

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the conflicts in Kimberly Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry* and Neil Armfield's *Holding the Man*, I would like to draw some conclusions in this chapter. It is apparent that in these films both of the protagonists are having the conflicts spurred by transphobic and homophobic people, and both of the protagonists are helpless against their opposition, causing them to submit to them in order to resolve the conflicts. Both films show that there will be people that trigger conflicts with LGBT people because of their phobia towards them, and those LGBT people will be helpless against those homophobic people.

In the first film, *Boys Don't Cry*, there are four social conflicts. The first social conflict is between John and Brandon. On the one hand, John wants to strip Brandon in front of Brandon's girlfriend Lana to show her that Brandon is a transgender, and on the other hand, Brandon fights against it. In this social conflict, despite Brandon's struggle against John, Brandon is unable to fight John's intention, causing him to be humiliated in front of Lana, her mother, and Brandon's other friends, which then resolves the conflict. This conflict is visually supported by camera shot, camera angle, mise-en-scène and lighting.

The second social conflict is also between John and Brandon. On the one hand, John wants to further emasculate Brandon for being a transgender by raping him, and on the other hand, Brandon fights against it. In this social conflict, Brandon is unable to fight John again causing him to submit to John's action and the conflict is forcefully resolved. Camera shot, mise-en-scène, and lighting support the visualization of the conflict.

The third social conflict is between the sheriff and Brandon. On the one hand, the sheriff, being a transphobe, cannot accept Brandon's gender identity and asks offensive questions to Brandon about the incident while being reluctant to help him, and on the other hand, Brandon wants the sheriff to accept his identity as a transgender and help him. In this social conflict Brandon also submits to his opposition, the sheriff, by lying that he has a sexual identity crisis, so that the sheriff will stop asking more questions and his decision resolves the conflict albeit unsatisfactory to him.

The fourth social conflict is between John and Tom and Brandon. On the one hand, John and Tom threaten Brandon not to tell anyone about the rape, and on the other hand, Brandon thinks that he has to tell someone about it. In this social conflict, Brandon tries to fight John and Tom by telling the sheriff about the rape, but it costs his life after John and Tom find out about it. His death resolves the conflict. The third and fourth conflicts are visually supported by camera shot and mise-en-scène.

In the second film, *Holding the Man*, there are three social conflicts. The first social conflict is between Tim and his parents. On the one hand, Tim's parents want Tim to stop seeing John because homosexual relationship is against the social

norm, but on the other hand, Tim refuses to stop seeing John because he feels happy with him. In this social conflict, Tim's mom says that being a gay will make Tim miserable and Tim's dad says that knowing Tim is a gay embarrasses him. However, Tim fights back by saying that he is happy with John and refuses to obey their command. This conflict is resolved peacefully as Tim's parents can gradually accept the fact after Tim becomes independent. This conflict is visually supported by camera angle, camera shot, and mise-en-scène.

The second social conflict is between Tim and a group of homophobes in a bar. On the one hand, the homophobic bar patrons are disgusted by Tim's behavior and want him out of the bar, but on the other hand, Tim feels like he has a right to be in the bar and express himself. In this social conflict, the homophobes are hostile towards Tim and his LGBT friends, but Tim yells at them, saying that they have every right to be there. However, this social conflict is resolved by Tim and his friend leaving the bar to avoid more conflicts.

The third social conflict is between Tim and John's father, Bob Caleo. On the one hand, Bob wants Tim to give up half of the belongings to him, but on the other hand, Tim wants to keep them all because it is the last gift from John. In this social conflict, Bob demands Tim to relinquish half of the inheritance to him, including the car that Tim needs the most. Tim then tries to argue to keep the car, but John keeps insisting that due to Tim's deteriorating health, he will not need the car. Seeing that it is pointless to argue with Bob, Tim then agrees to let go half of the belongings, including the car, to resolve this conflict. The second and third conflicts are visually supported by camera shot and mise-en-scène.

From the resolution of the conflicts mentioned above, I found two significant similarities between the two films. First, it is apparent that the root of both Brandon's and Tim's conflicts are homophobes, as they both live in an LGBT-rejecting community. Brandon lives in Nebraska where most of the people are quite conservative and most of which are transphobic, represented by John and the transphobic sheriff. Tim lives in Australia in the eighties when many of the people still consider LGBT people contemptuous, represented by Tim's parents, the homophobic bar patrons, and Bob. Second, both of the protagonists' lives end tragically. Brandon is killed because he tries to stand up for himself by reporting John and Tom to the sheriff, and before his impending death because of HIV, Tim is deprived of half of his inheritance, his right to be considered as John's partner at the funeral.

Apart from the similarities above, there is a difference between the films. The difference is that the protagonists present their sexuality differently to the society. In *Boys Don't Cry*, Brandon pretends to be a cisgender man due to the conservative community that he lives in. This goes well for him as it makes him easily accepted, and everybody treats him nicely until the revelation of his true sexual identity. While Tim, because he gets support from John and his LGBT friends, is open and expressive about his sexual orientation despite the negative treatment he faces.

In conclusion, based on the conflicts and comparisons of those films, no matter how they express their sexuality, LGBT people will either almost always receive negative treatment from people who do not know or fear about them, or face awful consequences for who they are. Thus, in my opinion, both films attempt to

raise the issue of LGBT through a tragic depiction of both protagonists' fate. The message of both films is clear, that is, to draw the audience's awareness and sympathy. The directors seem to hope that they become more open-minded towards LGBT people, by portraying them as normal human beings and showing them that whatever the conflicts are, LGBT people will likely be the one to suffer a tragic end because of who they are. In addition, for every one person that accepts them, there will be hundreds of transphobes and homophobes that will reject them and treat them negatively.

