# CAMERON'S SEXUAL IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE MISEDUCATION OF CAMERON POST NOVEL BY EMILY DANFORTH

#### **THESIS**



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#### **ABSTRACT**

Patmagara, D.T. (2021). Cameron's Sexual Identity Formation in The Miseducation of Cameron Post by Emily Danforth. English Department, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Advisor: Dr. Wahju Kusumajanti, M.Hum

Keywords: Homosexual identity formation, sexual identity, homosexual

This study aims to determine the characterization of Cameron, the factors that cause Cameron to be a homosexual, the portrayal of Cameron's homosexuality and the extent to which the stages of Cameron's homosexual development are in accordance with Cass's theory in the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily Danforth. This research has four statement of the problems: 1) how is Cameron Post's characterization described in the novel The Miseducation of Cameron Post. 2) what factors caused Cameron to be homosexual in the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. 3) how Cameron's homosexuality is depicted in the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, and 4) how the development phase of Cameron's homosexual identity occurs in the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*.

This study used descriptive qualitative method. Queer studies are applied to describe and analyze data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, statements, and dialogues that record the main character's thoughts and actions regarding identity issues. To describe Cameron's characterization, the researcher uses the New Criticism Theory. Meanwhile, to analyze the data about Cameron's homosexual identity development, the researcher used the Homosexual Identity Formation theory from Vivienne C. Cass.

The results showed that Cameron was described as a homosexual girl. Cameron's homosexuality is influenced by homosexual friendships, the absence of parents, and homosexual society due to the large number of Lesbians in Cameron's circle. In the development of homosexual identity, Cameron has certainly reached a stage of identity pride.

#### **ABSTRAK**

Patmagara, D.T. (2021). Pembentukan Identitas Seksual Cameron di The Miseducation of Cameron Post oleh Emily Danforth. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Pembimbing: Dr. Wahju Kusumajanti, M.Hum.

Kata Kunci: Pembentukan identitas homoseksual, identitas seksual, homoseksual

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penokohan Cameron, mengetahui faktor-faktor penyebab homoseksualitasnya, penggambaran homoseksual Cameron, serta sejauh mana tahapan perkembangan homoseksual Cameron sesuai dengan teori Cass dalam novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* karya Emily Danforth. Penelitian ini memiliki tiga masalah penelitian: 1) bagaimana Cameron Post dideskripsikan dalam novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. 2) faktor apa yang menyebabkan Cameron menjadi homoseksual dalam novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, 3) bagaimana homoseksual Cameron digambarkan dalam novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* dan 4) bagaimana fase perkembangan identitas homoseksual Cameron dalam novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*.

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Kajian queer diterapkan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis data dalam bentuk kata-kata, frasa, kalimat, pernyataan, dan dialog yang mencatat pemikiran dan tindakan tokoh utama yang berkaitan dengan permasalahan identitas. Untuk menggambarkan karakterisasi Cameron, peneliti menggunakan Teori Kritik Baru. Sedangkan untuk menganalisis data tentang perkembangan identitas homoseksual Cameron, peneliti menggunakan teori pembentukan identitas homoseksual dari Vivienne C. Cass.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Cameron digambarkan sebagai gadis homoseksual. Homoseksualitas Cameron dipengaruhi oleh persahabatan homoseksual, ketidakhadiran orang tua, dan masyarakat homoseksual karena banyaknya lesbian di lingkungan Cameron. Dalam perkembangan identitas homoseksual, Cameron telah mencapai tahap kebanggaan identitas.

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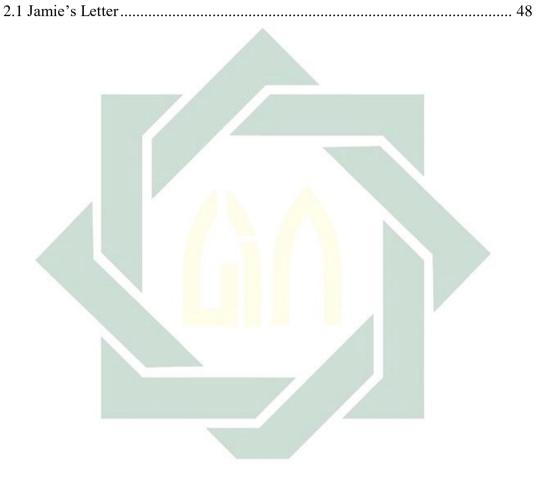
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#### **CHAPTER I**

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the beginning of the thesis, which consists of the background of the study, statement of the problems, scope and limitations, significance of the study, and research method.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

God has created humans with male and female sexes to love each other and have children. Qur'an Said, "And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect." (QS. Ar-Rum: 21). Sexes in humans are followed by characteristics called gender. Nagoshi, Nagoshi, and Brzuzy (2014, p. 3) state that gender is based on a mandatory binary system that links social characteristics with the anatomy of sex. Gender is a belief in humans about who their sexual identity is, whether they are male or female. This belief in sexual identity will lead people to a sense of attraction to their opposite sex. The attraction to the opposite sex is referred to as sexual orientation. Levay (2011, p. 1) state that sexual orientation relates to the sex of a person's chosen sex partner. Sexual orientation is a trait that influences humans to experience sexual attraction to others. People who have an attraction to the opposite sex are considered straight, and this is called heterosexual (Levay, 2011, p. 5-6). Besides heterosexual orientation, which is the majority in society, there are some people who have different sexual orientations namely homosexual and bisexual. According to Levay (2011, p. 13) Homosexual

means attraction to the same sex, while Bisexual means attraction to both sexes (2011, p. 13). Some of the forms of sexual orientation mentioned above are what is referred to as sexual identity.

Knowing that there are many sexual identities other than heterosexual, it requires guidelines that regulate humans to stay on the path of truth following religious teachings in regulating human sexual roles. This norm is called Heteronormative. Heteronormative can be seen as a reflection of the teachings of Islam. As Allah SWT said in the Qur'an, "You lust after men instead of women! You are certainly transgressors." (Q.S. al-'Araf: 81). Heteronormative beliefs about gender assume that male gender identity and sexual attraction to women are a natural and inevitable gender package (Nagoshi, 2014, p. 4). It is heteronormative following Islamic teachings that humans are created in pairs between men and women. Michel Foucault also said that ideas related to the truth of sex are based on a coherent identity with gender norms in society. (Butler, 1999, p. 23). Heteronormativity exists to protect humans from homosexuals and bisexuals or other sexual identities that are considered to deviate from religious teachings. It causes people with sexual identities such as homosexuals and bisexuals to be difficult to accept by society. Healey (2014, p. 43) state that people who reject homosexuals are generally referred to as homophobes. The term homophobia refers to individual and social prejudices against people who do not conform to heterosexual identity and behavior or do not conform to heteronormative behavior. Healey emphasized that being homophobic is wrong because it denies human rights to homosexuals. Detiknews (2019) reported that a

Semarang police officer was fired due to his deviant sexual orientation. The police officer is suspected to be a homosexual. The police officer felt discriminated against because he was fired on the grounds of his sexual orientation. The case example above proves that the rights of homosexuals have never been considered equal to the majority of heterosexuals.

The rejection of homosexuals is caused by a lack of understanding by the public regarding the definition of homosexual itself. The knowledge gap on this issue makes people view homosexuals negatively. Hence, they then assume that this phenomenon is a bad thing. This rejection makes homosexuals more and more uncomfortable with their situation and blames themselves for their situation. Their efforts to show who they are, are being hampered by feeling inferior. In their growth to become a homosexual, there are several stages of self-identity formation. According to Cass, a psychological theorist, identity formation in homosexuals goes through six phases (1984, p. 147). This phase of identity growth will show how far a person can accept themself as a homosexual, with all the influences and pressures from their environment. According to Balthazart (2012, p. 159) adolescents more often suffer psychologically in recognizing their identity as homosexuals. The growth of sexual identity in a homosexual is significant to study to know the condition of homosexuals so that we can treat them well.

All problems in the world can be reflected in literary work and issues regarding sexual identity in society. It is because literary works also contain life values. Literature can be a medium in conveying one's

feelings. Writing in a literary work involves extraordinary experience, thoughts, and emotion (Bennett & Royle, 2004, p. 35). Literary works can be used as a medium to symbolize and replicate themselves (Bennett & Royle, 2004, p. 12). Literary works can produce a strong identification between readers and characters or between readers and writers (Bennett & Royle, 2004 p. 19). Therefore, literary works can examine various issues from the author's point of view according to the theme raised. One of the themes that can be present in a literary work is the issue of homosexuality. Of course, many writers raise the issue of homosexuality in their literary works, such as *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily Danforth (2012), *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (1982), *City of Night* by John Rechy (1963), *Stone Butch Blues* by Leslie Feinberg (1993), and more. This study uses the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron* by Emily Danforth as the main object of study. It was because the main character in the novel shows the formation of a homosexual identity.

