand up Jude's skirt but is brushed away. This scene is repeated two other times in the narrative when Fergus attempts to slide his hand up Dil's skirt and is brushed away, and at the end of the film when Dil attempts to fellate Fergus post haircut and is brushed away. In all three instances, clothing is hiding the genitalia/sex/gender. In addition to hiding the sex, is the brushing aside of the sexual advance not hiding the sexuality of the character?

**Witnessing the Haircut: Distinguishing between the Transparent Moderate Moment and the Transparent Violent Moment**

In "Interrogating Identity: Frantz Fanon and the postcolonial prerogative," Bhabha poses the concept of fluid identity and the idea of in-betweenness. To conceptualize his theory on identity, Bhabha recalls an Althusserian notion of hailing regarding the formation of an individual's identity. He states "three conditions that underlie an understanding of the *process* of *identification* in the analytic of desire emerge" (Bhabha 63). Bhabha argues that for an individual "to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus….Second: the very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a space of splitting…[and] Finally, the question of identity is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image" (Bhabha 63-64). Thus, an individual comes into being in relation to being next to someone or something else in time and space. In a film, the moment of the haircut (or hair transformation) becomes the locus, the space of splitting, the very moment that the character assumes an image, an identity in relation to a referent (otherness or its look). The fluidity of identity crystallizes into a pre-given or *self*-fulfilling position as the haircut forces the image to assume a position in relation to the demand or desire of the self or another character. However as Bhabha indicates, this new identity position is never affirmed because the identity of the character is ignored and established in relation to other characters and the spectator, whose own identity position is also in flux as it attempts to establish itself in relation to the identification with and against "an otherness, its look or locus" – the new cinematic image on the screen.

It is in Bhabha's final condition in the *process of identification* that Scarry's conceptualization of pain (creation/decreation) returns to the argument. The "production of an image of identity" (creation) is the **Opaque Movement** of the narrative and the "transformation

of the subject in assuming that image" (decreation) is the consent of the cinematic image at the time of the haircut as distinguished by the degrees of pain as witnessed in the **Transparent Violent Moment** and **Transparent Moderate Moment**. For the spectator, the moment of the haircut can be read with visual and narrative markers. What is notable and important to distinguish between these two markers is that the one – the body, the hair – can be considered material – the spectator can see the hair being cut or the transparent physical ramifications of the haircut (hair transformation); and the other – the belief, the identity – can be considered immaterial – the spectator must infer and analyze the motivation (consent) behind the haircut – most often through narrative. My conceptualizations of the Transparent Violent Moment and the Transparent Moderate Moment and their occurrence within the Opaque Movement reside within the interplay and movement between the two markers – the material and the immaterial – as witnessed by the length and amount of hair that is cut and the motivations behind the haircuts and hair transformations.

In films like *Taxi Driver*, *Fight Club*, *The Bourne Identity*, *Waiting to Exhale*, *Single White Female*, *Caged*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *White Chicks*, *Mulan*, *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *Vertigo*, and *The Magdalene Sisters*, characters undergo drastic haircut changes that I would classify as the Transparent Violent Moment. In these films, characters shave their heads, drastically color their hair or get an extreme haircut from long hair to short. For example, in the film *V for Vendetta*, the character Evey finds herself being held prisoner and tortured. At one point during her captivity she is shaved. The image below captures the pain and anguish on her face as her identity is stripped away. In this film the character moves from a nice and kind woman who wants to avoid violence towards a nice and kind woman who is able to flip the switch and commit the violent act of blowing up the Parliament building.

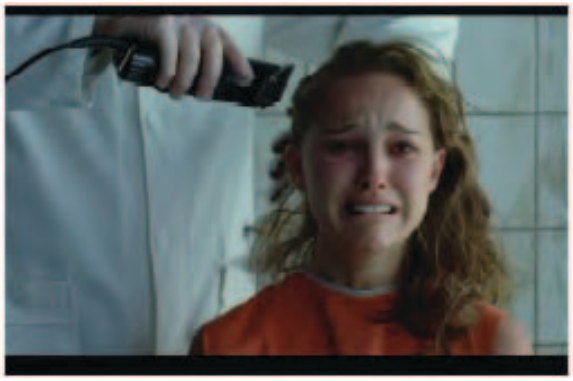
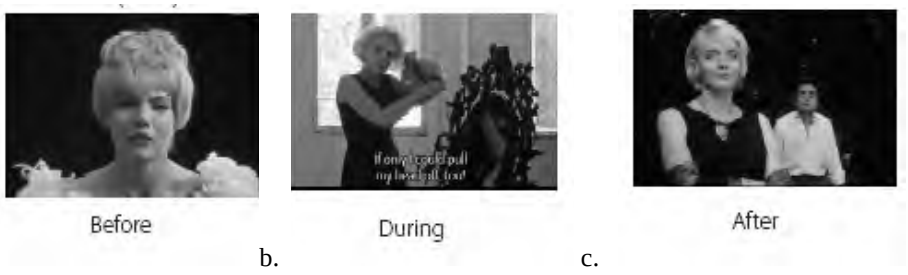


**Figure 5:** Still Image of Evey getting her hair shaved during the Transparent Violent Moment of *V for Vendetta*

On the flip side of the extreme changes to hair is the moderate change in hairstyles and hair length. In films like *Something New, Pretty Woman, Little Mermaid, Desperately Seeking Susan, Clueless, Sliding Doors, The Mirror has Two Faces, the Lethal Weapon series*[xiii], and *Smoke Signals*, characters undergo moderate changes to their hair that I would classify as the Transparent Moderate Moment. In these films, characters trim, cut, and color their hair however the changes are moderate. For example in the film *Cleo from 5 to 7*, Cleo is frustrated with her existence and being pigeon-holed as a diva. In a telling scene, captured in the images below, Cleo strips from her hair a clip of additional hair. With the removal of this extra hair, Cleo liberates herself and begins a journey of introspection that culminates in her willingness to confront her cancer head on.




a. b. c.

**Figure 6:** Still Images of Cleo: a. Before, b. During, and c. After the Transparent Moderate Moment in *Cleo from 5 to 7*

In *The Crying Game*, both types of moments occur. In the first haircut of the film, Fergus moves between a shag hairstyle and a professional look: this would be an example of the Transparent Violent Moment in that a significant length of hair is cut from the body. In the second haircut,

[xiii] The Lethal Weapon series can rightfully be argued as an example of the Transparent Violent Moment. The difference would be one's individual reading of the motivation behind the hair transformations.

Fergus receives a trim at the hands of Dil – the trim cuts off the extra length of hair at the nape of the neck: given the minimal amount of hair that is cut I would define this second haircut as the Transparent Moderate Moment. The third hair transformation occurs off-screen as Jude cuts, colors, and straightens her blonde hair into a red bob – an example of the Transparent Violent Moment. And finally, Fergus cuts off Dil's massy, voluminous hair into a short natural afro – again, the Transparent Violent Moment. Further distinction between the two types of moments will be made as the motivation behind the haircuts/transformations is discussed below. It should be noted though, the length of hair being cut cannot be the only distinguishing factor in determining which Moment a character has experienced, unless it is apparent that a significant amount of hair is cut, the head is shaved, or a combination of the two is involved. The act of cutting is only a part of the realignment process; it is the apparent act of decreation of an identity. Difference in the moments will have to be negotiated and balanced against the motivation – the intention behind the production/creation of the new identity.

**Interrogating the Haircut: Reading the Opaque Movement**

As I indicated before, consent is instrumental to understanding and reading the realignment of the self, of the character's identity, before and after the moment of the haircut. As I have shown, hair is the material representation of the self, and as I intend to show the immaterial

> ...You'd do anything for me?
> Anything.
> No way.
> You said anything Dil.
> A girl has to draw the line somewhere.
> Want to change you into a man.
> Why?
> It's a secret.
> Would you like me better that way Jimmy?
> Yes.
> And you wouldn't leave me?
> No.
> Do you promise?
> I promise.
> Go on then.
>
> from *The Crying Game (1992)*

representation of a character's pre-given identity or self-fulfilling prophecy is linked to the choice of hairstyle that results from the haircut/transformation. The lines of dialogue above will allow me to explore consent and give voice to the immaterial importance of hair in the representation of identity.

The aforementioned lines of dialogue precede the scene in which Fergus cuts Dil's hair into a short afro. At the heart this dialogue is that the matter of consent that can be witnessed as either psychological warfare or torture. Scarry argues "the difference between the two models [war and torture] is this: in one the belief belongs to the person whose body is used in its confirmation; in the other, the belief belongs to a person other than the person whose body is used to confirm it" (149). To explain her argument further, consent requires the acceptance of fictitious belief systems: in war the system is "not yet real" while in torture the system is "unreal". Further, in war, the body/belief of the loser gives consent or acceptance of the winner's belief system if they lose in battle: if not mine than yours. On the other hand, torture forces one to accept something that they did not believe in the first place by inflicting pain upon the body: not yours only mine.

What is important to note in this is the presence of the body and the belief in the act. As we look at the lines of dialogue above, it is important to notice the bodies present. The body or bodies involved in the act can help point to a distinction between psychological war and torture. Two or more bodies may initially point towards warfare, though as Scarry notes, if it becomes apparent that the body of the one being cut no longer consents to the transformation at the hands/words of the others, then warfare has moved to torture. Torture can occur between two or more people. Complications between psychological warfare and torture can arise when the engagement is between one person and their own ideological belief system or an institution (e.g. government/military as seen in *G.I. Jane*) outside of themselves.

Fergus and Dil's exchange above is an example of psychological warfare, the tension between the demand and the desire of self versus the other. Their engagement resulted in an identity with a motivation and belief system that could be classified as "if not mine, than yours." Their battle, and her surrender to him, resulted in a consensual acceptance of a belief system and identity that 'was not yet real." If the creation of a new cinematic image – Dil as Jody in his cricket whites – resulted in the decreation of Dil as woman at the moment of the haircut as shown in the dialogue above when Dil surrenders, then the process of identification began much earlier in the film. The motivation for Fergus's actions lie within the narrative and requires the spectator to look back at the previous images to find referents and infer the importance of those images in shaping the belief system of the body conferring its beliefs (Fergus) onto the body being confirmed (Dil). As I indicated before, the motivation resides within the Opaque Movement of the film which begins the moment the first character enters the narrative to the last moment a character leaves the narrative; thus, the motivation will have to be examined throughout the narrative even though the dialogue above crystallizes the instance of the Transparent Violent Moment.

To begin looking at the motivation for the cut, let us begin with the resulting identity created, hailed into existence. The new cinematic image (identity) – Dil as Jody in his cricket whites – finds its otherness, locus, look not only in a photograph, but also in a dream-image and a ghostly apparition of Jody in his cricket whites. The photograph is an object external to Fergus's body; the dream-image exists within Fergus's consciousness and is thus a part of his body. Thus, the ghostly or dream-image of Jody has significant import in understanding a portion of Fergus's motivation. By stating this, I disagree with Scarry who states "That is, the particular content of the dream images (now terrifying, now benign; now full of uncanny secret intelligence about the sleeper, now ignorant, arbitrary, and nonsensical) is itself insignificant beside the overall fact of the dreaming itself, the emergency work of the imagination to provide an object – this object, that object, any object – to sustain and to exercise the capacity for self-objectification during the

sleep-filled hours of sweet and dangerous bodily absorption" (167). While the dream-image of Jody can be read as "any object" by Scarry's definition, the cutting of Dil's hair is more than an act of the imagination in creating any object, but a real act of creating a real object. As Fergus states to Dil, that real object is the creation of a man (Want to change you into a man). Thus the process of haircutting is a process of gendering (*man*ing) a previously female body into a male body. To echo Dil, why? The answer lies in the word "secret" in Fergus's subsequent line of dialogue.

As I indicated before, the embargo of the press to not disclose the "secret" of *The Crying Game*, stresses the importance of the "reveal" of the film which hinges on the infliction of psychological pain upon the spectator. Given that the pain inflicted upon the spectator and Fergus is rooted in the preconceived notion of Dil's gender as female, the motivation for the haircut can be read as a means of trying to protect Dil - a rather chauvinistic motivation, but a motivation nonetheless. However this motivation only works if the spectator and Fergus *feel* and *believe* that Dil is indeed a "woman" that *needs* the protection of a man.

Now if we follow Fergus's line of thinking ("you'd do anything for me") and agree that Dil has now been '*man*ed' with the cutting of her hair into a short afro for her own protection, it must be stated that the body that is protected or saved is not Dil, but Fergus; for the resulting cinematic image – Dil as Jody in his cricket whites – possesses an identity that protects and kills for Fergus. What does this mean than for the masculinity of Fergus given that he decreated a woman to create a man to 'save' him from participating in a scheme he feared? Now, even if there is no agreement that Fergus's masculinity is now in question, it should be apparent that the motivation, the belief, the why of the haircut still resides in the "secret" that Fergus states openly. Since we are talking about psychological warfare and torture, could the motivation exist in a form of self-torture within Fergus's consciousness? The warfare is shown in the dialogue, acted out with the scissors operating as a weapon in their battle, and is clearly evidenced by Dil conceding to Fergus, but could it be that Fergus himself is unaware of the secret motivation for his actions?

If, as Scarry indicates, torture is the attempt to get the body of the other to believe something that is unreal, could Fergus not be the body conferring the belief and the body being conferred? If that is the case, would Fergus's motivation reside in his attempt to get himself to believe something that has been unreal to him, maybe some objectless referent that has been causing him psychological pain that needs to be eliminated? Could the answer lie in Fergus's visual consumption of an image that produced disgust and caused him to vomit – the secret/reveal of the film? Could it be that the motivation for the haircut resides in the consumption of an irredeemable image, an image of excess visibility of a 'woman who has sex organs more or less everywhere'? If this is indeed the case, could this image – woman with a penis (which exists in a state of objectlessness given the cinematic image is projected and not actually material existence) – this secret of the film, not be situated as a motivating force in his behavior? If this is the case, then, as Marriot suggests, Fergus was simply trying to defend himself from the consumption of an irredeemable image that caused him disgust. In this case, the 'fear-and-object' image that he consumed was not the image of the penis itself as object, as the penis itself did not disgust Fergus nor warrant a defense against pain – he had previously held Jody's penis and he had received fellatio. Thus the pain inflicted must have come from the fear of seeing an image that was not previously consumed and internalized within his consciousness – the (cinematic) image of a woman with a penis – and initially became the source of his objectless fear. However, once the cinematic image was consumed and internalized into an object, it was no longer an objectless fear, but an image that induced the pain associated with its new state as 'fear-and-object.' Therefore, if the new 'fear-and-object' is the previously objectless fear associated with an image of a woman with a penis, then this new 'fear-and-object' was the source of Fergus's disgust, and it would need to be eliminated. As such, Fergus needed a defense, a mechanism to alleviate the pain. He needed to cut Dil's hair and realign her into a more palatable and consumable image that he could look at again and again and reestablish his aestheticization without pain – Jody in his cricket whites.

