
THE PARADOX BEHIND THE EXISTENCE OF GAY CONVERSION THERAPY AS DEPICTED IN GARRARD CONLEY'S MEMOIR *BOY ERASED*

Sekar Yolanda Azza

e-mail: sekaryolandaazza@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The issues of minorities still become an interesting topic to be discussed since practically the laws sometimes cannot protect the rights of the minorities. Homosexuals are one of the minority groups in the United States struggling with homophobia. The existence of gay conversion therapy is a paradox in the multicultural country. This research is conducted to examine how the portrayal of homophobia in gay conversion therapy and how the paradox of multiculturalism depicted in Conley's memoir entitled *Boy Erased*. The primary data of this research are the dialog and narration in the memoir published in 2016, which contains the irony behind the existence of gay conversion therapy. The secondary data are taken from articles and current news that relates to the issues. The post-nationalism approach, homophobia theory, and multiculturalism theory are used to analyze the data. The study found institutionalized homophobia at Love in Action (LIA) as the gay conversion therapy institution. The reasons behind the existence of gay conversion therapy are the paradox of toleration, lack of equal recognition, and the inability to provide positive accommodation for homosexuals. The existence of gay conversion therapy proved that the struggles of homosexuals in the United States still need to be overcome.

Keywords: *gay conversion therapy; homophobia; homosexuality; multiculturalism*

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INTRODUCTION

The United States is primarily known as the champion of democracy and the guardian of democracy. *Declaration of Independence* promised to protect all men's rights to get the freedom of life and pursuit of happiness regardless of their race, sex, gender, job, and

ethnicity in the United States (Jacobs, 2004). A democratic system provided the citizens to get equal opportunity and provide equal rights for all citizens. A democratic system should also accommodate the rights based on society agreements and individual responsibility to respect other people or group's rights.

The dynamic form of society is a challenge for the United States to implement the policy related to the rights of the minorities. The diverse perspectives on religion, morals, beliefs, and cultures have been used to justify oppression and diminished the rights of minorities (Robinson, 2009). As the target of the political situation from both conservatism and liberalism, it is not easy for minorities to speak up. Creating large crowds or mass movements is one of the powerful strategies to get their rights, as the 1960’s Civil Rights movement that has inspired the emergence of homosexual movement.

The Stonewall Uprising created progressive change for the homosexual movement. Homophobia was culpable in this movement to spread irrational fear and hatred toward homosexuals. In recent years, homophobia is not only about physical harassment, but also verbal abuse, such as jokes and negative comments on social media. Those homophobias not only contribute to physical violence, but also result in depression and suicide cases.

After the legalization of same-sex marriage law for all fifty states of the United States in 2015, homosexuality still becomes controversial, and gay conversion therapy still exists. “Conversion therapy is treatment grounded in the belief that being homosexual is abnormal. It is intended to change the sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of homosexual people” (Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2019). Conservative religions commonly established this therapy. In other words, the existence of conversion therapy explains that Americans are mentally not ready yet to accept the legalization of same-sex marriage law.

Historically, gay conversion therapy is also known as reparative therapy or sexual reorientation. This therapy is not a new phenomenon in the United States. Academic literature documented that therapy has been used since early 1980 (Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2019). In the same way, the existence of gay conversion therapy is fully supported by conservatism. Homosexual clients who are seeking treatment to change their sexual orientation mostly suffering homophobic. The other factor that drives homosexual to be submitted into this therapy is families who do not support the ‘coming out’ process. The existence of gay conversion therapy proves that same-sex marriage law is not the ending of discrimination towards homosexuals.

The problems inside gay conversion therapy pushed the homosexual movement to persuade the government to ban this therapy. While some people and institutions agree to ban this therapy, conservatism prefers to rely on their Biblical values. The survey from Ipsos/Reuters in June 2019 reported that 52% of the United States adults support banning gay conversion therapy. Moreover, 18% of them stand to disagree with banning gay conversion therapy, and the other 30% argue they do not have a specific argument about this therapy (Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2019).