This study applies a queer study focusing on describing the stages of homosexual identity development and the factors that influence homosexual identity. According to Tyson (2006, p. 322) queer theory is based on deconstructive insights and is relevant to the issue of heterosexual identity and issues of gay and lesbian sexual identity. Queer theory also explains that an individual's sexual identity is flexible and can change at any time because sexuality is a dynamic range of desires (p. 335). Therefore, Queer theory will be very suitable to be used in this study

because this study aims to discuss changes and development of the main character's sexual identity. This study also uses new criticism theory as a supporting theory to describe Cameron Post as the main character. At the same time, the theory of Homosexual Identity formation by Vivienne C. Cass is used to find the growth phase of Cameron Post's sexual identity in Emily Danforth's novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. It is because this novel was written by Emily M Danforth, who is a lesbian. In her book, she raises the issue of homosexuality about the growth of a girl's sexual identity.

This study focused on the main character, Cameron Post. The novel talks about Cameron Post's daily life as a teenager who will enter a stage in finding her sexual identity in life. The story begins when twelve-year-old Cameron loses both her parents and lives her life as an orphan. In life, Cameron meets with various new people who shape her sexual identity.

In this study, the researcher has found several previous studies related to the current study. Later, previous studies were used as a reference and guide for obtaining research updates. Several previous studies used novels with the same title as the current research object.

Previous studies include Barbara, Wendy, & Elizabeth (2017), Robert (2014), Putri (2021), and Nanda (2017). None of the above studies addresses the formation of a Homosexual identity. Therefore, this study explores the phases of sexual identity development in homosexual

adolescents. This study is an update to complement previous studies with the same research object.

#### 1.2 Statement of the Problems

- 1. How is Cameron Post's characterization described in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel?
- 2. What factors caused Cameron Post to become a homosexual in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel?
- 3. How is Cameron Post's homosexuality described in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel?
- 4. How does the developmental phase of Cameron's homosexual identity happen in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel?
  From the statement of the problem above, there are four objectives of the study as follows:
- To find the description of Cameron Post's characterization in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel.
- 2. To find out the factors those make Cameron Post a homosexual in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel.
- 3. To describe Cameron Post's homosexuality in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel.
- 4. To describe the development phase of Cameron Post's homosexual identity in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel.

#### 1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the readers and the academic community. The researcher hopes to help provide knowledge about homosexual social issues that are reflected in a literary work. Then, the researcher also hopes that the readers can understand more about how to treat homosexuals well to reduce bad views for homosexuals. In addition, this study is also expected to be a reference for researchers who want to conduct research on the same topic.

#### 1.4 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study is the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily Danforth. The current study is limited to analyzing the characterization of Cameron Post as the main character and the growth of her sexual identity.

#### 1.5 Research Method

#### 1.5.1 Research Design

The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The current study is to illustrate data from Emily Danforth's novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*.

#### 1.5.2 Data Source

This study uses two sources of data, namely primary and secondary. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel is the primary data of this study. At the same time, secondary data are taken from books, articles, journals, and websites related to this study to obtain more valid data.

#### 1.5.3 Data Collection

The researcher used library research to collect the data. Hence, the steps are as follows:

- 1. The researcher read *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel to understand and determine the issue that would be analyzed.
- 2. The researcher interpreted every sentence of *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel using a data table.
- 3. The researcher selected, collected the quotations which shows the main character's description and the main character's homosexual issues in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel.
- 4. The researcher classified the data based on the main character's description, the factor causing the main character's homosexuality, and the main character's homosexual identity formation aspects in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel.
- 5. The researcher collected the other data from articles, journals, and books to support the analysis.

#### 1.5.4 Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data by following the steps as follows:

 The researcher divided the discussion into four parts, i.e., Cameron's characterization, Cameron's homosexual factors, Cameron's homosexual described and Cameron's homosexual identity formation.

- 2. The researcher explained Cameron's characterization using New Criticism theory and Cameron's homosexual identity formation using the homosexual identity formation model by Vivienne C. Cass.
- 3. The researcher interpreted the results of the analysis.
- 4. The researcher concluded the results of the analysis.



#### **CHAPTER II**

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the researcher explains the theories used in this study and previous studies.

#### 2.1 New Criticism

According to Tyson (2006, p. 135) new criticism is an approach in researching a literary work. New criticism making a careful reading of the text of the literary work so that it can find examples of real and specific evidence in the text of the literary work itself to validate the reader's interpretation. It explains that new criticism cannot be separated from close reading methods that allow readers to understand the contents of literary works more concretely.

The new criticism explains that the writers does not always include meaning related to the purpose contained in their work, and sometimes a text in a literary work can have a wider meaning than what the writer himself wishes to convey (p. 136). New criticism concludes that the best way to analyze a literary work is through the text in work itself which, is an intrinsic element rather than paying attention to elements outside the literary text itself, such as the emotions of the writer or reader.

A new criticism theory with a close reading method emphasizes the search for text evidence in researching the literary work's meaning. It supports interpretation in intrinsic elements, such as pictures, symbols, metaphors, poems, meters, points of view, views, characterizations, plots, etc. (p. 137). It means that the intrinsic element is the main focus in interpreting a literary work.

#### 2.1.1 Character and Characterization

Character is an almost inseparable element in a literary work. The character has an important role in the course of a story in a literary work. The story in a literary work always has a conflict to run, and conflict is formed from various perspectives and ideologies of each conflicting character. According to (Bennett & Royle, 2004, p. 60) characters are the object of our curiosity. Characters in literary works often reflect human nature and behavior in general through sympathy and antipathy so that they become part of humanity itself. Because the character reflects humans, the characters in literature also have different personalities like humans in general. Giving nature to a character in a literary work is called characterization.

Characterizations can start from physical depictions to the way characters think and act. According to Baldick (2001, p. 37) characterizations can be done in two ways, namely directly and indirectly. The direct way is by describing through the narrator in the story. At the same time, the indirect way is the depiction of characters through the actions of characters, speech, or physical appearance, which is then concluded by the readers themself. Therefore, characterization is an inseparable element from the character itself.

#### 2.2 Queer Theory

The term queer will always refer to oddities and things that are not straight. This anomaly is related to gender issues and deviant sexual orientation in a person. Hendri Yulius (Vasava Shakti, 2016) argues that queer was initially widely known for the first time in America as an object of ridicule. Homophobia

who disagreed with lewd sexuality used this term to demean gays at the time.

Therefore, the term queer becomes an umbrella for all deviant or deviant sexuality forms, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

Gender identity and sexuality are determined from birth gender and cannot be changed. Existing matrices and cultural norms claim that sexual identities other than heterosexual are considered non-existent (Butler, 1999, p. 23-24). In the realm of knowledge, queer theory studies all kinds of deviations or anti-normative in society, including sexual deviations. The queer theory rejects the idea of a society bound by norms to ideas about gender identity and sexuality.

The queer theory is rooted in the material that gender identity and sexuality are unstable, historically and socially constructed, and not based on gender. Butler said, gender is always an action, even if it is not an action by a subject that can be said to have existed before the action. (1999, p. 33). This understanding is called performative gender. It is based on the understanding that a person's gender is determined through their behavior and sexual orientation. Judith Butler considers the 'performative' construction to be a forced reaffirmation of norms" (Butler, 2011, p. 59). Therefore, queer people oppose norms in society because they think gender can be chosen, not determined by gender norms and gender.

#### 2.3 Sexual Identity

According to Reiter, Queer theory emphasizes that a person's sexual identity is formed by their initial experience in finding a sexual attraction to others. This attraction occurs naturally and without the desire to choose. After

finding their sexual attraction, they will go through various social interactions to develop their sexual orientation identity (Nagoshi et al., 2014, p. 6). This process will lead someone to the identity that fits within them. There are three types of sexual orientation in life, such as Heterosexual, Homosexual, and Bisexual.

#### 2.3.1 Heterosexual

Heterosexuality is the sexual attraction of the opposite sex (Healey, 2014, p. 3). Heterosexuality is believed to be the straightest sexual orientation in society. Following religious teachings, heterosexuality takes a norm to guide humans in choosing a sexual orientation that can be called normal. This norm is called heteronormative. Based on social norms in heteronormative, it has been agreed that heterosexuality is an acceptable sexual orientation in society. Therefore, sexual orientation other than heterosexual is considered deviant and unacceptable.

#### 2.3.2 Homosexual

Homosexuality is a person's sexual orientation in the form of same-sex attraction (Healey, 2014, p. 44). Homosexuality is believed to be a deviant sexual orientation in society. It is because homosexuality is not in line with heteronormative guidelines and is believed to be a major sin because it is not following religious teachings. Homosexuals are difficult to be accepted in heterosexual society, making homosexuals difficult to develop their sexual identity. Therefore, homosexuals have different phases of identity development depending on the surrounding conditions.

#### 2.3.3 Bisexual

Bisexuality is a sexual orientation in sexual attraction to the opposite sex or the same sex (Healey, 2013, p. 44). Bisexuals are also considered deviant because they still have same-sex attraction. As with homosexuals, a bisexual will also be difficult to accept in society. It is because it is still not following religious teachings and heteronormative norms. However, in this study, no bisexual character was found and the research will focus on homosexuality.