What is important to note is that if Fergus was engaged in self-torture then he was forcing himself to accept something that was unreal to him. If that is the case, then Fergus's identity also shifted. The cutting of the hair not only realigned Dil into an object that existed within his imagination, but Fergus's identity was also shifted in the process. What could Fergus's new identity be realigned to? If haircutting is indeed an act of gendering (*man*ing, *woman*ing, or creating some other body in transition) and a shifting of the character's identity, does the body cutting the hair experience a gendering of the self as well? If Dil was *man*ed at the time of the haircut with an identity that followed preconceived notions of masculinity – protector and killer – then was Fergus *woman*ed at that very moment as well? Did the haircut realign the perceived symbol of power – the penis – from Fergus to Dil? If the haircut indicates and reaffirms the fluidity of identity as argued, could it not be argued that Fergus became a woman confined/imprisoned to a gender role that is traditionally read as sacrificial; a gender role that robs the individual of freedom and power; a gender role that deprives the individual of sexual choice?

*Fergus – Performing the Heterosexual White Man*

## Chapter 2

"Hugh Grant epitomizes a masculinity which has adopted the social tactics of niceness, compliance and liberal tolerance in response to the rising aspirations and assertiveness of women. Both in his public persona and his fictional character of Charles [from *Four Weddings and a Funeral*], his hesitant speech and self-effacement appear to leave him incapable of asserting himself. But this foppish play-acting is designed to preserve his narcissism."

—Jonathan Rutherford, Forever England: Reflections of Masculinity and Empire

For most critics[xiv] and spectators, the character of Fergus in the 1992 Neil Jordan film, *The Crying Game,* has been read as firmly heterosexual or heterosexual with homoerotic overtones. I question the validity of this assertion and propose a reading of Fergus's performance as a character in the process of discovering who he is sexually and racially. Beyond, race and gender, what other identity characteristics is Fergus attempting to discover? What other processes of self-discovery and performance are spectators resisting or accepting as they view and read his character? What are the visual markers for reading changes in Fergus's identity performance within the film? In this chapter I propose the visual markers for reading fluidity in Fergus's identity performance can be attributed in part to the cutting/transforming of a character's hair. By arguing that the two haircuts Fergus gets during the film represent not only visual changes to the character, I will argue that they are moments of identity realignment. In arguing this, it is my goal to enrich the theoretical concepts—Transparent Violent Moment and the Transparent Moderate Moment and their occurrence within the Opaque Movement of the narrative—I introduced in an earlier chapter. To begin, let us first mark the instant that the Opaque Movement begins within the narrative. The Opaque Movement begins the instant the first image of a human enters the film and provides the spectator with an unconscious method of determining what a sexed body will

[xiv] Handler, Grist, Lockett, Giles, Jordan, Backus and Doan to name a few operate under the assumption that Fergus is genuinely heterosexual though they do concede he does manifest homosexual tendencies.

look like within the film. With this shot we, as spectators, are given a sequence that establishes the representations of gendered, sexualized, and racialized hair that we will use to establish narrative reference as to what a racialized and gendered (sex and sexuality is usually implicated through gender) body will look like within the narrative whether we are conscious of this fact or not.

*The Crying Game* opens with a tracking shot from right to left underneath a bridge near Laytown in County Meade. In the background, a carnival/fairground can be seen. While there are images of people moving along the shore, the indistinct appearance of the characters does not clue the spectator as to the types of people that are going to be represented in the narrative. From beneath the bridge, the film cuts to a close up of speakers that are projecting the previously non-diegetic music, thus suturing the music to the narrative. The camera then pulls back from the speakers and fills the screen with representations of various background characters. This shot begins the Opaque Movement in *The Crying Game*.

As the camera moves through the fair, the various background characters – men, women, and children – can be seen with different styles of dress, different complexions, and different hairstyles. There are images of women with long, short, red, blonde, and brunette or brown hair. There are images of men with blond, brown, short, long, and unfortunately, mullets. As I argued earlier, while clothing can be used to distinguish the perceived gender of a character within the space of a film, I think it is the hair of the character that gives the spectator a visual referent as to the gender (sex and sexuality is implicated), race, and ethnicity of a character.[xv]

The Opaque Movement also provides a type of cinematic mirror for spectators to view themselves in and against to assure themselves that they have '*man*ed' or '*woman*ed' themselves accordingly. Complications surrounding gender/sex identity occur within this opening sequence as shown in the following image.

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[xv] In his work Welcome to the Jungle, Kobena Mercer argues that skin is the preferred marker for racial identification.

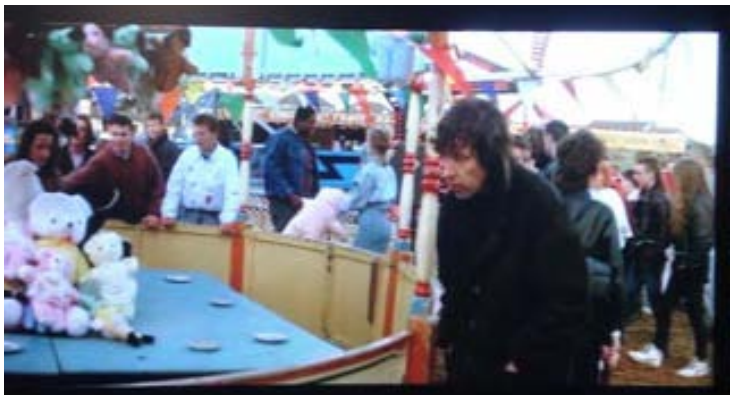

**Figure 7:** Still Image of Fergus from *The Crying Game.* Fergus is standing back to back against an image of a previously "identified" woman. The shot depicts an overlay or a possible suturing of Fergus with this other character through hair and dress

At the foreground is Fergus, to his immediate right is an individual with a similar hairstyle also dressed in black (an earlier shot pointed towards a female face), and in the background right two individuals (previously shown as male) display similar dress with hairstyles that blur the gender line. In these images, black clothing and long hairstyles point to similar bodies – possibly characters on the fringe of society. Given that the still image shown depicts the character of Fergus back-to-back with the female body, an allusion can be made that the two are mirror images of each other. To go further, the overlap of the two cinematic images, both dressed in black, appear sutured to one another as if they were the same body – both male and female.

In this fairground setting with its population of various image representations, the spectator is shown the 'look', the movement of the character images. Given the predominance of white faces, as opposed to the lone black face in this sequence, it appears that the film is going to be a white film with dark overtones. Further, with the overwhelming presence of white faces in this opening sequence, the spectator is shown what it means to be and look white, and presumably straight. Wheeler Winston Dixon argues that

> …all social mass communication is heterosexually privileged; the arbiters of public discourse assume they are speaking to a straight audience. Thus straightness becomes the normative system of values for the dominant social discourse, just as whiteness is seen as the 'majority' and all other ethnicities make up the 'minorities.' But just like whiteness, straightness is a construct, something that doesn't really exist, a concept that needs constant reaffirmation to keep it from disappearing. (Dixon 1)

If, as Dixon suggests, whiteness and straightness (heterosexuality) require constant reaffirmation, cinema offers the venue for constant performance within a medium that can be viewed and re-viewed and thus maintain a level of existence through persistence. Gwendolyn Audrey Foster corroborates Dixon and this assessment of film when she states,

> …the performance of whiteness in moving images. The performance of whiteness in cinema may be viewed as a sort of cultural, repetitive dis-ease, a place where we can return to the repressed, the disordered, and the destabilized; whether that be whiteness, class, or compulsory heterosexuality, the cinema is a factory of identity performances. It is the garment center of white fabrication. The cinema has been remarkably successful at imposing whiteness as a cultural norm, even as it exposes the inherent instability of such arguably artificial binaries as male/female, white/black, heterosexual/homosexual, classed/not classed. It is as though the cinema has sought to hold up these binaries with an almost unrelenting fervor that insists on the definition of the body through performance. (Foster 2)

For both Dixon and Foster, cinema provides the system for spectator self-identification. In her theoretical examination of whiteness, Foster introduces a term called *white space* to describe the narrative space where identity is formed. I will extend her concept as a component of the Opaque Movement as she argues "white space [is] a post-modern concept of on-screen space where identity is negotiated, mutable, and transitory" (Foster 3). For the purposes of the Opaque Movement, the identity being 'negotiated, mutable, and transitory' applies to both the characters within the on-screen space (narrative) and the spectator reading the film. Formulating an identity whether it is the identity of a character or a spectator's self-identity is a fluid interchange within and apart from this white space as spectators identify or resist identification with characters viewed throughout the Opaque Movement of film.

Spectators who accept the heterosexually privileged and white discourse of a film as a given reinforce Dixon's assertion of their minority or privileged status. Resistance to this cinematic discourse requires a conscious sidestepping of the discourse of the spectator by not accepting the cinematic images or performances of identity fabrication (white and straight) as the

norm in a binary discussion. In his article “Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance,” Manthia Diawara develops the “notion of the resisting spectator” (Braudy and Cohen 892) as a challenge to traditional notions of spectator identification that don’t account for the black spectator viewing and not identifying with their like on the screen. By adopting his concept of resisting spectatorship, it is my goal in part to enhance his argument by extending the notion of the resisting spectator to all spectators who don’t identify with their representation on the screen. In assuming this position, I am giving voice to Diawara’s argument that “resisting spectators are transforming the problem of passive identification into active criticism which both informs and interrelates with contemporary oppositional film making” (Braudy and Cohen 900). The resisting spectator who resists identification with their cinematic representation on the screen, regardless of race, sex, gender, sexuality, begins to examine the film within the white space created by the narrative instead of identifying with the preconceptions and normative identifications associated with a given cinematic image apart from the narrative. For example, if one were to accept a queer position for the film as the norm—that is a minority position for the narrative discourse—what identity does the spectator afford himself or herself when minority no longer applies to the spectator? I ask this question for it is within and apart from this white space of *The Crying Game* that Fergus performs whiteness and heterosexuality.

If as Dixon suggests, the concepts of whiteness and heterosexuality require constant reaffirmation or else they disappear, what are the performative qualities that need to be repeated? And if these qualities or characteristics are absent, is the film advocating an alternative or queer discourse? If so, then it stands to reason that the spectator is imbuing the white space of the film with external discourse apart from the narrative in order to affirm their external identification as majority, minority or Other. When discussing the concepts of whiteness and heterosexuality or masculinity of men, and more specifically the British or English male—which I am going to extend to the character of Fergus as a member of the United Kingdom—the concepts of

masculinity, heterosexuality and whiteness have been defined in terms of the male body's relationship with mothers, nation, violence, marriage, work, husbandry, fatherhood, sexuality, and patriarchy, among other concepts (Hearn and Pringle 2006; Spicer 2001; Neal 2008; Rutherford 1997). It is the depiction of those relationships in film, literature, history, politics, and culture that man is defined as a masculine, heterosexual, white, and male. If it is through the relationships between the male body and these concepts that man is established as white heterosexual male, how does the absence of a majority of these relationships from *The Crying Game* allow for the definition of Fergus to be identified as heterosexual and white?

I acknowledge that Fergus brandishes a gun and as a volunteer of the IRA group that kidnaps Jody, Fergus displays aggressive moments; further, the film itself contains some rather violent scenes, however, the film makes a conscious choice to distinguish Fergus as someone different than these other violent characters. At the beginning of the narrative, Fergus has no job, no marriage, is not a husband or father, and does not discuss a relationship with his parents. So I ask, what are the performative acts within the film that constitute his whiteness or heterosexuality? At the beginning of the film, Fergus is characterized much as the way Hugh Grant is characterized in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter – nice, compliant, foppish, and liberally tolerant of others. He is the new British male. However that reading of the character is externally leveled against the character. For in actuality he is but a body in the countryside.[xvi] When describing Grant's character Charles in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, Rutherford could be describing Fergus in the film:

> What he desires to emulate is the antithesis of the English heterosexual manliness he aspires to. He gives expression to that recurring difficulty of upper and middle class, heterosexual Englishmen – loving women….But the film's representation of homosexual love as something lost suggests that Charles must

[xvi] As will be discussed later, Fergus does kiss Jude while they are out in the country, however the kiss itself does not imply a relationship beyond what could be seen as affection between brothers-at-arms. This sexual act will have to be weighed against the act of holding Jody's penis to determine the status of Fergus's sexual identity. The measures, and value of those acts, are determined by the spectator identifying with, or not, the character on the screen.

> renounce the homoerotic origins of his desire. He succeeds in securing a woman through the efficacy of sensitivity and niceness. But the doubt remains that what he was loving was more his own desire (for himself, for other men) than a woman. (Rutherford 141)

Most readings of Fergus concur with the sensitivity, niceness, and liberal tolerance of the character, but again, those are external readings of a character within the white space of *The Crying Game*. My proposed reading of the character argues that the moments of performance that reaffirm whiteness and straightness and serve to stabilize the binaries of male/female, white/black, and heterosexual/homosexual occur after the character gets his two haircuts.

The first haircut that Fergus obtains is off-screen and is an example of the concept I call the Transparent Violent Moment because the character cuts a substantial amount of hair when he moves from a shag hairstyle to a more professional short cut reminiscent of Peter's hairstyle. Prior to his haircut, Fergus's initial Irish identity is meek and feminine. He is friendly. He is kind. He is childlike in his actions when he and Jody run through the woods. He is reticent to participate in the torture of Jody, despite his role in capturing him. He is controlled by Jody. He is a beta male to Peter whom he has to ask permission for his actions. He is not comfortable being in possession of the pistol, of power – "should we regard the pistol as symbolizing the phallus – of sufficiency and lack" (9) as Leighton Grist suggests in his reading of the film. He is an equal to Jude in her motherly attributes (she gets them tea, he feeds Jody). He holds Jody's penis. He finds pleasure in caring for Jody's penis. He is sexually ambiguous. In Peter's words, "You're a good man Fergus" (Jordan 201).