To ban all gay conversion therapy was not easy for the government to do since Christianity was the biggest religion in the United States. Nonetheless, the opportunity to ban all forms of gay conversion therapy remains. Until June 2019, the United States only banned conversion therapy in 18 states. *The New York Times* argues, “Between 2012 and 2018, 14 states and Washington, D.C., passed laws prohibiting conversion therapy for minors.” (Gold, 2019). Recently, New York and the

District of Columbia also join other states to banish conversion therapy in the United States. Gay conversion therapy still operated in more than half of the states in the United States. Some people continue to believe this therapy immensely able to change sexual orientation from homosexual to be heterosexual. Conversion therapy is needed to be discussed due to its complexity, and it cannot be seen from just one perspective.

Arkansas is one of the states that still legalized gay conversion therapy until 2019. This phenomenon illustrates in Garrard Conley's memoir entitled *Boy Erased* published in 2016. As a non-fictional literary work, this memoir was chosen to portray this issue because of the closeness to reality. Conley's debut memoir, *Boy Erased*, exclusively demonstrates his anxiety after coming out as a homosexual in a conservative family. Living in the small town of Arkansas as the son of a Baptist pastor, Conley was living in rigid rules of Christianity or the Southern Bible Belt. His conservative family forced Conley to break homosexuality prejudice (Conley, 2016).

Soon after Conley's parents found out their son's sexual orientation, his father intimidated Conley to join with gay conversion therapy, namely *Love in Action* (LIA) at Memphis in 2004. LIA is one of gay conversion therapy in the United States that promised to prevent and cure homosexuality. At first, Conley showed an uncomfortable feeling to be homosexuals and tried to cure his homosexuality through gay conversion therapy. Conley was also praying and questioning his faith over God when the treatment started to screw up his life (Conley, 2016).

Garrard Conley's memoir *Boy Erased* achieved a good response from the readers. The reader's enthusiasm brings this book into New York Best Seller in 2016 and movie adaptation with the same title in 2018. As the conversion gay therapy survivor and lecturer, Conley actively shared his experience through digital media and seminars. This memoir contains his hope to banish gay conversion therapy after the legalization of same-sex marriage law. Furthermore, *Boy Erased* was born as one of the tools and medium to examines gay conversion therapies' policy in the United States. The memoir of Garrard Conley successfully brings the issues of gay conversion therapy to the public.

Since gay conversion therapy still becomes debatable issues, this research aimed to examine how the portrayal of homophobia in the gay conversion therapy and how the paradox of multiculturalism depicted in this memoir. Queer theory, as the paradigm, would be the border to counter perspective of sexual orientation. This qualitative research also applied the post-nationalism approach to see the United States as a whole rather than a single entity. As a minority and marginalized group, homosexual people also has contributed to American cultures.

Furthermore, homophobia in the gay conversion therapy can be seen by homophobia theory. The next theory is multiculturalism, and this theory helps to see the issue of American society about gay conversion therapy that still exists. By these theories, American gay conversion therapy can be examined clearly.

DISCUSSION

Homophobia Inside The Gay Conversion Therapy

Being a homosexual is not accessible if there is homophobia in society. The complexity of the power relations between the mainstream or majority and minority brings homosexuals into the marginalized group. It cannot be denied that the conservative perspective towards homosexuality led to the homophobia that justifies the discriminations. As an impact, gay conversion therapy was created to fulfill heterosexism’s ego in society. Gay conversion therapy under conservatism spread the dogma that homosexuality is a life choice rather than various types of sexual orientations (Thumma, 1991).

Institutional homophobia theory by Blumenfeld was used to examine homophobia in the gay conversion therapy. Institutional homophobia refers to how government, military, religion, and other institutions discriminate against people based on their sexual orientation. The collective homophobia by gay conversion therapy as the institution proved that discrimination towards homosexuals is legal in some States (Blumenfeld, 1992).

The homophobic attitude by gay conversion therapy has interconnected with the Church’s view about homosexuality. This memoir implies that Conley was learning a homophobic attitude since he was a child.

The rest of my bigotry I learned from pantomime: limp wrists and exaggerated sashays from mocking church members; phrases that lifted out of natural speech into show-tune lilt—“Oh, you shouldn’t have”; church petitions that had to be signed in order to keep our country safe from “perverts.” (Conley, 2016).

The sentence exposes the image of homosexuality rooted in Conley’s mind, along with his skeptic attitude. Hence, the ambiance of institutional homophobia fulfills his mind when he joined gay conversion therapy.

When Conley first arrived in the groups, the therapist clearly said, “The first thing you have to do is recognize how you’ve become dependent on sex, on things that are not from God” (Conley, 2016). John Smid, as the principal therapist at LIA, suggests the conservative dogma in that sentence. The negative ambiance from him leads to institutional homophobia and persuades homosexuals to think they are abnormal and full of sin.