#### 2.4 Cass's Model Homosexual Identity Formation

According to Cass, the image of sexual identity in a person can change. The image of a person's sexual identity is heterosexual. However, that image can change to something else like homosexual or bisexual. In its changes, homosexuals often show a stage of transition from heterosexual to homosexual (1984, p. 145). This stage of change is called homosexual identity formation. Cass divides this stage into six stages of development. The phases are Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity Acceptance, Identity Pride, and Identity Synthesis. These six phases will occur sequentially to form a perfect homosexual identity if it ends in the sixth phase.

#### 2.4.1 Identity Confusion

The first phase felt by homosexuals is the phase of confusion. In this phase, a person is faced with where their sexual orientation is going. This confusion is caused by thoughts, feelings, and actions that represent homosexuals

(Cass, 1984, p. 147). Therefore, a homosexual will question their previous heterosexual sexual orientation and fall into confusion.

#### 2.4.2 Identity Comparison

The second phase is called the Identity comparison phase. At this stage, a person has considered himself to be a potential homosexual. This assumption then becomes the fear of being ostracized by the people around them because they are different. This stage allows the person to perceive himself as a homosexual or to deny the possibility. All of that will be influenced by the cognitive strategy and behavior of the person. A person who chooses to be a homosexual will seek contact with other homosexuals, not to feel alienated in a heteronormative society (Cass, 1984, p. 151).

#### 2.4.3 Identity Tolerance

The third phase is called the identity tolerance phase. In this phase, the image of homosexuals has begun to develop, and this is due to association with other homosexuals to meet social, sexual, and emotional needs. However, the desire to socialize is often seen as a need rather than a desire. It shows tolerance and acceptance in accepting one's identity as a homosexual. Association with homosexuals will determine whether a person will be comfortable with a homosexual identity or reject that identity. A homosexual at this stage will show their homosexual identity secretly (Cass, 1984, p. 151).

#### 2.4.4 Identity Acceptance

The fourth phase is called the identity acceptance phase. At this stage, a person begins to accept himself as a homosexual. Interaction with the homosexual community in the previous stage became a medium for learning about the subculture of being a homosexual to create a positive view of the sexual orientation. In this phase, homosexuals can adjust to society by pretending to be heterosexual but still living a homosexual lifestyle in their community. This strategy is used to avoid negative reactions from the surrounding community regarding their homosexuality. The stage will be influenced by how far the perpetrator can accept negative ideas about being a homosexual (Cass, 1984, p. 151-152).

#### 2.4.5 Identity Pride

The fifth phase is called the identity pride phase. In this phase, homosexuals reached a phase where they are proud of their identity as a homosexual and their community. This phase often results in conflicts over the issue of rights to homosexuality among the community. Homosexual perpetrators at this stage begin to blame the bad stigma of society and demand the validity of homosexual equality with heterosexuals. Identity development then becomes dichotomous in this phase. Homosexual perpetrators no longer hide their sexual identity. The developments at a later stage will be influenced by the perpetrator's acceptance of the confrontation's negative reaction. Homosexual who can overcome the dissonance that ensues will proceed to the final phase (Cass, 1984, p. 152).

#### 2.4.6 Identity Synthesis

The last phase in developing sexual orientation identity as a homosexual is called the Identity Synthesis phase. This phase is the most peaceful in the acceptance of identity as a homosexual. Apart from the conflicts that arise in the fifth phase, homosexuals begin to accept and have positive contact with non-homosexuals. It is because the view of self-image by oneself and the view of society has been synthesized into a unified identity that unites private and public aspects, thus creating a stable and peaceful atmosphere (Cass, 1984, p. 152-153).

#### 2.5 Previous Study

The Previous study is used as a reference and guide for the current study to find research updates related to the research object and the same research field.

Therefore, the researcher has found four previous studies with the same research object, namely the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily Danforth.

The first previous study was written by Sindiya Mutiara Putri, a Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta student. Her study is entitled *The Lesbianism Reflected in The Miseducation of Cameron Post Novel (2012): A Feminist Approach (2021).* This study analyzes various aspects of lesbianism and the issues in the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* with a feminist approach. This study found three aspects of lesbianism, namely biological, environmental, and psychological aspects. Then the researcher also set out the issue of preventing the existence of homosexuals. The last finding is the supporting elements of homosexual issues in the novel, such as themes, characters, settings, and plots.

The second previous study is an article written by Barbara Pini, Wendy Keys & Elizabeth Marshal. This study is entitled Queering rurality: reading The Miseducation of Cameron Post geographically (2017). This study explores the geographical aspect of writing the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron* Post by reading the text geographically. This study found three geographic themes. The first is the well-documented heterosexism of rural life. The second theme is that rustic spaces can be quite whimsical. The third theme found is non-existence.

The third previous study is research conducted by Nanda Vidyastria, a State University of Surabaya student. This study is entitled Homosexual Identity in Alex Sanchez's Rainbow Trilogy (2017). This study aims to describe the stages of development of homosexual identity in the three main characters of the Rainbow trilogy using the Cass model, the factors that influence the development of homosexual identity using D'Augelli theory, and the form of violence against homosexuals experienced by the main character using D'Augelli and Rivers theory. As a result, this study found that the three novels describe the development of homosexual identity in Jason and Kyle, including identity confusion, identity comparison, identity acceptance, identity tolerance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. In Nelson, the identifiable stages include only the identity synthesis stage. This study also reveals how the factors of personal subjectivity and action, interactive intimacy, and historical, social connections are related to each other and influence the development of the homosexual identity of the main character. In addition, this study shows various forms of victimization that occur to Jason, Kyle, and Nelson in the form of physical and verbal violence.

The fourth previous study is a journal written by Robert Bittner with the title Hey, I Still Can't See Myself!: The Difficult Positioning of Two-Spirit Identities in YA Literature (2014). This study explores the difficulty of depicting characters with two souls in textual form in two novels, *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily Danforth and *The Dreamer's Legacy* by Celu Amberstone. The study result found that the depiction of characters with two souls apart from gay and lesbian identities was only found in the novel *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. Danforth presents a character named Adam as a character with two souls.

From the four previous studies above, few of them use the same research object as the *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel. However, none of the four previous studies discussed identity sexual identity formation in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel. Judging from the importance of this issue, the researcher decided to analyze The *Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel with the Homosexual model formation theory by Vivienne C. Cass to produce research updates.

#### **CHAPTER III**

#### CAMERON'S SEXUAL IDENTITY FORMATION

This chapter presents a discussion of the data contained in the novel according to the theme of the discussion. The application of Queer theory is used to study changes in sexual identity in the main character. The researcher divides the discussion into four parts based on the formulation of the problems that have been mentioned. The first topic discusses the characterization of Cameron Post's character. This topic is discussed using the New Critique approach. The second topic discusses the causes of Cameron's homosexuality. The third topic deals with Cameron's portrayal of homosexuals. The fourth topic discusses Cameron's homosexual phase with Vivian C. Cass's theory of homosexual identity formation.

#### 3.1 Cameron's Characterization

Cameron Post is the main character in the novel. Cameron is described as a twelve-year-old country girl. Cameron lives in a small town called Miles City with her grandmother and aunt. At the beginning of the story, Cameron just lost her parents in an accident. "The afternoon my parents died, I was out shoplifting with Irene Klauson." (Danforth, 2012, p. 1). Cameron spends her days with her childhood friend Irene Klauson. Her relationship with Irene is so close. But Irene is not a girl with a good personality, and she always incites Cameron to do bad things like stealing. "It's just a pack of gum," she said. Can't you steal it?" (Danforth, 2012, p. 12). One day, Irene invites Cameron to play on her father's ranch. "We were out at the ranch, up in the hayloft, sweaty from helping Mr.

Klauson mend a fence, and we were sharing a bottle of root beer." (Danforth, 2012, p. 4). They both play until Irene challenges Cameron to kiss her. "I bet you wouldn't try to kiss me," she said, not moving her stare for a second." (Danforth, 2012, p. 6). It was the first time Cameron's same-sex attraction was aroused. "But after that kiss, as we leaned against the crates, a yellow jacket swooping and arcing over some spilled pop, Irene kissed me again. And I hadn't dared her to do it, but I was glad that she did." (Danforth, 2012, p. 6). Cameron's characterization will showes a gender deviation which leads to a sexual identity deviation.

#### 3.1.1 Physically Strong Girl

Cameron is described as a strong girl. Some quotations show that Cameron is a strong girl. Cameron's physical strength is illustrated by the quote below.

During one of these clearing sessions we unearthed a dollhouse my father had made for my fifth birthday. As dollhouses go, it was amazing. It was a built-to-scale reproduction of some big old Victorian in San Francisco—according to my dad, it was a famous one on a famous street. The version he built for me was three feet high and a couple of feet wide. It took both Ruth and me, working together, to get it out of the narrow opening of the cluttered storage shed. "Should we put this in the car, take it to St. Vincent's?" Ruth asked after we'd made it through the cobwebbed doorway and were standing together on the lawn, both of us sweating. "It would make some little girl awfully happy." We'd taken carload after carload to that thrift store. "It's mine," I told her, though I wasn't planning on keeping it until right that minute. "My dad made it for me, and I'm not giving it to some stranger." I hoisted it up by its peaked roof and took it into the house, up the stairs to my room, and shut the door. (Danforth, 2012, p. 40)

The quotation above describes Cameron, who has found her old dollhouse.