This initial identity is represented in his shoulder length hair that mimicked the shoulder length hair seen on the female body shown in the still image earlier. It is this identity that Fergus wants to negotiate, mutate, and transform. For the spectator, the narrative clues that Fergus's identity is in flux occurs in the following exchange of dialogue:

> Tommy: So what do you need Fergus?

Fergus: Need to go across the water.

Tommy: Do you now?

Fergus: Need to lose myself awhile. (Jordan 206)

These phrases are the narrative markers in the text that indicate a *makeover moment* or a transformation to his identity is about to occur. These statements clearly mark his consent to engage in the transformative act. While the statement ("Need to lose myself awhile.") does not occur within a framework of psychological warfare with another character or institution, it does indicate that Fergus is consenting to give up, to lose his identity to something else. This statement can be read as an example of psychological self-torture namely because the unspoken pronoun 'I' is so pronounced in the desire for transformation.

The actual haircut occurs off screen, however the new image representation of Fergus that the spectator sees following those narrative clues is evidence that a physical transformation has occurred; thus, it should be apparent to the spectator that an internal transformation to the character has also occurred. As I argued earlier, the initial character of Fergus exists within a space in the narrative in which his identity has no reference to the characteristics normally associated with defining the white heterosexual male. As a result of the Transparent Violent Moment[xvii], it is as if this ambiguous character identity is laid to rest and a new identity is born, an identity born within and against some of the aforementioned criteria – first up, work.

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[xvii] During a makeover moment – Transparent Violent Moment (TVM) or Transparent Moderate Moment (TMM) – the amount of hair being cut off distinguishes between the two, as does the level of motivation behind the cut. As I argued earlier, within the TVM characters shave their heads, drastically color their hair or get an extreme hair cut from long hair to short. In her article, "Hair without a head: disembodiment and the uncanny," Janice Miller says of hair: "To leave the body, to be cut off, to fall out, to be separate is for hair to reveal its marginality; to be come alienated from its 'natural' bodily context and hence to become menacing." (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 185). I concur with Miller that the removal or cutting of hair, especially significant or even medium lengths, can menace both the spectator and the character within the narrative. To menace is to show or represent a threat or to inflict harm; to evoke Elaine Scarry – to menace is to cause psychological pain upon the character or the spectator. Given that hair is dead physically, metaphorically the symbolism of hair and its ability to register gender, sex or race is profound. The more hair that is cut or transformed, the greater the menacing threat to the psychic register of the character or the spectator in their ability to define or redefine, and thus identify or *un*identify with, the image before them, especially when the amount of hair being cut off challenges the ability to gender-identify the image. The menace, threat, or effect of psychological pain diminishes with the presence of a narrative visual referent that can suture the narrative and thus alleviate the pain caused by having to search for a referent in the first place.

As a character, Fergus's performance of whiteness is recognized by the white face he sports immediately after he has undergone the Transparent Violent Moment off-screen. Amy Zillax contends in her reading of Fergus that—

> …race is often produced as a similar kind of masquerade….Fergus's whiteness is…figured as literally whiteface, a thick coating of pale dust, which has settled on his face and body at the construction site where he works. This figuration can be seen to describe race as both radically external to the subject—literally a deposit on the skin, rather than the psyche—and, in that way, as analogous to gender: like Dil, Fergus is just "a bit heavy on the powder." (Zillax 33)

While Zillax essentially argues that race is a façade of the skin, as evidenced by the white powder, Foster argues that whiteface is not blackface—a possible description of the white powder—but rather it is a form of ethnic passing. Whiteface "involves performing whiteness in such a way that traces of ethnicity are erased. Whiteface defines the cinematic landscape as a white space. Blackface made a safe place for black minstrelsy within white cinematic space," she argues (Foster 47). Further, Foster says "when I use the term whiteface, I do not mean the opposite of blackface. I regard whiteface as a space where representation that demands class-passing, class othering, giving up ethnic identity to become white, and insists that the human race, especially in America[xviii] is white" (51). To concur with Zillax, the white face (powder) that the spectator sees on Fergus is an indication that performance of whiteness is occurring. Additionally, the fact that Fergus is now performing manual labor at a construction site should clue the spectator that he is attempting to reconstruct his identity. In his reading of the film, John Hill states that "a number of scenes take place in this location, a symbolically useful place of *re*construction, in which the holes in the walls have not yet been filled up…boundaries are marked, but they can change, people can see through them, penetrate them – cross over them" (95). Thus, though Fergus has attempted to lose himself by creating a new identity for himself in

[xviii] Though Foster argues for whiteface as a form of ethnic erasing in America. I am extending her concept to England via her use of cinema as the medium for transmitting the concept of whiteface as cinema is a medium produced in other countries beyond America.

Britain, this new identity is not stable and in fact will come crashing down around him, much like the windowpane that he shatters, when he creates the Transparent Violent Moment of Dil. For now though, we can read Fergus' identity as a performance of white.

Foster says that whiteface is expected of immigrants, both on- and off-screen. Fergus's immigration to Britain results in his attempt to hide his class, his nationality, his 'identity' through this new representation. While getting his haircut for the second time by Dil in her salon, Fergus shows his performance of whiteface during the following exchange:

> Fergus, sitting up. She begins to cut.
> Dil: You American?
> Fergus: No.
> Dil: Not English.
> Fergus: No.
> Dil: Scottish?
> Fergus: How'd you guess?
> Dil: The accent, I suppose. (Jordan 209)

Foster says that to perform whiteness, "whiteface demands that class markers and ethnic markers be erased…One must give up all claims of ethnicity to be properly white" (51). Fergus's assumption of a Scottish identity and name change illustrate his attempt to transform his identity. The name change, the class change from IRA volunteer to laborer, and ethnic change from Irish to Scottish illustrate Fergus's performance of whiteness as a result of the Transparent Violent Moment, but what about his performance as heterosexual?

Let us ask first, what is heterosexuality? Jonathan Katz says the term "heterosexual was not equated here with normal sex, but with perversion – a definitional tradition that lasted in the middle-class culture into the 1920s. Kiernan linked heterosexual to one of several 'abnormal manifestations of the sexual appetite" (19-20). In these first years of defining heterosexuality, its deviance and abnormal qualities became subsumed by theories of nationalism and respectability

and shaped into the standard of acceptable normal behavior for middle-class society.[xix] In her theorizing of heterosexuality, Diane Richardson argues, "the experience of institutionalized heterosexuality is also informed by, and informs, constructions of race and class" (2). Further, she states that "we [spectators] tend to assume that '"whiteness" figures the normative center of political and theoretical discussions about sexuality and identity" (2). In his reading of the film, Christopher Lockett says, "the subversive quality of the film lies not in the revelatory nature of a sudden sexual switch, but in the way a performative sexuality gets played out against an ingrained and fundamentally gendered nationalist tradition" (294).

Taking all of these conceptualizations of heterosexuality as whole is important to understanding the performance of sexuality that takes place after Fergus gets his hair trimmed by Dil which is the visual representation of the Transparent Moderate Moment (See image below).

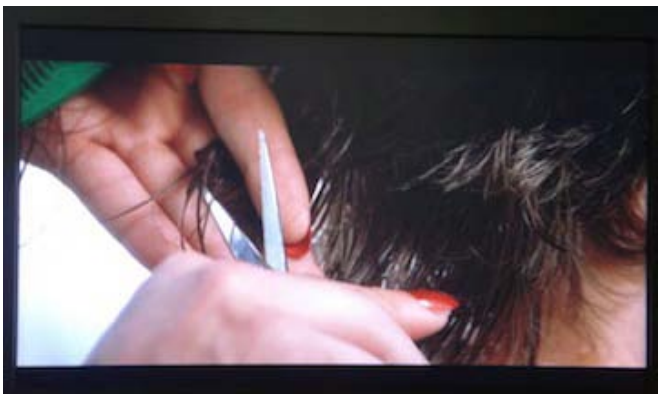


**Figure 8:** Still Image of Fergus getting a haircut during the Transparent Moderate Moment at the hands of Dil

First, if heterosexuality is tied to issues of race, nation, and class, then it stands to reason, one could argue that Fergus may have initially been straight when he held an Irish identity, however after the first haircut, he chose to pass himself off as Scottish and with it, strip himself of an ethnic identity and as a citizen of his nation, and with it, the implicit association of heterosexuality and national identity as Irish. Richardson argues, "claims to citizenship status, at least in the West, are closely associated with the institutionalisation [sic] of heterosexual as well

[xix] See George L. Mosse's exceptional work, Nationalism & Sexuality: Respectability & Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe, for insight on how the theories of nationalism and respectability operate to control and contain the minds of middle class culture and create the current understandings of normal behaviors and sexuality in all of society.

as male privilege….If we take citizenship to mean national identity, for example, it would appear that in many if not most nation-states this form of citizenship is equated with a naturalized heterosexuality" (16). Thus, as Fergus performs whiteness (i.e. ethnic passing) does he not have to pass himself off as heterosexual since he is not in actuality a citizen of any given nation-state?

Despite critical and spectatorial assumptions of Fergus's heterosexuality, doubt is clearly present. Stephen Rea says of his character, "It was very clever of Neil to maintain the ambiguity of the relationship between Fergus and Dil. I mean, Fergus is definitely heterosexual, that's why he had the relationship with Miranda (Richardson). I remember at the time, Neil saying 'I don't know if we need to have this scene outside with Miranda', and I said 'You've got to see him kiss her, because you've got to be sure that he's heterosexual" (Zucker 114). He continues, "But I think it is an ambiguous relationship between Fergus and Dil, and deliberately so. After he knows that Dil is a man, they never consummate the relationship. They kiss, but it's never actually consummated. That's Neil's way of avoiding the potential prurience and squalor of it. But, when he kisses Miranda, it's definitely in the audience's mind that they're lovers…Fergus is completely naïve" (Zucker 114). I would argue so is Rea of this situation. If a kiss by Jude solidifies his heterosexuality, what does fellatio by Dil solidify? Which act is more straight – a kiss or a blow job? Or are we to assume that a kiss is more than a kiss for white men, while receiving fellatio from another man, is what, just par for the course of white male privilege? Further what does the possible post-coital cigarette in the 'honeymoon' suite signify if not consummation of a relationship?[xx]

The initial reading of Fergus as strictly heterosexual only works on the spectator who identifies as heterosexual during the first, initial viewing of the film. Any secondary viewings of the film are automatically colored by the specter of the penis in the Fergus/Dil relationship. Thus,

[xx] Leighton Grist makes a similar reading of this scene when he says "Fergus in addition takes the transformed Dil to a hotel for what he dubs 'a honeymoon,' whereupon an eliding straight cut takes us from the hotel's exterior to a shot of Fergus lying on a double bed, under whose covers Dil sleeps while Fergus smokes what might be construed as a 'postsex' cigarette" (6).

the kiss between Fergus and Jude contains as much passion as a chaste kiss between brothers-in-arms. Jude and Jody's kiss—make-out session—contains more passion and heat despite Jude's apparent distaste for the encounter. And why is this? Does the encounter between Jude and Jody have a threat of consummation between a black man and a white woman? Does the true heterosexuality of the film only showcase itself in this scene between black man and white woman? Is Georgia Brown correct when she states that "But only in the opening scene, when drunken Jody drapes himself around the blond Jude…was I conscious of him as a black man" (Village Voice vol. 37). Wouldn't this assumption then make the image representation of the black man inherently heterosexual and not the white man? Rea's and the spectator's identification with the representation of Fergus as heterosexual lies not with the kiss, but with their own positionality as heterosexual white male or minority apart from the whitespace of the narrative. So I ask, why are these acts of consummation so important?

Derek Neal argues that "without sex [acts], gender threatens to float away from the individual, to become completely social and exteriorized phenomenon. Yet, gender, even in its most plastic or 'performative' formulations, makes no sense without reference to sex" (124-125). Further, "The body conveyed masculinity also, both to society and to the self, through its function, what it did. Sexual acts were only the most specially charged of such functions. Together, form and function spoke back to the self, creating an embodied subjectivity" (Neal 125). Thus, the sexual acts serve as an anchor for the characters and the spectators to formulate a sense of identity about and against the character as heterosexual white male. Implicit in this identification, and pointed out by Neal, is the presence of the body, the biology of the character. With that, one must ask if heterosexuality is essentially linked to the presence of the penis, wouldn't the presence of a penis on a woman not imply heterosexuality of that character? Or is heterosexuality only ascribed to a white penis?

Fergus decision to enter the salon and have his hair trimmed is evidence of his consent to be recreated. This haircut, this trimming of his hair, is a moderate transformation of self: the Transparent Violent Moment has already occurred and now, Fergus is simply trimming off the rough edges in his previous creation. Thus, the Transparent Moderate Moment is a scene that shows his submission to the hands of the other and to the power of heterosexuality. The trimming of his hair at this point enables Fergus to remove the discomfort still implicated in his hair and thus shed off the tail of homosexual overtones and produce a haircut that will allow Fergus to enter the realm of heterosexuality, of acceptability, of sameness, of commonality as perceived by the world around him. Elaine Scarry states that in "benign forms of creation, a bodily attribute is projected into the artifact[xxi] (a fiction, a made thing), which essentially takes over the work of the body, thereby freeing the embodied person of discomfort and thus enabling him to enter a larger realm of self-extension" (144). Cutting off this last portion of hair is mandatory for the character to identify his self as straight. Dixon states, "performing straightness entails rigid self-discipline.