The attitude of gay conversion therapy’s client is controlled by those twelve-step programs. The negative image of homosexuality vividly shaped in gay conversion therapy. “You’re using sexual sin to fill a God-shaped void in your life” (Conley, 2016). This judgemental word was coming from Smid’s mouth during the first session. Rather than build empathy, this institution spread the fear of homosexuals’ mind.

At the moment, it seemed as if everything about me was inappropriate as if I might be banned from the premises simply because I was already too dirty. His tone suggested that I was desperately trying to hide an extensive sinful past. (Conley, 2016).

Conley’s mental condition could be traced through these sentences as personal homophobia, while the trigger of personal homophobia is institutional homophobia. It can be seen when he said dirty and sinfulness inside him because of homosexuality. The religious value inside gay conversion therapy has made Conley into the depression.

For the first time, Conley did not feel anything wrong with gay conversion therapy because he grew up with a Bible belt. Then as time flies, he got another view about this institution “LIA had taken a more extreme stance against the secular world than any of the churches I'd grown up in, though the counselor's way of thinking was not unfamiliar to me” (Conley, 2016). The programs of LIA as gay conversion therapy seems not fully moved based on Biblical values. Here Conley explained the walls of LIA that empty from anything because the therapist presumes the image or icon could trigger secular thought. On the other hand, art, such as classical music by Beethoven and Bach, cannot be heard at LIA because they are not Christian. Likewise, popular literature, such as Harry Potter, cannot be read at this institution due to their fear of secularism.

Rather than supplied professional therapists who offer empathy, LIA was focused on killing same-sex desire within the harassment.

At the moment, it seemed as if everything about me was inappropriate as if I might be banned from the premises simply because I was already too dirty. His tone suggested that I was desperately trying to hide an extensive sinful past. (Conley, 2016).

During the programs, Conley started to feel more uncomfortable within himself. Besides his personal homophobia, LIA was adding some reason for Conley to hate himself. The paranoid comes when LIA's employee asks him about his boyfriend. "Smid had told the man that it would be better for him to kill himself than to live as a homosexual" (Conley, 2016). Another verbal abuse from LIA happened when Smid argues that being homosexuals is the worst, and it might be a

trigger for homosexual's minds to commit suicide.

In the middle of the programs, some rules were trying to destroy Conley's confidence from being himself. Conley has lost himself during LIA's program, which claimed he could cure his homosexuality. “Every night, I was to focus exclusively on my sinfulness” (Conley, 2016). This program is called Moral Inventory (MI), and the clients should trace back their sin to find the reason for their homosexuality. This therapy has a purpose to emphasized the shameful sin in the clients' life and brushed the sin away. Through this program, Conley got a harrowing accident in his life. “I was rereading the page quickly, scanning to see if I'd written anything too embarrassing to share in front of our group, but, really, all of it was embarrassing” (Conley, 2016). How LIA pushed someone who has homophobia inside his mind to speak in front of many people may occur in their psychology. Therefore, it would be a traumatic experience in their life when they are not comfortable with themselves.

The night before the MI program started, Conley firmly pressed his memory to find his sin about being a homosexual. “Perhaps part of the reason I couldn't sleep well at night was that I'd never, before this moment, truly emptied myself of all sin.” (Conley, 2016). Conley cannot remember his same-sex attraction. Due to the condition of his environment that lives in a conservative family, he felt a lack of experience in same-sex attraction.

I kept my MI folded beneath my right thigh, dreading the moment when I would have to stand in front of this group and share my shame. I was especially worried about sharing this story with J, who seemed to have developed a great deal of

respect for me in only a few days. (Conley, 2016).

The implication of the MI program that asks the clients to announce their sin in front of many people might be a boomerang for the clients. However, this program was too vulgar to expose someone's secret in front of other people. This program is ineffective since Conley still cannot control his homophobia when he began to confess his sexual orientation.

