

Tribhuvan University

Homosexuality in Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love*

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled

Homosexuality in Tom Stoppard's *the Invention of Love*

is original work carried out as a Master's student to submit at the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus accepted to the extent that assistance from Others in the thesis's design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic Expressions are duly acknowledged.

All the sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no Materials with to a sustantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other Degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due Acknowledgement is made in the thesis paper

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Letter of Approval

This Thesis Entitled “Homosexuality in Tom Stoppard’s *The Invention of Love*”
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Abstract

The present research study throws light on the obsessive sexuality of Housman for his class mate in Stoppard's play, *The Invention of Love*. The rigorous morality, suppression and exclusion of gays in that time and other cultural constraints compel Housman to remain silent and subdued. Victorian England, which had strong moral codes, strictly forbade the identities like gays and lesbians to express themselves. The then society was largely intolerant of peripheral sexuality like homosexuality. That is the reason Housman had to suppress his homosexual longing and his desire for social recognition as well as identity in the play. This pang, pathos and pride of Housman are examined in the light of Foucault's insight regarding homosexuality. Additionally Judith Butler Eva Kosovsky's concept about sexual construction is utilized to probe the issue at hand.

The origin of identity gay feelings can be traced down to childhood yet people may not be aware of homosexual feelings until after experiencing heterosexual relationships or marriages. The play revolves around the quest of Housman for his homosexual identity which was not acceptable in the society of that time. He makes an attempt to establish homosexual relation with his mate Moses Jackson with whom he is emotionally and physically attracted. But the society of that time used to accept heterosexual relations only. So, Housman's desire and dream to be with his mate never gets unfulfilled.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Tom Stoppard and British Literary Tradition

Tom Stoppard is one of the major playwrights of the 20th century. He is a Czech-born British playwright and screen writer. He has prolifically written for radio, TV, film and stage, finding prominence with plays such as *Arcadia*, *The Coast of Utopia*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor* and *The Real Things*. His works cover the theme of human rights, censorship and political freedom, often replicating the deeper philosophical thematic of the society. Stoppard has been a key playwright of the British National Theatre and is one of the internationally performed dramatists of his generation. He was knighted in 1997; he is Sir Thomas Stoppard now.

He grew up in Singapore as his father was working in Singapore in 1938. His father got killed there but his mother managed to flee into India with two sons. Stoppard's basic education began in Mount Hermon School in Darjeeling, India where he was known as Tommy Straussler. This is where he "began his journey to become an Englishman [though] his accent in which he occasionally lispes and roll his *r*-sounds, is a frequent reminder of the Czech origin" (Levit 166-68). He went to England in 1946 with his mother and stepfather. There his schooling was done at schools in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. He became a journalist and became theatre critic writing plays for radio and television.

Ira B. Nadal, biographer of Stoppard makes a link between the psychology of the writer to his growing and environment. In his case, the lack of information creates a mysterious cloud over him:

A hidden past supplemented the theme of dislocation initiated by his mother's unwillingness to reveal the family's history. This sense of mystery surrounding his origin, especially likely contributed to another theme of the biography: Stoppard's distrust of history that it is always incomplete leading to his resistance to exposing anything private. Hesitancy in outlining the family's Jewish past was the result of their repeated displacement (21)

The confusion of history and art has shaped his subject matter. Perhaps this confusion may be the reason, Stoppard's subject matter of play are structured around the theme that "ambivalence means survival in [his] universe" (24). It is perfectly true that he is unafraid to deal with subjects that challenge public and common sentiments of people and cultures. So, the subject matter of his works ranges from metaphysics and quantum mechanics to moral philosophy and moon landings.

Tom Stoppard's writings show the profound influence of many varied sources during this time and the remaining years of his life. He found inspiration in other American playwrights. His plays focus on themes like nightmares of socialistic practice, threat of alienation, terror of seclusion, questionable scientific enlightenment, liberating tradition, and progressive transformation of individuals. Colin Sydenham takes Stoppard as the most reliable critic of the then degraded materialistic trend of twentieth century America. Sydenham keenly exposes the power of Stoppard's funny sense of satire. Sydenham makes the following point as the mildly trenchant nature of Stoppard's work Stoppard's concern with philosophical investigation of ideas theme evident in Robinson's observation. However to dwell upon his themes alone is to falsify the effect of his plays,

because Stoppard adds farce to his philosophy that the result is more funny than painful. He develops his ideas through a series of comical confusions, leaving the hero in a bewilderment which is both sad and funny. The characters may suffer from the insufficiency of reason, but the farce makes this very lack a cause for enjoyment. Among Stoppard's principal means of generating both the uncertainty and the laughter is the intermingling of the logical with the absurd: fantastic incidents are made to appear logical, while ordinary and apparently rational occurrences are presented as if they were absurd and inexplicable.

Most of the protagonists in his plays possess just such a capacity for wonder, which distinguishes them from their fellows, even if it is hazardous to their sanity. Stoppard expresses his basic sense of disorder in two ways: directly, by making it the subject of his plays and having his characters talk about and be thwarted by it; and indirectly, in the form of his plays, by a lack of development and coherence in his plots, which are constructed episodically of a chain of arguments and counter-arguments. Stoppard himself sees it as the greatest virtue of his plays that they present a series of conflicting statements made by conflicting characters, and then to play a sort of infinite leap-frog.

This working method produces both the farce and the intellectual fireworks, but it also leads to dramatic thinness, to characters who are personifications of ideas, always subordinate to a conceit. What makes Stoppard's play special is that partly the hero is successful writer with some of the several dramatists' own characteristics. It embraces so many other themes; not least the relativity of the perception and the difficulty of deciding 'what the real thing' actually are in art, life and politics. Stoppard's play is full of a wild,

macabre farce. Farcical elements abound in his works. Two minor figures from Shakespeare's tragedy. They are uncertain of their own identities. They are keenly aware of passing the time flipping coins and playing word-games. They come up against the seemingly inexplicable public events that make up Hamlet. The play nevertheless marked Stoppard out as a highly original voice. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's acceptance of death, in the play by the same name, as a means of discovering their true identities remains emotionally touching.