[xxi] For Scarry, "certain words—such as 'produce,' 'body,' 'project,' 'artifact'—are common to the description of both [war and torture], it may seem that the two are less radically antithetical than they are. But the overlapping vocabulary is itself the sign of how absolute the difference is between them, for they share the same pieces of language only because the one is a deconstruction of the other, a reversal of the path of creation to decreation." (Scarry 145.) In the Opaque Movement, hair is the artifact of the cinematic image (body) in question. The two terms become the overlapping link between the cinematic image and the spectator who recognizes their hair or body type and thus allows them to identify or *un*identify, thus confirming their '*man*ed' or '*woman*ed' existence. The terms 'produce' and 'project' become integral to understanding the difference between war and torture as determined by the consent of the individual to receive a hair cut or experience a transformation to their hair. Pain is integral to distinguishing between war and torture. Scarry is indicating that in war (a 'benign form of creation'), an external object is being created to alleviate the pain experienced by the body. In torture, the destruction of that external object—artifact—is being used to inflict pain. Now if hair on the body is the artifact and the creation or use of a hairstyle is used to alleviate the pain associated with the constant immaterial *re*production of gender, sex, sexuality, and race, to cut, shave, or transform hair is to deconstruct the immaterial significance of the hairstyle (i.e. the race, sex, sexuality, or gender of the body). To echo Scarry, to assume that war is better than torture is to miss the significance of creation and decreation in both war and torture, for in both, the attributes of the hurt body are projected into the creation of a hairstyle meant to represent the immaterial and thus alleviate the body of pain associated with defining or performing the immaterial. In creating any given hairstyle, "pain is deconstructed and displaced by the artifact; in the other, the artifact is deconstructed to produce pain." (Scarry 145). In light of this, consent takes on significant import in that torture is forceful (and at other times willful, implying the self) deconstruction of a hairstyle in order to inflict pain upon the body and thus call into question the immaterial beliefs of the body. I would argue that a benign form of creation of an artifact that doesn't significantly challenge the immaterial beliefs of the body and 'essentially takes over the work of the body' allows the embodied individual to remain in the 'larger realm of self-extension' or preconceived social notions of gender and racial definitions. A moderate transformation to the hair of a cinematic image is thus a benign form of creation of an artifact (hairstyle) on the body (cinematic image) and therefore doesn't significantly challenge the embodied individual to give up the larger realm of self-extension or identification. By contrast, a violent transformation to the hair of a cinematic image produces a level of pain that alters and challenges the immaterial beliefs of the body. It should be noticed that the length of hair being cut is only a component of the creation of the new artifact, it is also the effect of the artifact on the body that must be considered.

It is a state of monotony, repetition, and predictability" (8). He continues with a list of 'acts' that a straight man must perform in order to affirm his straightness; acts such as play sports (Fergus plays cricket), be upwardly mobile, wear a tie, work, and "straight men must always make aggressive and suggestive comments to and/or about women [cat calls towards Dil], who are expected to view this attention as both expected and desired. Straight men objectify women; straight women expect them to do it" (Dixon 8). In the sidebar, I offer a list of performative acts that can be read as a checklist affirming Fergus's heterosexuality and through implication, whiteness and masculinity.

1. Fergus new hairstyle mimics Peter's hairstyle.
2. Fergus dresses in black and white – his clothes mimic Peter's clothing.
3. Fergus brings Dil flowers.
4. Fergus takes Dil out on a date.
5. Fergus walks Dil home after their dates.
6. Fergus kisses Dil chastely on the cheek goodnight.
7. Fergus stands up to the weaker man – Dave – to secure his spot at Dil's side.
8. Fergus performs sports (specifically cricket) on the scaffolding at his job site.
9. Fergus performs manual labor.
10. Fergus defends the honor of Dil against his boss in order to show his authority even though he is in a subjugated position of employment.
11. Fergus engages in romantic playful exchange with Dil.
12. Fergus receives fellatio from an "inferior" individual.
13. Fergus smacks "inferior" individual for deceiving him.
14. Fergus apologizes to this "inferior" individual for assaulting her in order to keep her "inferior" status in check and securely in a position that will allow him to receive fellatio at some future date, if he so desires.
15. And the ultimate performative moment, Fergus prepares to perform heterosexual sex with Dil. His eyes move down the body in a requisite manner – devouring the flesh with his eyes until he comes face to face with the penis itself and its phallic representation – "is that what is the source of his anxiety?" – and he runs off to the bathroom to vomit. Because that is what heterosexual men must do when they come face to face with the penis; they must disavow it and vomit to secure their position as heterosexual.

Fergus's narrative transformation throughout the Opaque Movement is not becoming more likeable, displaying kindliness to others, granting acceptance of blacks, queers, or appearing more gentlemanly, as he leads the audience on a quest of gender and sexual acceptance of the Other. His movement through the two makeover moments opens up his veneer of heterosexuality and allows him to enter his own homosexual self. Fergus literally dismantles the wall of sexual expectations for himself and the viewer. The trouble with this information is that spectators don't want to resist identification with Fergus as heterosexual, white male. To do so

would disrupt their own expectations and ability to describe themselves against the Other. See, a resisting spectator isn't simply the individual who is unable to identify with the image presented before them – be they black or white – on the screen as Diawara theorizes. It also includes the spectator who is unwilling to resist *un*identification with the image before them because said image provides them a locus for determining their own positionality and subjectivity within and outside the film.

As I indicated earlier, spectators define themselves within and apart from the white space of the narrative. Preconceived notions of male and female reside with spectators apart from the white space of film, which to be fair, reproduces these stereotyped, preconceived notions in order to affirm and confirm for spectators those very notions of male and female. Hill says that *The Crying Game* "represents a demand to live in and with the 'in-between,' to resist the rigid assignation of stereotyped identities inherent in such thinking, identities on which much of our 'knowledge' about the world depends" (89). For those who choose not to resist this "knowledge" of the world, a limited ability to read the film becomes apparent. In the case of Rea, who sees the image of the white male on the screen and naturally tattoos heterosexuality onto his representation, it allows him to implicate traditional representations and expectations of heterosexuality, masculinity, and centrality to his image. As I stated before, this position allows the spectator and critic to assume a heterosexual male position in order to secure their own subject position when viewing and reading the film.

The secret of this film works so well because it hinges; no, it prefigures the traditional notions of male and female and yet disrupts them as seen in the carnival sequence. The secret works so effectively because film is traditionally read and viewed by spectators from a position that affords film a heterosexual white male frame of reference. A conscious playing with spectatorial expectations on the part of Jordan allows for the 'reveal' to produce nausea and disgust for Fergus and the spectator by extension. If the spectator reads the film consciously from

a subject position outside the traditional white heterosexual male position, they are able to see that the secret isn't the reveal of a penis, but a reveal that the authority of privileging white heterosexuality as the central lens of truth is a falsity. An example of this resisting spectator is illustrated in the quote by Charles Busch, "peerless New York-based writer and drag actor," who states:

> I knew in the first scene [that Dil is played by a male actor] but I couldn't believe that that was the big surprise everybody was talking about. It's no surprise to *me* that a girl has a dick. So I kept waiting for the big twist. I thought Miranda Richardson was going to reveal that she had a dick, too. I mean, *there's* a surprise for you. (Handler 36)

So what is it that allowed Busch to resist the machinations of the film that attempted to hide the truth from the audience? Was it his marginal position as drag performer? Could it be a queerness about his own body, a queerness of his mind? Could it be his feminine sensibility? Could it be that the film provided the conscious spectator with various avenues for seeing the truth? Could it be that he had already digested representational images of a woman with a penis before?

The truth of the matter is that Fergus's performance of the heterosexual white male could have continued indefinitely regardless of the presence of the penis on Dil's body. It isn't the penis that produces the third shift in the tone of the film from love story to action film; it is the reemergence of Jude and Peter that have the more pronounced effect on the identity construction that Fergus is attempting to forge. Once the two characters return to a central position in the narrative, Fergus's performance as heterosexual white male begins to unravel when he cuts Dil's hair during the third Transparent Violent Moment in the film.

Up until the moment of Jude and Peter's reemergence in the narrative, protecting Dil and making sure that she is taken care of has been Fergus's prime focus. Dreams of Jody have occupied his mind: Jody has become Fergus's man of his dreams, his photographic pin up and for what purpose? Fergus occupies himself with Jody, whom he derives his power from. The

photographs allow Fergus to gaze on the image of Jody in order to devour, consume, emulate, eradicate, and mine the past for phallic strength. Once his past materializes in physical form, Fergus can no longer draw upon these photographs, these dream representations, these ghostly apparitions as a power source. He must make the image, the ghost, *reappear* in material form again. This is what prompts Fergus to transform Dil.

The deconstruction of Dil as woman, and creation of Dil as man, as something new, something that nobody recognizes, brings about the destruction of Fergus's performative identity. Fergus produces the Transparent Violent Moment after Jude and Peter have told him that he is going on a suicide mission. The specter of pain from his own physical death forces him to sacrifice Dil's hair and identity: the price is his own psychic identity construction and the acceptance of his homosexual Irish identity, or quite possibly the deconstruction of his identity has white heterosexual man and the creation of his identity as white heterosexual woman. This assertion is tied to the aforementioned 'honeymoon' suite scene and the image of the sutured male and female body that share a similarity of dress and hairstyle. As Fergus drastically cuts off Dil's hair he is attempting to *re*create a representation of a man that appeared only in a photograph or a dream within this narrative. For Fergus, his goal was to make a real image that existed in the photographic-dream-image representation of Jude in his cricket whites. There was no original 'real' referent for this image in the narrative only a sign of some ghostly representation since we never see Jody in this outfit. We only have a photographic/dream-image representation as evidence of its previous existence. If we accept this new Dil-image-representation of Jody in this outfit to be Jody, we must unconsciously read this image representation (photograph/dream-image) as real, as once alive, as dead, as a ghost, as wanting to be recreated, rematerialized.

Fergus cuts Dil's hair into a short afro and dresses her in the cricket whites once worn by Jody. His goal is to produce, project, *re*create an image representation that he hopes will protect

and comfort him. Once the haircut is complete and Dil is firmly within her own Transparent Violent Moment, Fergus' feminine, motherly, subordinate qualities re-emerge. The scene between Fergus and Dil in the "honeymoon" suite possibly indicates the post-coital experience: the man (Dil) spent and asleep and the woman enjoying a cigarette. Further, the scene with the two individuals in bed could be seen as "a form that inducts Eros into the service of Thanatos by suggesting that men may only love each other passionately and unreservedly when the threshold of death is absolutely, 100% definitely about to be crossed" (Backus and Doan 187). Fergus thought he was about to cross this border into death.

The next night, Fergus confesses his 'infidelity' to a drunk Dil in an attempt to seek forgiveness, or was it to produce anger that Dil would act upon him and protect him from his fate? It is after he confesses his sins to Dil that he is tied to the bed where he erotically struggles to free himself and is thus protected from carrying out the mission that claims the life of Peter. Fergus is unable to save himself, so he has had to produce, create a representation with more phallic power to destroy his new identity and eliminate his past. After Dil has eliminated his past by killing Jude, Fergus banishes the representation from reality by sending Dil away. He then accepts the blame for the murder, the least he can do since the ghostly representation he created can no longer exist, and goes to prison.

In the end, for the spectator to assume that Fergus is safe from exploring his homosexual tendencies because he is away from Dil and safe behind bars seems rather naïve. Given Fergus's described kindliness, feminine masculinity, and otherwise gentlemanly disposition, it seems rather naïve to assume that Fergus, suddenly cordoned off from the woman with a penis, could or would say no to a more dominant male asking for sexual gratification given the situational homosexuality generated by prison. No, Fergus's heterosexuality is only a given for the spectator unable or unwilling to resist the preconceived notion of heterosexuality as stable, fixed, and a given for white males in film.

## Chapter 3

"Blondness…its distinctive imagery of youth, vitality and wealth, built up over thousands of years, has woven itself into the most popular material of the imagination. We see it and absorb its messages every day. Blonde hair is attractive and sexy, and often worn as a trophy. In every popular forum of our age – in film, television, fashion, pop music and politics – many of the most powerful players are blonde. But there is something strange about all these blondes. Very few of them are genuine."

—Joanna Pittman, *On Blondes*

Let me say right up front, that to say that Jude is the only woman in *The Crying Game* does a disservice to both Dil and Jude and falls into the critical trap of essentially linking sex to biology. Further, since the film hinges on the "reveal" of Dil's body surface, it would seem naïve and rather archaic of me to simply say that the evidence of a penis on Dil's body makes her a man. Rather the two characters present an opportunity to examine the rupture of language and study the relations of nomenclature to image to concept. To approach this examination I will examine the character of Jude in relation to critical readings of Miranda Richardson's characterization that identify her as evil, abhorrent, scorpion, a *monster*. The level of animosity that has been directed towards her portrayal as been rather torturous and for me the root of that animosity has not been thoroughly explored. In this chapter I propose an analysis of the character that argues an ambiguity about Jude's gender, race and sex as a result of a transformation to her hair is the source of animosity and hostility towards the "only" *woman* in the film.

As an initial point of entry, the language that has been leveled against Jude has depicted her as a threat, a menace, a terror. Emer Rockett and Kevin Rockett argue "some feminist critics in particular took exception to the fact that the one 'good' woman in the film was a man, and

condemned the portrayal of Jude as 'misogynistic'" (134). Further, Marina Burke has quoted Neil Jordan as saying that he wrote Jude "quite consciously as a monster, a monstrous part, because all the men who survive make female choices, and the woman makes males choices. It's very consciously done" (18). I find these sexist arguments of her character limiting and rooted in a historical reading of women, gender and sex essentials. Their argument, both filmmaker and critic, presupposes that a woman must be gentile, soft, a damsel, and not in possession of the phallus. And if she is in possession of the phallus she is, as Kristen Handler argues in her reading of the film, "the scorpion…the phallic woman, who has been more commonly described as Black Widow, Spider-Woman, Deadlier than Male" (37). In short, Jude is the monster of the narrative.

To read Jude as *monster* opens up the breadth of the discussion. As Jeffrey Jerome Cohen argues in his reading of culture through the monsters produced in that culture, "Like a letter on the page, the monster signifies something other than itself: it is always a displacement, always inhabits the gap between the time of upheaval that created it and the moment into which it is received, to be born again" (4). With this in mind, Jude can, and should, be read as an image that signifies something other than woman in the traditional sense, something other than woman in the monstrous-feminine sense. As a *monster*, Jude can be read two-fold, and by moving across the gap of her *re*creation or *re*birth, and between her character in the first and second halves of the narrative, a challenge to the notions of woman, gender and sex is made available. Cohen states, "Every monster is in this way a double narrative, two living stories: one that describes how the monster came to be and another, its testimony, detailing what cultural use the monster serves" (13). Thus, the gap is the crux upon which the monster must be read through. Therefore what is the gap, or more specifically, at what point in the narrative is the characterization of Jude made monster? I contend that the moment of *re*creation or *re*birth is the point when Jude reenters the narrative and is seen with a drastic change in hairstyle. As I have argued earlier, haircuts and transformations to hair is a place of splitting, a site of rupture within the narrative and is a locus in

the formation of *identity*. As such, this point in the narrative is an example of the **Transparent Violent Moment** in cinema. Jude's re-entry is shocking, and produces a sense of fear that presupposes the dead have risen, and a vampire, a zombie or some other monster has risen from the earth and is about to wreck havoc upon the unsuspecting hero. Cohen argues that "Because of its ontological liminality, the monster notoriously appears at times of crisis as a kind of third term that problematizes the clash of extremes—as 'that which questions binary thinking and introduces a crisis'" (6).