The dollhouse was a gift from her father. Cameron loved the dollhouse so much

that she insisted on keeping it in her room. A few sentences from the quotation above explains that Cameron is a strong girl. Cameron moved the dollhouse to her room without anyone's help. "I hoisted it up by its peaked roof and took it into the house, up the stairs to my room, and shut the door." (Danforth, 2012, p. 40). Cameron is declared physically strong because the size of the dollhouse that she lifted herself is very large and measures three feet. "The version he built for me was three feet high and a couple of feet wide." (Danforth, 2012, p. 40).

"Retreat means defeat," Coley said, pulling her hair out of her face and lifting her arms for me to help her up, so I did but then backed off again. "I didn't want to hurt you with my advanced physical prowess," I said, all jangly energy. (Danforth, 2012, p. 118)

The quotation above illustrates that when Cameron played with Coley, Cameron said that she had a strong physical strength for a girl. Cameron's statement proves that she is a physically strong girl.

My body wanted to be tense, that's how it planned to keep me alive, by letting me know how serious the cold of this water was, how I needed to get out of it, by refusing to let me get used to it. (Danforth, 2012, p. 332-333)

The quotation above describes Cameron swimming in Quake Lake at night. "I did, however, know better than to feel the cold water with only my toes, then my feet, and to try to slowly, slowly adjust, inch by inch. There wouldn't be any adjusting to this lake on this night: there would be, at best, tolerating it."

(Danforth, 2012, p. 332). Cameron shows how strong she can stand to swim in Quake Lake at night. Then the quotation above shows that Cameron has a passion for making sure that she is strong. Some people, especially a girl like Cameron,

would not dare swim in a lake at night because it was so cold. It is what makes

Cameron portrayed so physically strong.

#### 3.1.2 A Tough Girl

Besides being described as a physically strong girl, Cameron is also described as a mentally tough girl. The quote below will explain Cameron's tough nature.

"Well, you just go on and take this then, okay, hon?" she told me, handing it back without ringing it up. "And you can just call me, even, to come and pick it back up when you're finished. You keep it for as long as you want." "Are you sure?" I asked, unaware that this was the first official time of so many to come when I'd receive the prorated orphan discount. I didn't like it. I didn't want Mrs. Carvell "taking care" of me. (Danforth, 2012, p. 25)

The quotation above describes Cameron, who is trying to rent a video. The death of both Cameron's parents made everyone concerned for Cameron. So, some of them want to pity Cameron. Some people want to pity Cameron, like Mrs. Carvell, who allowed Cameron to rent videos without paying whenever she wanted. However, the quotation above explains that Cameron is unhappy with all the attention people give to her just because she feels sorry for her orphaned self "I didn't like it. "I didn't want Mrs. Carvell "taking care" of me." (Danforth, 2012, p. 25), then Cameron refused the favor given to her by paying for the video. "I couldn't let her do this thing for me. It made me twist up inside." (Danforth, 2012, p. 25). It proves that Cameron is a tough girl and does not want to be pitied.

"Well, I'll go ahead and say that this is strange, isn't it? Awkward is probably the best word." Margot took a long swallow from her drink, letting the ice cubes collide with the lime wedge. "But I am very glad we're doing it." I liked how she said we, and made this dinner something the both of us were doing and not something she

had done wholly for me. It made me feel like an adult. (Danforth, 2012, p. 37)

The quotation above describes Cameron and Margot having dinner at a restaurant. Cameron is so close to Margot and feels comfortable with her. It is because Margot does not think of Cameron as a pathetic orphan girl. Cameron was so happy because Margot's invitation was not something she did for her sake because of the death of her parents. "I liked how she said we, and made this dinner something the both of us were doing and not something she had done wholly for me." (Danforth, 2012, p. 37). This sentence proves that Cameron does not like to be pitied.

#### 3.1.3 Brave Girl

Besides being strong and tough, Cameron is also described as a brave girl. Several quotations that have been found prove this. "Irene once dared me to dive from the old Milwaukee Railroad Bridge. I did, and split my head against a car engine sunk into the black mud of the river. Fourteen stitches—the big ones." (Danforth, 2012, p. 3). The quotation proves that Cameron is a brave girl. Cameron jumped off the bridge just to accept a challenge from Irene. Most girls would not dare to do such a dangerous thing.

#### **3.1.4 Competitive Person**

Cameron is also described as a girl who likes to compete. Cameron has competed since she was in elementary school. She always competes with her childhood friend, Irene.

We tied for top grades in first through sixth. On the Presidential Fitness Tests she beat me at chin-ups and the long jump and I killed her on push-ups, sit-ups, and the fifty-yard dash. She'd win the spelling bee. I'd win the science fair. Irene once dared me to dive from the old Milwaukee Railroad bridge. I did, and split my head against a car engine sunk into the black mud of the river. Fourteen stitches—the big ones. I dared her to saw down the yield sign on Strevell Avenue, one of the last street signs in town with a wooden base. She did. (Danforth, 2012, p. 3)

The quotation above proves that Cameron is a competitive girl, both in academics and doing things like challenges from Irene. Cameron is also described as a reliable swimmer who is relied on by her coach, Ted. "I'd found my rhythm, Ted said. I'd placed at state in all my events, and now Ted was expecting something from me, and that was sort of a scary place to be: in the scope of his expectation." (Danforth, 2012, p. 8-9). Cameron's competitive nature is more visible when she has a swimming match with Lindsey.

That summer Lindsey Lloyd and I traded off for high point in the Intermediate Girls Division at each of the Eastern Montana Federation swim meets. She would beat me by half a stroke on the hundred free, I'd out-touch her on the IM, and then it would come down to the timers comparing their stopwatches each and every hundred butterfly we swam. (Danforth, 2012, p. 57)

The quotation above shows Cameron's competition with her friend Lindsey in a swimming competition. Cameron always shows how the results of her competition with Lindsey. "In our prelim heats, on Saturday, I beat Lindsey's time in every event, even the freestyle." (Danforth, 2012, p. 63). It is enough to prove how happy Cameron is to compete in both academics and sports. The researcher concluded that Cameron is a very competitive girl.

Analysis of Cameron's characterization shows that Cameron is described as a girl who is brave, tough, physically strong, and competitive. Cameron's

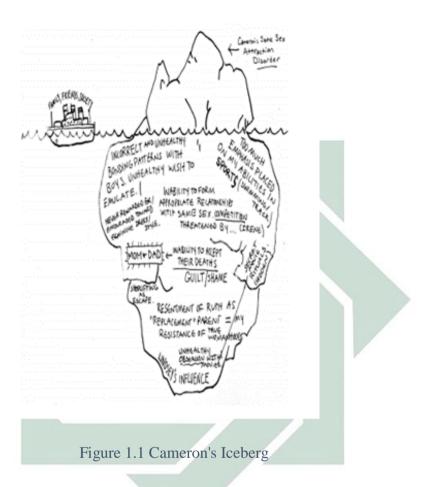
personality analysis shows indications of gender identity deviation in her. When viewed from her nature, Cameron has traits that lead to Masculine gender characteristics, such as independence, aggression, strength, and competitiveness. A girl is usually described as having more feminine traits from a heteronormative point of view, such as sensitivity and passivity because of cultural expectations (Healey, 2014, p. 15). Despite being a girl, Cameron shows a more dominant masculine trait than showing a more feminine self. It is also evidenced by the words of one of her male friends, Jamie "Sometimes when I hang out with you, you're like more guy than I am." (Danforth, 2012, p. 104). In the end, gender deviation can lead to the onset of sexual orientation deviation as well. According to Isnaini (2018) the tendency regarding a person's sexual orientation depends on their sexual behavior, emotional connection or physical attraction to one or both sexes. It evidenced by a quote that shows Cameron's attraction to the same sex in an emotional form, "...the more I fell in love with Coley Taylor." (Danforth, 2012, p. 92). If this were the case, a teenage girl like Cameron would find herself in a sexual identity confusion and turn her into a homosexual.

### 3.2 Cameron's Homosexual Factors

This study finds several factors that cause Cameron's homosexuality in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* novel. Some factors include homosexual friendship, the absence of parents, and the homosexual society. These factors will be discussed in this sub-chapter.

### 3.2.1 The Absence of Parents

The next factor that causes Cameron's homosexuality is the absence of parents. Every growing child will always learn from the experiences around them. The experience they get and the simplest is to see their parents. All parents act as role models for every child. According to Nurhayati and Rosaria (2017), parents are tasked with maintaining, teaching, and understanding appropriate behavior in the surrounding social norms. Their role is important for forming a child's identity, one of which is gender identity and sexual orientation. It is why the role of parents is very important. The researcher found a problem in the role of Cameron's parentsl so that it became a contributing factor to Cameron's homosexuality. "...after my parents' car crashed through a guard rail on the skinny road that climbed the ravine over Quake Lake." (Danforth, 2012, p. 17). The quotation explains that both of Cameron's parents died in an accident en route to the camp at Quake Lake. The death of Cameron's parents became the most influential moment in Cameron's life, especially in the formation of her identity formation. Cameron was said to be twelve years old when her parents died. "She was twelve," I said. "Just like us." (Danforth, 2012, p.12). The existence of parents is needed at Cameron's golden age. The absence of Cameron's parents meant the absence of a role model for Cameron as well. Cameron does not have a role model and experience of affection from someone she cares about. This situation forced Cameron to look for alternatives in seeking affection in other ways. One of them is the affection of a childhood friend Irene who is described as a homosexual girl. It will be a discussion regarding the friendship factor in the cause of homosexuality which will be discussed in the next sub-chapter.