The subjects of Tom Stoppard's theatre are familiar to much of contemporary literature. He writes of the anxiety and confusion of life, of the helplessness of the individual caught up in forces impervious to reason, of the loss of identity and faith. He discusses in philosophical terms the lack of absolute values, the problem of freedom, the uncertainty of all knowledge and perception. Stoppard's world is implausible and irrational and also full of cruelty and pain. His characters are the victims of accidental calamities which threaten and occasionally destroy them. But to dwell upon his themes alone is to falsify the effect of his plays, for Stoppard adds such farce to his philosophy that the result is more funny than painful. He develops his ideas through a series of comical confusions, leaving the hero in a bewilderment which is both sad and funny. The characters may suffer from the insufficiency of reason, but the farce makes this very lack a cause for enjoyment. Among Stoppard's principal means of generating both the uncertainty and the laughter is the intermingling of the logical with the absurd: fantastic incidents are made to appear logical, while ordinary and apparently rational occurrences are presented as if they were absurd and inexplicable.

Stoppard was simply a detached, apolitical stylist. He was knocked firmly on the head by the two works that followed. One is *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*. It deals with the incarceration in Soviet madhouses of perfectly sane dissidents. It was a witty assault on institutional evil. The other is *Professional Foul*. It was written for television. It showed Stoppard tackling moral and political issues with absolute clarity. It dealt with a Cambridge Professor who visits Prague to see a football match. It delivers a lecture on 'Ethical Fictions as Ethical Foundations' only to find himself confronting the real world of political persecution and learning.

The whole play revolved around a series of antitheses: classicism and romanticism, art and nature, order and chaos, determinism and free will. Stoppard's capacity to touch the heart was even more apparent in *The Invention of Love*. Stoppard increasingly devoted himself to adaptations. His next major play, *Hapgood* enjoyed mixed fortunes. Many found its mixture of quantum physics, espionage melodrama and romantic comedy confusing. Clearly the play was about the absence of fixity in human affairs. *Arcadia* dazzlingly showed Stoppard's return to theatrical form. Two time-periods and worlds were juxtaposed.

No contemporary playwright has been as successful as Tom Stoppard in creating what have been termed serious comedies. Stoppard is a writer capable of inciting admiration, astonishment and baffled bewilderment as well. His plays provide their readers and audience with a rich tapestry of absolutely unique characters and innovative approaches to the art of philosophical comedy and farce. Many literary critics have been using the word "Stoppardian" to describe features of theatre which comprise his original and incomparable style of writing, his comedy and his truly unusual characters. Katherine

K. Kelly writes in a letter to the editor that creation of multiple voices and mixing up his own journalism, history and philosophy, his characters fails to deliver a certain meaning to the readers, always creating an "expertly orchestrated" viewpoints and sometimes failing altogether: " Stoppard who [speaks through] his media interviews about his plays and meaning and Stoppard who speaks through his characters in his plays . . . sound identical, while at other times they sound distinct" (354). However, Guralnick argues that "to give a play precedence over the playwright's personal opinions of the play itself, is fair enough" because we trust the "playwright further than the play" (354). This well-deserved attribute has become a renowned feature in the drama world resulting from Stoppard's ingenious and unconventional writing and the atmosphere he endows his plays with.

Homosexuality and Stoppard's Play

When it comes to homosexuality, sexuality deserves a lucid explanation and analysis. The subject of sex is embedded in human history. In certain cultures, people avoid talking about it and consider it a taboo. In other words, silence has ruled the understanding of sex. For fear of violating the moral conscience, people often choose not to expose their interest in the subject of sex. Michel Foucault once commented that "if sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression" (12). The fear of deviating from the social norm forced people to ambivalently refrain from mentioning sex or sex-related topics. The established law limits people's search for freedom and for the truth. However, talking about sex does not imply concupiscence, nor is it a crime to be judged. In fact, sex should not exist in the shadows because people talk

about it more than anything else, whether unconsciously or intentionally. Sex is part of people's lives and they need to learn to embrace it as they chastise the archaic order. Not only is sex a matter of sensation and pleasure, it also indicates truth. The nineteenth century was an age of various possibilities. Arbitrary truth was under scrutiny. Since sex had awakened from its repression, denouncing hypocrisy of sex as a taboo was the pivot when people started to deal with sex issues. To exploit its secret, people needed to understand it. As mentioned earlier, the future and fortune of a country relies on people's demeanor toward sex. Sex does not exist in one form but is perceived heterogeneously. In addition to the dispersion of sexualities, homosexuality simply happens to be one form that acts against the established law while representing heterogeneity. Foucault further develops argument in the book *History of Sexuality* that "homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul" (2).

Michel Foucault's original idea regarding same sex attraction is very relevant in this study. From the angle of Foucauldian stand on same sex attraction, it is useful to examine the idea the protagonist's homosexual quest. Foucault's notion of normalcy as a construct with regard to any thing is basically relevant in this study. The idea of normalcy as "a discursive construct of time and culture work" (87) is the theoretical fulcrum of this thesis. Similarly Foucault's idea of same sex attraction which was quite flourishing in ancient pagan society is crucial in this study. Foucault, in contrast, insisted that "the category of the homosexual grew out of a particular context in the 1870s and that, like sexuality generally; it must be viewed as a constructed category of knowledge rather than as a discovered identity" (76).

In terms of sexuality, homosexuality should not be excluded, as the issue of sexuality should not be neglected. Sexual sensibility constitutes homosexuality; in other words, masculinity and femininity can co-exist as inverted characteristics that determine a man's sexuality. This echoes Foucault's definition of androgyny when he tried to prove the existence of homosexuality as one species in the age of multiplication.