Having risen from the ashes of the past, Jude appears as a result of crisis (exploding greenhouse), at a time of crisis (Fergus is involved with another woman that he reads as male), and introduces crises (Fergus suicide mission and Dil's haircut) into the narrative. With respect to hair, in her inquiry on the history of blond hair, Joanna Pitman states, "I was well aware that women who try on masks and radically change their appearance often do so in response to a crisis" (6). Thus the radical shift in Jude's hair from blonde to red, also presents an opportunity to question the binary dynamics of male/female, either/or. It is within the turmoil of these crises, that the "kind of third term," Jude as woman is able to become *monster*. To arrive at and utilize Jude's monstrosity, let me begin looking at her characterization at the start of the narrative. As discussed previously, the **Opaque Movement** of *The Crying Game* begins with the introduction of the first cinematic image of a person. In the film, that moment is the fair/carnival when we are first introduced to Jody and Jude. She is a blonde woman in a denim skirt. Her hair is swept back; the strands are loose, flowing and unkempt, yet still feminine in their styling. When read against the other images in the sequence, Jude's blonde hair is the blondest and the one styled in the most feminine manner. This first backswept hairstyle shows Jude at her most feminine, ironically her most deadly. It is here at the fair/carnival that Jude lures Jody to his capture outside the fairgrounds. Cohen argues, "Times of carnival temporally marginalize the monstrous, but at the same time allow it a safe realm of expression and play" (17).

In this scene she is portrayed as an object of desire: it is while she has this hairstyle that she utilizes the powers of femininity, beauty, sensuality, and sexuality to her fullest to lure Jody into the IRA trap. She gives her body to the cause in order to capture the prey. Is this the first trespass of character? As women have been traditionally symbolized as the metaphor for the nation, is her role as lure and her willingness to do her part for the cause a betrayal to her symbolic representation as Mother Nation?[xxii] So even at this point in the narrative Jude is showing monstrous characteristics, namely, her ability to lure the soldier away from the crowd. This ability lies in the fact that she is visually a woman as conveyed by her hair. Beyond that, she is the white woman seducing the black man. When discussing representations of blacks in cinema, Ed Guerrero says "the white woman as the essence of whiteness, the most prized possession of the white man and the object of desire of all other races, is a powerful representational current running through Western literature and cinema" (64).

I contend it isn't simply the paleness of her skin that allows for her to be named white woman, but the blondness of her hair. It is her blond hair that is used to depict the concept of woman, to depict freedom, beauty, sensuality, (hetero)sexuality, and femininity. It is this cinematic marker—the *female* image with blonde hair—against which every other cinematic representation of sexuality, desire, pleasure, consumption, production, and creation is gauged against currently. In agreement with Guerrero, Jude's hair is meant to showcase beauty, natural female beauty. Pitman says, "blonde hair, with its genetic allure, has become linked to femininity and beauty" (5). She continues, "it has become a blazing signal in code, part of a value system laden with moral, social and historical connotations that has rooted itself in the human subconscious of the West and increasingly across the rest of the world" (Pitman 3).

The cinematic marker is evidenced in cinema by the head toss from side to side or from top to bottom that allows the long tresses to move through space with the appearance of wanton

[xxii][xxii] Again, see Mosse for a discussion of the role of women in, and symbol of, nation.

abandon. Jude displays a quick hair toss when she arrives at the greenhouse hideout on her motorcycle. She enters the room and takes off her helmet. She shakes her hair quickly from side to side and runs her fingers through her hair. This ability to run your fingers through hair is at the heart of freedom. It means that he can run his fingers through your hair. It means that your hair will fall into place. That your hair will move when you move: that you won't have pain. For women of ethnic ancestry who have thick hair that could be viewed as coarse, kinky, curly or nappy, this freedom doesn't always come easily. "'Freedom' is still equated with having straight hair," say Ayana Byrd and Lori Tharps in their study of black hair (180). They continue to say that for black women, though there are "various natural styles [that] have the freedom to swim, sweat, and walk in the rain without destroying their styles" (180) these women don't wear these styles. Byrd and Tharps state that the reason these hairstyles are not represented in the media is because "manufacturers understand that the majority of Blacks would not see freedom in wearing natural hair. They would instead feel further alienated, ostracized, and unattractive" (180). One could say that this alienation, ostracization or marginalization by cultural standards of beauty might make a woman feel as if she were a monster, unwelcome in the society that created these borders of beauty. Now this fear of becoming something monstrous, something cast out of culture is not limited to women solely. For the mechanisms of cultural production that influence women also influence men. The authors contend that "Even though women are often more vocal about their desire for straight hair, Black men are a fundamental part of the equation. Since Black males are raised in the same environments as females, it is inevitable that many of them will find straight hair desirable for women and sometimes for themselves" (Byrd and Tharps 154). The frightening aspect to this statement, man runs the risk of becoming a *monster* himself.

Of course, adhering to this notion as represented by the cinematic marker informs women and men both who feel that straight blond hair is the epitome of beauty, of a pain-free existence. Byrd and Tharps state "Popular culture continues to be filled with Black women with long, or at

least soft, moving hair. Music videos overflow with light-skinned, long-haired women or, continuing a trend that started in the early nineties, feature women who are of mixed heritage, Asian or Latina" (180). Now it should be acknowledged that the borders of cultural production, in this case beauty standards related to hair, apply to men and women alike; however, in terms of monster theory, Cohen asserts, "Primarily these [cultural] borders are in place to control the traffic in women, or more generally to establish the strictly homosocial bonds, the ties between men that keep a patriarchal society functional" (13). Important to Cohen's argument here in terms of *The Crying Game* is the critical readings of the relationship between Jody and Fergus that for the most part assert a firm heterosexuality to Fergus while conceding a homosocial bond with Jody. (See Chapter 2.) To follow Cohen's reasoning, to assume and assert a homosocial bond between the two *men* in the film implicates two important issues regarding the women in the film: 1) the *women* in the narrative exist at the margins established to bind the nature of woman, and 2) the role of women within the narrative is to reaffirm the homosocial relationship between Jody and Fergus.

As described so far, Jude, as monster, exists at the margins of society in terms of what constitutes a 'good' woman. Also situated at the margins of the narrative is Dil. As we have worked through monster theory so far, it should be apparent that Dil is also monster, and thus as defined by Cohen, also a woman, yet let me explain her monstrosity a bit further. Like Jude, Dil has also experienced the Transparent Violent Moment. Her identity has been re-ascribed. For some, this new image is Jody, for others it is black man, for still others, like Handler who states "this new identity becomes inflected, or infected, by figures of pathological femininity: the pathetic queen, the hysterical, clingy, self-destructive woman, [who] in the place of the penis adequate to the phallus,…displays at this point the multiple lack of her homosexual/transgendered/feminine identity" (36). With each slash, she has been contained, neutered, leashed, and positioned into a corner of the room from which we can gaze upon her

without any further threat to a spectator's identification of self. In her reading of the film, hooks identifies Dil after the Transparent Violent Moment as a woman who "suddenly turns into the traditional 'little woman,' eager to do anything for her man. She is even willing to kill. Her aggression is conveniently targeted at the only 'real' woman in the film, Jude, who happens to be white" (60). I have several problems with this assertion by hooks. First, I agree with hooks that the traditional 'little woman' is eager to please, and that angers me that that image/notion is rooted in my consciousness. However, I find it problematic that this traditional 'little woman,' at least the image/notion I have occupying my mental plane, would never kill for her man. The image of traditional woman is accompanied by connotations of demure, subdued, true self-inferiority and most definitely not a creature capable of killing. I mean the thought of violence frightens this type of woman, that's why she has a man to protect her from violence, from getting carried away by those savage monsters – actual or theoretical.

Beyond this, the evocation of 'happens to be white" situates Dil in black and not in mixed, not in different, not in other, and it anchors Jude in white and doesn't allow for the possibility that Jude is also a black woman post-hair transformation. It conveniently allows hooks to evoke and work with the binary essentials needed to make her statement 'real' as if the quotes situate her from outside the essential binaries needed for her argument. In his reading of the film, John Hill also discusses the binary essentialisms of male/female along with the concepts of either/or, the notions of hybridity, and the violence perpetrated by the women in the film. However, like hooks reading of Dil in the film, I find Hill's reading of Jude's character as mostly negative rather problematic given the premise of his argument that he outlines as—

> I began by focusing on the issue of binary analysis, the 'either/or' approach to the assignation of identity. This can lead to the othering and rejection of the different which de Beauvoir describes, or, faced with the discomfort of difference, to liberal humanist myths of 'sameness' which may function to cover up and deny that real

> and important differences do exist, differences which perhaps constitute a challenge to established norms. (Hill 90)

By criticizing Jude's character for exercising power and challenging traditional feminine notions Hill has succumbed to the 'cover-up' represented in the traditional notion of femininity and is therefore reinforcing the very binary analysis that he is trying to resist. As this shows, resisting identification is very problematic and challenging: it is not an easy feat to accomplish because the writer, critic, theorist, spectator can easily become consumed by the knowledge and material they are reading and forget that they were trying to resist this material in the first place. Unmaking that very thing we have made in order to "rethink such 'structures' of difference" (Hill 91) can trap the individual who has to use those very structures of langue to deconstruct their existence. Thus, while trying to read beyond and deconstruct the binary analysis of difference in *The Crying Game*, Hill "may be seen to be falling into exactly the position that the film in its imperfect way is warning us against" (94).

Another problematic concern is the exclusion of violence, the 'willingness to kill,' and 'aggression' being exempted from the female sex, from the 'real' woman in the film, and locating it firmly in the male, in the black, in the Other. I take offense that men, to be seen as men, can only be violent, can only be aggressive, and if they are truly frightening and violent, they must also be black, or Other. As can be seen in their distinct readings of the women in the film, hooks and Hill both take note of the aggression and violence associated with each character. For hooks, Dil is not a 'real' woman and targets her violence towards the only woman in the film, as if she were a 'self-destructive woman.' For Hill, Jude takes pleasure in her aggressiveness, which can also be seen within hooks description of Dil. Regarding Jude, Hill says, "She is in many ways the most wholly negatively presented character: sexually aggressive, violent when it is not necessary to be so…apparently reveling in her role as a dangerous woman, which is presented very much as a role she enjoys" (93). This reveling in her sexuality is also a characteristic of the monstrous, as

Ben Barootes states in his examination of monstrosity in contemporary British fiction, "Upon seeing La Bestia naked bare as is, the unnamed heroine recognizes a part of his animal nature within her self. She admits this seemingly monstrous sexuality is a part of her being, embraces it, and permits herself to revel in it. She decides to release her lamb-self and 'run with the tigers.'…She thus liberates her sensuality, her sexuality, her desire. Shirking passivity, she becomes – if not aggressive – assertive" (Scott 192-193). By embracing her monstrous sexuality, Jude as scorpion joins the ranks of women "who oversteps the boundaries of her gender role [and] risks becoming a Scylla, Weird Sister, Lilith ('diereste Eva,' 'la mere obscure'), Bertha Mason, or Gordon" as described by Cohen (9). To this I would add Dil as the woman who oversteps her gender role of wife by moving on sexually with Dave and Fergus. For both hooks and Hill, implicit in their arguments are behavioral acts that challenge the traditional notions of femininity, and would thus situate both Jude and Dil at the margins as monsters.

Lastly, I have a problem with not only hooks, but all other critics who use the quotation marks around the 'real' to serve as their manner of exempting them from the binary essentialism they assign to biological understanding of gender, sex, and race. 'Real' is easy; it is a quick shorthand to say that I mean 'biological' or 'authentic.' It allows for a discussion of language rupture to bypass the discussion. Instead it carries and indicates preference; meaning, I 'prefer' to keep my biological sex contained and free of the contamination by not calling her trans-, and allowing her entrance into woman. As for race, skin tone has been the predominate method for determining race. Cultural behaviors or actions are rarely considered as a means of identifying an individual within any given race, as it appears an inability to mobilize for political action is available. I would argue that the affinity one shares with another based upon cultural practices and behavior provides a sufficient entry point into this conceptualization. However, I will approach questions or challenges to Jude's racial and sexual identification as a result of her hair

transformation in the Transparent Violent Moment. As we make our way through this discussion, keep in mind the following two aspects of reading culture via monster theory:

> A mixed category, the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition, demanding instead a 'system' allowing polyphony, mixed response (difference in sameness, repulsion in attraction), and resistance to integration." (Cohen 7)
>
> And,
>
> Any kind of alterity can be inscribed across (constructed through) the monstrous body, but for the most part monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual. (Cohen 7)

During the greenhouse sequence Jude let's her hair down and begins to flex her muscles. She displays overt racism and minimal compassion. She hides her body under a pile of clothes but she still expresses herself sexually by kissing Fergus. Of all the volunteer soldiers that are part of this IRA splinter group, Jude is the only character that is given the ability to stand up to the men around her. She makes tea and sandwiches like the traditional role of the woman should, but she also pokes, prods, challenges the authority of Peter. She questions the actions, motivations, and character of the "hero." She wields the gun as a weapon to inflict pain upon Jody. She is the only character in this Ireland sequence that has a voice and is able to use the gun as a weapon and not just as a symbol of strength. Therefore, if the pistol is also symbolically the phallus, she is the only white character in the first half of the film to wield its power. This must make her an abomination, a monster, an aberration to femininity. Clearly it is Jude's assault against the borders of traditional feminine notions and the established order of patriarchy that makes her the aggressive scorpion. Sarah Edge says in her reading of the film, "Jude can be seen to represent such a danger in a number of complex ways. First, she does so through her nationalism and feminism, represented through her rejection of traditional 'feminine' signifiers, and her threat as a disruption to the patriarchal symbolic order" (181).

Her emergence from the makeover moment is not that different than either of her Irish representations or as drastic as Fergus' transformation – at first blush. When we meet Jude in London she is "the image of the *femme fatale*, the phallic woman" (Handler 37). She is cold. She is calculating. She is methodical. She dresses more sophisticated. She shows her body with her clothes. She embraces her sexuality. She embraces her femininity. She stands up directly to Fergus who attempts to exert control over her by grabbing her hair and threatening her to stay away from Dil. She has no compunction about sacrificing Dil for the cause. She dominates Fergus. She dominates and controls Peter and now appears to be in charge of the operation. And, she loses the phallus when Peter reaches between her legs and grabs the gun. It is as if he disconnects the phallus from the body, castrating her. Of course he can't wield its power either seeing as he is gunned down in the street.

