Drawing the Border, Queering the Nation:

Nation Trouble in *Breakfast on Pluto* and *The Crying Game*

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> *Do you think we are stupid enough to perjure ourselves again and again with the fiction of nationhood? How dare you talk to us of duty when we stand waist deep in the toxin of your past…*
>
> ~Toni Morrison, 1993 Nobel Lecture in Literature

Part I | Drawing the Border

1 This article examines films set in Ireland by writer and director Neil Jordan. Thus far, Jordan has made eight Irish films. Here, I focus on two of those: the whimsical picaresque piece adapted from Patrick McCabe's novel *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005), and the controversial blockbuster that put him and (actor and Field Day co-founder) Stephen Rea on the map, *The Crying Game* (1992). The title of the latter film is a pun referring to both the heartbreak involved in romantic relationships and the state of occupied Northern Ireland. This split film offers juxtaposed crying games—a historico-political conflict as against an invented romance-gender conflict—so that viewers recognize the issues as linked. Perhaps needing no introduction, it gives us main character Fergus (Stephen Rea), a Volunteer in the Provisional IRA.[1] He befriends Jody (Forest Whitaker), a Black-British policeman of West Indian

[1] The next generation of the IRA, following the Easter Rising, the wars and partition, whose specific aim is to reunify Ireland and fully dissolve the tenets of colonial occupation. Founded at the moment of partition and widely considered responsible for assassinating Michael Collins, this Northern "Provisional" IRA has over time splintered into multiple factions; e.g., the "Real" IRA carried out the largest single moment of violence in the North, the bombing civilians in County Omagh in 1998, and the "Continuity" IRA has waged mostly guerilla protests. The "official" Provisional IRA deconstructed itself in 2005 and re-inaugurated as a democratic political program under the auspices of *Sinn Féin*. In the previous era, the Provisional IRA worked hand in hand with *Sinn Féin*; now they are essentially one, a non-militant, political organization that, since 2005 and especially in the last three years, has made much headway in all-Irish, cross-border politics.

descent on patrol during Operation Banner.[2] Fergus participates in abducting Jody, is charged with overseeing him, and later ordered to assassinate Jody. But he does not follow this direction, and Jody is hit and killed by a British lorry instead of by the bullet Fergus was ordered to hit him with. Now, Jordan's protagonist "cross[es] the water, lose[s] [him]self for awhile," traveling to London in a symbolic cattle boat. Fergus is thus reborn, alighting in the colonial mainland as a second self, a Scottish immigrant named Jimmy. On the lam and now newly employed in construction, he is not just hiding from the paramilitaries; Fergus is there to fulfill the romantic mission which comes to trump his political involvements. It is the errand requested by his new, now dead friend to deliver a message to Dil (Jaye Davidson), a second order he fails to complete.

2 Instead, Fergus finds and falls in love with Dil, a development that comprises this halved, bordered film's second and concluding segment. From the time of his first film *Angel* (1982), through to *The Crying Game* and then *Breakfast on Pluto* in 2005, it is to the queer radical represented by orphan, adoptee, and gay transvestite Irish(wo)man, Patrick "Kitten" Braden (Cillian Murphy) that Jordan has always sought to represent visually.[3] *Breakfast on Pluto* is a bizarre tale, in his words, "part fantasy, part fable, part almost burlesque" (DVD voiceover). As a perfectly circular narrative,[4] it "avoids any orientation toward a culmination point" (Deleuze and Guattari 21 – 22). The protagonist crosses multiple borders

[2] Operation Banner was the name given to the entry of British troops to and occupation of Northern Ireland during the period between August 1969, when the violence precipitously escalated, through July 2007 when the operation was finally brought to an end after implementation of most provisions of the Good Friday Agreement.

[3] The gender identity of Jordan's protagonist in this film is ambiguous; she is a transgender figure as well as being a drag performer and transvestite. She identifies as female and feminine, and, like Dil (of *The Crying Game*) before her, is biologically male. In the cases of both figures, their biological maleness cannot be ignored as it is, in both cases, an ineffaceable part of the narrative. In the literature on this film, the main character is typically designated simply a transvestite. She is alternately referred to as an "Irish drag queen" (Gale Literature Resource Center summary, 2013), a "glam rock transvestite" (Macnab 2006), a "gay transvestite" and (though unclear and undefined) a "(true) transvestite" (Kauffmann 2005).

[4] It begins and ends in not just the same moment, but the very same shot, as Kitten walks Charlie's baby in a pram while being cat-called by construction workers.

multiple times and is continually embroiled in misadventures, as her queer subjectivity abuts Irish orthodoxy and conservatism. She does not make the simple, singular leave-taking of a Fergus Hennessey or a Stephen Dedalus;[5] Kitten leaves then returns then leaves again, her two-hour film in thirty-six episodes charting the piecemeal movement toward piecemeal, accumulating freedoms. Lines of story beget lines of flight in a web of incidents of leave-taking and crisis involving five exiles and three bordered water-crossings. *Breakfast on Pluto* and *The Crying Game* are set in the "border country" (Hughes 2) of the partitioned North, a territory "not so much enclosed by its borders as defined by them" (Hughes 3)? And Jordan's chief interest, in these narratives, is that location. Both films come together as stories of the Troubles sharing the tripartite themes of partition, gender and nation. Both represent how political strife invades the lives of ordinary citizens, causing them to make choices they would not otherwise, as well as how gender functions as an arm of presumably distinct political processes. The films employ bifurcated narrative structures and general partition aesthetics: each concerns the conflict that raged in the North between 1968 and '94 and the struggle for independence of those counties; each one offers a nuanced look at the North that is tied to, interrupted and intersected by distinct gender troubles.