The researcher also found a picture in the novel which shows the image of an Iceberg. This Iceberg drawing is a method used by God's Promise in finding the cause of same-sex attraction through past experiences. The Iceberg image above is courtesy of Cameron. In Cameron's Iceberg, she writes about several factors that are thought to cause same-sex attraction. One of them is an error in parental control. After the death of her parents, Cameron was raised by her aunt Ruth.

Aunt Ruth was my mother's only sibling and my only close relative save Grandma Post. She made her entrance the day after my parents' car crashed through a guard rail on the skinny road that climbed the ravine over Quake Lake. (Danforth, 2012, p. 17)

Aunt Ruth's presence was not well received with Cameron. Their relationship is not very good, and they often fight with each other. In her Iceberg, Cameron writes, "RESENMENT OF RUTH AS "REPLACEMENT"

PARENTS=MY RESISTANCE OF TRUE WOMENHOOD." The sentence shows that Aunt Ruth's disharmony relationship as a guardian (mother) to Cameron makes Cameron doubt the gender identity of a woman. So that then makes gender deviation on Cameron and affects her sexual identity.

I can take some of that blame. I can shoulder it. I saw you turning from God and acting out, unsure of yourself, and I let you go your own way instead of actively helping you to become the woman I know you can be. (Danforth, 2012, p. 238)

The quotation above describes the letter from Aunt Ruth sent to Cameron, who is currently undergoing rehabilitation at God's Promise. Ruth's letter expresses her remorse for not being a good guardian to Cameron. Ruth as Cameron's guardian, cannot be a role model for a true woman in Cameron's life, "...and I let you go your own way instead of actively helping you to become the woman I know you can be." (Danforth, 2012, p. 238). It can be highlighted as a factor in parental control in building a child's sexual identity.

## 3.2.2 Homosexual Friendship

The factor that causes Cameron's homosexuality that is most often found in the novel is friendship. Cameron is often told always to be friends with a lesbian girl. The researcher found several quotations that show the friendship

factor in the cause of Cameron's homosexuality which will be discussed in this sub-chapter.

She looked back at me, dead on, our faces close again. "I bet you wouldn't try to kiss me," she said, not moving her stare for a second. "Is that a real dare?" I asked. She put on her "duh" face and nodded. So I did it right then, before we had to talk about it anymore or Irene's mom called out to us to get ourselves washed up for dinner. (Danforth, 2012, p. 6)

Cameron has allegedly had a same-sex interest since she is nine years old due to biological factors. But the development of her sexual identity began to develop when she entered adolescence. The first thing that aroused her kind of interest returned was her relationship with her childhood friend Irene. As quoted above, Irene was the first person in a novel that fishing Cameron made physical contact with same-sex relations. "I bet you wouldn't try to Kiss Me," She Said, ... " (Danforth, 2012, p. 6). Irene made Cameron kiss her and triggered a sense of interest in fellow kind in her. As a result, Cameron began to get a further curiosity about the feeling. After kissing First of them, Irene continued to affect Cameron, "but do you think we can do it again, though, cam?". "If we're careful," I Said. (Danforth, 2012, P. 7). It explains that interest in Cameron's same-sex is influenced by the friendship factor carried out by Irene.

After her relationship with Irene, the influence of Cameron's same-sex attraction was then carried over by her friend Lindsey. Lindsey is a friend of the swimming team as well as Cameron's rival. Lindsey is described as a lesbian girl. "If I was back in Seattle, I would be at Pride this weekend." (Danforth, 2012, p. 59). Lindsey's sentence explains that she is a Lesbian. Lindsey will go to the Pride event when she arrives in Seattle. Pride is an event that celebrates lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBT) culture. Pride is packaged in the form of parades and festivals started in major city centers to increase visibility, equal rights, and legal protection for LGBT people living in these communities. This event has also been used as a demonstration several times for legal rights such as same-sex marriage, legal protection for spouses and families, anti-discrimination laws, or Tran's rights. Most pride events are held annually, and some around June to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City, a landmark event in the modern LGBT social movement (What is Gay Pride or LGBTQ+ Pride?, 2021). Through Lindsey, Cameron is increasingly mired in same-sex attraction. It is because Lindsey began to introduce homosexual culture to Cameron. Lindsey even asked Cameron to go to Pride. "...But you'd go to Pride with me, wouldn't you? You'd want to go to it. Just say yes." (Danforth, 2012, p. 61). Lindsey always stuffed Cameron with all kinds of lesbian stuff.

True to her word, even before midterms Lindsey had already sent me maybe twenty handwritten notebook pages filled with her observations and current love interests, always in sparkly pen, as well as a busted-up copy of Rubyfruit Jungle, a couple of random issues of The Advocate, and maybe a dozen mix tapes with each song written in a different color on the cardboard liner inside. (Danforth, 2012, p. 80)

The quotation above explains Lindsey sending Lesbian stuff. Lindsey gives Cameron lessons on being a lesbian through her notebook, "...Lindsey had already sent me maybe twenty handwritten notebook pages filled with her observations and current love interests..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 80). In addition, Lindsey also sent a magazine containing lesbian content "...a couple of random issues of The Advocate..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 80). The Advocate is a magazine

about LGBT, printed monthly and obtained by subscription. The Advocate also has a website. Both the magazine and the website have an editorial focus on news, politics, opinion, and arts and entertainment of interest to LGBT people. In addition to magazines, Lindsey also sends stuff like Lesbian genre films.

I had rented it sometime in my first months after knowing Lindsey, but at that point she'd given me so much lesbian-knowledge-building pop-cultural homework that I guess it was one assignment I'd forgotten to mention to her as checked off the list, because she sent it to me, a videotape in the original box with a pink PREVIOUSLY VIEWED MOVIE sticker placed inconsiderately over Catherine/Miriam's face, in a care package that came all the way from Anchorage, Alaska. (Danforth, 2012, p. 147)

The quotation explains that Lindsey sent Cameron a lesbian genre film
"...she sent it to me, a videotape in the original box with a pink PREVIOUSLY
VIEWED MOVIE sticker placed inconsiderately over Catherine/Miriam's face..."
(Danforth, 2012, p. 147). Catherine is an actor in the Lesbian genre film. Lindsey aims to build Cameron's knowledge of Lesbian culture through the film "...at that point she'd given me so much lesbian-knowledge-building pop-cultural homework..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 147). It shows that friendship plays an important role in the formation of sexual identity. As a result of Lindsey always introducing Lesbian culture, Cameron will increasingly believe that she is a Lesbian and comfortable with it.

Cameron even believes that the cause of her homosexuality is related to the influence of Lindsey. It can be seen from Cameron's Iceberg image on figure 1.0. Apart from Lindsey's influence, Cameron's friendship with male friends also influences the formation of her homosexual identity.

Of course we'd gotten to the topic of my unhealthy friendship with Jamie and the guys, what Lydia called my need to inappropriately emulate the reckless behavior of certain teenage males, which was part of my incorrect gender identity. (Danforth, 2012, p. 301)

As explained by Lydia as the chairman of God's Promise, that unhealthy friendship with men make Cameron imitate their masculine behavior, causing Cameron's gender confusion. It affects the change in Cameron's sexual identity.

Then she took a breath and said, "As I was saying, while not all these items are directly related to your sinful behavior, many of them are, or at the very least, they come from your experiences with individuals with whom you have troubled relationships. (Danforth, 2012, p. 310)

The quotation above concludes that the friendship factor can influence the development of a person's sexual identity. Lydia explains that the cause of Cameron's sin of same-sex attraction is the experience of dealing with troubled people. It refers to Irene and Lindsey. Therefore, the researcher concludes that friendship is one of the factors that cause Cameron to become a homosexual.

## 3.2.3 Homosexual Society

The last factor is the societyl factor. This factor is rarely found in the novel but can be related to the previous factor. As explained in the previous subchapter, friendship can affect the development of one's sexual identity. However, it is also influenced by the existing society, whether it is healthy or not. Cameron is said to have always been friends with people who have same-sex interests, whether it's just a coincidence or maybe Danforth wrote it that way on purpose.

Pastor Crawford paused several times during his living-room sermon, for me to add something, or to question, I guess, but I didn't. At some point he said, "I think we can agree that Miles City isn't the best place for you right now, spiritually or otherwise."

And I just couldn't help myself. "What does Miles City have to do with anything?" I asked the floor. "There are too many unhealthy influences here," he answered. (Danforth, 2012, p. 173)

As explained by Pastor Crawford, that the society around Cameron is an unhealthy society "...I think we can agree that Miles City isn't the best place for you right now, spiritually or otherwise..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 173). It is one of the factors that cause Cameron to have unhealthy friendships as well, "...There are too many unhealthy influences here," he answered." (Danforth, 2012, p. 173). As a result, Cameron became a person with a distorted sexual identity.