Homosexuality should not be considered an indiscretion, but is the "means of access both to life of the body and the life of the species" (4). The more people choose to ignore the existence of homosexuality, the more unexpected vagaries people conjure up to delve into the core of its essence. In other words, homosexuality indicates purely human desire. As modern society is perverse, the desire embedded in each individual is systematically constrained because of social conventions and laws. People are forced to become blind and are silenced from expressing their desire. They keep this aphrodisiac desire in the depths of their hearts for fear of moral judgment. Thus, the law of marriage was conceived for governing sex. Through marriage, although sex is still not highlighted, it becomes less of a habitual sin but rather human nature. However, people still cannot avoid exposing themselves to the issue of sex; therefore, they justify their concupiscence as being morally acceptable in the name of marriage. Meanwhile, homosexuality is exclusive as its behavior could not be categorized, not to mention be sanctioned by the law of marriage in the 19th century. Homosexuality, therefore, was denied and considered an abnormal sexual act. Foucault once said that "to deal with sex, power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition," which argues that homosexuality is displaced because of a power struggle" (5). Homosexuality was forced to disappear from the power vortex, but now it should also exist as a form of sexual desire. Power always

comes after desire, and it constrains sex due to the social taboos, so truth is concealed. As an alternative form of sex, homosexuality resists the law of prohibition and demands the revelation of truth. In other words, homosexuality exists as a reverse discourse and requires attention to reveal its legitimacy.

Judith Butler in *Gender Troubles* states "biology is not destiny, which responds to the miscellaneous forms of sex" (39). She argued that sex should not become a mere method of confining the development of gender. As a passive medium, a human body will determine a cultural meaning for itself in order to fit into society. In this regard, homosexuality arises from homogeneous heterosexual and phallic cultural conventions based on its free will and unorthodox demeanor. Homosexuality raises the issue of gender identification. As mentioned earlier, gender cannot be easily defined or referred to as the casual result of sex. In reality, one becomes a man or a woman as the result of a cultural compulsion. Since culture is the combination of linguistic structures and significations, it denotes that multiple identifications construct society, and "the 'unthinkable' is thus fully within culture, but fully excluded from dominant culture" (41). Specifically, gender is a complex issue which shifts at any given juncture in time. One's body acquires its signification by means of interacting with other entities. This interaction results in discourses governed by power relations.

Homosexuality is deprived of its position in the context of power relations. Butler further commented that no one is born with a gender—gender is always acquired. Her meaning is that homosexuality only exists as a term to stabilize a binary opposition to heterosexuality. Power relations force homosexuality to retrieve internally as well as make it repressed and disparaged. Thus, homosexuality becomes an "Other," whose

attached negative definition makes it come to terms with heterosexuality and gradually turns it into a sexual nonidentity. However, homosexuality is not a lack or an Other that can never be possessed or completely understood. What strikes people is not homosexuality itself, but the terror of the unknown that homosexuality engenders. It seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy as a ubiquitous discourse. Being a homosexual has never been easy, even in the 20th century.

Tom Stoppard's iconic character, Housman, in *The Invention of Love* suffers an inner struggle between being honest about his feelings toward Jackson and burying his agony as a gay man in his heart. Housman undergoes three phases, awareness, denial and acceptance, during his lifetime. This paper will focus on these three phases to decode Housman's transformation.

The Invention of Love is based on the lifelong unrequited love of the Victorian poet, Housman for his university mate Moses Jackson. Jackson is a friend of the poet, A.E Housman during his university life when he was seriously committed to develop extraordinary knowledge about classics. On the surface it appears apparently that there is a friendship between Housman and Jackson. Everyone who knows Housman and Jackson are aware of the fact that they are close friends. They are sure and certain that their friendship is selfless, reciprocal and genuine. But this seeming friendship happens to cross limit and takes the form of deep intimacy between two persons involved in the same passion for scholarship in classics. Upon the surface, Jackson and Housman are friends. But the reality is drastically different. To the utter ignorance of Jackson, Housman is homosexually obsessed with Jackson. If Housman was not driven by the same sex attraction to Jackson, he might not have been troubled by the memories of

Jackson even decades after they were separated upon the completion of the university education. Till Housman dies at the age of seventy seven, he is one-sidedly attracted to Jackson. It is entirely problematical to what extent Housman's attraction to Jackson was friendship and to what extent it was homosexually tainted.

In the midst of dramatic monologue, Housman himself says "I have decade-long un-requited love for Jackson (7). This statement alone is enough to assert the claim that he was homosexually obsessed with Jackson and Jackson just knows that he is a close friend of Housman. The play begins with Housman standing on the bank of the river Styx. He is captained by a nervous Charon. Housman begins to remember moments from his life. He remembers starting with his matriculation at Oxford University wherein he studied to achieve scholarship in classical literature. The play unfolds in short scenes that trace Housman's relationship with Moses Jackson, for whom he homosexually develops a lifelong unrequited love. Housman's intellectual growth into a preeminent Latin textual scholar and his friendship coexist with his latent same sex urge to Jackson.

The friendship between Housman and Jackson is entirely problematical as Housman goes on cultivating his lifelong un-recruited love for his friend Jackson. But Jackson does not extend friendship beyond the realm of friendliness. But in a one sided way, Housman goes on developing homosexual obsession producing the impression outwardly that he is the close friend of Jackson. The protagonist, Housman undertakes a quest for homosexual identity as he always feels lonely and alienated in the society which supports only the heterosexuals. This search for homosexual identity takes place under the banner of friendship with Clarkson. Both homosexuality and friendship overlap confusing those who believe in the distinct category of norms regarding human relation.

Housman's lifelong homosexual bonding with Jackson and Jackson's confession that there is just a friendship between them make the friendship versus homosexuality issue striking from research point of view. In name of friendship how homosexual search begins and transform the life of the homosexually obsessed person is the core objective of this research. The overlapping of these two emotions creates area of interest in which the thesis is based. In a society which is biased to homosexuals, the pattern of searching for a homosexual partner is bound to be different from that of the present day society which is increasingly open and acceptable to gay community.

The problem of quest for self in the western tradition has largely been encountered through a philosophical framework. One of Foucault's most provocative assertions are that modern homosexuality is of comparatively recent origin. Many historians of homosexuality had been keen to trace connections and continuities between 20th-century homosexual identities and behaviors and those of earlier periods. Foucault, in contrast, insisted that "the category of the homosexual grew out of a particular context in the 1870s and that, like sexuality generally; it must be viewed as a constructed category of knowledge rather than as a discovered identity" (*The History of Sexuality* 76). Foucault did not suggest that sexual relationships between people of the same sex did not exist before the 19th century.