Another harassment in LIA as gay conversion therapy portrayed in *Boy Erased* was when homosexuals should pretend to be masculine. Further, masculinity becomes a measuring element to detect homosexuality inside someone's body. "It's important to get in touch with this part of yourself," Cosby said. "This masculine part that's been missing for so long." (Conley, 2016). Here, Cosby tried to convince LIA's clients to remember their childhood moments with their father. Another statement from Cosby also persuades LIA's clients to increase their masculinity as the indicator of heterosexuality. "Masculine meant strong. Masculine meant straight." (Conley, 2016). Moreover, Cosby claimed the father is the key to masculine-affirming for the son. Conley's childhood memory came to his mind when he did not like to play a ball with his father, and he was never like playing sport.

Nevertheless, Michael W. Ross' research conducted in 1975 reported no relations between masculinity and homosexuality. While masculine is a gender expression, homosexuality is a sexual orientation. Ross has deconstructed the previous researches by Hewitt (1961) and Morgenthaler (1970), who said homosexuality was dominated by a feminine attitude (Ross, 1975). On the other hand, APA is also running a campaign to raise

society's awareness of the differences between masculinity as social construction and homosexuality (American Psychological Association, 2008). Although some research argues that masculinity and homosexuality were not correlating, LIA still used that perspective to cure their clients. "The best I could do at this point was to copy everything down, write it in sloppy print, make myself appear as masculine as possible on paper and in person." (Conley, 2016). It can be seen how Conley enforced his self to become someone else based on society's measurement of heterosexuality.

Conley had therapy to switch his sexual orientation in nineteen years old. Most of LIA's clients grew up in conservative families and desperately sought treatment to change their sexual orientation. Besides MI, LIA also provides other programs called F.I. (False Images).

I can no longer remember which story he found, but I can remember the way he ripped the pages out of my notebook, wadded them into a dense ball, and said, in a voice free of emotion, "False Image," as if that was all they were. (Conley, 2016).

There was a limited space for Conley to express his feeling at LIA, even it was just a daily notebook. This program aims to erase and eliminate the thought of same-sex desire from daily stuff such as clothing, appearances, jewelry, and belongings that indicated homosexuality. Journaling was considering F.I. activities that were not allowed at LIA.

Another program at LIA is called Genograms. This program asks the clients to expose their family's sin, starting from the grandfather until themselves. "A genogram shows hereditary patterns and sinful behaviors in our families. It doesn't trace our genealogy

so much as the history behind our present sinful behavior.” (Conley, 2016). When Conley failed to mention it, he decided to ask his mother. “I don’t understand any of this,” she said. “Why do they need to know so much about our family? What does our family have to do with sexual feelings?” (Conley, 2016). Based on his mother’s response towards Genogram, it can be seen that this program was highly illogical. Again, this kind of program could lead someone’s emotion to hate their family. Moreover, the doctrine over homosexuality as a hereditary sin was not relatable with APA’s statement that argues homosexuality as part of sexual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2008).

Shortly afterward, Conley knows that his therapy cannot be done in two weeks. The therapist said he should stay at LIA for approximately months or years to cure his sexual orientation.

Most patients needed at least three months’ residency, usually longer. In many cases, college students like me dropped out of school for at least a year in order to create distance from unhealthy influences. Many stayed even longer. In fact, most of the staff members were former patients who’d been with LIA at least two years, choosing to remain inside the facility rather than reintegrate into their old lives. (Conley, 2016).

Through his memoir, Conley points out that his parents should pay \$1,500 as the cost of the therapy in two weeks at LIA. This amount of money was not worthy since the therapists were not professional. It is seen when Cosby was not a certified psychologist, doctors, or even someone who understands religious values, but he works as the therapist at LIA.

He had never experienced same-sex attraction (SSA), as LIA labeled it. He’d never been through LIA’s program himself since his only major impediment

in life had been alcoholism, and LIA had hired him as a counselor because they believed his extensive A.A. experience was the only prerequisite for curing any and all forms of addiction. (Conley, 2016). The same case also happens when another therapist at LIA was the marriage counselor. This ironic was proving the harmful situation at gay conversion therapy, such as LIA. Henceforth, the institutional homophobia through LIA’s policy and programs lead Conley to be far from his God.

“Are you still praying?” His crow’s-feet winked from the corners of his eyes. “All the time,” I lied. The truth was, I hadn’t tried praying for two days, not since my mother and I visited the Peabody when I had felt, for a moment, what it might be like to live another life (Conley, 2016).

This quotation portrayed rejection from Conley when he was trying to reconstruct his sexual orientation, but he got nothing supported system even from his religion. Briefly, institutional homophobia from that therapy destroyed his faith.

