

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 5.1 Conclusion

*Boys Don't Cry* (1999) provides a compelling illustration of how gender identity is realized through performance, as seen in the main character, Brandon Teena's ongoing efforts to embody masculinity despite challenges from his biological sex and social environment. Brandon's actions, appearance, and interactions throughout the film depict a complex yet consistent performance of masculinity shaped by personal identity and societal expectations. His choice to wear masculine clothing and emulate various aspects of men reflects his male gender identity and aligns with Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, which emphasizes how repetitive behaviors, such as clothing styles, shape gender. Brandon's gender performativity is also supported by Brannon and David's masculinity theory. Brandon's rejection of feminine clothing is in line with Brannon's and David's "No Sissy Stuff" rule, underscoring his refusal to conform to norms associated with his biological gender. Brandon's confrontation with the men who make Candace uncomfortable illustrates Brannon's "Give 'Em Hell" concept of being assertive, brave, and willing to face danger. Even after being beaten, Brandon's continued aggression, without showing vulnerability, aligns with the "Sturdy Oak" ideals of fortitude and emotional control. Similarly, when John chooses Brandon to drive, it reinforces Brannon and David's "Be the Big Wheel" concept, highlighting Brandon's social recognition of masculinity through leadership and perceived competence.

Brandon's gender performativity is also influenced by other people. Lonny's cutting Brandon's hair to resemble a man's and her criticism of the bump in his pants demonstrate support for Brandon's development of his gender identity. Brandon's environment also influences his masculinity. While surrounded by Tom, John, and his friends, their interactions are often rough, especially those between men. This strengthens Brandon's masculinity as he adapts to the men in his environment. Scenes in which Brandon interacts with women show romantic interest, meanwhile, Brandon does not show any romantic interest with a man. Brandon's resemblance to a man is an attempt to get acceptance as the gender identity he desires in a homophobic setting. As a result, Brandon changes every aspect of himself to resemble a man. Overall, Brandon's

character demonstrates how masculinity is constructed and maintained through ongoing performances shaped by cultural norms and expectations of others.

## **5.2 Suggestion**

Future researchers can expand the concept of gender performativity by analyzing how various cinematic elements such as camera angles, lighting, soundtrack, and character interactions contribute to the construction and reinforcement of gender identities on screen. For example, the use of close-up shots can emphasize gestures, facial expressions, or body movements that signal gendered behavior, while lighting choices can highlight or obscure aspects of a character's gender performance. Similarly, soundtrack and diegetic sound can frame a character's actions as conforming to or deviating from normative gender expectations, thus influencing audience perceptions. Beyond technical elements, the dynamics of character interactions such as dialogue, power relations, and intimacy play a crucial role in shaping how gender identities are performed, negotiated, or contested within a narrative.

Beyond focusing on a single character, comparative studies between multiple characters with different gender identities within the same film can provide deeper insights into how gender is performed differently, depending on social context, narrative structure, and genre conventions. For example, comparing the performance of masculinity in a marginalized transgender character with that of a hegemonic masculine figure can reveal tensions between dominant and non-dominant forms of gender identity. Furthermore, exploring representations across genres such as drama, romance, action, or comedy can reveal how cultural norms surrounding gender are reinforced or subverted through storytelling strategies. By broadening the scope of analysis, future research can illuminate the complex interactions between cinematic form, social discourse, and gender performativity, offering a richer perspective on how films both reflect and shape societal understandings of identity