One of the things that make the society around Cameron unhealthy is that there are so many people with same-sex attractions. The first is Irene Klauson, who is Cameron's childhood friend. "This is how things usually went with Irene and me. It was best friends or sworn enemies with no filler in between. (Danforth, 2012, p. 3). Cameron has been friends since childhood. With a girl who has a same-sex attraction, "Irene had dared me to kiss her." (Danforth, 2012, p. 4). Second, Cameron met a childhood friend of her mother named Margot. "The big thing that happened while Ruth was away was that my mom's friend Margot Keenan paid us a visit." (Danforth, 2012, p. 35). Margot is described as an adult who also has same-sex attraction. "She seemed like she was done, but then she added, "I loved your mom since I met her." (Danforth, 2012, p. 39). Cameron's meeting with Margot, an adult who is considered the same, seems to make Cameron more comfortable accepting that being a homosexual is not wrong. The third is Lindsey, a friend of Cameron's swimming team. She was the one who introduced Cameron to live as a homosexual. The fourth is Mona Harris, who is

Cameron's senior lifeguard "...I asked the senior guards to watch my attempts and offer advice. One of them, Mona Harris—a college sophomore with a gymnast's build and a huge mouth..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 132). Mona Harris is also described as a homosexual girl. "Mona went on, flinging a scoop, trying for nonchalance. "You probably already heard that I dated a girl for a while this year..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 140). The last one is Coley, who is Cameron's schoolmate. "I had biology with her fall semester of freshman year, and Coley didn't huddle at the back table with the other FFAs, though they had saved her a seat." (Danforth, 2012, p. 86). Coley is not a Lesbian girl but a victim of Cameron's Lesbian influence. Even though as a victim, Coley's existence is a factor that makes Cameron a complete homosexual. Coley eventually also became a homosexual because of Cameron.

The society around Cameron is declared an unhealthy society. It is a result of the many homosexual women who exist and are in a relationship with Cameron. This kind of society then affects the friendships in Cameron's life and then becomes a trigger for unhealthy relationships that make Cameron a homosexual.

The causes of Cameron's homosexuality have been described in several sub-chapters above. That Cameron's homosexual development was triggered by several factors such as friendship, the presence of parents, and society. Cameron received treatment from the wrong environment due to lack of parental affection and unhealthy friendships with other homosexual girls. She fell into a deviant sexual orientation and became homosexual. After knowing the factors that cause

Cameron's homosexuality to develop, the next sub-chapter will discuss the depiction of homosexual identity in Cameron.

## 3.3 Cameron's Homosexuality

After analyzing the characterizations based on Cameron's character which refers to masculine, and also the factors that support Cameron to be a homosexual, the researcher then found that Cameron is described as a girl who has same-sex attraction (Lesbian). Some of the data will be discussed below.

It was as perfect a summer night as the one before it. We watched the stars from our place in the barn loft. We blew stolen pink bubbles bigger than our heads. We kissed again. Irene leaned toward me and I knew exactly what she was doing, and we didn't even have to talk about it. (Danforth, 2012, p.16)

The quotation above is described when Cameron and her best friend Irene kiss in a barn loft owned by Irene's father. The sentence in the quotation proves that Cameron feels happy when she kisses Irene. Therefore, Cameron is considered a homosexual character.

I wish I didn't even have a reason to send this card at all. I'm sorry and I love you. She didn't sign her name, but I liked that. I felt flushed when I read what she'd written, and then I read it again and again until I was dizzy with it. I traced my finger over and over the ballpoint I love you, and the whole time I felt ashamed, some sicko who just couldn't stop, even after her parents died. (Danforth, 2012, p.22)

The quotation above explains that Cameron has received a condolence message for the death of her parents from Irene. Irene, who was identified as a homosexual, expressed her love for Cameron. "I'm sorry, and I love you." (Danforth, 2012, p. 22). Cameron's response to these remarks shows feelings of sexual pleasure usually directed at a person of the opposite sex. "I felt flushed

when I read what she'd written, and then I read it again and again until I was dizzy with it." (Danforth, 2012, p. 22). However, Cameron showed those feelings to her same-sex friend. In addition, the sentence "I traced my finger over and over the ballpoint I love you, and the whole time I felt ashamed..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 22) proves that Cameron feels crazy over Irene's words of love. It clearly illustrates that Cameron has same-sex attraction.

Irene's face was bright against the dark of the sky, her eyes all shimmery wet, pieces of her hair blown free from her ponytail. She was beautiful. Everything in me wanted to kiss her, and at the same time it felt like everything in me was sick. (Danforth, 2012, p. 31-32)

Not only does she keep a feeling of love for Irene, but Cameron also has a sexual desire for Irene. The above quotation explains that Cameron wants to kiss Irene "She was beautiful. Everything in me wanted to kiss her ..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 31-32). This sentence proves that Cameron has an interest in same-sex, even sexually.

I would have these moments of jealousy over the tiniest of things—Brett grabbing Coley's hand as we crossed a street or Coley ruffling the back of his head as he drove us somewhere—but for those first months I was mostly content just to be near her and to make her laugh, which was harder to do than with other girls; I had to try harder, which made it more worth it. (Danforth, 2012, p.92)

The quotation above describes the feeling of love for her school friend Coley. The phrase "I would have these moments of jealousy over the tiniest of things—Brett grabbing Coley's hand..." (Danforth, 2012, p.92) explains that Cameron is jealous of Brett, who is Coley's girlfriend. It is because Cameron loves Coley. Then the sentence "... I was mostly content just to be near her and to make her laugh, which was harder to do than with other girls; I had to try harder,

which made it more worth it." (Danforth, 2012, p.92), explaining that Cameron treats Coley as a special girl to her, this also proves her feelings for the same sex.

On the last streets before my house I decided that I would write Coley a letter. I would write her a really long letter and tell her that even if this thing between us was big and scary, we could figure it out because we had to, because it was love and that's what you do when you're in love. (Danforth, 2012, p.170)

The quotation above explains that Cameron will write a love letter to Coley. The sentence "I would write her a really long letter and tell her that even if this thing between us was big and scary, we could figure it out because we had to because it was love and that's what you do when you're in love." (Danforth, 2012, p.170), explains that Cameron loves the same sex. Unlike the same-sex relationship with Irene and Lindsey, which only aims to satisfy sexual desires without feelings. Cameron clearly stated her love for Coley, and it was proof that Cameron's sexual orientation was same-sex.

I could have spent hours just tracing my lips over her perfect skin, feeling the way certain bones made ridges and valleys, smelling her tangerine lotion, the small noises she made when I found certain, unexpectedly pleasurable areas: just below her armpit, these tiny soft hairs at the back of her neck, her collar bone, which jutted out like the thin metal rod and spokes of an umbrella's undercarriage, her heartbeat steady and fast there. (Danforth, 2012, p. 155)

The quotation above explains that Cameron and Coley are having sexual relations. The sentence "I kept on with my exploration, tiny, tiny kisses, just grazing my lips over her breasts, her ribs, her stomach, and Coley pressed and moved against me in encouraging ways." (Danforth, 2012, p.155) explains that Cameron has dared to have more intimate same-sex relationships. From her kiss with Irene, Cameron increasingly dared to have a more intimate sexual

relationship with Lindsey. It proves that Cameron is increasingly convinced of her identity as a homosexual.

The discussion above concludes that Cameron is described as a girl who shows gender deviation towards masculine. With the existence of gender deviation in Cameron, the researcher then analyzed several factors which then led Cameron to homosexual identity. The researcher concluded that Cameron's sexual orientation is homosexual. Some of the quotations above describe some of Cameron's same-sex sexual relationships with some of her friends. Among her friends, Cameron only shows love for Coley. Knowing that Cameron's character is portrayed as a homosexual, the next discussion will discuss the transition of Cameron's sexual identity change from heterosexual to homosexual at certain stages.

## 3.4 Cameron's Homosexual Identity Stages

Cameron has experienced the development of identity formation as a homosexual. In this subchapter, the researchers discuss the extent to which Cameron's homosexual identity development stages are described in the novel. In analyzing the stages of Cameron's homosexual development, the researcher applies the theory of Vivienne Cass.

## 3.4.1 Cameron's Identity Confusion

The first stage in Cameron's development of homosexual identity is marked by the moment when Cameron kisses her best friend Irene in an Irene dad hayloft "There's nothing to know about a kiss like that before you do it."

(Danforth, 2012, p. 6). Sexual contact with Irene creates identity confusion in Cameron.