**Figure 9:** Still image of Jude arranging herself before the mirror after the Transparent Violent Moment

After her emergence from the Transparent Violent Moment, Jude's hair is colored red and cut into a severe bob with a wig-like appearance. By changing the color to red, she is "taking all the old qualities" associated with red hair and "reclaiming them. [She] is saying red hair stands for liveliness (not mischief), originality (not non-conformity), determination (not stubbornness), passion (not tempter) inventiveness (not dangerous) and a decided (not dangerous) strength of character" (McCracken 105). The hairstyle is smooth and contained, there are no fly away strands. Every aspect of her hair and her identity is firmly under her control. Her gazing at herself in the mirror to smooth out her red hair is her conscious attempt at creating an image of herself

that reflects her interiority – “Aye, I was sick of being a blond. Needed a tougher look, if you know what I mean” (Jordan 239). As Marion Roach states in her study of red heads:

> Under the circumstances, I would have been less shocked if he had said, ‘You may be many things, you redhead, but you are no lady.”…This is because I define myself in part by my color. And I know it is the proverbial slippery slope: That there are associations with red hair I utterly reject and others I wear proudly means nothing to anyone else, since I don’t get to choose how the observer sorts those same traits. Grazing through the stereotypes, I am on the delicatessen plan, winding a way over the menu offerings, picking, choosing and rejecting; adhering to some, dismissing others. Having adopted a method of personal vigilance that allows me to be on the lookout for associations that suffuse my color with preferred associations and to reject those I choose not to adopt, I enhance my self-image. But to other people my red hair is more a take-it-or-leave-it experience: Red-haired, to them, I may also be a certain type of person, complete with temperament. (Roach 193)

This fact of her character is what frightens men and women about her character. She is in control. She has decided to extricate herself from the cinematic marker of beauty and make a new representation for herself. This process of making her new identity as an equally beautiful image destroys and deconstructs the cinematic marker that is traditionally ingrained in the mind of the spectator. Her perceived violation of the cinematic markers symbolic characteristics is what angers the spectator. Through fire, Jude kills the cinematic marker and is reborn in a new cinematic representation that is similar in appearance to the gendered representation of the chanteuse in the Metro bar. The fact that the image of beauty is now associated with gendered and sexually ambiguous characters from the Metro bar troubles the spectator who will not resist the power of the cinematic marker: the spectator who will not resist the power of essentialism.

Now, if we rupture the language of ‘no lady,’ ‘color’ and ‘red’ we can cross the borders and boundaries between gender and race as a link between Jude and Jody. This is because, beyond the style of hair that mimics a black ‘transvestite,’ there is the red color of Jude’s hair and it’s evocation of blood. Along with blood, there is the fact that both Jude and Jody are mutilated, their bodies ripped apart by a tank or riddled with bullets. Barbara Creed states in her study of the monstrous feminine, “the horror film offers many images of a general nature which suggest

dismemberment. Victims rarely die cleanly or quickly. Rather, victims die agonizing messy deaths – flesh is cut, bodies violated, limbs torn asunder" (107).

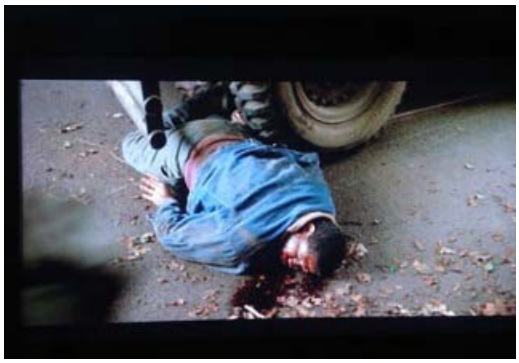
a.  b. 

**Figure 10:** Still images of the violent and brutal deaths of Jody (a) by the tank and Jude (b) by gunfire. Jody and Jude share not only messy deaths, through language and blood the two characters exist at the margins of society as monsters, as similar.

The images above illustrate how their presence in the film moves from a familiar body to that of corpse, bloody and unrecognizable. Creed states, "The ultimate in abjection is the corpse. The body protects itself from bodily wastes such as shit, blood, urine and pus by ejecting these things from the body just as it expels food that, for whatever reason, the subject finds loathsome. The body ejects these substances, at the same time extricating itself from them and from the place where they fall, so that it might continue to live" (9). In the case of Jude and Jody, living is constituted as a ghost that permeates the entire narrative. Jody's death and Jude's 'first' death occur nearly simultaneously at the end of the greenhouse sequence. Unlike Jude, Jody reenters the narrative sooner in the forms of dreams, photographs, and a haunted presence that hangs over the relationship of Dil and Fergus as if he were a ghost. Jude's reentry to the narrative is assumed to be tangible, living, as if more than a zombie or some other imagined monster; however, her relationship to Fergus will continue to haunt his actions as well.

A distinction between the two characters, Jude and Jody, is the absence of substance. The mass of Jody's body is absent from the images after he is killed; his body exists in a space outside the narrative even though he is viewed within the film. He is a black man, a possibly queer man,

moving within and apart from the world created within the film. He is remade or called into existence through clothing and hairstyle. While he cannot be seen in the physical sense, he affects the narrative via a haunting of the characters. On the other hand, Jude returns from this abject space of existence with material form. Her presence, her body is recognized and seen by those around her. Though she haunts the world around her, she is not seen as a monster, only identified by monstrous characteristics.

If we look at Jude and Jody as representations of male and female objects, in that each represents the current image of societal or cultural conception of gender, sex and race, can we not question their subjectivity given that each is 'dead,' a ghostly representation of something that was once alive but no longer. Creed states, "the subject, constructed in/through language, through a desire for meaning, is also spoken by the abject, the place of meaninglessness – thus, the subject is constantly beset abjection which fascinates desire but which must be repelled for fear of self-annihilation" (10). If both Jude and Jody, as ghosts, inhabit this abject place of meaninglessness, is their presence or work in the narrative assumed to be over given that neither really exists? However, once Jude returns to the narrative she shares an affinity for a short bob, she no longer haunts Fergus like Jody, she physically makes him act, whereas Jody made him act subconsciously. As stated before, Jude's characterization is deemed, aggressive, vile, monstrous; in short, contemptible. The language used to describe her character situates her in a position that mimics Jody in that in the first half of the film, Jude considers the body of Jody as animal, beast, monster, contemptible. Again, through language, the two are then situated within the same space, but what of the body. If the hairstyle between the black 'transvestite' and Jude as monster does not enable us to cross the border which separates those who take up their proper gender roles from those who do not that Creed has found within horror films, there is always the blood.

Kristeva says, "But blood, as a vital element, also refers to women, fertility, and the assurance of fecundation. It thus becomes a fascinating semantic crossroads, the propitious place

for abjection" (59). It is through the blood of Jody and Jude and their appearance within the narrative as symbols of vaginal or menstrual blood that a more bodily link can be made. In the images below, the hooded Jody represents "a graphic image of the *vagina dentata*. The visual association between biting and bloodied lips, sexual intercourse and death…" (Creed 75), while the image of thinly veiled curtains punctured by the bullets that kill Jude represent a hymen being penetrated.

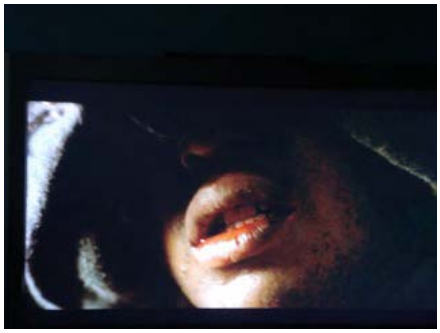
a.  b. 

**Figure 11:** Still images from *The Crying Game*. a. Jody after being hit in the face by Jude has the hood removed to reveal a bloody mouth that symbolically represents the vagina dentate. b. Punctured curtain by a bullet symbolically represents a torn hymen. Each image precedes the messy deaths of Jody and Jude. Through language and blood the two characters exist at the margins of society as monsters, as similar.

Therefore, in possession of the *vagina dentata,* Jody has entered the realm of the monstrous feminine and the monstrous in that the spectator is aware of a hybrid body in dual possession of the penis and the *vagina dentata*; and, by associating the thinly veiled curtains as an external representation of Jude's hymen, it would appear that I am making her female, however, the curtains are external to her body, and so I am ascribing the material or symbolic conception of sex onto a body that may or may not be female. Of course to accept this assessment that Jude and Jody are similar, is to recognize a monster that is not a "monster of prohibition…that cannot-must not" (Cohen 13) cross the border, but is in fact a monster of opposition or permission that in fact must cross the border in order to cross Cohen's threshold of becoming and manifest itself. To recognize this is to see that Jude, Jody and Dil, as monsters, as men, as women, "…they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any

systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions” (6).

## Chapter 4

Hair is a key aspect of appearance, one that is always on view unless it is purposely concealed, removed, or lost as a result of aging or disease….Throughout history, men's and women's hair styles often have been quite different, and both have varied with the changing fashions. Certain styles have been regarded as "feminine" while others were viewed as "masculine," which set the genders apart and enabled people to identify one another more easily. For thousands of years, in most cultures, women wore their hair longer than men's….In modern times, as in the past, hair continues to serve a psychological role in most people's lives and it provides a means of revealing cultural and social values. People use their hair for self-expression as well as a vehicle for gaining social acceptance.

—Victoria Sherrow, *Encyclopedia of Hair: A Cultural History*

If you let it, the ghost can lead you toward what has been missing, which is sometimes everything.

—Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*

The genres in which one could classify *The Crying Game* are varied: romance, drama, action, horror, political, or thriller. I would also argue that one could read the film as if it were a ghost story – a haunting narrative full of complex characters that hang over the narrative as if they were specters from the past and the future. Generally, ghosts can be described as transparent apparitions in whose absence a presence is felt or experienced. I choose the term transparent consciously as a descriptive term for apparition, for by definition[xxiii], it is a term that could be a synonym for ghost. Further, within this complex definition is a not only a characteristic that could be termed ghostly, but a term that recalls traditional photographic film or film stock that has been processed – transparency. The complexity of this term and its ability to drag multiple concepts

[xxiii] According to dictionary.com, transparent is defined as follows: 1. having the property of transmitting rays of light through its substance so that bodies situated beyond or behind can be distinctly seen. 2. admitting the passage of light through interstices. 3. so sheer as to permit light to pass through; diaphanous. 4. easily seen through, recognized, or detected: transparent excuses. 5. manifest; obvious: a story with a transparent plot. 6. open; frank; candid: the man's transparent earnestness.

within its word, recalls for me the character of Dil, in whose cinematic image a complexity of concepts can be located or defined. Is Dil a ghost in the traditional sense of an apparition that represents the soul or spirit of a deceased person? I would argue no and yes; and by doing so, I would contend that Dil as a character, through narrative characterization and in portrayal by Jaye Davidson, is an image that could represent Avery F. Gordon's theoretical concept of complex personhood that she defines as the following:

> Complex personhood means that all people (albeit in specific forms whose specificity is sometimes everything) remember and forget, are beset by contradiction, and recognize and misrecognize themselves and others. Complex personhood means that people suffer graciously and selfishly too, get stuck in the symptoms of their troubles, and also transform themselves. Complex personhood means that even those called "Other" are never never that. Complex personhood means that the stories people tell about themselves, about their troubles, about their social worlds, and about their society's problems are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching toward. Complex personhood means that people get tired and some are just plain lazy. Complex personhood means that groups of people will act together, that they will vehemently disagree with and sometimes harm each other, and that they will do both at the same time and expect the rest of us to figure it out for ourselves, intervening and withdrawing as the situation requires. Complex personhood means that even those who haunt our dominant institutions and their systems of value are haunted too by things they sometimes have names for and sometimes do not. At the very least, complex personhood is about conferring the respect on others that comes from presuming that life and people's lives are simultaneously straightforward and full of enormously subtle meaning. (Gordon 4-5)

As complex a definition of this concept that Gordon posits, it is my goal in this chapter to explain that Dil as character and image represents not only this conceptualization, but is an image that also represents *something new, something that nobody recognizes*. The complexity of this argument will manifest itself through a discussion of Dil within the Transparent Moderate Moment, the Transparent Violent Moment, and the importance of her hair throughout the Opaque Movement of the narrative. As noted in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, hair is important in the identification process, especially if one is to try and identify gender and sex by extension. It is through hairstyles that identifications of self and other are recognized and misrecognized by characters in, and spectators of, *The Crying Game*. As I see it, being that hair is

the most malleable aspect of one's identity the modification to the character's hair serves as the most convenient method for transmission and realignment or shifting of one's gender, sex, or race. Now, while a haircut indicates a rupture in the ability to name a character's identifications has occurred, there is also the need to recognize that a haircut can indicate a *realignment* in the character's identity is also present. The choice to utilize the word realignment rather than simply *shifting*, though shifting is implicitly a component of the haircut, is important in this discussion of Dil because realignment implies that there is an initial, or original, referent upon which the haircut is trying to return the body. Within *The Crying Game*, this realignment is seen by spectators who recognize the character of Dil post-haircut as black man or similar to Jody. To read Dil's character as black man is to read the cricket whites and the short afro as belonging to an original character that is named Jody in his cricket whites and black man in possession of a penis in absentia. Reading the character of Dil as such is to retain an attachment to a photograph and a dream-image representation even though a name is only implicitly given to the photograph by the individual captured by the photograph. This is to say that consuming the two images (photograph and dream-image of a body in motion) is to acknowledge that the two images are real and can serve as the referent upon which to name and identify Dil. In accepting or admitting these images as real, the spectator is validating Gordon's reading that hauntings are more than childhood repressions or merely "reality-testing" as Freud advocates in his study of the uncanny. For Gordon, Freud did not challenge the presence or power of the ghost as he studied the uncanny; rather, she argues that by following the ghost, recognizing that the ghost is present and in fact acts upon reality, one is able to identify or name that which is missing from reality. So what is it that is missing in *The Crying Game*? What is missing from the spectator's canon of consumed referents that a misrecognition of a body in motion is made readily and apparently? And if one were to state that they don't believe in ghosts, how is it that the two different images of a man known to be dead serves as a referent for a character who says of herself, "Don't recognize myself, Jimmy."?

