



ASSESSING THE HOMOPHILE PROBLEMS USING QUEER THEORY

IN THE GRAVITY OF US BY PHIL STAMPER

S. Abenaya and S. Senthil Kumar

Student, II MA English, Sathyabama institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be university), Chennai-600119

Assistant professor of English, Department of English, Sathyabama institute of Science and Technology (Deemed to be university), Chennai-600119

Correspondence: abenaya240@gmail.com

Abstract

At the early nineties homosexuals are difficult to embrace and considered as the strange one in the society. At present homosexual marriages are legalized and accepted in many parts of the country. People were happily started to accept their feelings and they would rather not to hide their sexual preference to the world. This paper presents the mental conflicts of homosexual peoples and their tormented state in their abnormal relationship. This novel *In the Gravity of us* was written by Phil Stamps. Here author is also a homosexual person, lives with his husband in America. They both are living happily as an example for the homogeneous couples. They have child now. Cal is the primary protagonist of this novel, and the plot revolves around how Cal and his same-gender partner feel about their homophile relationship. By using Queer theory, the author perfectly described the inner conflicts faced the homosexual couples through this novel.

Keywords: Modernity, love, homosexual, depression, first love, space.

A well-known writer in the young adult genre, Phil Stamper is praised for his exploration of LGBTQ+ identity and themes. His highly praised debut book, *"The Gravity of Us,"* depicts a young LGBTQ+ romance against the backdrop of a space mission. *"As Far as You'll Take Me,"* which addresses themes of self-acceptance and

personal development, is another noteworthy piece. Stamper frequently explores themes of relationships, identity, and emotional journeys in his books. He is well-known in the LGBTQ+ community in particular for playing characters that are real and relatable. His books are acclaimed for their inclusivity and representation, which enhances the field of young adult fiction. Stamper draws on his personal experiences and understanding of the challenges that LGBTQ+ youth face to inform his writing. Both readers and critics have given his work positive reviews, demonstrating his ability to connect with a wide range of audiences. In addition to his profession as a writer, Stamper uses his position to promote LGBTQ+ awareness and representation in literature. His books have a powerful emotional impact on readers because of his storytelling, which is renowned for its character-driven narratives and emotional depth. Stamper has gained recognition in the literary world for his contributions to young adult literature, despite not always being acknowledged. Phil Stamper is a dynamic and developing writer who will keep adding new viewpoints and upcoming projects to the field of young adult literature. Stamper's dedication to accurate portrayal and aptitude at capturing the nuances of contemporary adolescence make his work particularly noteworthy.

Queer theory is a type of literary theory that dismantles the traditional assumptions about gender and sexual identities in society. The field is created from sexuality studies and women's studies. Queer theory examines gender and sexuality as socially and culturally constructed concepts. The main goal of queer theory is to challenge the traditional approaches and fight against social inequality. It is a field of critical theory that emerged in the early 1990s. The term has different meanings depending on its use, but it is always associated with the theorization of gender and sexual practices that exist outside of heterosexuality. The queer theory proudly notions that a homogeneous relationship is a common thing like the heterosexual relationship.

Phil Stamper's importance in queer theory is multifaceted and significant, as his contributions to young adult literature provide profound insights into LGBTQ+ identities and experiences. His novels, including "The Gravity of Us" and "As Far as You'll Take Me," are notable for their authentic and diverse portrayals of queer characters, which challenge traditional heteronormative narratives and broaden the scope of LGBTQ+ representation. Stamper's work is closely related to queer theory's core principles, particularly the exploration of identity fluidity and multiplicity. His characters embark on complex journeys of self-discovery and personal growth, reflecting queer theoretical notions of identity as dynamic and evolving rather than fixed or monolithic.

Stamper's focus on queer youth, which addresses the unique challenges and experiences of LGBTQ+ people during adolescence, is one of his most significant contributions. Stamper's depiction of the struggles and triumphs of young queer characters sheds light on how queer identities are formed and expressed during this formative period, adding to the conversation about queer adolescence and its intersection with broader identity factors. This emphasises the importance of age-specific experiences as well as the impact of societal norms on young queer people.

Stamper's novels also explore queer relational dynamics, providing nuanced depictions of queer relationships and emotional experiences. This focus on relational complexity broadens our understanding of queer love and intimacy, challenging simplistic or stereotypical portrayals and aligning with queer theory's emphasis on diverse and authentic relational forms. His storytelling exemplifies the intersectionality of queer identities, demonstrating how various aspects of identity, such as race, class, and gender, interact with and shape queer experiences.

Furthermore, Stamper's commitment to authentic storytelling and representation aligns with queer theory's call for visibility and validation. His work gives a platform to underrepresented voices in the LGBTQ+ community, challenging reductive stereotypes and promoting a more inclusive and comprehensive portrayal of queer lives. Stamper challenges dominant societal norms by giving characters depth and agency, contributing to the deconstruction of normative assumptions about gender and sexuality.

Phil Stamper's significance in queer theory stems from his ability to provide authentic, diverse, and nuanced representations of queer identities and experiences. His work advances queer theoretical discourse by delving into themes such as identity fluidity, relational dynamics, and the unique challenges that queer youth face, all while advocating for greater visibility and inclusion. Stamper's contributions not only enrich the field of young adult literature, but also have a significant impact on cultural and theoretical understandings of queer identity.

Queer theory provides a valuable lens through which to analyse the homophile partnership problems depicted in Phil Stamper's novel "The Gravity of Us". Queer theory, which investigates how societal norms and expectations construct and constrain identities, can be used to better understand the complexities of Cal and Leon's relationship within the larger narrative.