3 This article theorizes the meanings of the border (and partition more broadly), the literal partitionings of the films themselves, and their portrayals of the complex normative pressures facing post-partition Irish subjects. It extends the intersectional analysis on Jordan's work, already in progress, looking at how he tethers gender to the nation through genderqueer characters and deconstructs nationalism through transgressions of gender. Any analysis of these films, it seems, begins with the Irish border. Richard Kearney notes how many Irish writers speak of "being in transit between two worlds, divided between opposing

[5] A reference to the conclusion of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist.*

allegiances" (14).[6] And there is no better exemplifier of this than Neil Jordan, who self-consciously and conscientiously deploys literal and metaphorical borders. Along with that, the specific films in question orbit a set of signature tropes: the gothic, vampires and demons, mythologies and fairytales, interior narratives and dream narratives, symbolic spaces of performance and performativity, as well as individual identity and subjectivity, social relations and socialized violence. Over the years and the many films, a handful of concerns have emerged in the criticism. He is viewed as a highly eclectic filmmaker, having worked prolifically within "local and international markets" (Rockett 1) producing one of the most varied contemporary filmographies in terms of subject, aesthetic and genre. His cinematic work "resists categorization" (Pramaggiore 1 – 2)[7] and remains intensely committed, also, to interrogating gender. Indeed, Jordan is an originator of contemporary queer cinema; he has made a number of films known for unpacking and radicalising normative conceptions of sexuality especially. But this aspect of his work is complicated, in the sense that, though the portrayals of masculinity and sexuality are progressive, even radical, his representations of women are frequently troubled. Notwithstanding that this filmmaker sometimes produces gender-burdened "castrating women narratives" (McLoone 182), at the same time, they almost always offer shrewd, scrupulous interrogations of the essential concerns for this article—that is, masculinity and (homo)sexuality.

4 When set on the island, Jordan's films deal prominently with its political history. How they do that, what Jordan is doing with the border, these are questions that often go unattended in the scholarship despite the staging of unbroken dialogues with them. In the extensive discourse on *The Crying Game*, for example, historical and local specificities get trumped by a focus on gender and race, many reviews only slightly concerned with the

[6] On this point, also see Muldoon 2000.
[7] Also see Zucker 2013, ix – x.

political and paramilitary frames to which Fergus, Jody and Jude are tied, and from which Fergus flees. The criticism is thus, in part, defined by a conception of this director as politically escapist.[8] Without dismissing any existing methodology or viewpoint, I advocate for analysis that pays greater attention to the historicity and materiality of the geography, an awareness we see in some more recent readings.[9] Of the critics who do acknowledge and address Jordan's political content, Joseph Cleary's 2002 assessment was groundbreaking and significant. It teased out the way narratives of the Troubles elide partition as a factor in the conflict known as the Troubles. *The Crying Game* is one of several romance tales Cleary uses to show how state structure is erased from the milieu as represented; in it, he says, the border is obstructed as Jordan fails to deal with the politics underlying the social issues (110 – 112). Far from detaching sectarian hostility "from the question of the existing state order" or "underestimat[ing] the degree to which the sectarian conflict is rooted in conflicting national and state allegiances" (Cleary 109), however, the Irish border is actually the most visible register of the nation in these films. J. Boozer agrees, saying Jordan cannot be "accused of unawareness of the crises and conditions that exist" (179), that his work is "firmly placed" within and "directly related to modern Irish history and […] [the] Troubles" (McCann 69). Maria Pramaggiore, in her incisive study *Neil Jordan*, likewise shows how it is entirely possible to read *The Crying Game* as not just a response to historical cultural change but to "the creation of the province of Northern Ireland, a legacy of the eighteenth-century British plantation of the North" and related "political disputes over the geographical and symbolic borders of the Irish nation" (Pramaggiore 8).

[8] See Cleary 2002 and Kearney, 1982 and 1988. For the other view, that Jordan's work is *not* escapist, a view I share, see Rockett 2003, Pramaggiore 2008 and McCann 2010.
[9] A positive example is McCann 2010.

5 The films assessed visualize proliferate borders and boundaries and derive critical meanings from the trope. All were crafted through a poetics of partition: a series of inevitably contingent metaphors signifying inevitably contingent Irelands, stagings of scrims and pivotal intersections as well as sect, gender and race lines. The border 'doubled' Ireland and these films are doubled, too—at the level of genre, narrative structure, character and location. Both a political thriller and a romance tale, *The Crying Game* is bifurcated in terms of genre, and both films feature gender-split protagonists—a character riven by dual sexualities in *The Crying Game* and dual genders in *Breakfast on Pluto*. In the 1992 film, an Irishman called Fergus becomes a Scotsman named Jimmy, and Dil is forcibly, visibly 'trans-gendered' as Fergus dresses her in Jody's masculine attire (his cricket uniform) in order to disguise and safeguard her. Kitten is 'doubled' across her story, too. In the late scene when she finally finds her mother, the character's dividedness is spectacularly clear: posing as a British Telecom clerk, she is torn between her identity as a transgender woman and the bizarre double-drag she hides behind.[10] In this case, it is a literal disguise as she does not reveal her true identity to her mother. In yet more partitionings, Fergus's key relationships (with Jody, then Dil) are distinguished by the divide between Ireland and England—that is, the geographical parties to the conflict. There and in *Breakfast on Pluto*, a dramatic shift from one to the other political terrain occurs. Both are prised down the middle by a common water crossing: in chapter eighteen of the thirty-six installments of *Breakfast on Pluto,* and at the precise middlepoint of *The Crying Game*, Kitten and Fergus cross the water to London.

6 Even while, as Cleary outlines, many narratives of the Troubles do indeed sever the tie between political and communal realities, Jordan is simply not one of these storytellers.

[10] In this case, a literal disguise, as she is unwilling to reveal herself to her mother.

But, an understanding of how the films draw and deploy the border is crucial to a full appreciation of that. Jordan's protracted concern with gender and political history, the ways he toils to conjoin and ally them, leads to a recognition of these films' intersectionality. They are narratives that demarcate an interlocked assembly of identifications and ideologies—nationalism, colonialism, history, North/South locatedness, religion, political trauma, gender—in the lives of Irish subjects. Complex, intersectional work like Jordan's is often treated using "single-axis frameworks" (Nash 2), where one or the other issue comes to the fore as preeminent concern—gender *or* nation *or* race—and the analysis is shorn of the range of pertinent issues. Emer and Kevin Rockett suggest his work "has not received the critical engagement […] it deserves" (1), and that "it is only by refusing to accept closed categories that one can truly engage" it (2). He is drawn, they say, "to the 'in-between'—the confusion, richness and complexity at the site of boundaries" (2). This is certainly the case. In fact, the "'ethnosexual' categories" Jordan often works with may be "so ethnic and sexual at once that it is difficult […] to separate the two, so one or the other is simply neglected" (Gamson and Moon 55). Rooted in feminist thought, an intersectional grounding betrays this absence as oversight: "triad analytics" (Peterson *passim*) take as first supposition not only the interlocking nature of identifications but that their performance and performativity are "co-constituted" (Dhamoon 230), that subjectivity is simultaneously defined "by mutually reinforcing vectors" (Nash 89; Collins 63).