The playwright's ambivalence about people who pursue knowledge for its own sake perfectly mirrors that of most people; hence his popularity. John Simon is of the view that Tom Stoppard's play is full of elements of opaqueness and obscurity. His attempt to live into the personality of Housman made the playwright completely

disoriented. On this aspect of Stoppard's dramatic pursuit is evident in John Simon's understanding of his literary trend. He remarks:

The Invention of Love is Tom Stoppard's most literary play yet. Ostensibly, it is about A. E. Housman's unrequited love for the heterosexual Moses Jackson, and about Housman's more nearly fulfilled passion for scholarship. Also about how the pessimistic poet of *The Shropshire Lad* coexisted in the same man with the fanatically finicky editor of Latin texts and scourge of other editors past and present. But it is mostly about Tom Stoppard's wit, erudition, gift for persiflage, ability to bone up on any subject, dramatic flair. (1-2)

Foucault's main idea on homosexuality which is expressed in *The History of Sexuality* is instrumental in analyzing the one sided same sex attraction of Housman to Clarkson in the text, *The Invention of Love*. The insight regarding homosexuality is apt to examine the failed homosexual identity which Housman longs for. "If homosexuality is", as Foucault asserted, "a cultural product, then what is heterosexuality? And why is it viewed as the natural, normal sexuality? Why is Western society governed by what queer theorists have called 'heteronormativity?'" (67). Sexuality is a cultural product that cannot be regarded as a simple extension of a biological process.

commented that "A.E. Housman's inability to face up to and to act upon his true sexual nature brands him as indelibly Victorian," which explains why Housman forfeits sexual assertiveness and fidelity to himself (8). He feels confined by the conventional law which prevents a man from showing feelings to another man. Housman himself also admits "My life was marked by long silences" (7). This reconfirms his fear of violating the taboo, so he constructs his existence by means of repression and self-denial. His repressed feeling finds no outlet, but relies on classical literature concerning love of comrades as a way of escaping from the exposure of his true identity.

The title of this play, *The Invention of Love*, corresponds to homosexual love as, on the one hand, it is not approved by society; on the other hand, this type of love should be invented out of the fixed form of love that people are familiar with and acknowledge. Homosexuality needs to find a way out of the predetermined destiny of how a man loves a woman so as to lead to a happy ending. This play suggests that people need to invent themselves through the act of love in order to invent the object whom they love. On some level, because of his repression, Housman "internalized society's judge, converting his own guilt and shame into abject denial" (8). It is never about whether Jackson accepts Housman's homosexual love, but about his emotional anxiety from his denial of being a homosexual. Sadly, Housman only expresses his romantic sensibility through poetry; as a man in love with another man, he fails to come out of the closet.

In *The Epistemology of Closet* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, argues that identity in gender terms have been defined by set and closed norms, like closet: "the closet is the defining structure for gay oppression in this century," which means the image of the closet is initiated by the speech of silence (9). Set as a confinement, the closet becomes a

even multiple ones when replying "Alfred Housman is my name. My friends call me Housman. My enemies call me Professor Housman" (2). In his afterlife, he finally emancipates himself from the shackles of social order and embraces his homosexuality. This introduces the initiation of how he transforms from a man refusing to accept his homosexuality to one who loves who he really is. When he studies at Oxford, Housman feels confined by the social law that condemns homosexuality as a religious profanation and an amorous equivocation. Although he knows he loves Jackson, Housman could not boldly express his feelings for fear of the public intolerance.

The power of heterosexuality dominates society. So, Houseman cages himself in his own world and turns into "a figure haunted by grief, grief resulting from his hopeless love for his athletic friend," Stoppard understands the intellectual and emotional pains this world causes to repudiate any form of abnormal sexuality. It, of course, makes sense that Housman relates his pain to the intolerance of homosexuality and his renunciation of his homosexual love. The more Housman tries to ignore his inner voice of falling in love with Jackson, the more agony and suffering he sustains. Though knowing his love to Jackson is beyond friendship, Housman intends to avoid the issue of homosexuality by justifying his love as a form of brotherhood but he fails to do so as it was innate sexual orientation which was impossible for him to avoid as he wished. When the young Housman meets the dead Housman, he shares with him his interest in the stories of Theseus and Pirithous, and Achilles and Patroclus to claim that he is not a gay man. The young man believes that his love of Jackson shares some similarities with that among those heroes and he does not understand why he cannot show his real affection for Jackson and why people do not try to understand him. This is the very first time that the

young Housman is aware of his love for a man. The young Housman even asks "was there ever a love like the love of comrades ready to lay down their lives for each other "to exemplify that his love is not a homosexual act" (7). He further explains:

Theseus and Pirithous. They were kings. They met on the field of battle to fight to the death, but when they saw each other, each was struck in admiration for his adversary, so they became comrades instead and had many adventures together They loved each other, as men loved each other in the heroic age, in virtue. (2.76-80)

Housman would not refer his concern for Jackson to a homosexual relationship.

Mentioning the stories of these heroes suggests Housman's awareness of his homosexuality and, at the same time, his denial of it. He has the need to justify his behavior, so he says that he would have died for Jackson but never had the chance to do so. Housman's era does not allow or accept him to commit homosexuality so that "his homosexual desire was accompanied by, and for this perhaps required, this internal differentiation" (12). He knows that his affection for a man cannot be conceived as natural, and the stigma of homosexuality forces him to internalize his real sexual orientation to succumb to an oppressive discourse of heterosexuality. Talking about these two kings helps Housman to unlock his doubts about violating the social order. By doing so, he gains a sense of security to protect his secret of loving Jackson from being exposed to public castigation and being scrutinized by the public. After the first phase of recognizing his love for Jackson, Housman moves to his second phase of denying his homosexuality. When he mentions Theseus and Pirithous, he in fact acknowledges his special feelings for Jackson; meanwhile, for fear of being considered abnormal, he needs