The mental problems because of institutional homophobia proved that suicide cases happened often. Some of the clients tried to commit suicide several times. “This was T’s seventh suicide attempt since coming to the program. He’d tried pills, knives, whatever he could find.” (Conley, 2016). The situation declared something wrong inside LIA. The verbal violence was damaging their clients’ mental. In 2004, “Various bloggers have since approximated the number of suicides resulting from LIA’s treatment as anywhere from twenty to thirty cases, though figures like these are impossible to pin down.” (Conley, 2016). That was not a small number for suicide cases at LIA. The controversy still evolved until

Conley decided to walk out of gay conversion therapy.

June 16, 2004, becomes the final day of Conley's treatment at LIA. He took this sudden decision after Smid pushed him to explain his relationship with his father as part of LIA's program. "You've been hiding what you really feel all week long," he said. "You're angry, but you're not showing it. You're keeping all of it hidden away, but we can see it" (Conley, 2016). This accident happened when Smid and other therapists provoked Conley's feelings to explode hate towards his father. "I wanted to tell the group that there were things I'd never understand about my father. There were things that could never be translated into words. But I loved him." (Conley, 2016). Regarding the sentence, this program tried to let hatred growing up between him and his father. Hence, he decided to brutally scream at that moment and ask his mother to pick him up.

In brief, based on *Boy Erased*, the portrayal of LIA as gay conversion therapy indicates an institutional homophobic attitude. There are so many peculiar programs that do not relate to clients' efforts to switch sexual orientation. The instructor or therapist who works under LIA also did not certify in the specific interconnection fields within sexual orientation. Furthermore, this memoir did not portray physical harassment inside LIA at that time, but there were verbal abuses that hurt the client's mind. According to the data, the suicide case in LIA cannot be considered as an ordinary case. Institutional homophobia unconsciously also affects Conley's faith in his religion. The illogical programs and rules that dictate someone to be heterosexual with verbal abuse is not an ideal institution for the rights of homosexuals in the U.S.

Gay Conversion Therapy as The Paradox of Multiculturalism

The harassment inside gay conversion therapy in the United States did not only happen on Conley. *The Williams Institutes* in 2018 estimates 698,000 homosexuals around 18-59 years old have participated as the clients of gay conversion therapy (Mallory, Brown, & Conron, 2019). Since gay conversion therapy under a religious system had seen homosexuality as both sinner and gender disorder, they argue that gender can be change or fluid (Robison & Spivey, 2007). Whereas homosexuality is a sexual orientation, and it is different from gender. The misconception between gender and sexual orientation justifies gay conversion therapy to change the client's attitude to be more masculine and feminine to prevent and cure homosexuals.

In 2018, *The New York Times* reported ex-client of gay conversion therapy had a traumatic experience. As the Southern Baptist missionaries and bisexual, the unnamed clients joined gay conversion therapy in the 2000s. Being rejected for over two years because of bisexuality painfully drained her/his emotions (Brinton, 2018). *The Guardian* in 2018 also mentioned Mathew Shurka's story, who joined gay conversion therapy when he was 16. Born as a secular Jewish son, his father has spent \$35,000 for five years of gay conversion therapy. He also confirmed that he suffered from depression and tried to commit suicide (Ramaswamy, 2018).

Besides them, there are any other ex-client of gay conversion therapy in the United States. Through *Time*, James Guay explained the practice of gay conversion therapy when he was 16 years old. As a homosexual who was raised in a conservative Christian family, it

was not easy to struggle with his homosexuality. He left the therapy when he was 20 years old and looking for a certified psychologist to cure his memory about gay conversion therapy (Guay, 2014). At first, some people said gay conversion therapy could treat them to be heterosexual, but it turns out otherwise. *Time* announced the founder of gay conversion therapy in South Carolina apologizes to homosexuals and his ex-clients. McKrae Game claimed himself as homosexual in 2019. He admitted this therapy was harmful, and all the advertisements were fake (Gajanan, 2019).

Before McKrae Game publicly declared his homosexuality, the director of Love in Action (LIA) also married his same-sex partner in 2014. Similar to Game, John Smid also points out that gay conversion therapy was not working on his sexuality (Phillips, 2014). Considering those example cases of ex-clients and ex-director of gay conversion therapy in the United States, this therapy should be banned and banished as soon as possible in all States. The physical harassment and verbal abuse towards homosexuals were not proving that the United States protects all men's rights, as written in the *Declaration of Independence*. As a democratic country, the lawmaker absolutely should hear both majority and minority voices before legalizing the rules. However, the existence of gay conversion therapy was not in line with the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2015.