7 This intersectionality is part and parcel of Jordan's border work. The films resonate a split ground and mimic their subject matter—a partitioned place—thus earning the designation of partition narrative. That is, cultural production that foregrounds a larger evaluation of the border and functions as analogue to the material, political fragmentation through deconstructed narratives and characters. Jordan's films outline a "richer ontology"

(Collins 63) and "permit the asking of 'new' questions and the exploration of different connections" (Cole 566). This means the questions asked of these films are often not the always the best ones. We should ask, for example, what they would do, what they would look like, say and stage, were they to foreground partition and the life of state structure. How represent, on film, the border separating the two Irelands? How embed the trope in a way that retains the tie to the historical, political swathe such that it is un-occluded and maintains a presence? I think when a film does that it looks like *The Crying Game* and *Breakfast on Pluto*. Seen as intersectional—seen as talking to and critiquing nationalism, gender and postcoloniality, seen as responding to the traumatizations of political history—we are reminded of the miscellanies of representation, that range of methods for representing politics, commenting on state structure, making a historical film, or focusing on subjects caught within Joyce's socio-political "nets."[11]

8 When we approach Jordan using the conjuncted lenses urged by an intersectional hermeneutic, other interpretations begin to emerge. For instance, in placing Cathy Caruth's historiographical trauma theory next to these films, we recognize them as examples of a political history that is necessarily traumatic and (thus) largely un-writeable.[12] Because it is traumatic, history, she argues, often finds expression in the form of an ostensibly unrelated dream narrative, comes to fruition through a narrative mimicry, a second shadow account imitating the spectral, silent history.[13] The narrative is split, mirroring the break or wound of trauma as well as, in this case, the imposed border (read: trauma) splitting the place represented. This reading applies less directly to *Breakfast on Pluto* in the sense that Kitten is,

[11] Another reference to the conclusion of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist.*
[12] This is an issue Egoyan struggles with in *Ararat* as well, in telling the history of the Armenian genocide. In that film, he tells it several times in several ways, none of which are ultimately satisfactory, all true and false, etc.
[13] I reference chiefly the argument developed in chapter two, "Literature and the Enactment of Memory."

from *before* the beginning, uncompelled by gender codes. Like John Cameron Mitchell's protagonist in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), she is a child of the traumatic borderlands mirrored in the surreal quality of her film. Unlike *The Crying Game*, her film visualizes not a path toward embracing homoerotic desire as the means to break the nationalist embrace but an *a priori* state of genderqueerness that propels Kitten to flights of discovery, travel and leave-taking *from* the nation and from a very young age. Caruth's notion of a 'partitioned' history is sharpest in *The Crying Game*, where Jordan can be seen as having made a first attempt to write and film a straightforward, realist (hi)story of the Troubles—comprising its first half—but then displaces this ostensibly failed account, midway, by sending Fergus to London and converting him from lead figure of a political thriller to the romantic hero of a romance tale.

9 In this interpretation, Jordan's first endeavor to grasp and convey the Troubles seems, paradoxically, disassociated from the second echo story. Narrative one, a realist, historical thriller, is replaced by narrative two, a fraught gender-bending romance about political others victimized by geopolitics, colonial occupation, nationalist aggression and compulsory gender norms. In this sense he filmed both of Caruth's (hi)stories, intersected them, and provided an intermission: the visual pause and momentary quiet at the halfway mark, as Fergus crosses the water in a boat. As with a dream narrative, the film now takes on a "noirish glow and […] the characters lack the 'realism' associated with their Irish [narrative] counterparts" (Rockett 129). The displacement of the realist narrative self-reflexively mirrors Jordan's displacement of realism across his work. From the start, he "eschewed the formal codes and conventions of bourgeois realism" (Ging 142), betraying a real "impatience" (Glicksman 71) with that as with Irish filmic conservatism; he prefers cinema "that doesn't belong to any kind of realism" (Macnab 22). Charting the transition from *The Crying Game* to

Breakfast on Pluto, one quickly comprehends how, as the films and years advance, this horizon is pushed ever outward until we come to 2005 and his least transparent, most ornate film.[14]

10 Although this reasoning applies chiefly to *The Crying Game*, recall, in Caruth's frame, that the film was made during the Troubles. It is a historical narrative representing a conflict that was still in progress and which personally "affected Jordan" (Zucker *Dark Carnival* 24). This fact manifestly alters literally *everything* about what can be scripted, symbolized, visualized or even inferred.[15] This awareness of the shared temporalities of historical film and traumatic history, this understanding of the bordered, doubled nature of such accounts, this awareness of the intersectional grounding from which Jordan works are all crucial to discernments of (at least) his Irish films. The primary concern of this article, a matter of discourse theory, is the constitution, deconstruction, and re-constitution of the representative subject whereby discourses seen as distinct are shown to profoundly converge and transform, one to the next. Accepting, as intersectionality mandates, that socially constructed ideologies and identifications interconnect, the question then becomes, how do they interact? Is their intersecting neutral or are there traceable dynamics of relation that occur *between* nation, class, gender, race and other facets of (a necessarily intersectional) identity? Perhaps one of the most interesting questions we can ask of *The Crying Game* and *Breakfast on Pluto* is, how does the filmmaker's representation of a series of intersectional Irish lives "explore undoing

[14] Many years into Jordan's filmmaking career, it was this film that challenged him as he struggled to find a form to tell *Breakfast on Pluto* (DVD voiceover).

[15] On this point, see Zucker 2008 20 - 21. …*The Crying Game*, released two years before the ceasefires were called and peace talks commenced, is a film of the pre-peace-process, late-Troubles era, a transparently critical response to the failed efficacy of militant resistance. With it, too, the Troubles continued to rage, though with less intensity: 1992 saw a bombing at Teenane, attacks on RUC officers and *Sinn Féin* members, and multiple, random shootings by Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries from various wings. The same is true of Jordan's first feature, *Angel*, made in 1982 at the height of the Troubles—the Blanket protests, the hunger strikes, the deaths of those martyrs, the disturbing exploits of the Thatcher regime, the many bombings—at Belfast, Derry, Magherafelt, Armagh, Ballykelly, Ballymena, Bessbrook in Ireland, and Hyde Park and Regent's Park in London—all playing out, historically, as this film played out on set.

gender"? (Cole 565) Jordan's poetics of partition works together with what perhaps seem superfluous gender questions, it incites an intense reflection on matters touching the performance and performativity of nation, nationalism and postcoloniality.