to hide his affection. He refuses to be tagged a gay man after his friends know that he is interested in Greek poems. Under the influence of heterosexual expectations, Housman understands that his interest will force him to step out of his closet because "well, to a Roman, to call something Greek meant . . . sissy like, or effeminate" (7) He denies that his feelings towards Jackson are a form of homosexuality. While he loves Greek poems, Housman strives to avoid the stereotype of any connection between Greek poems and his homosexuality. As a matter of fact, he undergoes a series of inner struggles between being true to himself and hiding in the dark to keep his secret. He seems to forget that "the disclosure of one's inner self and desires does not lead to great self-acknowledgement, but merely imbricates the subject further in a network of disciplinary power relations" (13). Housman forgets that sexuality and power are related and coextensive. Where there is desire, the power relation is submerged. Housman's desire comes from his affection for Jackson, which is considered abnormal and twisted by society. He needs to protect himself from being wrongly recognized as a gay man, and wants to gain the approval of society for his admiration for rather than love of Jackson. Butler argued that "sex is a political and cultural interpretation of the body" (3).

This argument indicates that sex and gender do not have an arbitrary relationship. So, Housman's relationship with Jackson is not a pathological disease that stands for an oppositional status competing with heterosexuality. Under the dominance of the hegemonic order, Housman needs to yield his free will to comply with the social order. Housman admits "I know very well there are things not spoken of foursquare at Oxford. The passion for truth is the faintest of all human passions. In the translation of Tibullus in my college library, the he loved by the poet is turned into a she" (). His confession shows

his subordination to the social order, and it forces him to return to his safety zone. Since homosexuality is a social taboo, he finds no reason to break it. His inwardness prevents him from honestly accepting who he really is. Housman's denial in the second phase starts from the time when Jackson rejects him. Housman makes a hand-made laurel crown to celebrate Jackson's success on the track. However, Jackson refuses the crown and leaves it on the seat, leaving without saying a word or showing any gratitude to Housman. Besides showing his homophobic attitude to homosexuality, Jackson's decision not to accept the crown indicates his rejection of Housman in terms of men's love. This enables Housman to return to his closet without making any indicative move towards Jackson. Although aware of his love for Jackson, Housman has no choice but to deny his real feelings for him for fear of losing him and suffering judgment from society. We then notice that the relationships of homosexuality and heterosexuality are intertwined. As the conversation between Housman and Jackson shows:

JACKSON. The girls were pretty, and the tunes,

it was only the story. HOUSMAN. That whole thing was silly.

JACKSON. Jolly, you said. You don't have to agree with me all the
time.

HOUSMAN. I don't

JACKSON. Well, you do, you know. Hous—you should stick to your own
opinions more. (2.55-59)

This short talk explains that Housman needs to try his best to hide his feelings. In fact, he unconsciously agrees with Jackson in every aspect. When Jackson says, "You don't have to agree with me all the time," it implies that he has already noticed that Housman has a

special feeling for him. Meanwhile, Housman's response, "That whole thing was silly," indicates that he does not like Jackson to focus on women. Besides, when Housman replies "I don't," it can be perceived that he seems to have been caught doing something wrong and feels anxious, so he denies what he just did. Once again, we can see his desire revealed when Housman encounters Jackson. Interacting with Jackson exposes Housman's inner desire long confined by the social order, and he strives to repress it in order not to be found out. However, he seems to forget that "since the unlived life is frequently the object of a desire that remains repressed or at least unfulfilled, the desire will continue to exist, seeking some sort of outlet or expression" (14). In order not to be tagged as "Other," Housman ignores his inner voice but complies with the main stream. Fear of being punished forces him to deny his homosexuality and to internalize his unspeakable affection for a man in his heart. However, Housman should have embraced his true identity in order to liberate his confined soul from the shackles attached by both Jackson and society. What Jackson says at the end of this conversation suggests that Housman should reclaim his own power as an independent discourse free of any judgment and discrimination. In Housman's second phase of denying his homosexuality, Chamberlain, one of his classmates, who admits his homosexual orientation to Housman, is introduced as an oppositional figure against the expectations of society as well as an inspiration to help Housman look at his chaotic life. The Chamberlain's mission is to manifest the existence of a gay man surviving the repressive nature of society and the social censorship. Chamberlain proves his value as a complete discourse, not subordination. He could not endure seeing Housman suffering due to his love for Jackson while he watches him deny his gay identity.

CHAMBERLAIN.

Sit down, you're like a

nervous girl . . . No offence, old chap. I like you more than anyone I know. I even like you for the way you stick to Jackson. But he'll never want what you want. You'll have to find it somewhere else or you'll be unhappy, even unhappier. (2.64-68)

In this short statement, Chamberlain suggests that Housman put himself before anyone else and learn to love himself first. Loving Jackson with fear has made Housman lose his own autonomy. Chamberlain believes that Housman should learn to accept his own identity in order to love other people. He sees Housman suffering because of his homosexual identity and because of his refusal to accept the fact that he loves a man.

Under the dominance of the social order, Housman feels confined, which undermines the importance of his existence as a man who loves another man. As a matter of fact, "homosexuality and heterosexuality mutually define each other" (15). This demonstrates that heterosexual and homosexual desire mutually manifest each other in terms of sexuality. To be frank, both homosexual and heterosexual desires are conceived as a fundamental aspect of the inter-relatedness with other people. With this interaction, the significance of each sexual orientation is highlighted. Homosexuality is no longer repressed, but is juxtaposed, making it as important as heterosexuality in regard to sexuality. People engaging in same-sex relationships are empowered to justify their deviant behavior which is misunderstood by the public. The belief that "to live openly as a lesbian or gay man is to depart from society's predominantly heterosexual expectations" turns into dissidence (16). What Housman lacks is a transgressive aesthetic resolution to acknowledge and respect his deviation from the social order. He should

have stopped denying his affection for a man and come to accept his true identity as a gay man. Chamberlain plays the role of guiding Housman to gradually embrace his gay man identity. As an openly gay man, Chamberlain is fully aware that "telling others about their sexual orientation could change the power dynamics within a particular environment and the relationship they had with the individuals they told" (17). Housman undergoes the suffering between the moral principle and his own conscience. Losing a dynamic stand in society bothers Housman while also jailing him in his own closet. His denial only manifests his craving for the love in Greek love poems like those heroic figures sharing an intimate brotherhood. Housman's inward attitude limits his development to properly express his love to Jackson. Chamberlain sees Housman's agony whenever he faces Jackson.