"Yeah," I said right away, because even though no one had ever told me, specifically, not to kiss a girl before, nobody had to. It was guys and girls who kissed—in our grade, on TV, in the movies, in the world; and that's how it worked: guys and girls. Anything else was something weird. (Danforth, 2012, p. 6)

The quotation shows the first stage of Cameron's identity confusion. Cameron, who had just kissed her best friend Irene, felt that what she had done was wrong. It is contrary to the hetero culture that surrounds her. In addition, Cameron felt physical symptoms after kissing Irene, "It was all action and reaction, the way her lips were salty and she tasted like root beer. "The way I felt sort of dizzy the whole time." (Danforth, 2012, p. 6). Cameron's reaction showed confusion about her sexual identity that she felt dizzy after kissing Irene. However, Cameron did not take long to accept the potential for homosexuality in her. It is caused by one of the biological factors, that Cameron has shown homosexual symptoms since she was nine years old. "But after that kiss, as we swooping and arcing over some leaned against the crates, a yellow jacket spilled pop, Irene kissed me again. And I hadn't dared her to do it, but I was glad that she did." (Danforth, 2012 p. 6). The quotation shows that Cameron accepted the sexual treatment by saying that she was happy Irene kissed her back. According to Cass, in identity confusion, the perpetrator will be faced with choosing to accept their new sexual identity or ignore it. If the perpetrator accepts their new sexual identity, they will enter the next stage (Cass, 1984, p. 150).

According to the quotation, Cameron has accepted her potential new sexual identity, so she will continue to develop her homosexual sexual identity.

# 3.4.2 Cameron's Identity Comparison

At the identity confusion stage, Cameron has shown a positive and comfortable response to her homosexual identity. It caused her to enter the second stage, namely Identity comparison. According to Cass, the perpetrator accepted potential to be homosexual in this stage and turned to fear of being ostracized by the Hetero community. People who have accepted the potential to be homosexual then try to study homosexuals themselves—looking for justifications to feel comfortable with their homosexual identity. Cass also explains that one approach to solving this problem is to look for other homosexuals to get more information about being a homosexual (1984, p. 151). The researcher found a different case with Cameron. Cameron is never depicted looking to some homosexual person or the homosexual community to get homosexual knowledge. Cameron is more often familiar with homosexuals through homosexual movies. Before that, Cameron also sought justification through the Bible to get clarity.

I hadn't ever known exactly what the Bible said about the way that I felt about Irene, the way that I knew I could let myself feel about other girls. I had some vague idea that it wasn't too favorable, but I had never sought out the hard evidence. That night of the first Firepower, after I got home, I went to my room, put on Fatal Attraction as my background movie, and searched out homosexuality under the handy Topics to Consider contents inside the front cover. I underlined passages from Romans and Corinthians. I read all about Sodom and Gomorrah, had questions about the nature of brimstone. Though what seemed to me the most specifically damning passage, Leviticus 18:22, only mentioned male homosexuality (when a man lies with a man, this is an abomination), this didn't actually make me feel any better. I read

that line probably ten times. Things seemed clear enough. (Danforth, 2012, p. 49)

Through the quotation above, Cameron is explains to have tried to find information about homosexual identity through stories in the Bible such as Sodom and Gomorrah. She found that the Bible only describes the opposition to homosexuality as applicable only to men and men. Therefore, Cameron is increasingly getting justified for her identity as a Lesbian. Apart from the Bible, Cameron is also described as seeking knowledge of homosexuals through various movies.

I watched Mariel Hemingway kiss Patrice Donnelly in Personal Best. I watched them do more than kiss. I rewound that scene and watched it again and again until I was afraid the tape might break, and handing a broken tape of that movie to Nate Bovee, trying to explain it while he smiled his smile, would have been unbearable. (Danforth, 2012, p. 33)

The quotation above explains that Cameron had watched lesbian movies to seek information about the relationship in homosexual culture. A movie is a place of learning about homosexuals for Cameron. Cameron did her learning secretly. It was because she was afraid that people around her would know that she had the potential to be homosexual, "Nate didn't say anything about it the next time that I rented, so I was hopeful that he'd forgotten about it. I was hopeful, but I wasn't stupid enough to try renting it again, even though I wanted to." (Danforth, 2012, p. 33). The sentence shows Cameron's caution in doing homosexual things, such as renting gay movies. Cass also explains that in this second stage, the perpetrator could not show their homosexual identity to everyone (1984, p. 151). That is why Cameron tries to act like a hetero in front of the people around her.

She played the role of the server and stayed, with Grandma, in the kitchen and breakfast nook during the bulk of the pre-prom meal, entering the dining room only to refill our wine glasses with sparkling grape juice and snap photos of us eating our frites. But she was sort of sweet about the whole thing and obviously genuinely happy to have the four of us there, me behaving like her vision of a typical teenage girl. (Danforth, 2012, p. 101)

The quotation above shows that Cameron acts like a normal girl in front of Ruth's aunt and keeps her homosexual identity a secret. Cameron tried to comply with Coley's request to go to prom night with Jamie, albeit with a heavy heart. "Jamie will go with you if you ask him, even if he doesn't really want to." "Coley, I don't really want to." (Danforth, 2012, p. 96). Although uncomfortable with this, Cameron still tries to act normal and accepts Coley's invitation to go out with Jamie.

In addition to seeking information through homosexual genre movies,

Cameron is also accidentally meeting a lesbian girl. This girl is Lindsey,

Cameron's swim teammate. "That summer Lindsey Lloyd and I traded off for high
point in the Intermediate Girls Division at each of the Eastern Montana Federation
swim meets." (Danforth, 2012, p. 57). Her meeting with Lindsey is coincidental,
and Cameron doesn't even know that Lindsey is also a Lesbian. "Don't be mad at
me," she said, her voice quiet and much less Lindsey than usual. "It's Gay Pride."

(Danforth, 2012, p. 60). Lindsey's presence is a determining factor for Cameron to
enter the next stage. With Lindsey, Cameron can easily learn about the life of
being a homosexual.

## 3.4.3 Cameron's Identity Tolerance

After finding a Lesbian friend, Cameron was declared to be in the Identity Tolerance stage. At this stage, the perpetrator begins to accept themself as homosexual. As a result of the homosexual self-image that is getting stronger in them, at this stage, the perpetrator begins to need homosexual treatment such as socially, sexually, and emotionally. It makes it necessary for the perpetrator to have contact with other homosexuals. Relationships with other homosexuals will affect the response the perpetrator will show. Homosexual friends will be role models to lead the life of being a homosexual. The perpetrator will show a response in the relationship, and if the response is positive, the perpetrator will enter the next stage. Meanwhile, if it shows a negative response, the perpetrator can potentially return to their old sexual identity (Cass, 1984, p. 151). Cameron's third stage is illustrated in her moment of relationship with Lindsey.

"Prom is an antiquated institution that reinforces outdated gender roles and bourgeois dating rituals. It's worse than cliché". Thanks for remembering to always make every moment a teaching moment," I said. "Well, I'm fucking sorry that I have to, but this is not healthy progress for a dyke in training. Pining after straight girls—straight girls who are, by the way, in happy relationships with good-looking straight boys—when you live in a town filled with angry, Bible-pounding, probably gun-toting cowboys is a total no-win." (Danforth, 2012, p. 99-100)

The quotation describes Lindsey's teaching about being a Lesbian. Lindsey is against the concept of a prom night made for hetero. Lindsey also said that going to the prom is not good for Cameron, who is training to become a lesbian girl. The above quote proves that Cameron has received social treatment from other lesbians. This social treatment is intended in the form of friendship and

communication of the teachings of homosexuals that Lindsey gave to Cameron. Cameron's response to Lindsey's treatment has been positive. It is because Cameron is grateful for Lindsey's guidance. In addition, Lindsey is Cameron's only link to the lesbian world "...she was still my one and only connection to authentic, real-life, not-in-the-movies lesbianism..." (Danforth, 2012, p. 99).

In addition to getting social treatment such as friendship and good communication, Cameron is also described as getting sexual treatment from Lindsey.

Lindsey was the expert, and I let her lead me, her mouth hot and her lips frosted with sparkly orange-flavored lip gloss. She pulled off my tank top in a couple of jerky moves and took off her own Tshirt even faster. Her skin was warm and smooth on mine. Her hands pulling me into her until there was no space between us at all. She had me pressed up against the wall, a light switch indenting my back, her wet mouth everywhere, when she pulled away. "I've never really done anything more than this," she said. "What?" I was breathing hard, my body wanting in a way that it never had before, in a way that I didn't know it could. "I mean, I've done this lying down or whatever, but this is it," she said. "Okay," I said, reaching out to pull her back. "Is that okay?" she asked. "Yeah," I told her, because it was. It was plenty. (Danforth, 2012, p.67-68)

The quotation above explains that Cameron had sex with Lindsey, "She pulled off my tank top in a couple of jerky moves and took off her own T-shirt even faster. Her skin was warm and smooth on mine. Her hands pulled me into her until there was no space between us at all. She had me pressed up against the wall, a light switch indenting my back, her wet mouth everywhere, when she pulled away." (Danforth, 2012, p. 68). The sentence explains that Cameron began to have a more intimate same-sex relationship. Cameron and Lindsey are seen kissing passionately until their bodies stick together naked. Then Cameron again

showed a response to her sexual desire. "I was breathing hard, my body wanting in a way that it never had before, in a way that I didn't know it could." (Danforth, 2012, p. 68). The sentence explains that Cameron's body naturally enjoys sexual treatment from Lindsey. The quote above proves that Cameron has received sexual treatment from Lindsey and positively responded to it.

