Boys Don’t Cry (1999) & Side Effects (2013) Movie Analysis

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Our society does not offer equal opportunities for some categories of people, particularly those who do not identify with the normal gender or sexual orientation. In America, transgender persons belonging to such groups do not get recognition as equals. That explains the struggles of Brandon Teena, a transgender teen, as depicted in the film Boys Don’t Cry by Kimberly Pierce (Ebert, 2018). Throughout the movie, Brandon reaffirms his masculinity by engaging in roles of a socially constructed man wearing short hair, bearing a stuffed sock in his groin to appear like he has a penis, and changing his name to look like a man from Teen Brandon to Brandon Teena. All these he does because he is aware of the social intolerance, discrimination, and marginalization faced by transgender individuals in our society.

In the movie, Brandon is depicted as an accepted man, though he continually seeks the approval of his friends, John and Tom, by engaging in dangerous acts to prove his masculinity. The alpha male in the movie misleads Brandon by encouraging him to partake in self-destructive activities like overindulging in alcohol and drugs, as well as reckless driving. At one point, Tom burns his hand with fire to show his friend Brandon the scars sustained out of self-mutilation, which to him is a measure of masculinity. Through the two friends, power and control have been explored in the movie (Ebert, 2018). This shows the expectations that society has pegged on the male gender; hence, they are willing to do the unthinkable to that effect.

When Tom and John learned of Brandon’s gender reassignment surgery, they got disgusted since they felt he was not a real male. However, when Brandon meets Candice and protects her from a man who wants to harass her, he leaves her a note finishing with “Love always, Brandon” (Boys Don’t Cry). This shows that Brandon’s self is different from what the movie depicts him as. This stresses his biological sex, which does not match his socially made gender. This film has provided insight into the sexuality battles to which our society subjects those who do not conform to its expectations.

Side Effects (2013)

In the pharmaceutical society that we live in, the side effects are the hazards that are ever-present out of prescriptions of the drugs we use. Whether they are voiced publicly or minimized in print, they are a shady companion that comes with drug prescriptions. The film Side Effects focuses on Steven Soderbergh’s (2013) film side effects suffered by a young couple after the side effects that the wife’s

medication caused. The effects led her to commit alarming acts. This made the psychiatrist who was assigned to her take responsibility for the predicaments of the patient while confronting his patient's sanity (Sobczynski, 2018).

This movie explores the theory of sexuality through two characters, Emily and Victoria. Emily is the wife to Martin. The latter went to jail, leaving Emily behind in a sad state of mind, and Victoria came through as her counselor. Victoria, too, had been abandoned by her husband. The two later became lovers since they had bisexual tendencies. While Emily teaches Victoria about illegal stock trading, Victoria, on the other hand, teaches her how to fake depression, which she starts applying even in the public domain. She did so at a public party to show everybody that she was trying hard to make it work between her and Martin and that she was suffering from depression. This was in preparation for her attempt to murder Martin and use depression as a scapegoat so that she could inherit all his money. She wanted to get rid of him because she did not love him (Sobczynski, 2018). This shows how selfish and self-centered our society has become, and people are ready to do whatever it takes in their pursuit of shortcuts to happiness.

The other psychological issue well portrayed in the film is that of compromises that individuals and doctors get into in the corporate-run healthcare system. Jonathan – Emily's psychiatrist, fought for her acquittal in court with the promise that she would plead guilty and get to stay in the psychiatric hospital. This badly damaged Jonathan's reputation, and his colleagues found him negligent. He would later discover that she feigned depression, and hence, her suicide attempts were fake, something that sent Victoria to prison, too, for conspiring with her. The movie, therefore, shows the side effects of the antidepressant drugs Emily was on and how they ruined her life.

References

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