The novel shows how normative expectations regarding gender and sexuality affect same-sex relationships. Cal and Leon's relationship is under intense public scrutiny due to Cal's father's prominent role in the Mars mission. This scrutiny reflects societal norms that frequently scrutinize same-sex relationships, emphasizing how heteronormative standards exacerbate pressures on LGBTQ+ people. The media's intrusive attention not only invades their personal lives, but it also reinforces the notion that their relationship is fundamentally different and subject to public validation or criticism.

Cal's father initially struggles to accept Cal's relationship with Leon, reflecting a broader societal discomfort with non-normative relationships. The tension between maintaining a public image and accepting personal truths exemplifies the conflict between societal expectations and individual identity. The pressure to conform to heteronormative standards can marginalize and complicate acceptance of same-sex relationships, both within families and in society as a whole.

A major idea in queer theory is the negotiation of identity within a limiting social framework, which is shown by Cal's effort to balance his social media persona with his true self. Cal's private life and public persona as an influencer frequently clash, highlighting the difficulties LGBTQ+ people encounter when their private and

public selves diverge. Genuine self-expression can be hampered and maintaining an authentic relationship might be made more difficult by the pressure to maintain a public image that conforms to heteronormative norms. In *The Gravity of Us*, the protagonist's relationship is influenced by societal pressures and familial expectations, highlighting larger challenges that same-sex couples frequently encounter. The novel emphasizes the couple's fight for acceptance as well as the effect of external prejudices on their emotional and relational dynamics. The protagonists struggle to navigate their identities in a world that may not completely welcome their relationship, leading to feelings of isolation and increased stress. The novel also explores the internal conflict of balancing personal wishes with societal expectations, demonstrating how these external constraints can impede communication and emotional connection.

Additionally, queer theory highlights how LGBTQ+ people challenge and defy social norms. The connection between Cal and Leon is an example of resistance to cultural norms, despite the obstacles and demands from outside sources. In the face of hardship, their attempt to uphold their relationship and self-respect illustrates LGBTQ perseverance and the continuous fight for acceptance and authenticity.

Queer theory sheds light on the difficulties that Cal and Leon encounter in *"The Gravity of Us,"* emphasizing the limitations that cultural and familial norms place on their relationship. Through a critique of normative expectations and an emphasis on the value of honesty and perseverance in navigating the intricacies of same-sex partnerships, the novel addresses these topics.

The concept of Queer theory is to dismantle the traditional assumptions about gender and sexual identities. Here Cal also deconstructs his own thoughts about his sexual identity and accepts the fact that he is attracted to Leon, who is also a man.

The Queer theory breaks the gender norms and the societal rules that are allocated to the peoples. This theory was mainly intended to make the peoples come out of these rules to lead a life which is free from everything. Though the theory already stressed about the liberation of LGBTQ community people, still they are hesitating to accept their own self and struggles to engage with it. Cal also hesitates to accept his relationship with Jeremy because he feared and felt guilty about his gender norms. It made him stop his relationship with him. But, when he met Leon, he couldn't resist his feelings towards him and accepted the fact that he is a gay. Leon also accepts Cal's love towards him. Leon's approval of his love created a strong hope in Cal.

In Phil Stamper's novel *The Gravity of Us*, character emotional struggles and wider societal issues are mirrored by personal relationship issues that are deeply intertwined throughout the story. The relationship between Cal and his companion, which acts as a lens through which Stamper examines topics of identity, acceptance, and trust, is central to the book.

Cal's relationship with his partner is characterized by a number of personal problems that reflect bigger societal issues confronting same-sex couples. The pair struggles to navigate their relationship while dealing with external demands and internal fears. Cal's path is defined by his need to reconcile his personal identity with societal standards, as well as his own anxieties of vulnerability and rejection. This tension is worsened by a lack of public acceptance, resulting in additional stress and conflict within the partnership.

The novel digs thoroughly into how personal issues influence interpersonal dynamics. Cal's doubts about his identity, as well as his fear of not being completely accepted by his partner, are major sources of stress. These personal conflicts illustrate the psychological problems that can disrupt love relationships, particularly when public acceptability is not fully achieved. Furthermore, the novel depicts how these inner struggles are not isolated but are influenced by external variables such as family expectations and society attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people.

Stamper's examination of these particular relationship issues emphasizes the emotional depth and complexity of the individuals' situations. By showing the sensitive and often painful parts of Cal's relationship, the novel offers a moving commentary on how personal fears and societal expectations collide, influencing how people connect and communicate with one another. The Gravity of Us's nuanced presentation provides a critical and empathic exploration of the human hardships inherent in same-sex relationships, demonstrating how these challenges are inextricably linked to larger social ones.

Before modernity, many people committed suicide for having feelings towards the same gender person. They do not know the fact that they are a homosexual and are afraid that the society they live in will not accept their relationship. The example for this is the series Until We Meet Again or the Red Thread. In this series, the main leads die one after the other because of the refusal of their parents for their relationship. Later they both reincarnated and the two find each other and get back together is the central concept of the novel.

Life has many problems to deal with so we must dig in our own problems and try to seek answers for them. We should not feel strange for our own identity. Even heterosexual couples have many problems and they all get divorced within no second. We live in such a world and we don't know what the future holds for us. If we love someone truly, we should not seek the sex orientation of the people and should go in the way of what our heart says.

Society will try to dump us even if we don't commit any sin or if we do things on our own. So, we do not have to abide by the unnecessary rules that were only formed to destroy the inner selves of the people. We must feel happy for the people who have accepted their lifelike Leon and Cal. Through this novel, *The Gravity of Us* the author clearly explained that "Queer" is not something strange and abnormal it should be evenly praised and celebrated as of heterosexuality.

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