Despite having a sexual relationship with Lindsey, Cameron did not get emotional treatment. Cameron has sex without any love for Lindsey. They satisfy each other's sexual desires "...I hadn't really fallen in love with Lindsey, and she hadn't with me; but we were okay with that, and liked each other maybe more for it." (Danforth, 2012, p. 69). Therefore, Cameron seeks such emotional treatment from other girls. Cameron is described as having feelings for Coley "...the more I fell in love with Coley Taylor." (Danforth, 2012, p. 92). However, Coley is not a homosexual, so Cameron had a strong desire to make Coley a homosexual.

I turned around and found her face, and her mouth was already waiting like a question. I'm not gonna make it out to be something that it wasn't: It was perfect—Coley's soft lips against the bite of the liquor and sugary Coke still on our tongues. She did more than just not stop me. She kissed me back. (Danforth, 2012, p. 123)

The quotation above explains that Coley eventually became a Lesbian like Cameron. It certainly benefits Cameron because she finally gets emotional treatment from her beloved Coley. The researcher concludes that Cameron has got the things she needs in stage identity tolerance, such as social, sexual, and emotional treatment from another lesbian. Cameron also showed a lot of positive responses to it. Therefore, Cameron is declared to be able to go to the next stage.

## 3.4.4 Cameron's Identity Acceptance

Cameron has found comfort in her homosexual identity. It is because of the good treatment she received from her homosexual friends. Therefore, Cameron entered the Identity Acceptance stage. At this stage, the perpetrator is declared to have fully accepted themself as a homosexual. The perpetrator's evidence is they are starting to open up their new identities to those closest to them. Increased contact with other homosexuals encourages a positive view of homosexual identity (Cass, 1984, p. 151-152). Cameron's stage of identity acceptance is illustrated when her homosexual identity is known by her close friend Jamie.

"What do I know?" "About me." "What about you?" His voice was only sort of teasing. "Why do you have to be such an asshole about this?" "Because what do I know, really? I know that you and that girl Lindsey are still pretty fuckin' chummy and she had the look about her. So that I know." "What look?" I asked, finding his face. "The dyke look.Fuck." (Danforth, 2012, p. 102)

The quotation explains that Cameron's homosexual identity had been revealed by her best friend, Jamie. Jamie learns of Cameron's homosexual identity through Cameron's attitude towards other girls. Cameron didn't even defend and lied that she was still hetero. Cameron prefers to admit that she has become a homosexual. It indicates that Cameron has reached the stage of acceptance of her identity as a homosexual because she began to open up to her close friends about her homosexual identity.



Figure 2.1 Jamie's Letter

The picture above is a letter from Jamie addressed to Cameron. The letter contained Jamie's acceptance of Cameron's homosexual identity. From the sentence "I NEVER TOLD YOU (ON PURPOSE) THAT MY UNCLE TIM IS GAY OR WHATEVER. MY MOM IS ALL PRAYING FOR HIM BUT WHEN I SEE HIM AT FAMILY SHIT HE'S DOPE. I MEAN HE'S NO PUSSY AND HE HAS A KICK-ASS HARLEY. I WON'T TELL ANYBODY ABOUT YOU, TRUST ME ON THAT ONE. YOU CAN." The researcher concluded that Jamie could accept Cameron easily because his uncle was also a homosexual, and he could accept him. Jamie also promised not to reveal Cameron's homosexual identity. It signifies acceptance and a positive response from Cameron's close friend. It is what makes Cameron more comfortable with her new identity. With the comfort and positivity given, Cameron has the potential to go to the next stage, namely identity pride.

## 3.4.5 Cameron's Identity Pride

After going through the identity acceptance stage, Cameron has the potential to be able to proceed to the Pride identity stage. In this stage, homosexuals will think that their identity is not something wrong and should be isolated. It makes some homosexual communities open their mouths to the issue of the alienation of their people. It shows that homosexuals at this stage are so proud of their sexual identity that they want to defend the truth and social equality and the rights of their people in society. Homosexuals at this stage often cause conflict in the community (Cass, 1984, p. 152). It is due to the magnitude of the feud between homosexuals and existing heteronormative. In this stage, the possibility of returning to a heterosexual identity is very slight because the perpetrators have believed that the path they chose was right and worth fighting for.

Cameron is told that her family discovered her homosexual identity.

Cameron's family, who could not accept this fact, then sent Cameron to a rehabilitation center for homosexuals, namely God's Promise "Ruth would drive me to the God's Promise Christian Discipleship Program the following Friday."

(Danforth, 2012, p. 174). In God's Promise, Cameron is found with various heteronormative treatments that confront her with a conflict about her homosexual identity. The researcher illustrates God's Promise as a form of heteronormative itself. "We help teens come to Christ, or in some cases come back to Christ, and develop the kind of relationship with him that you all are working on." (Danforth,

2012, p. 142). God's Promise vision aims to return a homosexual teenager to pure hetero as the teachings of God.

Based on this vision, the treatment given by God's Promise seeks to bind its disciples with heteronormative habits. This treatment shows whether Cameron has reached the identity pride stage. The researcher found that Cameron at times showed displeasure with the treatment given by God's Promise and showed a refusal to recover from her homosexuality.

"It will be hard work," Lydia said. "You'll have to confront things I'm sure that you'd rather not face. One of the most important first steps is for you to stop thinking of yourself as a homosexual. There's no such thing. Don't make your sin special." (Danforth, 2012, p. 207)

The quotation above explains one of the God's Promise rehabilitation methods called one-on-one sessions, which Lydia carried out as the principal. Lydia asks Cameron not to consider her as a homosexual. As a hetero, Lydia considers homosexuality not a sexual identity but a form of a big sin. The researcher found Cameron's negative response to the rehabilitation given to her. The various kinds of rejection reactions illustrate the negative response that a teenager can describe. "Lindsey in my head said, Funny—my sin seems pretty fucking special considering that you've built an entire treatment facility to deal with it." (Danforth, 2012, p. 207). The quotation proves that Cameron doesn't respond well to Lydia's words but thinks about bad things. Cameron thinks that her sin as a homosexual is something special. It is because Cameron has completely become a homosexual and is proud of it.

All the "support sessions" were designed to make you realize that your past was not the right past, that if you'd had a different one, a

better one, the correct version, you wouldn't have even needed to come to Promise in the first place. I told myself that I didn't believe any of that shit, but there it was, repeated to me day after day after day. (Danforth, 2012, p. 224)

The quotation above describes God's promise method, which asks

Cameron to forget her past to avoid homosexual experiences and belief in her

identity. However, Cameron chose to ignore the treatment. It is also a testament to

Cameron's pride in her identity.

I knew they were just doing what we always did, making a joke out of everything because it sucked to be here and we didn't want any part of it and why not just laugh everything off because we obviously knew better than any of the assholes running the place, but this time—I don't know, maybe because I'd actually been there and had seen Mark, had seen him lose his shit, had seen him sobbing with his face in the floor—the way we were treating what had happened made me even more annoyed, and I guess sort of angry, too. (Danforth, 2012, p. 266)

The quotation above is the most powerful illustration in presenting Cameron's pride identity. Cameron expressed her anger over the incident to her friend Mark. Cameron scoffs that the staff at God's Promise are assholes. It is because God's Promise imposes heteronormative on their disciples. Cameron also added, "I just told you all about it—the whole fucking purpose of this place is to make us hate ourselves so that we change. We're supposed to hate who we are, despise it." (Danforth, 2012, p. 287). Cameron's sentence asserts that she represents all homosexuals that their sexual identity is a matter of pride that cannot be changed in any way. That's why homosexuals at this stage are very difficult to recover and return to a heterosexual identity.

All forms of conflict and negative responses to God's Promise have made

Cameron come to the stage of identity pride. At this stage, Cameron will have the

potential to continue the development of her homosexual identity at the identity synthesis stage. However, the researcher could not find any evidence that Cameron had reached that stage. It is because Cameron's story is closed by a conflict between herself and God's Promise. Thus, the researcher concludes that Cameron can only reach the stage of identity pride as a homosexual.



# CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

The previous chapter, which discussed Cameron's characterization, showed that Cameron was described as a brave, strong girl and competitive person. Cameron has traits that are often found in men who lean towards masculinity. So, it can be concluded that Cameron has a gender deviation. Therefore, Cameron is also described as a masculine girl.

Cameron's homosexuality is caused by various factors, such as homosexual friendships, the absence of parents, and homosexual society. Some of these factors then influenced the development of Cameron's sexual identity towards homosexuals. Cameron is described as having gone through homosexual development from stage one to stage five. Cameron has sexual contact with her childhood friend Irene, which triggers her to enter a stage of Identity confusion. In the Identity comparison stage, Cameron seeks the truth about her homosexual identity through various media. At the stage of identity tolerance, Cameron found a homosexual friend who could be a role model. At the stage of acceptance of identity, Cameron has believed herself to be a homosexual and dared to admit it in front of her friend Jamie. At the stage of identity pride, Cameron has fully defended the dignity of her homosexuals by opposing God's Promise. The researcher concludes through the various discussions above that Cameron is described as a homosexual because of her lack of parental control, a homosexual society, and homosexual relationship. In addition, the researcher found that

Cameron's homosexual identity development stopped at the pride of identity stage because the story ends in Cameron's conflict with God's Promise.



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