The importance of this line in the naming process is central to understanding how people choose to ignore the complexity of Dil's personhood and instead choose to disregard her voice in the identification process and instead transfer power to the dead when it implicitly named itself in the photograph. Understanding the power of ghosts and haunting is to agree with Gordon when she states: "The willingness to follow ghosts, neither to memorialize nor to slay, but to follow where they lead, in the present, head turned backwards and forwards at the same time. To be haunted in the name of a will to heal is to allow the ghost to help you imagine what was lost that never even existed, really" (57). The ghost in this case is Jody, and the 'thing' that was lost or never even existed was *Jody in his cricket whites*. To move backwards and forwards through the narrative of the movie is to understand the distracting characteristics of hauntings like the aforementioned presence of the uncanny, repetitions, transference, and the desire to see the shape of Dil in the image of Jody. As Gordon states, "*I look for her shape and his hand*; this is a massive project, very treacherous, very fragile. This is a project in which haunting and phantoms play a central part. This project where *finding the shape described by her absence* captures perfectly the paradox of tracking through time and across all those forces that which makes its mark by being there and not there at the same time" (6). Thus for spectators who identify Dil in cricket whites as similar to Jody in cricket whites is to see her shape, her identity, in his body. Though Dil is seen in a similar outfit, the body of the Jody-image in the same outfit does not occupy the same space, nor does it move through space with the same movement. To find Dil in his body, is to find her shape by ignoring her presences and absences, and privileging the visibility of his body in his hand.

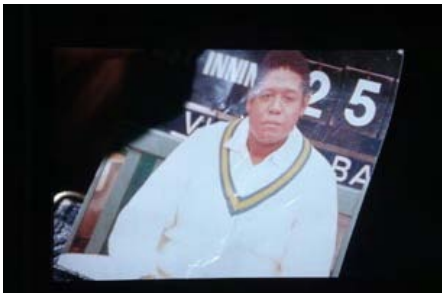
To understand haunting is to give a certain visibility to the invisibility of Jody in the second half of the narrative, or more specifically a hypervisibility to the character. Gordon defines hypervisibility as such, "Hypervisibility is a kind of obscenity of accuracy that abolishes the distinctions between 'permission and prohibition, presence and absence.' No shadows, no

ghosts. In a culture seemingly ruled by technologies of hypervisibility, we are led to believe not only that everything can be seen, but also that everything is available and accessible for our consumption" (16). The power of this hypervisibility that is granted to Jody prohibits the presence of Dil as a representation of something else; it disregards the voice of Dil in the naming process, and it ignores the power of the ghost's effects on reality.

The confluence of these three statements occur simultaneously after Dil has had her haircut during the Transparent Violent Moment and during the sequence in which the spectator and Fergus are first introduced to the photographic images of Dil and Jody in his cricket whites.

**Figure 12:** Still images from *The Crying Game*. a. Photograph of Jody in his cricket whites, b. First introduction of Dil and representation of the photographic space that Jody and Dil only occupy together, c. The scissors used as a weapon in psychological warfare by Fergus during the Transparent Violent Moment of Dil.

a.



CLOSE ON THE WALLET. Credit cards, army identification photograph.

JODY: Inside. There's a picture.

Fergus takes out a picture. It is of Jody, in cricket whites, smiling, holding a bat. Fergus smiles.

JODY: No, not that one. There's another.

Fergus takes out another picture of Jody and of a beautiful black woman, smiling.

JODY: Now *she's* my type.

FERGUS: She'd be anyone's type.

b.

DIL: Go on, then.

Fergus begins to cut.

CLOSE-UP ON DIL'S FACE as her hair is shorn. Tears stream down her cheeks.

DIL: You're no good at this, Jimmy.

FERGUS: I'm sorry.

But he keeps cutting. He gives Dil a short, cropped military cut like Jody's.

DIL: You want to make me look like him…

FERGUS: No. Want to make you into something new. That nobody recognizes…

She looks in the mirror at it in the dark.

c.

The three statements overlap and collapse the narrative as the power of the past makes itself felt on the present and the future. Figure 12 above will serve as the mechanism through which we can collapse the narrative and recognize the importance of the repeated presence of viewing Jody in his cricket whites throughout the Opaque Movement in both photographic stasis and filmic movement in the misrecognition of Dil, post-haircut.

Up until the moment of the first scene above, the Opaque Movement of the narrative, which began at the carnival at the beginning of the movie, has posited images of white actors with blond or brown hair and Jody with his dark complexion and short afro. The photograph of Jody in his cricket whites that he dismisses but Fergus smiles at, introduces a second image of an individual with dark complexion and a short afro. There is no voice associated with this image. The like-for-like resemblance between Jody and the image of Jody in his cricket whites is combined with the implicit understanding that the two images are indeed one via an absent acknowledgement of "no, that is me." This second image of another type of person of color is the introduction of Dil via photographic image. The introduction of Dil is the first disruption of our identification with the narrative. Her presence suddenly disrupts our ability to name. Until this moment, we haven't seen any hair like this on the screen, and so we ignore the hair and implicate the skin and simply say ignorantly, black, or more intelligently – mixed race. Our ignorance is arrived at by the deflection of the lighting, the luminosity of which whitewashes the hue of Dil's skin into a gradation of white to taupe to brown and the shades in-between. Since her skin provides a complication for the spectator, her hair is subconsciously deferred to in order to name. It is her hair, with its volume, it massy material occupation of the space before us that kinks the image projected from inside her representation into a shadow above white, non-white, mixed, black.

However, like the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, the voluminous mass of her hair is what enables the spectator to recognize and misrecognize her as gendered and sexed

female. It is through her hairstyle and its' juxtaposition against Jody in the second figure, and throughout the narrative pre-haircut, that Dil is read as female. The meaning of her hair is complicated with the reveal of the body in possession of the penis, however at that point in the narrative she is implicitly identified as either transvestite or possibly male-to-female transgender by Fergus or the spectator. Regardless, in either case, misrecognition has occurred as Dil has neither voiced her identity as transvestite nor transgendered. The presence of a penis on the surface of her body is simply, "Details baby, details." More than that, the presence of the penis on the body of a woman gives material representation to Luce Irigaray's idea[xxiv] that "*woman has sex organs more or less everywhere*. She finds pleasure almost anywhere. Even if we refrain from invoking the hystericization of her entire body, the geography of her pleasure is far more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is commonly imagined—in an imaginary rather too narrowly focused on sameness" (Conboy, Medina, and Stanbury 252-253). If that doesn't affirm her femaleness, maybe the focus on situating her in a sameness with Jody illustrates that for spectators who choose to name and identify her as similar to Jody are seeing the use-value in her character, and thus reducing her to a commodity, an artifact, in their identification process.

Despite this, until the moment of her haircut, the ability to name or identify Dil is complicated for the spectator who feels cheated, abused, manhandled, and violated in his previous identification of Dil as 'straightforward' female. The complex feelings that the reveal has produced within the spectator could mimic the complex feelings of Fergus as shown in the scenes below:

> FERGUS: No. Can't pretend that much.
> DIL: I miss you, Jimmy.
> FERGUS: Should have stayed a girl.
> DIL: Don't be cruel.

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[xxiv] See Chapter 1 for more of a discussion of Dil as a representative of Luce Irigaray's theoretical concept of woman as argued in This Sex Which Is Not One.

FERGUS: Okay. Be a good girl and go inside

And

COL: When a girl runs out like that, she generally wants to be followed.

FERGUS: She's not a girl, Col.

COL: Whatever you say.

But Fergus rises and walks out.

At the heart of this complexity is the fact that the reveal of a penis on the surface of a woman's body challenges the culturally produced notions of what constitutes female, biologically. The apparent disconnect between the long hair and the penis on the body troubles the expectations of the narrative and the spectator that are associated with an image that is meant to represent the love interest of the film. This is of significant importance if, as I have argued in an earlier chapter, Fergus got his second haircut during the Transparent Moderate Moment in order to shift his sexuality from something-other-than-heterosexual into a heterosexual position in order to be with Dil. The sense of betrayal inherent in the disconnect between body and hair length illustrates the importance of hair to convey cultural meaning and the need and desire to punish that which causes discomfort, challenges cultural borders, or inflicts pain in its brazenness.

The importance of the cultural meaning associated with hair length and gender, though I admittedly acknowledge women can indeed wear short hair, can not be overstated. As Sherrow indicated at the top of this chapter, "People use their hair for self-expression as well as a vehicle for gaining social acceptance" (xxv) and in the case of Dil, her hair is meant to express her femininity. In addition to Sherrow and Kobena Mercer, Janice Miller concurs with the ability to imbue hair with cultural meaning when she states, "Like many other customs concerned with the manipulation and fashioning of the human body, hairstyling and management is part of a range of culturally sanctioned practices and meanings associated with the communication of facets of identity, including status, taste, sexuality and gender" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 184). These 'culturally sanctioned practices and meanings" can be read as hairstyles and their imbued cultural meaning as a representations of man, woman, transvestite, transgender, or 'artifacts of civilization' (imagination's object) as defined by Elaine Scarry throughout her work The Body in

Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World, while the 'facets of identity' can represent the concepts or 'objectless fear' (race, gender, sex, sexuality) that are imagined and invented to alleviate pain. The importance of this last statement will become apparent, but for now, let me return to the complication Dil has generated and the need to alleviate the pain that her complex image has produced.

Miller argues in her examination of disembodied hair that through culturally-imbued hair and hairstyles, "Society then monitors its inhabitants in relations to this normality, subjecting transgressions, and those committing them, to ridicule and to its margins. Thus there is pressure to fulfill ideals of bodily presentation as functioning and aware members of that society. Hair is an integral part of this social and cultural body" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 184). In light of this, it stands to reason that those bodies that are forced to the margins through ridicule (for transformations to their hair[xxv]) approach the border space of the monster as defined by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen in his conceptualization of monster theory. These members of society and culture that exist at the border as monster, patrol and monitor society and ensure that normalcy or preconceived notions of culture and cultural production are maintained by the majority, else, they to become monsters banished to the fringe of culture. As I argued previously in Chapter 3, reading Dil, like Jude, as a monster within a culture that defines the body through an essentialist eye, requires that the monster be punished, ridiculed, and slayed in order to return normalcy to culture; that is, alleviate the pain that the monster (objectless fear) generated through its transgression against straightforward, culturally-defined normalcy.

The complexity in Dil's personhood, the disconnect between body and hair length, and the uncomfortable distraction within society recognized in having to witness or acknowledge the margins of culture as seen within the two aforementioned statements returns us to the ghostly

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[xxv] Though Dil has yet to undergo the Transparent Violent Moment at this point in the discussion, the transformation to her hair can be read as punishment to a body in possession of a hairstyle that offends, betrays, or transgresses the accepted cultural-defined norms, namely what constitutes a woman or is meant by female, at any given point in time.

haunting of the narrative. We return to Gordon through language – man, woman, transgender, intersex, heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, transvestite – and concept – race, gender, sex, sexuality, other, monster – as they haunt the dominant institutions of culture, to acknowledge that the discomfort, anxiety, and pain that they generated in garnering the respect of culture initially can be conferred onto the image and representation of Dil currently. Yet to approach the truth of this closer, we must go back further to acknowledge the hypervisibility of Jody as the dominant mode in which we attempt to see the shape of Dil in the image of Jody. To begin, Figure 12 is representative of the photographic space that Jody and Dil occupy within the narrative. In this

, the two characters occupy the same frame, however a line down the middle operates twofold: 1) as a means of visually distinguishing between characters – man and woman, and 2) a visual representation of the borders of culture and the existence of the monster at the margin of society. Given that Figure 12 represents a point in the narrative in which Jody and Dil occupy the same photographic space, and the accompanying dialogue which indicates “she’d be anybody’s type” adds to the complexity of the situation in that this sequence in the narrative is able to operate twofold: 1) Dil and Jody are separate individuals within the same space (photographic and film) and narrative – man and woman, and 2) spectators and Fergus can collapse the distance between man and woman into a singular image that collapses the distance between the three images – photographic image of Jody in his cricket whites, Jody as a character representing black man with a penis in absentia, and photographic image of Jody and Dil together – into the single image of Dil in Jody’s cricket whites post-haircut, or image of a black man in cricket whites with penis presently in absentia.

Beyond these two possibilities existing with the line and the possibilities existing within the sequence, the line can also represent other possibilities that approach the possibilities of the

sequence: the line can represent the gap between two frames of a film that have been edited together; the line can represent the space between the spectator and the film; the line can represent the in-betweenness, or more specifically the site at which, the combination of three factors: "First: to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus….Second: the very place of identification, caught in the tension of demand and desire, is a space of splitting….Finally, the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image" (Bhabha 63-64) in the *process of identification*, or more specifically *identity formation*, as theorized by Homi Bhabha occurs; less complexly, the line can simply represent the point through which the haircut of Dil allows the spectator to return to the narrative in order to misrecognize her as male, black man in similarity to Jody.

At this point it seems prudent to acknowledge that the line could represent a cut in the frame, as if it were a wound that requires suturing for closure; and, by acknowledging the cut and the wounding that occurs with the cutting, it seems prudent to acknowledge what has been referred to up to this point in the chapter as a given and yet should be cut open, explored and interrogated further, the haircut of Dil during the Transparent Violent Moment. The importance of the haircut should be apparent to the discussion so far in terms of how the misrecognition of Dil is obtained, however, to approach it further let us return to the importance of hair in cultural production and of what import haircutting has to society. Miller contends, "The frequency with which hair is cut, shaped and cleaned and the decisions that surround these seemingly everyday occurrences, are part of a range of bodily practices of self-management and discipline" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 184). So for Dil to maintain the long, massy and voluminous tendrils of curly hair in a feminine manner is to practice self-management and discipline in her subconscious performance of the female gender as argued by Judith Butler in her work Gender Trouble.

Further, as I noted earlier, the disconnect between Dil's body and hair length produced an uncomfortable sense of anxiety for spectators who may or may not have consumed image representations like Dil before: Dil's body spoke to an essentially biological male while her hair spoke to a woman performing female. The cultural management and discipline of Dil occurs at the time of the haircut and the subsequent *man*ing of her by spectators as male; though, I should note, even within the film the *man*ing of the character post-haircut is complex in that Dil refers to herself in the third person, as if the name and body did not go together: Fergus refers to Dil as Dil, Dil refers to herself in the third person, and Jude refers to Dil as 'that thing,' 'it,' and 'sick bitch.' However, for spectators to name her as Jody is to recall an affinity for Jody, an image with a short afro that they can refer to. The blink and you miss it presence of another black character with a short, almost bald, head of hair, occurs within the Metro bar and only serves to disrupt the recognition process, and thus, I would argue is 'spit out' as if it were never seen. The lack of repetition of that singular image does not allow for continuous consumption like the repeated image of Jody in his cricket whites both in photographic format and filmic movement consumed throughout the Opaque Movement. This repetition of image is a characteristic of hauntings that Gordon refers to and illustrates the power of the ghost to act upon reality. While the ghost is acting upon reality in the haircutting process, it is the resulting image of Dil with a short afro that recalls Jody. Miller argues, "Disembodied hair again suggests a sympathetic connection with its previous host, and a supernatural power lying within its own compounds. Hair was part of ritual and sacrifice, being offered in return for the protection of the self or loved ones…" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 189). Located within her statement is a complexity of relevance to the haircut at the time of the Transparent Violent Moment and the resulting naming that occurs.