11 The films' intersectional meanings articulate the critical role gender plays vis-à-vis other aspects of identity and other ideologies, chiefly nationalism. These narratives are reliant, for their progress, in Andrew Parker's words, on a "recognition that—like gender—nationality is a relational term whose identity derives from its inherence in a system of differences" (5). Whereas V. Spike Peterson asks how "the valorization of masculinized identities, ideologies and actions operate in contexts of militarism and war" (16), it is important to consider how national partition and the conflicts it produces comes into play in this context. How does the legitimization of masculinity operate in divided Ireland? Why does *The Crying Game*, a historical narrative about a political conflict, transform into a gender-bending romance? Cleary asks this question, too, but now, it becomes: what does Kitten's will to wear 'girls'' clothing have to do with the political life of the island and/or the *longue durée* of partition? According to her film, they are inextricably related. Why does Jordan initiate his second film about the Troubles featuring a drag performing transgender woman by immediately setting it down at the border? Within moments of the opening, a voiceover tells us that Kitten was "born near the border, in a small Irish town"—a sign that the story is to be understood as 'leaning' against that line, read as a partition narrative. Kitten's is a border story, then. How does it coalesce as an illustration of an Irish "self in partition" (Mufti 211)? And what does it reveal about the meaning of the border in the lives of Irish citizens?

12 The narrative is, in this way, rested on the political ties and the political divides between colonizer and colonized; it deconstructs not just colonialism but also (concomitant)

anti-colonial nationalism. Even as *Breakfast on Pluto* appears to be the tale of a crossdressing, willful, endearing adventurer, in fact, it (also) tells a story of divided Ireland and the long-term impacts of the partition, where the line re-mapping a previously mapped terrain transformed it into the proliferation of unhomely locations staged in Jordan's fragmented narrative. That is, as Homi Bhabha expressed it, the critical spaces visualized in these narratives function to "negotiate the powers of cultural difference," especially gender, "in a range of transhistorical sites" and narratives and subjects and intersectional identifications (9). Caruth posits the existence of a historical narrative that, because not directly articulable, appears as a partitioned, alternative dream story, a 'true' history that, as with Freudian dream condensation, translates real things into meta-symbolic objects, figures, places, scenes, sequences. What may be most important, in the analysis of *The Crying Game*, started above, is to recognize that it is the *second* story—part two, relocated to London and cohering as partitioning and displacement—that articulates the film's most important revelation regarding the historical politics at play. That is, how seemingly unaffiliated gender structures foreclose the deconstruction of Irish nationalism, and how the intersectional hinge to gender functions to consolidate it. In this historical imaginary, a 'false' (hi)story supplants the 'real' one but the second iteration has nonetheless captured it, is nonetheless 'history.' This suggests that, in the pre-treaty era during which the film was made, irrespective of one's opinion about partition and the continuation of the colonial state, it is not merely self-evidently germane discourses—nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, postcoloniality—but other intersectional normativities that work with them to constitute the subject and preserve the hegemony. This meaning is stymied in the initial realist telling (part one of the film) and does not find conveyance until after the gender borders are crossed and symbolically crossed out—*after* Fergus leaves a (narratively purloined) note in Dil's mailbox, *after* he returns to the

bar The Metro looking for her—this time, with full knowledge that she is biologically male. This brings us to an answer to the question, why is a single film narrative spliced apart as two bordered, inevitably proximate stories? Why do Jordan's juxtaposed "crying games" need each other? And how do these facts of the films explain how "restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life" are undone in the Irish context? (Butler *Undoing Gender* 1)

13 Ultimately, these bordered Northern narratives deterritorialize and queer nation, nationalism and national identity through reconfigurations of normative masculinity. If we grant this suggestion, it means the relationship of identifications—the premise of an intersectional reading—is *more* than simple concurrence. Gender forms an original captivity but it must do so as a "core constitutive element of race, ethnicity, and the nation" (Nagel 255). Jordan addresses this construction through filmic spectacles in which transformations of nationalist ideology—a performativity of nation—are predicated upon, sanctioned and impelled by gender transgressions. Seemingly unallied discourses form intersectional, unhomely 'houses of cards' in which, remove one piece, other pieces fall, performatively undo one compulsory normativity, undo others. We speak of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich *passim*) and, now, of an allied compulsion—nationalism. In an apparent will to move beyond standard postcolonial or nationalist, revisionist or feminist representations, Jordan's Irish films illustrate the domino effects of gender trouble as theorized. That is, how radical transformations of gender and sexuality are instantiated, articulated and performed (Butler *Gender Trouble passim*) by means of "peripheral [modes] of […] undoing" (Butler *Undoing Gender* 15) and "improvisation within a scene of constraint" (Butler *Undoing Gender* 1). Jordan's nation-work is hitched to instances of this kind of trouble. He stages movements we might, after Butler, see as instances of *nation trouble*: that would be, how radical shifts in

nationalist ideology—toward post-nationalism or transnationalism—are likewise enacted, how nationalist identification is not simply inscribed and internalized but maintained, or deconstructed and progressively re-inscribed, by the subject, through scripted performance or performativity. The work of Judith Butler informs this analysis which takes as first assumption her view of gender performativity, of discursivity and subjectivisation, as a fluid, malleable process and of the subject as agent through performativity. Thus we participate in undoing gender by refusing to perform gender according to established norms, by rewriting the meaning and materiality of sex, gender and sexuality as Jordan participates in doing in these films.