The legalization of same-sex marriage has proved the United States as a democratic country that promised to protect all men's rights to be equal regardless of their sexuality. Ironically, this law is problematic since gay conversion therapy still exists in 32 States. This condition shows that Americans are

not ready to provide homosexuals' rights. Equal rights are relating to minorities' problems. Henceforth, Will Kymlicka formed three types of minorities. The first types are national minorities, poly-ethnic minorities, and new social movement minorities. Homosexuality movement was included in the new social movement. As a multicultural country, Kymlicka mentions that the United States should have toleration, equal recognition, and positive accommodation towards minorities. Multiculturalism is not only about a country that has multicultural diversity, but also about how society interprets diversity as an abundance rather than a threat.

Based on the gay conversion therapy phenomenon, the Americans' toleration of homosexuality is the only paradox. The number of people who support equal rights for homosexuals is contra with the social condition. Previously, *GLAAD* and *Harris Poll* recorded 80% heterosexuals in 2018 supports and tolerated the rights of LGBTIQ (The Harris Poll, 2019). Unfortunately, the number of heterosexuals who support LGBTIQ did not eliminate the oppression. *The Trevor Project* also claimed that 67% of teenagers were persuading to join gay conversion therapy (Paley, 2019). The number of toleration is not automatically erased the stigma of homosexuality as a mental illness that needs to be cured. Hence, the toleration in the United States should continuously be checked, criticized, and questioned to fully and completely protect the rights of the homosexuals.

Nowadays, gay conversion therapy in the United States is mostly standing under a conservative religion. Most of them are under Christianity conservative, including Love in Action (LIA). It was not only Conley who

attempted to commit suicide. *The Trevor Project* also mentioned that 42% of teenagers who had experienced gay conversion therapy were committing suicide (Paley, 2019). Regarding the data, if equal recognition is well served in the United States, the number of suicide cases among homosexuals will decrease. The legalization of same-sex marriage and provide same-sex partners' rights was not enough to stop the discrimination over homosexuals. According to Kymlicka, the second indication of multiculturalism is equal recognition. Similar to toleration, equal recognition must be actively done by the government but also by all society. Henceforth, the United States still lacks equal recognition towards homosexuals based on the gay conversion therapy phenomenon and the number of suicide cases.

Positive accommodation also crucial since the United States consists of a population with different backgrounds of identity. To adequately serve Americans, regardless of their sexuality with positive accommodation, the United States must eliminate harassment in the institutions. It means that the ineffective gay conversion therapy programs and the unlicensed therapists should be checked and evaluated. Suppose the government still cannot banish the practice of gay conversion therapy in entire states. In that case, the government should provide favorable facilities and infrastructure to eliminate mental depression and discrimination towards homosexuals. However, the existence of gay conversion therapy will always exist since society is still glorifying heterosexism.

To understand cultural diversity, the United States should see the diverse as an absolute power, rather than its weakness. It would be easy if the citizen can practice the

meaning of democracy in their daily life. Democracy could lead the United States to be a tremendous multicultural country. Multiculturalism believes that “individuals have legitimate interests in their culture, language, and identity and that public institutions must fairly take those interests into account” (Kymlicka, 2018). In other words, the majority who have more privilege to create the policies should take care of the minority rights. Besides the rights, the citizen also should realize their responsibilities not to disturb someone’s rights. The challenge for the United States is protecting equal rights for minorities in the agile and flexible social conditions.

Another problem for the existence of gay conversion therapy is support from the government. The ambiance of the current political situation in the United States also impacted homosexuals’ mental health. *The Trevor Project* in 2019 reported that 76% of homosexuals teenagers are afraid of discrimination under Trump’s regime (Paley, 2019). Ironically, After Trump used homosexuals to gain a number of votes during the campaign trail, he asks his vice president to attend one of the gay conversion therapy anniversary parties in 2019 (NRB, 2019). On the other hand, it shows homosexuals as the minorities are regularly being targeted in the political situation. The policies to protect homosexuals in the United States is mostly about rules under the paper that justify gay conversion therapy as a treatment to cure.