CHAMBERLIAN.

Nothing which you'd call

indecent, though I don't see what's wrong with it myself. You want to be brothers-in-arms, to have him to yourself . . . to be shipwrecked together, (to) perform valiant deeds to earn his admiration, to save him from certain death, to die for him—to die in his arms, like a Spartan, kissed once on the lips . . . You want him to know what cannot be spoken . . . (2.78-84)

Chamberlain explains that only through accepting his real identity can Housman liberate himself to love. He finds that Housman feels ashamed of his identity and beautifies his love through Greek poems. In other words, Housman lives in his own created world where he believes Jackson will love him back some day like the heroic Greek heroes. However, Housman's ideal love story does not provide him with a perfect ending because

he seems to forget that homosexuality was an inborn trait and posited the existence of a third sex. Therefore, he could not ignore his sexual orientation when expressing his love for Jackson. In his love of Jackson, he sacrifices himself in many ways in order to receive his recognition. Love is not constructed on how much you love the person, but on how that person accepts your true identity.

The more Housman strives to win Jackson's recognition, the more failures he encounters. All dissatisfactions result from the fact that he fails to escape the confinement imposed by the moral social order. Chamberlain's role contributes to Housman's liberation through unmasking the disguised and systematic domination. For fear of being morally scrutinized, Housman maintains his love of Jackson not only in Greek poems but also in his heart. He hopes that Jackson will understand that their friendship is more than what it appears. By introducing those heroic figures, he is meant to find comfort to comply with his homosexuality. Hiding in the closet hinders Housman's free will to openly accept himself as a gay man. Instead of embracing more promiscuous sexuality, Housman "nursed a single, unrequited love for his class mate Moses Jackson" and "poured his stifled ardor into his poetry and scholarship" (19). Apparently, Housman runs away from the truth that would enable him to live a freer life. He chooses to neglect it and to repress his feelings as well. Evidence that shows Housman's denial of his homosexuality comes in the talk with Jackson. The conversation focuses on Jackson's girlfriend Rosa who suspects that Housman has feelings for Jackson.

JACKSON. Rosa said you're sweet on me.

HOUSMAN. What did she mean?

JACKSON. Well, you know.

HOUSMAN. What did you say?

JACKSON. I said it was nonsense. We're chums. We've been chums since Oxford, you me, and Pollard. (2.80-86)

We can see two different ideologies interacting with each other in this short talk. On the one hand, Jackson notices that the way Housman treats him is quite extraordinary, and more than as a friend. When responding, "Well, you know," Jackson seems to imply that he knows about Housman's homosexual affection for him but he cannot confront him for fear of breaking the taboo. Later on, in order not to make the conversation awkward, Jackson immediately confirms his pure friendship with Housman, even by mentioning another friend to assure him that a homosexual relationship will not develop between them. Here, Jackson's reaction corresponds to "heterosexuality as a fear of male homosexuality" (15). The systematic social order not only becomes a threat to homosexuality but also intimates that heterosexuality is involved in any form of relationship. On the other hand, Housman's two consecutive questions suggest that he has been waiting for Jackson's answer regarding whether he will accept his love or not. In fact, Housman does not care what Rosa thinks of him; he is more anxious to see Jackson's reaction to knowing his identity as a gay man. After he hears Jackson's answer, the story has another ending.

JACKSON. She didn't talk about Pollard. You're not, are you, Hous?

HOUSMAN. You're my best friend.

JACKSON. That's what I said, like .

HOUSMAN. Theseus and Pirithous.

JACKSON. The Three Musketeers. (2.94-96)

Housman finally realizes that they are not on the same page. Jackson only likes Housman as a friend, so mentioning the Three Musketeers helps him stop Housman from creating a homosexual relationship from their friendship. The image of the Three Musketeers can represent a real friendship, whereas Housman's two heroic kings imply something more than brotherhood, or bromance.

Housman wants to build up the relationship with Jackson to be like that of the two kings so as to cover up the fact that he is a gay man. When Housman comes to the second phase of denial, he fails to accept his homosexuality. Housman strives to justify his love of Jackson in terms of the stories he learned in the Greek poems, instead of acknowledging his homosexual love of a man. Why Housman denies himself in the second phase originates from a lack of confidence. He spends all his life complying with Jackson as well as regretting his disapproved love of a man. If he cannot love himself, how could he have the right to ask Jackson to love him back, regardless of the fact that Jackson is a straight man? At the very beginning, Stoppard already indicates that Housman will go through three phases in his life as his plot "does allow for moral choice" (1.20). When Housman comes back to meet his young self, it suggests that he finally embraces the truth and accepts his homosexuality. Through many ideological confrontations with Jackson and inner struggle with the social order, although he dies in the end, Housman eventually takes the road that he had previously refused to take as Jackson expresses feeling: "What will become of you?" to which Housman replies that "It has become of me" (2.101-102). Interestingly, the intention of Jackson's question of Housman can be concluded as his concern for Housman as a friend, and as his suspicion

can't accept the happiness" (Foucault 24). When it comes to sexuality, heterosexuality seems to have the privilege of claiming itself to be an authentic love. Love other than this kind is considered transgression and indiscretion. Moreover, Jackson brings up his love for Rosa to prove that heterosexual love is the norm that Housman should be pursuing. Jackson simplifies sexuality by suggesting "men born with feelings of same sex desire, congenital inverts, could easily become diseased through lack of self-control" (44). The suggestion he offers Housman implies that he should control his desire so as not to love or show any affection to a man. Same-sex desire or homosexuality results in an abrogation of self-control. As long as Housman learns to control himself, he could enjoy love as a "normal" man. However, the misconception of heterosexuality maintaining a more sacred love does not make Housman abide by the social order in the end. The title of the play denotes that Housman's love for Jackson will not have a happy ending, especially after Jackson knows that Housman is a gay man.