14 Owing to the absence or the assertion of gender performativity, this interaction is either going to normatively consolidate other points of identity or belief, or open up and reform them. "[R]earrangements of the real" (Zucker *Interviews* xi) and "trope[s] of mutability" (Rockett 1) occur in Jordan's cinematic line of sight through a sophisticated imbrication of gender, the nation and the border. Jordan's representations align with Gerardine Meaney's ideas in working from the assumption that "[a]ny evaluation of nationalism in the Irish context has to be conditioned […] by an understanding of the kind of state it produced and what that state and its dominant church […] perpetrat[ed]" (xv), perpetrations that must be deeply intertwined with gender. Recorded by the conspicuous presence of the border, the alliance of gender and nation is, we see, a tightly wound knot which has functioned, along with colonialism and Catholicism, to wind nationalism into the force it is—and, for Jordan, gender is the string which, when pulled, unravels that binding. While this line of reasoning does not map on to every postcolonial context—Jasbir Puar speaks of homosexuality being appropriated by nationalists and aggressor nation states to re-

intensify rather than deconstruct colonial discourses—it does appertain in Jordan's vision.[16] As Joanne Nagel says, in Ireland, queers are "problems for nationalists" (163). And if, as she further maintains, "nationalist politics is a major venue for 'accomplishing' masculinity" (160),[17] then the movement toward a post- or transnational collectivity may be operational, first, through contraventions of gender.

Part II | Queering the Nation

15 If the borders of nation, which locate and house the subject, are built together with gender, then, in re-signifying what male and female, masculine and feminine mean, other meanings embrangled therewith are inevitably redefined: nation, people, us, them, the meaning(s) of 'Irish.' *The Crying Game* and *Breakfast on Pluto* lay claim to this idea. They are intersectional, historical films positing gender as critical modality of change, growth and *denouement*. Each is positioned, in a sense, as Joyce's narratives were, envisaging a metaphorical escape from Irish nationalist-conservatism. Constituting a substantial evolution of this type of narrative's Joycean roots, Jordan's special contribution to the paradigmatic modern Irish story is in positing *gender* as the decisive performative for the obligatory, now quintessential flight. This is why he needs the partition, why he fashions a border aesthetic, why he attends with such care and consistency to the North. Jordan's particular crafting of stories of the Troubles works to pull the intersectional performativity up to the surface, a nation trouble that is as visible in Kitten's use of the ultimate weapon to battle paramilitaries—a perfume bottle—as it is in Fergus's 'failure' to murder Jody as against Dil's fatally wounding a very determined Jude with multiple bullets.

[16] This is a major point Puar makes across *Terrorist Assemblages*.
[17] This point is well established in the literature. The most important work on it is Mosse 1985. See developments of his ideas in Nagel 2003; Jeffords 1994; Parker et al 1992; Puar 2007; Walshe 1997.

16 This performativity of nation is identifiable through key tropes: the skilled use of interior narratives, the crafting of intensely symbolic spaces, shots and settings, and, the films' dramatic, centripetal transgressions of gender. Jordan's staging of nation trouble is writ large, most of all, as aspects of the protagonists' gender identities are (re)defined in ways that pull them away from the sway of entrenched Irish nationalism. This thesis is developed through Kitten's disownments and expatriations, a horizontal, fractional odyssey tuned to the "tempo of always-becoming" (Puar xvii). The original exile involves Kitten's transfer from mother (Eva Birthistle) to father (a priest played by Liam Neeson) and from there to adoptive mother, Ma' Braden (Ruth McCabe). A second, double exile occurs when she is ousted from school and home after writing a salacious tale of her own conception followed by placing a note in a problem box at retreat, asking where she might obtain a sex change operation in Ireland. Kitten then encounters a band called The Mohawks which sets off a series of mostly political mishaps and ends with her emigration. In London now, she commences the search for her long-lost mother but finds, initially, only a death-defying trek through torture, imprisonment, and danger, including a date with a serial killer, participation in a peep-show, and even a foray as a Womble. A fourth exile occurs when Kitten is wrongly accused of committing a bombing and is then incarcerated; after her release, she returns to Ireland for the funeral of a friend murdered by the IRA. This homecoming is short-lived and unrecuperative: she and Charlie (Ruth Negga) must journey back to London after neighbors burn them out of the rectory where Father Liam had put them up, a rejection not by mother or father or sister but by a mass of citizens allegorizing the *nation*.

17 Compromising the integrity of the borders separating-and-connecting politically distinct Irelands and politically distinct islands, Kitten's location slides around them. We are

rarely certain about whether she is on the Irish border's Northern or Southern side. She seems to 'slalom' from one exilic plateau to the next, a perception exacerbated by Jordan's use of "sweeping montages, [and] odd shots" creating the effect of a "kaleidoscopic whirl" (Kauffmann 23). A postmodern narrative of Deleuzian roaming that is *not* without a political core, this film (and the novel it is adapted from) satirize nationalism through Kitten's detachment from and disdain for it. But these actions depend on her *a priori* status as gender outcast. Her identification as female places her definitively outside the cultural swathe: as a girl-identified boy, she is automatically exiled and, so alienated, enacts her political disaffection in the thousand plateaus of a complicated narrative. Another in a long line of Irish bildungsromans, observe Kitten's snowballing need to confront and negotiate the border, the Troubles, the nation. As its too-many incidents accumulate, her distance from the ideological swathe grows rather than diminishing. Whenever Kitten could have been interpellated by the nationalist hail she simply becomes more queer, more gay, more queen. This protagonist is allegorical deterritorialization of the defining Irish ideology as she stands in a six-foot hole almost-murdered by the IRA; as she is heckled by that same group in Native American drag; as, in childhood, when draped in the Irish flag she plays a dying for Ireland game—play that takes on serious consequences when, as an adult, it is no longer just a game. 'Serious' is the signifier Jordan uses for the nationalist critique provided by his film, a one-word conceit contesting the altogether serious rhetorics of republicanism and unionism. Unlike Fergus, Kitten merely orbits politics. She is wholly un-serious about the Troubles and displays a "general air of nonchalance and […] a kind of innocence" (Kauffmann 22 – 23). Her troubled world likewise does not take her seriously: as multiple characters say, Kitten is a "Nancy boy," and so she escapes murder because the provisionals

fail to see her as a threat despite knowing that she destroyed a stockpile of their weapons and ammunition.