Moreover, multiculturalism under democracy is supposed to protect the human rights of the homosexuals. Under the name of humanity, the debatable perspective about homosexuality cannot justify discrimination. The society also could not push and provoked

homosexuals to cure their sexual orientation since the programs disobeyed the rights of the homosexuals. Thus, multiculturalism and homosexuals groups should be two-way mutual supports to provide a healthy environment for Americans. Although the United States already declared a national day for homosexuals, such as National LGBT History in October and National LGBT Pride in June (Blumenfeld W. J., 2010), the existence of gay conversion therapy is vital to be erased to protect the rights of the homosexuals. Through toleration, equal recognition, and positive accommodation, gay conversion therapy can be banned and banished in the entire States.

Will Kymlicka's theory of multiculturalism shows that gay conversion therapy is the paradox of multiculturalism. The data shows that gay conversion therapy exists because of not enough toleration, recognition, and positive accommodation for homosexuals in the United States. The discourse about equal rights for homosexuals still needs extra attention since the United States consists of diverse cultures. However, cultural diversity in the United States does not prove the ideal implementation of multiculturalism. According to the existence of gay conversion therapy, multiculturalism in the United States still needs to be reviewed. Equal rights for all citizens should be protected, or the risk of being discriminated against will always haunt minorities in the United States.

CONCLUSION

Life as homosexuals forced Conley to experience various oppressions in his life. Homophobia unconsciously attacks Conley's mental health. The binary terms of normal and abnormal about sexual orientation

automatically decreasing his self-confidence. As the religious son who is afraid of God's punishment, he decided to repress his desire to same-sex, and it impacts his mental. The negative image of homosexuality also impacts his perspective on homosexuals. Henceforth, he rejected the fact that he is homosexual and pretends to be heterosexual, who has a beautiful girlfriend.

The existence of gay conversion therapy vividly portrayed institutional homophobia since this therapy was mostly born under a conservative Christian institution. Verbal abuse was extremely thick in this therapy. Conley disclosed three programs, such as False Image (F.I.), Moral Inventory (MI), and Genogram from a total of twelve programs inside *Boy Erased*. Because of those programs, Conley, who has personal homophobia, get more depression. Rather than healing, this therapy showed ineffective therapy under unlicensed psychologists or someone who is not professional on the homosexuality issue. Those illogical programs indicated LIA as one of gay conversion therapy that is incompatible with handling the problems faced by homosexuals. Furthermore, the verbal abuse that destroyed the client's mental health through gay conversion therapy was causing suicide cases.

Gay conversion therapy, still existed after all States legalized same-sex marriage law in 2015. Unfortunately, same-sex marriage did not prove that all Americans ready to accepts homosexuality as a sexual orientation. The factors that caused gay conversion therapy as the paradox of multiculturalism is the lack of toleration, lack of equal recognition, and the inability to provide positive accommodation for homosexuals. The number of toleration of 2018 is on 80% for the past three years.

However, 67% of teenagers were persuaded to join gay conversion therapy. The existence of gay conversion therapy in 32 States until June 2019 proved that homosexuals' struggle in the United States is not over yet. According to multiculturalism theory, the data in *Boy Erased*, and social condition, gay conversion therapy shows that the United States is not the ideal multicultural country for homosexuals.

Based on history, gay conversion therapy was born because some conservative people did not agree with APA's decision to declassify homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses. The target of gay conversion therapy is mostly teenagers which mentally not stable yet. Moreover, this research elaborates on the connection between the historical context of homosexuality and Garrard Conley's memoir about homosexuality and gay conversion therapy in the United States. The relations among the data are causal, which means the historical context of these issues continues to impact today's condition in the United States. The data of various homophobic attitudes are interchangeable since the root of the problem is the oppression towards homosexuals.

The Revolution Industry 4.0 and globalization expose an excellent chance for the homosexual movement to promote the negative effect of gay conversion therapy both under certified psychologists and under religious groups. Thus, the increasing number of liberal people in the United States could both be a boomerang and an advantage. It is such a dilemma for The United States when gay conversion therapy is banned in the whole States, but the homophobic attitude is still on the root. The United States must review the legacy of discrimination and oppression experienced by homosexuals to get a better

environment. This memoir shows that the existence of gay conversion therapy after the legalization of same-sex marriage is a paradox of multiculturalism in the United States of America.

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