As mentioned earlier, Jackson uses an arbitrary scope to evaluate Housman's existence and value after the truth is revealed. As a straight man, Jackson defends himself as being free of responsibility of forcing a gay man to hide in the closet. 'Seeing is believing' is wrongly used through the scope of a heterosexual eye. The reason could be concluded that homosexuality is almost always considered a threat to the existence of heterosexuality in terms of a power struggle. Butler once said that "all social systems are vulnerable at their margins, and that all margins are accordingly considered dangerous." [3] This suggests that heterosexuality feels threatened because of the awakening of homosexuality, which has been representing a margin in the power struggle. Once menaced, heterosexuality loses its affirmative ground of expressing its pivotal thought.

Jackson's reaction to Housman's sexual orientation explains it all: "How could I know? You seem just like . . . you know, normal . . . How could I know?!" (77) "How could I know" becomes an excuse for Jackson to be free of his redemption. Therefore, homosexuality is viewed as the homophobic signifying dominance. Considered a reversed discourse, homosexuality needs to demand its legitimacy and find its way out of the hegemonic control. When Housman says "I didn't get what I wanted, that's true, but I want what I've got," it indicates that he has realized the urgency to accept himself as a gay man in order to free his confined soul" (54) He starts to esteem the importance of his personal value and his identity as a gay man once Chamberlain gives him a lecture on homosexuality.

CHAMBERLAIN. We belong to a sort of secret society . . . Actually it's more like a discussion group. We discuss what we should call ourselves. 'Homosexuality' has been suggested.

AEH. Homosexuality?

CHAMBERLAIN. We aren't anything till there's a word for it.

AEH. Homosexuality? Who is responsible for this barbarity?

CHAMBERLAIN What's wrong with it?

AEH. It's half Greek and half Latin!

CHAMBERLAIN. That sounds about right. (2.91-100)

Chamberlain is meant to say that being a gay man is not shameful. A gay man deserves a name to justify the fact of also being an integrated man just as a straight man is.

Heterosexuality undermines the significance of homosexuality, but "homosexuality, then,

would seem to be a matter of nature, not nurture; fate, not free will" (22). One man has no right to deprive the existence of another. Thus, Chamberlain claims the importance of being honest to oneself as well as to his loved one. In addition, when responding to Housman's question of the hybridity of the word, homosexuality, Chamberlain reassures him of the authenticity of homosexuality by implying that sexuality should not be classified into any category because of its uniqueness.

The combination of half Greek and half Latin explains the innate trait of a gay man: a biological man who mentally loves another man. This suggests that homosexuality should not be attached with any fixed meaning, so one's sexuality is always changing. Thus, Housman should not be so surprised to know that he had really fallen in love with a man, and his situation is completely different from those heroic figures in Greek poems. Chamberlain encourages Housman to accept the fact of being a gay man and that he should not feel ashamed of it. The third phase, acceptance, is significant for Housman. He not only accepts the fact that he is a gay man, but also knows that Jackson will never acknowledge his love. Thus, that explains why, when he comes back to meet his young self, Housman comes to the awareness of the zero possibility of ending up with Jackson by telling the audience "the love poem had to be invented". This implies that his love for Jackson is twisted in the eye of the public, so he could not have a blessed love like other love stories written in history. Accordingly, his love for Jackson should be specially made; in other words, Housman should create his own version of love compared to heterosexual love. He realizes that "'homosexual' is not the antithesis of the 'heterosexual' but 'a subversion of the quasi-sexual'" (Foucault 25) Now, he learns to be proud of his true identity and to stop hiding from the exposure of

being a gay man because "knowledge of his body and his desire signified power" (25). Being a gay man is absolutely not a crime, nor a disgrace that should haunt a man for life. Homosexuality is misunderstood in terms of its legal identity and legitimacy. Its assumed crime comes from repugnant indecency and abomination. Only through embracing his true self can Housman liberate himself to have the ability to love. Gleeson once commented that "everyone is capable of making homosexual object choice," which indicates that one should freely choose whomever he loves after he learns to accept who he really is" (25). This also corresponds with the idea mentioned earlier: the word, homosexuality, is a hybrid, which offers miscellaneous characteristics that should not have a fixed meaning. When Housman says "I shook his hand and tore my heart in sunder," he is aware that he needs to give up his love for Jackson and to begin to love himself more. Jackson's reaction to Housman's homosexual identity implies "confession is an act of violence against the unoffending" (89). This explains the unjust treatment deployed by the heterosexual dominance to limit the development of homosexuality for fear of being replaced in terms of power.

Sexuality is constantly changing and it should not be adopted as a law to enforce some norms and expectations through power. Both heterosexuality and homosexuality are derived from a perpetual impulse that comes from the pleasure of the human body. Each side represents a discourse that conveys social, political and cultural significance and forms various ideas and concepts to show the miscellaneous alternatives. Therefore, there should not be any abnormality when it comes to homosexuality. At the end of the play, when Housman states "My life is marked by long silences," this suggests that he has been manipulated by the heterosexual ideology of not talking about his sexual orientation

(95). The arrest of Oscar Wilde in the play also denotes the awakening of a transgressive aesthetic ready to challenge the established norm. The acceptance of being a gay man consummates Housman's wholeness and helps him to avoid discrepant scrutiny.

Housman has been denying himself because of Jackson's rejection of his love. He quotes the last line in Douglas' poem: "I am the love that dare not speak its name" to show his regret (101). Housman admits that he is not brave enough to accept who he really is, so he has been hiding himself in the darkness for fear of getting hurt. However, staying in the closet does not ease his pain. He suffers each day not only because of Jackson's rejection but also because of his secret. The more Housman strives to deny his sexual orientation, the more the agony rebounds on him. Wilde's news drives Housman's transformation because "truth is quite another thing and is the work of the imagination (93). Housman realizes the importance of being himself instead of pleasing Jackson. The truth is buried and misplaced as imagination is forbidden from society. Imagination represents an "outlaw" that cannot cope with the mainstream. The problem is not imagination but the system that confines people's thoughts.