18 The manner by which *Breakfast on Pluto* deconstructs nationalism through gender trouble is writ larger still, more spectacularly and more completely, in the symbolic architecture that closes the film. The second to last scene visualizes the contrasted paths taken by Kitten and her biological mother by means of a crosswalk—green tenting that reaches in the four cardinal directions. The action here is almost surgical, as Kitten and Charlie head west and her biological mother and half-brother head east—two sets of characters follow conspicuous 'green' borderlines (read: the structure of the nation) in diametrically opposed directions. This structure, filmed on the Deleuzian diagonal, is simulacrum of an invisible, fabricated partition border: the walls giving nation and nationalized self-existence, the demarcations of colonial history and a protracted resistance struggle. This image figures the complex intersectionality of Jordan's film and Kitten's subjectivity: it is meta-sign for the borderlands of gender and nation and visual analogue of the film's perfectly split structure. Viewers realize that, since Kitten never outed herself, the mother she at long last locates does not know she had encountered her abandoned son, now her transgender daughter. Just as Kitten tries but cannot go home again, despite finding her mother, she does not actually get all the way to 'mom,' that is, all the way 'home.' That biological connection, held so dear culturally and of a piece with the work of nation, has lost its grip, its importance ameliorating across all the exilic plateaus of Kitten's tale. Finally, this tie is severed in the diametrical culminating movements of mother and son. This movement unequivocally decenters biological heritage: that Kitten refers to her biological mother as the "Phantom Lady" ensures viewers identify her as negative national allegory, metaphor for an

illusory, mythic, phantom nation. Ireland as national simulacrum and Mother Ireland as therefore farcical, 'phantomized,' and rebuked.

19 Kitten's various steps outside the borders of the known, imagined Irish world are akin to Fergus's double exodus in *The Crying Game*: he crosses the water to London and engineers an incarcerated-escape at the close. Whereas Kitten resides outside state and para-state infrastructures, the earlier protagonist is part of the militant revolt in the North, used here partly to critique the repression of homosexuality within such groups (Pettitt 270 – 71). If taking seriously, as Lance Pettitt recommends, that Jordan intends Fergus as closeted and gay (272), recognize how, rather than "remain[ing] baffled, [and] beyond attainment" (Cleary 133) his sexual desire is actually liberated. When Jude finds Fergus in London, he refuses her request to rejoin the paramilitary effort saying "No way, I'm *out*." These words, an admittedly overused metonym, are a pun suggesting Fergus' release from both nationalism and heteronormativity; he comes out of the closet *and* out of the nation, literally and ideologically. Staged is a normative gender performance by a queer, closeted protagonist: after Jody's death, Fergus thinks, consciously, he's just doing a favor for a straight guy like himself. In masculine protector mode, he will look after Jody's girl, not only because he was asked to but to assuage his guilt and honor their profound, if brief, connection. As the story develops, this reading cannot hold. Recalling that Jody asked Fergus merely to locate Dil and give her a message, appreciate how things fundamentally change for Jordan's lead character, how his motive in engaging her comes untethered from the original task.

20 Dil refers to him several times using terms of endearment, "honey," "darling," "my sweet," and Fergus responds according to the normative interpellation: "Don't say that," "Don't call me that." But this is an obvious charade as we witness his concrete choices, first

and foremost to stay with her to the point of losing the freedom he risked his life for as a republican militant. Initially, Fergus feigns having any knowledge that Dil is biologically male or that The Metro is a gay bar. A *true* unawareness—regarding Dil's biological sex, her status as drag performer and transgender woman, or the bar as gay bar—is simply implausible. Once he is no longer able to deny that Dil is biologically male, rather than simply complete Jody's task and end the relationship, Fergus returns to The Metro looking for her. Then, he leaves her a note, the purloined letter viewers do not see. Is it Fergus's coming out and confession? The heroic fulfillment of the mission? We know it is not the latter, as he confesses this to her at the close. The question is answered when, after receiving the note, Dil visits Fergus at work. In an abundantly dramatic moment, she literally bursts through the shot, walking boldly across a cricket field. Resplendent, perhaps also victorious, her entry eclipses the game, the score board, the frame. Noticing her, Fergus drops a glass pane, shattering it—an action and object mimicking the frame of the shot, the border, the deconstruction of circumscribing discourses in progress. The broken glass, the building Fergus (literally) tears down, Dil's infringement of the shot: all metaphors of a line of flight from discursive captivities, exiting the house of the nation and of compulsory heterosexuality through a 'windowed' escape.[18]

21 Jordan and Rea both seem aware of this understanding and of the "centrality of the masculine body" (Jeffords 13) and the importance of specularity to Irish nationalism—how "a nation exists […] as something to be *seen*" (Jeffords 6), that is to say "performed," and which, here, through a brilliant rendition of nation trouble, is ruthlessly undercut. The

[18] See Macnab on this point. …In *Breakfast on Pluto*, it is hard *not* to read the moment when Bertie (Stephen Rea) confesses his love to Kitten as a winking rewrite of the analogous scene from *The Crying Game*. It clarifies the sexuality question: Rea's character, this time, admits to himself that his love interest is a biologically male transgender woman. He says he wants a "girl like her" and Kitten responds saying she's not a girl. Bertie tells her—*this* time, in *this* film—he already knew that, that he wants a "girl" like her.

protagonist's refusal of the patriarchal, heteronormative nation is overtly predicated on gender transgression: he is driven to renounce the compulsory alliance with republicanism, to cross the IRA, to betray his Irish nationalism, but, before he can loosen those grips, he must cross the borders of permissible sexual desire. This two-part film works through doubles: two Fergus's, two Dil's, two narratives, two settings, two key moments unlocking Fergus Hennessey's normative subjectivity, part one, occurring in the first narrative, part two in the second. His initial undoing unfolds during the "'love' scenes in which Fergus feeds Jody, tells him his name" (Cullingford 174) and twice touches his penis. He takes Jody outside to urinate in a scene that doubles, and foils, the opening action. Jordan images the progression from conformity to transgression by opening with a urination scene—the one in which Jody holds his own penis while tethered to heteronormativity, he is holding Jude's hand—and following that with one in which Fergus holds not Jody's hand but his penis. The second major transformation of Fergus is that most familiar, most controversial scene when he encounters Dil's body and seems to have just then discovered her biology. He becomes ill, and knocks her down while running to the bathroom. Traumatized and bleeding, Dil asks: "You did know, didn't you? What were you doing in the bar if you didn't know?" The conflict staged is not what it appears to be—that Fergus confronts her male body, is shocked and vomits. I read this critical moment differently, as more heteronormative catharsis (Aristotle *passim*) than homophobic abjection. Although Fergus performs the prescribed masculinist response—revulsion upon encounter with the situation of the homosexual—his paroxysm, in truth, is a purgation of compulsory heterosexuality.