To begin, once cut away from her body, the hair becomes disembodied from Dil's body and thus there is a sympathetic connection to the previous host (Dil), however 'a supernatural power lying within its compounds' allows for a resulting hairstyle that has a sympathetic

connection to a previous host – Jody with a short afro. Miller states that “Hair is dead and always has been, yet once it is removed from the body it seems to have an eerie ability to survive beyond us, sinister, because the dead nature of hair is masked by so many cultural representations of it. It is on many occasions a ghostly reminder of the absent body from which it originates.” (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 184) In the case of Dil, the cutting away of hair from the body does not allow the hair – and the feminine conceits associated with the length – to survive, rather it falls to the floor and stays dead. The cultural representations associated with the short afro dominate the hair that remains on the body. The short afro becomes the ghostly link to the absent Jody who originated the hairstyle within the narrative. As such, the presence of a short afro on Dil’s body and subsequent dressing in cricket whites concludes the repetition of *seeing* “Jody” in cricket whites in that Dil now represents a material representation of some image or concept that was never *seen* within the narrative. *See, seeing,* and *seen* are complicated in that they mean different things to my argument. As a spectator we *see* the movie before us, and in the process of watching the movie, we are *seeing* the image of Jody in his cricket whites, however we have not *seen* Jody in his cricket whites. What we as spectators have *seen* is a photograph of the character in those clothes with that hairstyle. What we as spectators have *seen* is a dream-like representation of said photographic-image in motion within the subconscious of Fergus, which thus implies that Fergus has imagined the photographic-image in motion and it is therefore not real. If we are to say that the photographic-image in motion is real, we are acknowledging Gordon’s ‘reality-testing’ as valid and therefore acknowledge hauntings as real and therefore the image we are seeing is a ghost haunting Fergus and the narrative and is therefore real. In acknowledging the reality of Jody the ghost, we must understand Gordon’s assertion that “it is also true that ghosts are never innocent: the unhallowed dead of the modern project drag in the pathos of their loss and the violence of the force that made them, their sheets and chains” (22) as a component to the motivation behind the cut.

To state that the ghost of Jody was an active component or participant in the making of Dil into the material representation of his former existence is to acknowledge violence directed towards a fellow marginalized being. To state this recalls a statement I made in Chapter 1 that challenged David Marriott's non-reading of the black spectator deriving pleasure at the destruction of the black body in his work On Black Men, and a statement I made earlier that indicated the frame showing Dil and Jody occupying the same space is a visual representation of the borders of culture and the existence of the monster at the margin of society. To this I say, reading culture from a position of monster or ghost is to begin assuming a marginalized position in which one sees the possibilities that members of society are never never straightforward, or never never complex; rather, it assumes a position that acknowledges that members of the *same groups of people* (race, gender, sex, sexual orientation) *will act together, that they will vehemently disagree with and sometimes harm each other, and that they will do both at the same time and expect the rest of us to figure it out for ourselves, intervening and withdrawing as the situation requires*. The movement between, within and apart from this argument is to recognize that if we acknowledge Jody as a real ghost, as the original referent for what Dil post-haircut is to represent and be identified as, we must acknowledge that he contributed to the violent act of cutting Dil's hair; and in that making, he derived pleasure in the destruction of the black body and it is evidenced by the grin he displays in the scene post-*reveal* which occurs outside of Fergus's dream mind.

Now, to return to the complexity of relevance located within Miller's earlier statement about the ritual sacrifice surrounding the haircut is to recall an earlier argument that I made in Chapters 1 and 2, in which the motivation for Fergus to cut the hair of Dil in the Transparent Violent Moment was *part of ritual and sacrifice, being offered in return for the protection of the self or loved ones*, namely Fergus's avoidance of a suicidal mission. Once the gravity of his suicide mission occurs to him he states that he doesn't have a choice, except Jude points out.

"Och, you do, Fergie." "Of course. I forgot." Life or death Fergus that is your choice she indicates. However Fergus hears that Jude has offered up the other woman in the narrative as a sacrificial lamb.

As such, let us begin looking at the cutting of Dil's hair within the Transparent Violent Moment as an act of sacrifice in the preservation of the self, loved ones, and the borders of cultural normalcy. Miller argues that "To leave the body, to be cut off, to fall out, to be separate is for hair to reveal its marginality; to become alienated from its 'natural' bodily context and hence become menacing" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 185). The natural bodily context that is being cut away from Dil's body and offered as a sacrifice to *who*[xxvi] are her femininity and her femaleness located symbolically within her hair length. To affirm this, Miller states, "…and most significant here…the magnitude of her hair loss is emphasized visually…representing the degradation of her feminine identity, sexuality and life force" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 190). Though Miller was making this argument about Oiwa in the story *Yotsuya Kaidan*, in my application of the argument to the character of Dil, I would disagree with the degradation of her sexuality or life force in that specifically, Fergus and Dil enjoy the 'honeymoon suite' and Dil is a force to be reckoned with when she ties Fergus to the bed and proceeds to kill Jude.

Further, Miller argues that "when hair traverses the boundaries of the body by leaving it, by being cut or pulled out…its nature, its meaning and symbolism and any cultural understanding of it undergoes an unsteadying shift. On the body, hair is controlled, familiar and homely: *it* [my emphasis] is part of us. Off the body, it transforms itself into something at the same time alien, unfamiliar and unhomely" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 185). On her body, the hair is controlled by a familiar cultural understanding that often reads long hair as belonging to the feminine, however once the hair is removed a new, controlled, familiar symbol takes the place of the long hair, the

[xxvi] By discussing the haircut of Dil as an act of ritual or sacrifice is to recall Elaine Scarry's discussion of *who*, namely God, and the role of wounding the body in the making of the world comprised of artifacts of civilization and the subsequent repeated production of wounding the body in making that which called for the ritual act of sacrifice in the first place, namely God.

short afro, which is often associated with black men. This statement acknowledges that hair undergoes a cultural shift stated by Sherrow and thus acknowledges the political cultural-beauty associations of the afro in 1970s America that belonged to women and men alike. Yet, within the context of *The Crying Game* and the Opaque Movement, it is in the removal of the hair from the body that it is transformed into something alien, unfamiliar and unhomely, namely the short afro. This is because after Dil has her haircut during the Transparent Violent Moment, the short afro serves as the ghostly link to Jody in his cricket whites as argued earlier. Miller concurs when she says, "It [short afro] has thus become this absent body's [Jody] symbolic presence—its ghost—a reminder of the transient nature of the human body, and an emphatic assertion of hair's ability to both represent and exceed it" (Biddle-Perry and Cheang 186).

The *it* under discussion now is the concepts associated with Dil in cricket whites. The image of Dil in cricket whites exists within the narrative for only a short period of time. During its manifestation the words used to define and name it move between Dil as uttered by Fergus, Dil as uttered by Dil, and 'that thing,' 'it,' and 'sick bitch' as uttered by Jude. Clearly there is no agreed upon words upon which to call the image. The movement between words that each drag concepts of 'girl,' 'wife,' 'wee black chick,' 'not a girl,' and 'man,' shows the instability of cultural concepts and moves the image to the margins occupied by the Other, the monster, the ghost, the 'something new, something that nobody recognizes' for language is incapable of defining its conceptualization. In saying that, I am aligning the conceptualization of what the image of Dil in cricket whites represents along the spectrum of pain and imaging closer to Scarry's definition of pain in that she describes the cultural sameness of any one language's inflexibility to express pain because "the utter rigidity of pain itself: its resistance to language is not simply one of its incidental or accidental attributes but is essential to what it is" (5).

So what does that mean to begin approaching the conceptualization of this image? Defining her as man, woman, transgender, intersex, woman with a penis, heterosexual,

homosexual, lesbian, transvestite, hybrid, other, monster, or ghost only approaches her identification, her identity. Reading her character, her image, as 'something new, something that nobody recognizes' sees and understands that the image is going to prove unstable in its complexity. To recognize this image is to see that the image, in its making *drags in the pathos of their loss and the violence of the force that made them, their sheets and chains* into its existence and interaction with the world around it. In its making is the destruction, the unmaking of other creations, other facets of identity that can be called man, woman, transgender, intersex, woman with a penis, heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, transvestite, hybrid, other, monster, or ghost. In its making is the destruction of the force that made it: Jody the ghost and Fergus's ritual sacrifice. In its making is the consent to be made. In its making there is warfare, there is torture. In its making is violence. In that violence: destruction, cutting, pain, wounding, unmaking.

To see this violence is to see the role of the scissors in the *process of identification* within both the Transparent Moderate Moment and the Transparent Violent Moment. To see the role of the scissors is to understand and see the scissors as a physical object that moves between both weapon and tool during the two haircuts seen on-screen. To elaborate, Scarry states, "The weapon and the tool seem at moments indistinguishable, for they may each reside in a single physical object (even the clenched fist of a human hand may be either a weapon or a tool), and may be quickly transformed back and forth, now into the one, now into the other. At the same time, however, a gulf of meaning, intention, connotation, and tone separates them" (173). Scarry goes on to distinguish the difference between weapon and tool as result of the surface upon which the artifact (hammer, ax, knife, scissors) acts. The surface in question for Scarry is a matter of sentience versus nonsentient surfaces. For now, I will maintain that the surface upon which the weapon and tool are acting upon is a surface with no substantiation – that is characters projected onto a screen. By not discussing in depth Scarry's conceptualization of the weapon and tool distinction here, I concede that I agree with Scarry's physical distinction between weapon and

tool; yet, by talking about cinematic artifacts (scissors, razors, knifes, blades, shavers, etc.) utilized in the haircutting process the movement between weapon and tool is going to be situated within Scarry's argument that it is the *gulf of meaning, intention, connotation, and tone separates them*.

In both the Transparent Moderate Moment and the Transparent Violent Moment, the cinematic artifacts (scissors) are present in the making process. During the TMM, the scissors are utilized as a tool by Dil to cut the hair of Fergus. The intention and meaning for Dil is to trim his hair as part of her professional duties as hairdresser, stylist. As I argued in Chapter 2, the intention and meaning for Fergus to trim his hair may be his desire to perform heterosexuality, and thus there is an apparent distinction or gulf in meaning associated with the action of the scissors in the haircutting process. In the TMM, there is no sense of warfare in that Fergus has entered the salon and asked to have his haircut; Dil consents to cut his hair as part of her profession. While there is no warfare, there is a sense of torture, self-torture, or self-alteration in that Fergus, as a 'generic embodied imaginer', has a desire to create, to produce, to make an artifact that represents conceptually a heterosexual male. This desire is to materialize an imagined object (heterosexuality) that he believes will alleviate the pain generated from not having had sexual relations with Jody. Within the Transparent Moderate Moment, the scissors are viewed in close-up as they snip and clip away the hair. For Dil and Fergus both, the scissors are but a tool in the haircutting process. Of course, this changes once the scene is repeated during the Transparent Violent Moment of Dil that occurs within the same space, with the same cinematic artifact (scissors). During the Transparent Violent Moment, the scissors become a weapon in the transformation process. The movement of the scissors from tool to weapon is evidenced by the scene in which Dil and Fergus engage in psychological warfare. In the TVM, consent is obtained as can be seen in Figure 12 at the beginning of this chapter – "Go on, then." The sigh, the resignation that is conveyed within the line when uttered during the movie, conveys the sense of

loss and pain felt by Dil after waging war with Fergus. In the course of their battle Fergus employs psychological tactics such as “You’d do anything for me?”, “You said anything.”, “Want to change you…”, “No.”, and “I promise.” While Dil counters during their exchange with “No way-“, “A girl has to draw the line somewhere.”, “You’d like me better that way, Jimmy?”, “And you wouldn’t leave me?”, “You promise.”, and finally, concession with “Go on, then.” Of course what is missing from this, and cannot be located on the page of the script (absence of body and movement), is the *use* of the scissors during the discussion. Dil is seated in the chair, and Fergus is standing above and behind her. In his hand the scissors hang above her, and within the artifact’s contents is the threat of violence, the threat of cutting, the threat of wounding, the threat of inflicting pain upon the body in order to illicit the desired imagined object (Jody in cricket whites). Beyond the threat of violence, wounding and pain, is the missing component of the discussion that can not be written with sufficient accuracy in that it must be *seen*. The scene between Dil and Fergus must be viewed, must be witnessed in motion in order to *see* the process of identity formation as it occurs. What must be seen is the pain experienced as a result of a haircut; pain that can only be seen in the tears that flow down the cheeks of Dil as her hair is clipped and snipped away. To *see* the tears is to understand Scarry’s articulation which states “Physical pain is not only itself resistant to language but also actively destroys language, deconstructing it into the pre-language of cries and groans. To hear those cries is to witness the shattering of language. Conversely, to be present when the person in pain rediscovers speech and so regains his powers of self-objectification is almost to be present at the birth, or rebirth, of language” (172). And so, what must be seen, consumed and incorporated visually is the blades of the scissors as they snip, sever, bite, eliminate the hair that contained within it the artifacts of civilization (woman, woman with a penis, transvestite, transgender, homosexual, female, femininity) and the making of a new imagined object with a hairstyle that contains different artifacts of civilization (man, penis, homosexual, heterosexual) all of which represent different facets of identity that currently convey culturally-defined norms. To see the Transparent Violent

Moment is to see the destruction of an artifact (character with a pre-established identity) and witness the birth of a new artifact (character with an as-yet-unnamed identity). To see the Transparent Violent Moment or the Transparent Moderate Moment is to hear the person self-identify themselves. To see the Transparent Violent Moment of Dil is to hear an image that is unable to self-objectify or to assume a pre-given identity; rather, to see Dil in cricket whites after the Transparent Violent Moment is to see something new, something that nobody recognizes.

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