Homosexuality is a form of exception that goes beyond the control in a world full of mostly heterosexuals. People are afraid of what they do not know, and feel panic when faced with change. However, people seem to forget that one's sexuality is changing all the time, so homosexuality should not be considered an abnormal pleasure but a discourse sharing the same significance as heterosexuality. Stoppard adopts the image of Wilde at the end of the play to illustrate the alternative embedded in society. Wilde functions as an imperative icon that makes people reevaluate their preconceptions as well as their misunderstanding of homosexuality. According to postmodernism, no subject

should be alienated, and authenticity no longer belongs to a particular discourse. Homosexuality is an independent discourse not made for competing with heterosexuality, but rather "heterosexuality needs homosexuality for its own definition: a macho homophobic male can define himself as 'straight' only in position to that which he is not—an effeminate gay man" (Foucault 33) Homosexuality is an assertion of heterosexuality. Housman's achievement in his third phase of embracing his homosexuality denotes his striving for a social position within natural differences. The three phases, awareness, denial, and acceptance, construct his integrity. Stoppard manages to let Housman experience the toughest time in order to manifest the value of homosexuality. Housman successfully "throws off the shackles of political correctness and explores the complexities of sexual attractions," observes Namste in an essay "Politics of Inside/out." Homosexuality is not only identity politics but also a representational process to which value is attached to it. Furthermore, Housman overturns the entire systematics of the natural and the unnatural. Foucault once commented that "It is through sex . . . that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own intelligibility . . . to the whole of his body . . . to his identity" (Foucault 144). This explains the significance of Housman's transformation through the three phases of his life. In his last monologue, he says "how lucky to find myself standing in this empty shore, with indifferent waters at my feet" (102). We could understand that although he has been through a lot in life, he has finally freed his soul to embrace both the happiness and bitterness that have haunted him until death. He used to be negative about everything that happened to him, especially his homosexual love for Jackson. However, he reclaims his own identity, and his indifference to his death indicates his victory over his own sorrow

and timidity. Foucault further emphasized that "we, on the other hand, are in a society of 'sex,' or rather a society 'within a sexuality'" (147). This explains that sex has no norms and should not be used to set up intrinsic rules either. *The Invention of Love* offers readers a chance to reevaluate the conception of homosexuality. There should be no criteria for classification when it comes to sexuality, no matter whether hetero-, homo-, or even bisexual. Sexuality should not be a taboo, nor should homosexuality.

III

Conclusion

Stoppard's Concern with Peripheral Sexuality

The core finding of the thesis is that homosexuality is not a deviation from the normal standard of sexuality. It itself is an instance of normal sexuality. The mainstream society of Victorian era was intolerant of homosexuality. It praised only heterosexuality as the acceptable form of sexuality. All other forms of sexuality were treated as peripheral or deviant sexuality. In Stoppard's *The Invention of Love*, Housman's homosexuality was treated as a deviant passion which was risky to the integrity of Victorian society. Housman's homosexual obsession with his friend, Jackson was repressed by the poet himself. Had he openly confessed his love for Jackson, he might have been ridiculed, rejected and treated as a man of deviant passion. So he was forced to repress his homosexual obsession with his friend.

There is friendship between Housman and Jackson. On the surface, they are friendly to each other. Even other people think Housman and Jackson are friends. But deep down the surface of their friendship, homosexual inclination of Housman is clearly seen. Housman's friendship changes into homosexual love. Secretly he loves Jackson. But Jackson is not aware of the fact that Housman is homosexually obsessed with him. Jackson never thinks of his bonding with Housman more than friendship. But Housman has already gone beyond the limit of friendship.

Though Housman develops homosexual obsession with Jackson, he is not able to confess about his homosexuality openly. He is afraid of society. He knows that the Victorian society he lives in is intolerant of homosexuality. Homosexuality is treated as a

deviant sexuality. Because of the fatal bias against homosexuality, Housman hides his desire. He harbors his attraction to Jackson secretly. He passes several decades waiting for Jackson's affection.

Sexuality is constantly changing. Both heterosexuality and homosexuality arise from the pleasure of the human body. Housman's life is marked by long silences when his decade long waiting ends in futility. The acceptance of being a gay man remains a dream to Housman. Housman's wholeness helps him to avoid social criticism. Housman has been denying himself because of Jackson's rejection of his love. Housman admits that he is not brave enough to accept who he really is. He has been hiding himself in the darkness for fear of getting hurt. He suffers each day not only because of Jackson's rejection. Housman tries to reject his sexual orientation. Housman realizes the importance of being himself instead of pleasing Jackson.

Homosexuality is a form of exception. It goes beyond the control. It is a deviation in a world full of mostly heterosexuals. People are afraid of what they do not know. They feel panic when faced with change. However, people seem to forget that one's sexuality is changing. So homosexuality should not be considered an abnormal pleasure.

Homosexuality is an independent discourse. It is not made for competing with heterosexuality. Heterosexuality needs homosexuality for its own definition.

Homosexuality is an assertion of heterosexuality. Housman experiences the toughest time to speak for the value of homosexuality.

In a state of confusion, Housman reverses the roles. Despite his oscillating mood, he goes on to keep the conversation going. He does not lose a chance to use Clarkson as a listener. In his story telling, he relates his own life-story. Assuming the frank tone, he

says he lives with strange inmates. This is a strange story which does not cement his friendship with peter. He tells a story of the colored queen. The queen wears a kimono. She plucks her eyebrows. The narration bears homosexual implication. By that time, a woman weeps behind closed doors suggesting "a land-lady resembling a bag of garbage, which remains busy making sexual advances towards him whenever he is available; and a dog that starts barking on seeing him" (13). Housman is tricky and shrewd to hoodwink Clarkson.

The causes of homosexuality are difficult to trace. Some of the apparent causes are complex. Same-sex attraction can be a powerful force. Lots of homosexuals struggle against the oppressive biases of the mainstream society. They eventually choose to accept their habit. They take as a part of their identity same sex attraction. In so doing, they may have to achieve mastery over social and familial disapproval. Some decide to openly identify themselves as gay whereas others choose to remain in the closet. Judged from the contemporary spirit of liberal society, the Victorian bias against homosexuals was a cruel case of aggressive and fatal prejudice.

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