22 "Dil: 'Do you like me even a little bit?' and Fergus responds, with strong feeling: 'More than that.'" On careful inspection, reading intersectionally, we recognize that Fergus's true exodus regards his sexuality, and the other domino that falls with it is his

nationalism.[19] To underscore that, perhaps because Jordan fears it will not be easily grasped, he takes part two to the fullest generic extreme: his main character transitions from militant jailor to prisoner of the state *and* queer romantic hero. This understanding is important to sussing out the tie between gender and nation, between the genitalia controversially on display and the fact that Fergus's desire is contained and closeted in connection with his nationalism. The moment of a dawning awareness of same sex desire occurs concurrent with the (more important, for Jordan) refusal of nationalism. If Fergus is to get beyond that, and by extension beyond the imperialism that structures his Northern Irish Catholic life (and the political life of his split homeland), he must break free of the gender limits forestalling a closeted desire. He must reimagine and reinvent what it means to be a body, to have a sexuality, to be a sex, to have sex. Tracking Fergus' linked exoduses, it is clear that the film instantiates a teleology of escape and reifies a transgressive Irish ontology and identity. Having taken the fall for Dil, Fergus concludes his journey toward two freedoms incarcerated by the state that colonized his people and lit the fire of his anti-colonial militancy in the first place. In Jordan's tragi-comic conclusion, he is seated behind a Plexiglas divider, and Dil visits him. The brick and mortar structure, the Plexiglas, both symbols of not just the colonialism always-already imprisoning him but all his prisons. The transgendered figure is transparently free, a fact highlighted by the extreme long-shot Jordan uses to visualize her entry, underscoring her freedom of movement and location outside the 'walls.'

23 Allegory of Jordan's Deleuzian horizon, she is *transparently* unbound, literally and with regard to the discourses at play in the film. Perhaps the most significant articulation of nation trouble in the 1992 film is the director's deployment of a threaded interior narrative,

[19] This is the only reading in which his return to The Metro actually makes sense.

the tale of the toad and the frog which Dil hears for the first time in the film's closing minutes. Through it, the intersectional domino effects of a performativity of gender-and-nation are loudly clarified. Jordan's characters often "discover that they are empowered […] to invent fictions" and then his viewers realize how those stories often come to "acquire the status of reality" (Pramaggiore 7). In *The Crying Game*, like baton hand-offs, the tale is told once, twice, thrice. Consolidating its central meaning and playing meta-filmically off of Jordan's multi-part film, the fable is told twice by Jody to Fergus, with different meanings but both regarding the Irish *nation*. And it is narrated a third time, by Fergus to Dil, the meaning again re-converted, this time referring to *gender*. This closing chorus re-signifies the tale as Fergus employs it to explain his sexuality and not his Irishness. Dil says, "You're doin' time for me, no greater love." Fergus responds, "As the man said, *it's in my nature,*" and finally, "Can't help it, it's in my nature." That line tracks the multiple experiences of captivity and exodus and is reified, in the end, as a "movement of deterritorialisation and destratification" (Deleuze and Guattari 3) by which it "change[s] in nature and connect[s] with other multiplicities" (Deleuze and Guattari 9). A line of articulation redoubles as line of flight: the lovers' dialogue outlasts the fade, is thus uncontained signaling escape, eventually, despite Fergus's spectacularly captive finish.

24 Three urination scenes metaphorically chart the gender transformation, and, a story standing first for nationalist meanings mutates into one signifying the critical gender implications of this film. What Jordan achieves here is rather remarkable: forced to confront Dil's body, Fergus is likewise forced into consciousness of his homoerotic desire, and this occurs at the expense of a commitment to paramilitary service to the nation. His relationships with Jody and Dil bring him out of inscribed masculinity, out of the closet. Illustrated forcibly, as in *Breakfast on Pluto*, there is no known beyond once he's 'failed' in

this regard. Having chosen not to reject his sexual desire, he thus confronts the loss of every key belonging and, like Kitten, cannot get back to any of the state or political or traditional identifications he was born into and is forever interpellated by: his *de facto* citizenship in the anti-colonial nationalist para-state; as a Catholic and nationalist, he never owned membership in the *dejure* colonial state; and his belonging to the Irish nation was canceled with the re-mapping of Ireland. However, and this is important: all of these belongings depend on *gender* conformity, induce heterosexual performance and a unfailingly enacted cisgender. He can 'sell out' his nation, swear allegiance to the Crown and still be Northern Irish; he can re-declare a former fidelity to the paramilitary anti-state and atone for his transgressions in that context. But he cannot love the biologically male Dil and belong to either or indeed any apparatus.

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25 That romance, if maintained (which it is, and dramatically so), categorically exiles Fergus, hence, Jordan's development of nation trouble as an "enabling response" (Butler *Excitable Speech passim*). This understanding of the film's content and the director's intent, this view of Fergus as a "'homo Provo'" (Pettitt 269),[20] makes it possible to freshly explain and explore this film's instructive characterisation of the gendered Irish subject. We recognize analogous movements in other instances of queer cinema, such as Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* or Eytan Fox's *Walk on Water* (*Lalekhet Al HaMayim*, 2004), partition narratives that work, also, through genderqueer characters and deconstructions of normative masculinity in a penultimate critique of nations and nationalisms. Atom Egoyan's *Ararat* likewise tethers the representation of a violent national-political history, and a historiographical meditation on whether, in Caruth's frame, such histories are articulable at

[20] The term "provo" is slang for Provisional, that is, a Volunteer in the Provisional IRA.
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all, to a radical gender sequence the narrative fully depends upon. The "gender play" (Meaney 95) in these films "fuses anxieties about sexual identity with questions of nationalism" (Pettitt 269, quoting Wheelwright), a theme "usually imagined as devoid of connection to sexual politics in general and queer politics in particular" (Puar xii). These films all instances reveal the "crucial link[s] between nationalism, state power, and the policing of gender and sexuality" (Scarlata 3).

26 Although unclouded by an (in my view critical) awareness that partition holds forth as testament to the force (and *not* the failure) of imperialism, Jordan's films remind us that it stands as "monument to the failure of Irish nationalism to achieve its central goal" (Scarlata 12). In colonial contexts, nationalist intersectionality surges and race forms the hinge of a "heightened nationalism" by which the yoking to sexuality becomes more "immediate and direct" (Mosse 133). Racism brought "to a climax tendencies that had been inherent in the alliance between nationalism and respectability" (Mosse 133), and colonialist nationalism, having defined "civilized" males as "capable of mastering [their] sexual urges as soon as they came into conflict with the demands of society," labors to designate Irish and African men as libidinally out of control (Mosse 10 – 11). In this vein, Graham Huggan argues that postcolonial praxis is by definition comparatist and intersectional (*passim*). But the join thus created is dialed up in circumstances defined additionally, and more complexly still, by border politics. While it is always true that coming out of gender scripts is troubled by the co-constitution with colonial discourse—that "[p]ostcolonial countries like Ireland have particular difficulty with the real presence of the homoerotic" since the "gendered power relationship […] casts the colonizing power as masculine and dominant and the colonized as feminine and passive" (Walshe 5)—add to this the further complication that gender is transformed in other ways in response to partition. Jordan capitalizes on this, aware that an

already gender-burdened postcoloniality needs a dramatic gender performativity, a palpable breaking through or out, as we witness Kitten do time and again, and as we see in *The Crying Game* through Fergus's two key relationships.

27 Characterizations of both lead figures reflect the way the beloved, ontologically necessary locale is 'broken' and no longer provides a sense of place.[21] Their stories articulate the incapacity of male protagonists to be constituted by the subjectivity carved out for them by histories of border politics. Their places in the world are not just burdened, they are fragmented by the political processes that leave them adrift. Much as they endeavor to, Fergus and Kitten cannot get back to the nation, cut off from it as they are by the border cutting Ireland, by their place in the colonial structure, as by their gender identities. The damning exile Fergus comes to conceptualizes, simultaneously, a breakdown of nation: in the walls he literally pulls apart, the partitioning window he splinters, his chosen fall into culpability and penal colonization, the final image in which he is literally surrounded by Plexiglas borders. His film draws the border, signs the nation *and* "[queers] the colonial allegory" (Cullingford 176) and this reveals why partition is so exhaustively present. As Colin Graham theorizes, "contemporary postcoloniality has the potential to shatter the self-image of nationalism as much as it might function to radicalize it" (87). The gender work of these films is underwritten by the partition context, a political situation that by definition renders nation-state(s) contingent, puzzled, intersectional and also beckons an ardent, hyper-performed masculinity. A poetics of the border together with gender crafts a politics of location for divided Ireland that does precisely that: it visualizes the "rapid transition from an insular […] culture" to a multicultural, global one (Pramaggiore 7), "reinvigorating the dissidences of gender and subalternity, undermining the complacencies of historiography,

[21] A reference to Heidegger's geographical ontology, developed in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking."

and moving towards a notion of Irish culture which views the dialogic hybridity of 'Irishness' in empowered ways" (Graham 98).

28 The two films of the Troubles under review betray the inextricable links between Irish nationalism, geopolitical and colonial history and the life of gender and sexuality there. This is an awareness Jordan mines in Irish film after Irish film. In giving us the Irish subject in alternative guises—the drag performers of *The Crying Game* and *Breakfast on Pluto*, the vampires of *Byzantium* and *Interview, Angel's* vigilante cowboy—Jordan circles back to the link between the border symbolising the split nation and the genders of his split protagonists. Fergus's betrayal of Irish nationalism cannot stand alone, it *needs* his gay transformation, his refusal of compulsory heterosexuality, his purloined letter. In order for Kitten to live free of nationalist ideology, as precondition of her characterisation, she needs to like boys, to identify and dress as a girl. These protagonists are part of the continuum of Irish narrative that reveals "how difficult it is to maintain one's own proper identity as the man in the heroic story" (Meaney 5), in particular one that "challenge[s] discourses of nationalism, [and] sexuality" through the "disintegration of boundaries" and a "postmodern skepticism" (Pramaggiore 23). This is seen in the way Kitten is determined to escape the inescapable and that Fergus's only potential for freedom from that nexus is to land himself in jail for two thousand three hundred and thirty five *more* days—the future following the fade to black.

29 Jordan gets "beyond the circular return to the sanctity of the nation" (Pramaggiore 23), is clearly only "reluctantly beholden to [it] post-nationally" (Graham 92), clearly "transcend[ing], yet epitomiz[ing], nationality" (Rockett 2). In his hands, splits of setting, character and story are symbolic modes of escape from the nation rather than returns to it: in the 'trans'-social structure embodied by allegorical characters like Kitten and Dil, exemplified in the fractured, foiled outing of Fergus. In the strategic moments charted—

Kitten's neverending odyssey and Fergus's incarcerated exodus—the key is in hitching the gender metamorphosis to the political transformation. In *The Crying Game* and *Breakfast on Pluto*, a domino effect is set up between masculinity and the nation. And Jordan uses the border—signifier of a bordered condition, of life under partition—as the third integral point in queering and crossing the nation. The toughened, masculine figure in *The Crying Game* is ultimately incapable of killing in the name of the nation and the genderqueer protagonist of *Breakfast on Pluto* has nowhere to run or hide or truly 'be' in contemporary Ireland, and so cuts across national and partition borders in search of a home (read: homeland) she never finds.

30 These are dualisms Ireland may have "no wish to construct but through which we pass" (Deleuze and Guattari 20)—must pass—in Jordan's cinematic vision. By means of a border aesthetic, Jordan envisions and invites "forward-dawning [Irish] futurit[ies]" (Muñoz 23): the key space in *The Crying Game*, the gay gathering place called The Metro where Dil performs the title song, is signifier of the kinds of futurities José Muñoz and Deleuze and Guattari separately theorize and which Jordan struggles to visualize. It coheres as discursive opening in which a radical nationalist critique is permitted to occur and unfold, as locus of Fergus's dawning self-knowledge. A queer metropolitan circuit opposes the heteronormative national one, and the bar is an unhomely allegorical 'house' denoting the difference. It embodies the rhizomatic social configuration sought as against the conception of the modern nation—Dil's queer nation, a (re-)imagined community as hybrid, open, fluid gathering. Their respective endings land both protagonists in the precise place Jordan where wants them: the dramatic movement toward a queer Irish identity and ontology. They are propelled by a desired exodus from compulsory nationalism even if the leave-taking is exilic, as in *Breakfast on Pluto* and even if the figure inciting that movement ends his tale literally

incarcerated, as in *The Crying Game*. Just as Kitten is freed into a frightening world she yet boldly navigates, and Fergus is saved by imprisonment from a too-homophobic world and its too-many cultural laws, these stories speak to metamorphoses that will depend on the thriving of various queernesses in Irish national and social life.

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